Protect right to land Demand indigenous

people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indigenous people are still being oppressed in various ways across the country, said the representatives of ethnic communities at a meeting yesterday.

They are being evicted from their own lands and facing false cases filed by the Bangalees, the speakers said at the national committee meeting of the Bangladesh Indigenous People's Forum in the

Highlighting their various problems, the representatives urged the administration to protect their rights to land and property.

Forum President Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma alias Shantu Larma said a conspiracy has been going on to endanger the existence of indigenous people in the country.

"Though we work to protect the rights of every people, the ruling party is against it. We are more oppressed and deprived of our rights because of the domination by the fanatical forces," he said.

He also called on all to work unitedly to bring a revolutionary change to this situation.

The speakers said the administration always favours the intimidators who destroy the forests and file false cases against indigenous people

Even the government does not acknowledge the ownership of the lands by indigenous people and they often do not get any compensation for the loss of their lands, they added.

In Jafflong, many Bangalees collect stones from the river, causing erosion of the land, which eventually leads to eviction of the Khasi community, said the representative from greater Sylhet.

A huge portion of lands of the Khasis also goes to Bangalees every time when a land survey takes place, he said

"We don't get back the ownership of our land even after the verdict of the High Court in our favour. The government also does not pay heed to the rights of the indigenous people," said Ashit Mong.

The speakers urged the government to include the demands of the indigenous people in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)

They also demanded immediate steps for protection of the rights of indigenous people to land and property.

General Secretary of the forum Sanjeeb Drong and Prof Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University were



Solo exhibition of Hamiduzzaman begins Feb 17

A 12 -day solo exhibition of Prof Hamiduzzaman Khan will begin in the city on February 17, says a

World Bank Country Director to Bangladesh Christine Wallich will inaugurate the exhibition titled "Recent Sculptures and Other Works" on the gallery Kaya premises at 5:00pm

Eminent art critic Prof Nazrul Islam will attend the inaugura ceremony A total of 42 sculptures and 33-

water colour paintings will be put on

The exhibition will remain open from 11:00am to 8:00pm from February 17 to February 28.

AL programmes Language Day

Awami League has chalked out elaborate programmes on the occasion of the International Mother Language Day to be observed on February 21

The programmes also include wearing black badge, barefoot morning procession, paying tribute at the mazar of martyrs at Azimpur

graveyard and placing wreaths at the central Shaheed Minar. A discussion will also be held on the premises of Bangabandhu

Leader Shiekh Hasina in the chair. AL General Secretary M Abdul Jalil yesterday urged the party leadPAK SENATE CHAIRMAN, PML PRESIDENT MEET PM

People-to-people contact underscored

Chairman of Pakistan Senate Mohammad Mian Soomro and President of Pakistan Muslim League (PML) Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia separately at her Serena Hotel suite yesterday.

During the meeting, Khaleda and Soomro stressed the need for exchange of parliamentary delegations between the two countries for strengthening democracy as well as to enhance people-to-people

Chaudhury Shujaat during his meeting with Khaleda emphasised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

capital yesterday morning.

JS passes

three bills

UNB, Dhaka

The death of a patient sparked off a

clash between his relatives and the

staffs of Shomorita Hospital in the

clash that erupted after the

patient's relatives alleged that the

patient died due to doctor's negli-

Parliament last night passed three

bills, including one that seeks to

amend certain provisions of the

Code of Civil Procedure to bring

about reforms of the civil judicial

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed

piloted the Civil Procedure Code

(Amendment) Bill, 2006, which was

adopted by the House through voice

House are: The Judicial

Administration Training Institute

(Amendment) Bill, 2006, and The

Court Reforms Implementation

(supplementary provision) (Amend-

ment) Bill, 2006.

