

NEW APBN UNITS Commission for CHT slam govt move

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chattogram Hill Tracts Commission yesterday expressed deep concern over a government move to introduce a new unit of Armed Police Battalion in the region.

In a statement, the commission said it believes the move was a direct violation of the Chattogram Hill Tracts Accord.

Citing media reports, the commission said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal laid the foundation stone for four units of APBn in three hill districts on Thursday.

The event was preceded by a government decision, it said.

“The commission is surprised by this decision of the government,” read the statement.

Instead of implementing the basic provisions of the accord, it looks like the government is moving away from the implementation process, said the commission.

It said the government needs to deal with the issue of CHT politically by fully implementing the accord.

To improve the law-and-order situation in the CHT, it urged the government to transfer the “Police (Local)” subject to the Hill District Councils and facilitate the formation of the “Hill District Police Force” as per the CHT Accord and the Hill District Councils Acts of 1989.

It also urged the government to discuss with relevant groups, including the CHT Regional Council, before making any important decision related to the region.

It further called upon the government to declare a roadmap and timeframe to implement the accord in full and without any further delays.



Transport workers removing bricks left on the street in front of Jatiya Press Club by Jubo Dal activists who held a rally there in protest at the recent attacks on Chhatra Dal activists. The bricks were brought to the area for the construction of a metro rail station.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Russia gains more ground in east Ukraine

Forces blast Sievierodonetsk after claiming capture of key railway junction town

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russian forces were assaulting the Ukrainian city of Severodonetsk yesterday after saying they had captured the nearby rail hub of Lyman as Moscow pressed its offensive in the eastern Donbas.

Russian gains in recent days indicate a shift in momentum in the war, now in its fourth month. The invading forces appear close to seizing all of the Luhansk region of Donbas, a main Kremlin war goal, despite Ukrainian resistance.

Russia's defence ministry yesterday said its troops and allied separatist forces were now in full control of Lyman, site of a railway junction and lying west of the Siversky Donets River in the Donetsk region that neighbours Luhansk.

However Hanna Malyar, Ukraine's deputy defence minister, said the battle for Lyman continued, the ZN.ua website reported.

The Russian forces were likely to try to cross the river in coming days in the next phase of the Kremlin's Donbas offensive, the British defence ministry said in its daily intelligence report yesterday.

Severodonetsk, some 60 km (40 miles) from Lyman on the eastern side of the river and the largest Donbas city still held by

Ukraine, is now under heavy assault from the Russians.

“Severodonetsk is under constant enemy fire,” Ukraine's police force said in a social media post yesterday.

Russian artillery was also shelling the Lysychansk-Bakhmut road, which Russia needs to take to close a pincer movement and encircle Ukrainian forces.

“There was significant destruction in Lysychansk,” the police said.

The governor of Luhansk, which along with Donetsk makes up the Donbas, said on Friday Russian troops had already entered Severodonetsk. Ukrainian troops may have to retreat from the city to avoid capture, governor Serhiy Gaidai said.

The Russian forces have been making slow but steady advances in the Donbas - large parts of which were already controlled by Moscow-backed separatists before the war - after failing to capture the capital Kyiv soon after their Feb 24 invasion of Ukraine.

Their tactics involve mass artillery bombardments and air strikes that have laid waste to towns and cities.

The General Staff of Ukraine's armed forces yesterday said Ukrainian forces had repelled eight assaults in Donetsk and Luhansk in the previous 24 hours. Russia's

attacks included artillery assaults in the Severodonetsk area, it said.

“If Russia did succeed in taking over these areas, it would highly likely be seen by the Kremlin as a substantive political achievement and be portrayed to the Russian people as justifying the invasion,” the British intelligence report said.

Some 90 percent of buildings in Severodonetsk were damaged, Gaidai said, with 14 high-rise buildings destroyed in the latest shelling. Several dozen medical staff were staying on in Severodonetsk but they faced difficulty just getting to hospitals because of the shelling, the Luhansk governor said.

Reuters could not independently verify the information.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy remained defiant in his nightly address to Ukrainians.

“If the occupiers think that Lyman and Severodonetsk will be theirs, they are wrong. Donbas will be Ukrainian,” Zelenskyy said.

Analysts at the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War said that while Russian forces had begun direct assaults on built-up areas of Severodonetsk, they were likely to struggle to take ground in the city itself.

JP undecided over polls if EVM is used

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party has said it will discuss at the party forum whether to join the next national election if electronic voting machines are used.

JP Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnun said this at the convention of the party's ward-33 unit in the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday.

He said EVM is good, but those who will operate it will not be neutral. Therefore, if EVMs are used in the next election, it would not be fair and acceptable, he added.

