METROPOLÎTAN/NEWS

Ensure indigenous people's right to land

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called for constitutional recognition of the right of indigenous people to land to protect them from repres-

sion.

They also identified several of education. -- low rate of education, poverty, indifferent attitude of the government and inadequate representation from ethnic communities in parliament -- as major causes of the miseries of the indigenous

Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) organised the roundtable on 'Development actions and actors: The case of Adivasis of Bangladesh' at Begum Sufia Kamal Auditorium of the National Museum in the city, with Promod Mankin MP in the chair.

SEHD Director Philip Gain said indigenous people in Sylhet are being evicted from their lands for mere political interests. As a result, the indigenous population is declining gradually, he added.

According to census 2001, the ethnic population in Rangamati and Khagrachhari has declined by 25 percent in the last one decade, he said, adding that the indigenous people are still deprived of justice and their rights.

The ethnic people will not see their development unless their right to land is established, said Prof Amina Mohshin, a researcher.

There should be enough representation of ethnic community in parliament who would place the problems before the nation, she

Eminent writer and columnist Farhad Mazhar said indigenous people are being evicted from their lands, but the government appears to be indifferent to such problem.

Sudatta Bikash Tanchangya, secretary of the Movement for Protection of Land Rights of Indigenous People in CHT, said

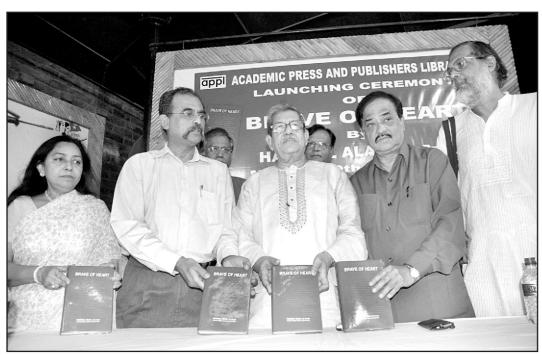
whatever development is taking place in the CHT are designed to render indigenous people landless.

Prof Dr Imtiaz Ahmad stressed the need for an indigenous library and one FM radio station for every indigenous community. "It would help ensure their development," he

Bijoy Onargy, a representative from Svlhet, said the miseries of tea labourers never get attention from the national level, neither from the government nor from the nongovernment sector.

'We are deprived of land right, our kids are growing up without education and we do not have job security," he said and called on all to come forward to help them.

Komol Kiska from Oraon community in northern region and Zeron Hazong from Modhupur also spoke of their suffering due to grabbing of their lands by outsiders.



A book titled 'Brave of Heart', written by freedom fighter Habibul Alam Bir Pratik, was launched at the Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday. From left are Shahina Rahman, Habibul Alam Bir Pratik, Prof Anisuzzaman. Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley and Afsan Chowdhury.

'Brave of Heart' launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A book titled 'Brave of Heart' by freedom fighter Habibul Alam Bir Pratik was launched in the city

Unveiling the cover of the book at the Liberation War Museum, Prof Anisuzzaman said the author in his book has tried to portray the unforgettable events of the liberation war in a simple language.

This book is really a glowing tribute to the freedom fighters, he

Afsan Chowdhury, director of Advocacy and Human Rights, BRAC, said it is a matter of regret that history has now become a subject of politics.

He said Habibul Alam depicted the liberation war, fought by indomitable freedom fighters, in simple words, which is the main power of the book.

He also suggested publishing a Bangla version of the book.

Maior (Retd.) ASM Shamsul Arefin said description of the houses and roads of Dhaka city during the war has been largely covered in the book.

Author Habibul Alam thanked the publisher, friends and family members who inspired and helped him to write the book.

"The events that I wrote are interrelated and I just tried to portray the events," he said.

The Academic Press and Publishers Library (APPL) published the book. Its Chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley presided

over the publication ceremony. Managing Director of APPL Shahina Rahman and cultural personality Nasiruddin Yousuf also







Sultana Rizia freedom fighter and mother of the Weekly Robbar Editor Syed Tosharraf Ali, passed away due to old age ailments at the residence of her

youngest daughter in Bagerhat town on March 17 at the age of 85, says a Sultana Rizia, wife of late Dr Syed

Wazed Ali, left behind her four sons, three daughters and host of admirers to mourn her death

She was laid to rest at her family graveyard at Baintala village in Bagerhat on March 18.