The two other bills passed by the

Four people were injured in the

Death of patient in city

hospital sparks off clash

sources.

on enhancing party-to-party contact for the benefits of the two

Welcoming the PML chief's idea, Khaleda said steps would be taken to increase the party-to-party

Chaudhury Shujaat proposed holding a meeting of the political leaders of the Saarc member countries to establish peace and prosperity in South Asia and requested current Saarc chairperson to take initiative in this regard. Khaleda also welcomed the

He requested her to send a

delegation from Bangladesh during

gence, said police and hospital

who suffered a brain stroke, died at

7:45am yesterday. He had been

undergoing treatment at the hospi-

and neighbours rushed to the

hospital and went on the rampage,

ward boy and vandalised some of

the decoration of the hospital.

claiming that negligence of the

physician concerned caused his

death," said Nurul Islam Tuhin,

Around 80 agitated people

rushed to the hospital and went

berserk, leading to the clash, said

Nurul Islam. He said that he was

brought the situation under control.

false, Dr Kazi Deen Muhammad

who was treating the patient said

Kawsar suffered a severe brain

his relatives about his condition,"

"The patient's condition was

Later, police stepped in and

Dismissing the allegation as

also assaulted during the melee.

general manager of the hospital.

Soon after his death, relatives

"They assaulted a doctor and a

tal since February 6.

hospital sources said.

The patient, Kawsar Ahmed, 55.

the centenary observance of his party sometime this year.

Responding positively. Khaleda said a delegation will be sent from Bangladesh to attend the centenary celebrations

Chaudhury Shujaat expressed the hope that Saarc under her dynamic leadership will bring peace and prosperity in South Asia.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Agriculture Minister MK Anwar, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, PM's Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Siddiqui and Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin were present during the meetings.

opens

The launching ceremony of the Confucius Institute was held yesterday at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city, says a press release.

North South University (NSU) and Yunnan University of China jointly established the Institute at the NSU campus to teach Chinese

This is the first institute of its kind South Asia.

Professor Wu Song, president of Yunnan University, Chai Xi, Chinese ambassador in Dhaka and Iftekharul Alam, chairman, NSU Foundation spoke on the occasion.

NSU Vice Chancellor Dr Hafiz

Initially the Institute offers a onevear course for the beginners. Classes will begin on February 25 Faculty member from Yunnan University Dr Zhang Gaoxiang will conduct the course.

China is enormously growing economic power in the world and learning the Chinese language will help develop business and trade in the South Asia region.

critical and I had already informed Police have been deployed in

Confucius Instt

language.

not only in Bangladesh but also in

GA Siddiqi chaired the inaugural session.

In the ceremony, speakers said

They also mentioned that the establishment of the Institute is a milestone of exchange and cooperation in the field of education between China and Bangladesh.

programme on 'Constitutional

Mandate: Education, PEDP-2 and

Financing Education" at the semi-

nar hall of the Minister Hostel in the

area of education are always

dropped out with the change of the

government, the country will never

achieve the desired goal in the

He also emphasised introduc-

ing single-track education system

in the country, saying that we can

never expect one result with ten-

the ruling and opposition parties in

many issues, but there should not

be any politics regarding education of our children," said Law Minister

education system in the country. Taking stance against the

He also emphasised single-track

demand for nationalisation of the

schools and colleges, Moudud

said, "Whenever a school or col-

lege is nationalised, accountability

ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon,

state minister for education, said it

is not easy to introduce single-

track education system through

the nationalisation process given

the limited capacity of the govern-

ment. Rather he placed more

emphasis on the quality of teach-

For falling quality of the primary

education, noted economist Dr

Atiur Rahman in his paper identi-

fied nine reasons including lack of

quality teachers, insufficient

female teachers, high gap

between teachers and students

inadequate infrastructure facilities

meagre salary and allowance of

the teachers and lack of proper

Parliamentary Caucus on

Former education minister

The three-day orientation

programme will end on February 16.

ers for quality primary education.

"Dispute may persist between

track education systems.

Moudud Ahmed

no longer exists there.'

education sector, said Suraniit.

If the important initiatives in the

parliament in the city.

Four killed in road crashes

METROPOLITAN/NEWS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people were killed and three others, including a joint secretary, injured in separate road accidents in Dhaka city and Keraniganj yesterday.

AKM Jahirul Haq Khan, 42, an official of Titas Zone-4 in Badda, was killed as a speeding truck rammed his private car on Mirpur Road near Asad Gate in the city at 1:30am.

Jahirul was returning home at Mohammadpur from the airport along with his brother Solaiman Khan, joint secretary of establishment ministry, and Solaiman's wife Shahnaz Kamrunessa Khan. The three and driver Jewel, 30

were injured in the accident. They were rushed to Dhaka Medica College and Hospital (DMCH) where Jahirul died at 4:30am Others left the hospital after receiving treatment.