Mujibul, also a lawmaker from the opposition party, alleged that the government is spending huge money in the name of implementing mega projects and looting is taking place in the name of development.

He said Tk 4 lakh crore has been siphoned off from 2009 to 2016. “Why is this not being investigated?”

The JP leader demanded the government publish a list of money launderers and take legal actions against them.

Bangladeshi shot dead at Sylhet border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Indian Border Security Force returned the body of a Bangladeshi to the Border Guard Bangladesh yesterday, five days after he was shot dead allegedly by India's Khasi people near the Jallong border area in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila.

The deceased, Kabir Hossain, 32, was a resident of Champaknagar village in the same upazila.

Locals and police said Kabir along with his two friends entered India on May 23. Khasi people opened fire on them that day, leaving Kabir hit by bullets. However, his friends managed to return to Bangladesh.

Kabir's body was found at the border's Mayabi Jharna area on Thursday. The body was recovered by BSF.

Yesterday, the body was handed over after a BGB-BSF flag meeting at the border.

17yr-old pregnant housewife ‘sets herself on fire’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 17-year-old pregnant homemaker set herself on fire after pouring kerosene on herself over a dispute with her husband in the capital's Shahjahanpur yesterday.

The victim, Papia Sarwar Mim, is undergoing treatment at Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery with 95 percent burns, said Inspector Bachchu Miah, in-charge of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital police camp.

Victim's husband Md Ramim brought her to the hospital in the afternoon. He was later handed over to Shahjahanpur Police Station, said the inspector.

Mim's mother Parvin Akhter said her daughter married Ramim three years back. She had long been arguing with her husband over his extramarital affair, she alleged.

“My daughter set herself on fire as she couldn't bear the mental torture by her husband,” Parvin said.

According to the law of the land, marriage of a girl aged below 18 is considered a child marriage.

A nightmare that won't stop at rape

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Tribunal, Pinky (not real name) sat on a straight-back wooden bench.

Khairul stood right behind her - the first time the two came to such close proximity since the alleged incident on August 30, 2021. His imposing presence seemed to unnerv the woman, who gripped the hands of her attendant from the safehouse.

Khairul was seen crouching down to take a call on his mobile, unsettling the victim.

Taking phone calls is prohibited during court proceedings.

“My heart was racing the entire time,” Pinky told this correspondent later.

The 22-year-old worked in a bakery and lived with her mother, a domestic worker.

According to the case documents, she had gone to the Sher-e-Bangla Police Station to file a general diary about a stalker.

“A man used to disturb me as I walked to work. One day I confronted him, and he hit me publicly in the street. He had also thrown my phone to the ground and broken it. So I decided to lodge a case,” she told the magistrate as she took the stand.

“When I went to the police station, I met Khairul. I had never been to a police station before ... so when he told me that he would handle the matter, I gave him my phone number and left,” she said.

Later, she changed her mind about taking action against her harasser after the man promised not to stalk her, and she informed Khairul of her decision.

“But he [Khairul] kept

calling, asking me to meet him. I declined every time,” she added.

According to the First Information Report, Pinky got a call from Khairul on August 30, at 7:30am in the morning.

“He told me I must go with him to meet a senior officer. I refused and said I have to go to work,” Pinky told the magistrate.

Around 8:10am, as Pinky was walking to her workplace, Khairul intercepted her at Panthapath.

“He took me to a house in Gulshan,” she told the court.

He then led her straight into a room, and took her phone straightaway, she said.

“He kept me there until 1:00pm and raped me thrice. I heard the zuhr azaan while in that room. He raped me, beat me up and in between, watched television,” claimed Pinky to this correspondent.

He dropped her off at Panthapath again and asked her to keep quiet - but the girl told her mother anyway who decided to seek justice.

She and her mother went to the Sher-e-Bangla Police Station around 7:00pm the same day but were made to wait until 3:00am to file a case, claimed Pinky.

At the police station, several cops approached her mother and told her to settle the matter for Tk 4 lakh, she said.

To this proposal, her mother said, “I will not be paid off by a rapist.”

Pinky could finally file a case at dawn when an additional deputy commissioner came to the police station. She took the

cops to the spot at 6:00am, after spending a sleepless night at the station.

Khairul was arrested on August 31, 2021, and suspended from duty, said Jahangir Alam, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar police.

After his release on bail on February 9 this year, Pinky took shelter at the safehouse out of fear of reprisals.

“I sent my daughter over to the safehouse because he [Khairul] kept hanging around. He even came to my neighbourhood last Saturday asking the locals if my daughter is back. My daughter had to quit her job, so now that income is gone too,” said the mother.