Her chehlum will be held at her village home after Juma prayers on

Attempt to evict indigenous people in Gazipur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An influential quarter attacked a village in Gazipur district recently to evict indigenous people and landless Bangalis from khas land where they have been living since 1981.

Cadres of under construction Libas Textile Mills Ltd attacked Andarmanik village of Mowchak Union under Kaliakoire upazila on March 5 and injured thirty people including a three-year-old girl Meem Akhter critically by throwing brick-

They also damaged 50 houses and left the place threatening that they will blow up the village with

Prior to the attack, cadres of Salman Khan, owner of the textile mill, called indigenous leader Manindra Chandra Barman and landless leader Abdul Aziz to mill area saying that their boss wanted to talk to them. But when they entered the mill. local terrorists led by Liton hit Manindra with rod.

On information villagers rushed to the spot to rescue him and admitted him to Kaliakoire Upazila Health

While visiting the village, local people told this correspondent that the mill authorities filled a case with Kaliakoire Police Station on March 11 accusing five people of the village including Manindra and Aziz of demanding a toll of Tk 50,000 from

The villagers also lodged a case with the same police station on the same day after the mill authorities

Talking to The Daily Star landless leader Aziz said Salman bought some land adiacent to the village and illegally encroached 2.65 acres of khas land evicting ten landless families recently to install the fac-

Inspired by the land grabbing, Salman launched the attack on the villagers on March 5 to evict some 500 inhabitants, he added.

He said Md Shafigur Rahman of Shafipur Union Land office lodged a case with Kaliakoire Police Station on March 9 accusing Salman of grabbing 2.65 acre of khas Land.

Protesting the attack Bangladeshi Adibashi Forum Gazipur Unit and Andarmanik Bhumihin Samabaai Samity Ltd jointly organised a rally at the vil-

Gono Forum leader Pankai Bhattacharva, Prof Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University, Assistant Editor of the Jugantor Sohrab Hossain and President of Bangladesh Adibashi Forum Sanjeeb Drong spoke at the rally.



No change in temperature likely

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country,

Highest temperature 35.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 12.6 degree Celsius at Srimongal

The sun sets in the capital at 6:10pm today and rises at 6:01am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min		Evening
Dhaka	32.1	16.3	31	23
Chittagong	34.5	19.5	58	55
Rajshahi	32.5	15.0	52	33
Khulna	33.2	14.6	68	45
Barisal	33.0	14.8	65	52
Sylhet	34.3	17.2	40	40
Cox's Bazar	35.0	18.0	35	53

EDEN COLLEGE Hunger strike observed to protest JCD torture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A token hunger strike was observed in the city yesterday protesting the repression on female students of Eden University College by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) cadres.

Several hundred women leaders and activists of opposition parties along with current and former students of the college took part in the programme from 11:00am to 1:30pm at Muktangon.

Mahila Awami League organised the programme where

leaders of main opposition Awami League (AL), Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), Workers Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Nari Jote and Nari Sramik Jote were present to express their solidarity.

The speakers demanded formulation of a policy under which seaf would be allocated on the basis of

Blasting the seat dealings of JCD in Eden College, they said JCD cadres in connivance with Principal Firoza Begum, wife of the state minister for religious affairs, captured all the four hostels through underhand dealings.

The speakers said JCD cadres attacked general students for protesting illegal practice, but the college authorities without taking action against them ordered the students to vacate the hostels on

They also criticised the role of BNP-Jamaat government and the principal who has already been made an officer on special duty (OSD)

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said criminal cases should be filed against the principal as she uttered very indecent words against the demonstrating students.

He demanded a neutral probe of

AL leader Motia Chowdhury demanded permanent removal of the principal

AL leaders Obaidul Kader, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Bahauddin Nasim, JSD leader Shirin Akhtar, Mohila League President Ashrafunnesa Mosharraf and General Secretary Fazilatun Nesa Indira also spoke on the

NEW MOORING TERMINAL

14.275 acres of land handed over to CPA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong officially handed 14.2/5 acres of land over to Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), the implementing authorities of the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT)

project, yesterday. Of the land, 13.645 acres were acquired from the local and the rest 0.63 acres were government Khas

Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury MP attended the handing over ceremony as chief guest and lauded CPA for making efforts to develop Chittagong port with professional attitude keeping in mind the overall development of the port

He emphasised the importance of reducing operational cost and enhancing efficiency of Chittagong port through short-, medium- and long-term plans after holding discussions with all concerned with the

The development has to be for the greater interest of people, not for the interest of a few vested groups, said Khosru, also the former commerce minister.