In another accident, an elderly man. 50, was crushed under the wheels of a vehicle at around 6:45am when he was crossing the road near Kalyanpur bus stand.

He was taken to the DMCH at 7:35am where the doctors declared him dead. His identities could not be known.

Another unidentified youth, aged around 30, was run over by a train at Malibagh level crossing in the early morning. He died at the DMCH a couple of hours later.

In Keraniganj, a speeding human hauler ran over eight-year-old schoolgirl Sharmin Akhtar, daughter of a rickshawpuller, at noon.

The girl was returning home from her school but the vehicle knocked her down at Muslim Bazar on Nayabazar-Nawabganj Road, killing her on the spot.

Local people intercepted the vehicle, but its driver managed to

They also demonstrated in the area demanding arrest and punishment of the driver and owner of the

Farmers demand reduction in electricity charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Farmers and farm labourers yesterday demanded withdrawal of repressive fees and reduction in electricity tariffs charged by the Rural Electrification Board (REB).

They also called for resolving problems of low voltage and The demands were placed at a

press conference organised by Bangladesh Krishak Samity and Bangladesh Khetmajur Samity in The leaders of the organisations also threatened to launch a tougher

movement if their demands go The farmers are passing their days in utter misery due to power, diesel and fertiliser crises, they said and demanded timely supply of

subsidy in fertiliser. They also demanded exemplary punishment to those responsible for killings in Kansat, Chapainawabganj

The leaders also announced that they would lay siege to all offices of the district commissioners and upazila nirbahi officers across the country on February 19 to press for their demands.

Khetmajur Samity President Shamsuzzaman Selim read out a written statement at the press

conference Krishak Samity leaders Nurur Rahman Salim, Morshed Ali and SMA Sabur and Sazzad Zahir Chandan of Khetmajur Samity also

Death anniversary



12th death anniversary of Anwarul Islam Bobby, founding editors of the nowdefunct The Daily Life and The Morning Sun, says a press

Today is the

Friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to pray for the

departed soul.

Obituary



Khilkhet Police Station passed away due to cardiac arrest at Lab Aid Hospital in the city on Saturday at the age of 65, says a Sobhan Master, also an Awami

Abdul Sobhan

Master of

Kuratoly under

League (AL) leader, was laid to rest at his family graveyard after namaze-janaza at his residence. Jashim Uddin Institute

expressed deep shock at his death His aulkhwani will be held at his residence at House-Ka 61 at Kuratoly on February 17 after Juma

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the qulkhwani and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.



Sramik League, labour front of the opposition Awami League, takes out a procession at Muktangan in the city yesterday in support of today's countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal. The AL-led 14-party has called the hartal.

Tk 450cr Dutch grant for six projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Netherlands will provide Tk 450 crore to Bangladesh for implementing six projects in the water resources sector in the next two

The two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) yesterday for a two-year extension of Twining Arrangement, under which the projects will be

The projects are Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP), Integrated Costal Zone Management Project (ICZMP) Estuary Development Programme (EDP), Integrated Participatory Sustainable Water Management Project (IPSWAM), South East Area Integrated Water Resource Planning and Management Project and Water Management Improvement (WAMIP)

Water Resources Minister M Hafiz Uddin Ahmed and **Development Cooperation Minister** of the Netherlands Agnes van Ardenne signed the MoU in the city. Dutch Ambassador BCM Beemsterboer and Secretary of Water Resource Ministry Syed Mohammad Zubayer were also Water Resource Minister Hafiz

Uddin said the Twining Arrangement was signed in 1999 initially for five years (2000-2005). "Now both the countries have agreed to extend the agreement for two more years with view to sharing water policy, water management and knowledge.

Agnes van Ardenne said it is easy to work in Bangladesh because many things, including water management and water system, are similar in both the countries.

She also said that they want to work in Bangladesh for poverty reduction, checking river erosion and sharing knowledge in the water resources sector.

Reunion

The annual general meeting and reunion of Matlabganj JB High School Old Students' Association will be held at the National Press Club in the city at 9:00am on February 17, says a press release.

