

28YRS OF CHT ACCORD Disappointment, frustration keep growing

MD ABBAS

Frustration and disappointment have been growing among the indigenous people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts as the CHT Peace Accord has still not been fully implemented even after 28 years.

Signed on December 2, 1997, between the then Awami League government and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samiti (PCJSS), the accord was expected to bring long awaited justice, autonomy and peace to the region.

The previous government said that 65 out of 72 sections of the accord have been implemented, with only a few remaining.

But PCJSS leaders disagree, saying that only 25 sections have been fully executed, 18 partially, and 29 not implemented at all.

The leaders also said that successive governments, including the Awami League government that signed the deal, have not taken adequate steps to make the accord fully effective.

Following the removal of the Awami League



government, and after repeated demands from the CHT Peace Accord Implementation Movement, the interim government reformed the Peace Accord Implementation and Monitoring Committee on January 1. Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain was appointed as the chair of the committee.

The committee held its tenth meeting in Rangamati on July 19, where officials said that effective measures would soon be taken to implement the accord and appointed the chairman of the Land Commission.

"This announcement gave us some hope. However, the government's later actions have left us deeply frustrated and disappointed," said Dipayan Khisa, a central committee member of the PCJSS.

Everyone knows making the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission functional is one of the most important steps in implementing the accord, especially for resolving long standing land conflicts, said Khairul Chowdhury, a

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and daughter Zaima Rahman.

Despite living abroad, Tarique was appointed acting chairman of the BNP in 2016 after his mother Khaleda Zia was imprisoned.

Officials said the EC prepared a voter list with photographs ahead of the December 2008 polls, but Tarique was not enrolled as he was abroad. He has not been included in subsequent voter lists prepared ahead of the 2014, 2018, and 2024 elections.

NO LEGAL BARRIER TO RETURN

Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul yesterday said he was not aware of any legal barriers to Tarique's returning to Bangladesh.

The government would provide full cooperation if any issues arose, he said, adding, "We will also provide full cooperation regarding his security."

Nazrul emphasized that the decision to return rests entirely with Tarique himself.

Speculation about his return intensified after BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's health deteriorated on Friday while undergoing treatment at the Evercare Hospital. On Saturday morning, Tarique posted on his verified Facebook page that returning to Bangladesh from the UK was not entirely in his hands.

NID CORRECTION HALTED

At the press conference, EC Secretary Akhtar Ahmed announced that the commission on November 23 decided to suspend NID correction and voter migration processes. However, voter enrolment will continue, but the new voters won't be able to vote in this election.

He clarified that corrections to seven key fields -- voter's name, father's name, mother's name, occupation, date of birth, voter address, and photograph -- will remain suspended. Currently, changes allowed include husband's or wife's name, marital status, educational qualification, religion (where applicable), disability status and type, and telephone number.

In a statement last night, the EC said NID corrections will continue on a limited scale for urgent needs such as medical treatment, study abroad, obtaining passports, and visas, and employment-related requirements.

The EC also extended the deadline for expatriate voter registration via the Postal Ballot BD app to December 25, from the earlier deadline of December 18.

The registration started on November 19 for expatriates in 140 countries. As of yesterday evening, 1,23,700 registered.

blows for Hasina. On November 17, she was sentenced to death by the International Crimes Tribunal-1 for crimes against humanity committed during last year's July uprising. Ousted on August 5, 2024 amid a student-led mass movement, she remains accused in over 550 cases nationwide, excluding the corruption charges.

FLAWED AND FARICAL' Tulip Siddiq told The Guardian that the ruling "deserves contempt" and called the entire process "flawed and farical". She said the outcome of the "kangaroo court" was predictable and politically motivated, adding that she would not be distracted from her duties to her constituents.

The Guardian noted that the UK has no extradition treaty with Bangladesh, making it unlikely Tulip will serve the sentence. A Labour Party spokesperson said the party does not recognise the judgment, arguing Tulip was denied due process and was never informed of the charges despite repeated requests through her legal team.

"Anyone facing any charge should always be afforded the right to make legal representations when allegations are made against them," the spokesperson said. "Given that has not happened in this case, we cannot recognise this judgment."

While talking to Sky News, Tulip said she still had no contact whatsoever from the Bangladeshi authorities, despite them "spreading malicious allegations about me for a year and a half now".

"I've had no correspondence from them - I'm not difficult to find, I'm a parliamentarian," she said.

"The allegation that I've been convicted for states that I, when I was an opposition member of parliament here in Britain, used my political influence over my aunt who was then the prime minister of Bangladesh to convince her or I suppose force her to allow my mother who is her sister to purchase a plot of land in some random place in Bangladesh."

Two additional graft cases against 21 people, including Hasina, nieces Azmina Siddiq and Tulip, and nephew Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby, are pending at the same court, with verdicts expected in January.

The ruling follows a series of legal



Students of Azimpur Government Girls' School and College in Dhaka were sent home yesterday morning as classes and exams were suspended after teachers at government high schools across the country went on an indefinite work abstention to press their four-point demand.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Tarique not on voter roll

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candidates to be registered voters.

At a press conference, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said only those who registered by October 31 would be able to cast their votes in the upcoming election.

Asked if Tarique registered, the EC secretary said that as far as he knew, Tarique had not registered.

On whether Tarique could still run, he said: "He can, if the Election Commission decides."

He explained that under the Voter List Act, 2009, the EC has the authority to grant such opportunities. Section 15 of the law states that the EC may, at any time, include or remove the name of any person entitled to be on the voter roll.

According to Article 12(l) of the Representation of the People Order, 1972, however, a person is disqualified from election if their name is not on the voter list.

WHY TARIQUE NOT A VOTER

During the last caretaker government rule, Tarique was arrested on March 7, 2007. He was granted bail on September 3, 2008. He left for London with his family on September 11, 2008, for medical treatment.

Since then, he has been living in London with his wife Zubaida Rahman

and daughter Zaima Rahman.

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