CPA Chairman AMM Shahadat Hossain, Chief Engineer Dr Shafayat Hossain, Additional Deputy Commissioner Rashidul Hasan, Chittagong Bandar CBA President Shamsul Alam, General Secretary Nurullah Bahar, Port 22 TU Member Secretary Quazi Jahangir Hossain and Jatiya Sramik League President Shamsul Haq Shafi were also present at the function.

On January 20 this year, CPA handed over 16.8969 acres of land. including 3.1919 acre for mosque, graveyard, roads and drains, to 51 families affected by the acquisition of land for the terminal. The port authorities also gave

over Tk 39 crore 21 lakh in compensation for damages of infrastructure and movable properties and over Tk 7 crore 30 lakh as dislodgement benefit, sources said. It developed the allocated land at

a cost of Tk 3.5 crore while it will bear other expenses for further infrastructure development and utility services. The CPA started implementing the Tk 737 crore project, involving

Tk 435 crore for infrastructure

development, on February 14,

2004. About five months are left for

completion of the 30-month project.



Bangladesh Book Publishers and Sellers' Association stages a demonstration at Bangla Bazar in the city yesterday

Appointment of magistrates challenged

High Court issues rule on govt

Take steps to protect

The High Court on Sunday issued a rule upon the government to explain why its action in appointing the magistrates at district level without consulting the Supreme Court and all orders and judgements passed by them since June 17, 1999 should not be declared "unlawful'.

The order came upon a writ petition filed as public interest litigation (PIL) by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), a human rights organisation, and Quazi Abdul Hannan, special correspondent of daily Samokal.

The rule issued by a division bench of Justice MA Matin and Justice ATM Fazle Kabir is returnable in three weeks

The HRPB and the journalist filed

environment

AL urges govt

Criticising the alliance government's

environment policy, the Awami

League vesterday demanded imme-

diate steps to protect the environ-

ment and proper utilisation of the

has been supplying gas to different

foreign companies by depriving the

countrymen, the AL leaders alleged

and called for proper utilisation of gas

reviving the jute industry and promot-

ing jute products, maintaining navi-

gability of the rivers through regular

dredging and taking steps to reduce

a press conference in the city on the

eve of the World Water Day. The AL

sub-committee on forest and envi-

ronmental affairs organised the press

management in big cities, including

the capital, planned urbanisation and implementation of the building code

and protection of forest resources and

They blamed the alliance govern-

ment for destroying the ecological

balance as well as political and

economic stability. The previous AL

government had taken a number of

projects to protect the environment,

but this government has halted all

Presenting a keynote paper, sub-committee Chairman Dr Hasan

Mahmud said the AL had taken up a

Speakers at a discussion said at

least some civilian freedom fighters

should have been awarded the title

of Bir Sreshtha as thousands of

civilians sacrificed their lives and

properties in the War of Liberation in

They also said the valiant civilian

veterans have to be searched out to

know how they are now and to

award the Bir Sreshtha title to some

They were speaking at the

discussion meeting on a book titled

"Mukti Bahini Wins Victory: Military

Oligarchy Divides Pakistan in 1971

by Major General (Rted) ATM Abdul

Wahab depicting the history of the

country from the battle of Plassy to

Bangladesh Institute of Law and

Justice Naimuddin Ahmed

International Affairs (BILIA) organ-

ised the discussion at its auditorium

the birth of Bangladesh.

at Dhanmondi in the city.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

'Civilian FFs should have

been entitled Bir Sreshtha

conducted

The leaders called for proper waste

The AL leaders were speaking at

They also stressed the need for

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

country's resources.

the intensity of floods.

cultivable lands.

those, they added.

resources.