Adequate power for irrigation demanded STAFF CORRESPONDENT

League yesterday submitted a memorandum to the Rural Electrification Board (REB) demanding adequate electricity supply to the irrigation projects in the northern districts of the country. They also demanded compensa-

Leaders of Bangladesh Krishok

tion for the families of the Kansat victims who were killed in police fire. Prior to the submission of the memorandum, they held a brief rally

in front of REB central office in the

Addressing the rally as chief guest, Krishok League President Dr Mirza Jalil said the Khaleda-Nizami government increased the prices of fuel, fertiliser and electricity, as they

do not want welfare of the farmers. He said the police with the directives of the government killed farmers who were demanding electricity. Farmers are being deprived of their legal rights after the government had come to power, he added.

If their demands are not met they will lay a siege to every Palli Biddut office in every upzila, he threatened.

Motahar Hossian Mollah and Sheikh Mohammad Jahangir also

Summer looks darker

(PBSs).

combined cycle plant, it took US company AES only \$170 million for the Meghnaghat 450MW combined cycle plant. The PDB installed a 70MW simple cycle plant in Shahjibazar for only \$30 million in 2001.

The contract for the plant gave German company Siemens an extra incentive to finish the job before the December deadline and penalty for missing the deadline. Siemens would have been given \$8,000 per day as bonus if it could finish the job before the deadline and \$50,000 penalty per day for missing the deadline, sources said.

But these did not work as the RPCL's consultant Lahmayer International Palli Power Services Ltd (LIPPS), which enjoyed undisrupted unauthorised power over the RPCL affairs, messed up the project's finances and abruptly got involved in a clash with the government. The LIPPS top executive was trying to takeover the government shares of the RPCL

through a third party. Because of Lahmayer's resistance to allow German donor agency KfW to conduct an audit into the books of RPCL, the gov-

ernment lost a 20 million euro untied grant earmarked for this project and another 40 million euro for another power project.

The KfW wanted to conduct the

audit following in-depth reports in The Daily Star on the corruption in the RPCL involving KfW funds. The remaining investment for this project was supposed to derive through the Palli Bidyut Samities

In August last year, the LIPPS officials sabotaged the Mymensingh plant and fled from the site. The RPCL then cancelled contract with the LIPPS. The government filed several cases for subversion against top LIPPS officials, including its majority shareholder Captain Reza, who have fled abroad and now trying to squeeze out money from the government through a misfit international litigation, sources pointed

The RPCL signed its contract with Siemens in early 2004 in which the RPCL committed to open a letter of credit for the German company by June 1, 2005 so that the contractor can import plant equipment. However, as the KfW

withdrew the grant, the RPCL landed in a financial crisis. At this point, Siemens expressed its interest to fund the project as loan. By then, the project started lagging behind the schedule.

Meanwhile, the LIPPS was interfering with the civil construction job at the plant site and the construction was suspended for several days. This followed a clash between the government represented by the police and officials and the LIPPS at the plant site. After the RPCL abandoned the plant, the government had to rearrange the RPCL structure as many of its officials were on the payroll of the LIPPS. Consequently the construction works suffered

further delay. The LIPPS had been appointed on unsolicited basis as the operation and maintenance consultant for the Mymensingh plant for a price four times higher than the market. Whenever the RPCL undertook a new project, the LIPPS turned out to be its consultant. It was hired for installing the 70MW Mymensingh-1, 2 and 3 and also for the proposed 450MW Savar power project.

Cops turn a blind eye

said a drug peddler of Doyaganj "They raid the drug spots only if they don't get the kickback or if any special instruction comes from the top," he said. In most cases, drug addicts not the pushers become victims of such raids.

Visiting a number of drug dens in the city, this correspondent found people were buying drugs even in presence of the police. The police teams sitting near by did not show any intention to resist the drug Despite several law enforce-

ment agencies in operation in the city, injecting drugs and Phensedyl, heroin, cannabis etc are being openly sold at more than 100 spots. Traders of Yaba, Ecstasy and cocaine are also running their businesses as well. A recent Rapid Situation