A DNA test of Pinky, done within 48 hours of the alleged incident, found no evidence of semen - but Pinky refutes this. “He raped me thrice.”

At the hospital, the medical examiner took only one light swab and did not keep her clothes either, she said.

Usually, examiners take multiple swabs and also examine the victim's clothing for evidence.

Back at the courtroom, Khairul prodded his lawyer prior to cross examination, “Ask the girl why there is no DNA?”

After the hearing, Pinky and her mother reunited for a short while, before she had to return to the safehouse. Her mother fished out sweetmeats and Biryani and fed her with her own hands. Before she could finish, it was time for Pinky to go back to the safehouse.

“I want my daughter back. But for that, the culprit has to be punished,” said the mother.

Our words neither heeded nor believed

FROM PAGE 1

was told that they were hiding him because there were cases against him.

Kuddus was picked up on March 30, 2017, from Rajshahi's Bagmara. Kuddus was then an independent candidate for the local union parishad election.

“On February 9, law enforcers called Kuddus's wife and accused her of hiding him. They said that Kuddus was in hiding and that we were helping him,” said one of his family members.

Emon, the son of Mohammed Omar Faroque, narrated how law enforcers got in touch with the family four or five months ago and told them that their father was hiding abroad.

“He was seen being picked up, and yet they said that he is in hiding,” said Emon.

Faroque's case was one of the two transmitted

to the government under “urgent procedure” of the UN Working Group. Faroque was allegedly picked up on February 5, 2014, by eight Rab members and the Detective Branch of Police during a raid on his relative's house in Chattogram, according to the UN body's report.

SM Moazzem Hossain Topu, 28, a former president of ward-22 unit of BCL, was picked up by “plainclothes detectives” from a friend's flat on January 26, 2016.

Saleha Begum, the mother of Topu, said she was visited by law enforcers a fortnight ago and asked to withdraw the names of the people she accused when filing a case for her son going missing.

“I had named eight people. Law enforcers came to my house and told me that I need to go to the court and withdraw those names. They said that the people I named are

not involved in the case. I refused because they could not tell me who the culprits are or if they had identified who picked up Topu,” said Saleha.

On March 15, the United Nations called on the government to ensure that human rights defenders and the families of victims of enforced disappearance do not face any harassment from law enforcement agencies.

“Immediately cease reprisals against human rights defenders and relatives of forcibly disappeared persons for their activism and co-operation with international human rights bodies and UN mechanisms,” it had said in a statement.

The gathering was organised by Maayer Daak, a platform of families of the forcibly disappeared, in commemoration of the International Week of the Disappeared.

can progress quickly.”

Nirapad Sarak Chai Chairman Ilias Kanchan and Shilpakala Academy Director General Liaquat Ali Lucky, among others, addressed the programme.

A committee led by former minister Shajahan Khan, also a transport workers' leader, made 111 recommendations in 2019 to lessen road accidents and make roads safer. Later that year, a taskforce headed by the home minister was formed.

Real Madrid lift 14th UCL title

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Liverpool had the upper hand with their high-pressing game rattling the Spanish champions and Mo Salah twice testing Real keeper Thibaut Courtois in the opening exchanges.

Sadio Mane came even closer in the 21st minute with a low shot that Courtois managed to tip onto the post. Real thought they had scored just before the break but French striker Karim Benzema's effort was ruled offside after a lengthy VAR review.

Earlier, there was a 36-minute delay to the kick off as police tried to hold off people trying to force their way into the Stade de France and trouble was still going on after the game started.

A stadium announcement said the

2100 local time (1900GMT) kick off was being delayed for security reasons, adding later that the start of European club soccer's showpiece had been postponed “due to the late arrival of fans”.

“Supporters attempted to penetrate the stadium. They forced their way through the first filter. The screening at the Stade de France is watertight,” French police said in a statement.

Reuters TV footage showed riot police chasing fans outside the stadium as they ran away and others being escorted away.

Dozens of supporters forced their way into the stadium premises and others outside, including children, were being tear-gassed by riot police, a Reuters witness said.

One of them

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The facilities include Central Diagnostic Center Padma Clinic, Prime Diagnostic Center, Tamanna Digital Diagnostic Center, Medina Eye Hospital, Eye Clinic and Phaco Center, and Health Care Diagnostic and Consultation Center.

According to the Natore Civil Surgeon Office, there are around 40 unauthorised private healthcare facilities out of 200 in the district.

HealthofficialsinTangail

shut down three healthcare organisations and fined three others yesterday, our correspondent reports.

According to the Tangail Civil Surgeon Office, a total of 181 out of around 300 private clinics and hospitals in the district had no approval.

As per the Medical Practice and Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982, private healthcare service providers must have licence from the DGHS.