Assessment survey carried out by CARE Bangladesh found there are at least 25 well-known drug spots in Mymensingh, 28 in Chittagong, 22 in Sirajganj, 12 in Faridpur, 16 in Cox's Bazar, 27 in Narsingdi, 18 in Brahmanbaria and 32 in Sylhet. All sorts of drugs are available at these spots, the survey reported. Every year the law enforcers

seize some drugs and arrest some people, but the trade goes on as usual. The arrested drug peddlers eventually get bail from the court and return to the business. More than 25,000 drug-related cases are now pending with the courts,

sources at the Department of

Narcotics Control (DNC) said. The formation of elite forces like Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) has

not changed the situation much. Since coming into operation in June 2004, Rab has recovered 44.34 kg heroin, 2.76 kg cocaine, 669.7 kg opium and cannabis, 173,086 bottles of Phensedyl, 965 Yaba tablets, and 998 ampoules of pathedrin, 293 of morphine and 198 of Tidigesic, sources said.

The DNC and the Detective Branch of police have also conducted a number of raids on drug spots and recovered huge amounts of drugs. In last year, the DNC alone arrested 1.147 persons in the city for drug pushing and filed 969

Still sources at Rab acknowledged that different kinds of drugs are being sold at a large number of spots in the city. These include Kamrangirchar, Begunbari Slum, Bhanga Gate, Shahinbagh, Nakhalpara, Titipara Slum, Sutrapur, City Polli, Dholpur, Demra, Tejkunipara, Chankhar Pool, Tilpapara in Khilgaon, Modongoli in Sipahibagh, Mirpur Shah Ali Mazar, Agargaon, Kantabon, Newmarket South Gate. Alamganj, Diabari Slum and Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur. A number of places in Uttara and near Nakhalpara Shia Mosque, Pagla Bridge, Nayabazar Yusuf Market, Arambagh Club, Mohamedan Club, Baitul Mokarram, Bangabazar in Fulbaria, Swamibagh rail-line, and

Tejgaon and Komlapur railway stations are also on the list.

A police high official said political commitment is a must to rout a complex social problem like drug running. "It's not really possible [for the police] to stop drug dealing. If somebody goes into this business, he would continue it until his death. It needs a political commitment to remove this [vice] from the society,'

he said requesting anonymity. On the other hand, a DNC high official said the police really do not want to stop drug running, as it is a large source of income for them. They earn a lot of money on a daily basis from the drug dens, he added

On the role of DNC in this regard, he said the department has only a 700-man staff, with the number field inspectors limited to just 103. Only five or less than five officials are posted in a district. In every district there are many upazilas and in every upazila there are several drug spots, he said, adding it is impossible to curb the entire drug business in a district by five or six people. He emphasised increasing the manpower of the DNC, as drug running has spread to rural areas too.

"If the government wants to effectively check drug running in the country, the budget [of the DNC] has to be increased. It's not possible to fight a business of Tk 6,000 crore with a budget of merely Tk 12 crore," he said.

on Int'l Mother **UNB**, Dhaka

The day's programmes will start at 6.30am by hoisting party, national and black flags half-mast at all the branch offices of the party, including its central office.

Memorial Museum with Opposition

ers, members and activists to observe the day with befitting man-

problems in education sector STAFF CORRESPONDENT not be united in many issues, but (CEF) organised the orientation Both the ruling and the opposition

for working together to address the problems relating to education setting aside disagreement among

programme for the parliamentarians yesterday stressed the need Caucus on Education in cooperation with the People's

he added

"Awami League and BNP may

they should at least be united in some basic issues like education. lawmakers at an orientation Awami League (AL) presidium member Suranjit Sengupta MP said while addressing the programme. Bangladesh Parliamentary

Empowerment Trust (PET) and the Commonwealth Education Fund



Dry weather likely

6:31am tomorrow.

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today. Light fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged night

Highest temperature 32.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Mongla and lowest 14.0 degree Celsius at Srimongal The sun sets in the capital at 5:54pm today and rises at

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some

major cities and to	wns yesterda	y were:	, , , , , , , ,	
City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Dhaka	29.5	20.3	85
Chittagong	29.8	17.0	71	75
Rajshahi	29.8	15.5	94	70
Khulna	31.7	18.8	91	57
Barisal	31.2	17.8	94	56
Sylhet	29.6	17.0	70	52
Cox's Bazar	29.5	18.4	73	



University of Information, Technology and Sciences (UITS) orientation programme for the executive MBA participants from capital market and corporate houses at Hotel Purbani in the city recently