The BNP-Jamaat

validity of the appointments of the judgements passed by them since June 17, 1999. Secretaries of the establish-

ment and law ministries and the

registrar of the Supreme Court were made respondents in the PIL Moving the writ, Advocate Manzill Murshid submitted that the action of the government in appointing the magistrates at

district level without consultation with the Supreme Court is a "flagrant violation" of the Article 116 of e Constitution Citing Article 116, he said that the control, including the power of

posting, promotion and grant of

leave and discipline of persons

bio-diversity project to save the

Sunderbans, but the coalition gov-

ernment "stopped this project in a bid

He also criticised the government

for destroying the forest resources in

Chittagong Hill Tracts. The environ-

ment courts formed during the AL

water resources minister Abdur

Razzak, Obaidul Kader, Dhaka

University teacher Dr Hossain

Mansur, Shaheen Monowara Hague

Ainal Hague Mintu and Sujit Ray

Nandi were also present at the press

Kochi-Kachar

Kendriya Kochi-Kachar Mela, a

national children organisation, has

invited stories from its present and

former members to publish a souvenir

marking its golden jubilee on October

30 to Director, Kendriya Kochi-Kachar

Mela, 37/A Segunbagicha, Dhaka-

children and youths are actively

involved with it. Many of them are now

well established and honoured in the

presided over the discussion while

BILIA Director Wali-ur Rahman

Dr Tawfig-e-Elahi Chowdhury Bir

Bikram, Group Captain (Rted)

Shamsul Alam Bir Uttam, former

army chief general Mostafizur

Rahman, former ambassador

Mohammad Zamir and former MP

Shamsul Alam said the condition

Abdul Awal addressed the meeting.

of thousands of civilian freedom

fighters has to be found out and they

have to be recognised and hon-

oured for their contribution in the

young generation about the heroes

of the Liberation War in this crisis

situation of the country. Otherwise

the anti-liberation war forces will

Among others, lieutenant colone

(Rted) Noor-un-Nabi Khan Bir

Bikram and Prof Reza Kibria were

Dr Tawfig said we have to tell the

struggle of independance.

come to power again.

The stories must reach within April

Since its birth in 1956, thousands of

Mela invites

stories

5, says a press release.

AL presidium member and former

regime are now inactive, he added.

to plunder the forest resources."

appointments are also "ultra vires" to the judgement made by the Supreme Court in December 1999 in the Masder Hossain case that put all the subordinate courts, including magistracy, under control of the Supreme Court. "The unilateral action of the

unchallenged," the lawyer said.

employed in the judicial service and magistrates exercising judicial function, shall vest in the President and shall be exercised by him in consultation with the Supreme He further submitted that such

government undermines the image and prestige of the highest judiciary, if such act of the government goes

N'GANJ AL OFFICE BLAST Int'l probe

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

demanded

The victims of bomb attack at Narayanganj Awami League office on June 16, 2001 that left 20 people dead and several hundred others injured, yesterday demanded an international investigation of the incident under the United Nations.

Addressing a press conference at Narayanganj Press Club,

they said international investigation has become imperative as the prime minister in a meeting at Fatulla on March 6 blamed the ALmen for carrying out the attack while two militants Anisul and Muhibul of outlawed organisation Harkatul Jihad gave confessional statement admitting their involvement in the

In a written statement former general secretary of district Krishok League Chandan Sheel, who lost his legs in that fatal attack, said if Mufti Hannan along with his accomplices are duly guizzed all mysteries will be unveiled

The speakers said a human chain will be formed at Chashara Shaheed Minar from 4:00pm to 5:00pm on April 7 demanding trial of the assailants.

Along with family members of bomb-victims, local AL leaders Mafizul Islam, Anisur Rahman Dipu. Khokon Shaha, Abu Hasnat Md Shaheed Badal and Chhatra League leaders were present at the

Belta's training programme begins

Bangladesh English Language Teachers' Association (Belta) has started its six-day training programme in association with Presidency University and Biam in the city, said a press release yester-

Nearly 140 English teachers from different schools, colleges and universities have registered their names at two venues at Gulshan and Eskaton for the highly interactive programme. Nine specialist trainers from the

USA, Australia, Argentina, Germany and Japan are the resource persons for different methodology and skillbased sessions. Belta, a voluntary teachers'

forum dedicated to the improvement of English language teaching in Bangladesh, especially at the grassroots level, has organised the programme in collaboration with an international body Teachers Helping

Dr Ibrahim elected FNB chair

Dr Muhammad Ibrahim, executive director of CMES, has been elected chair of the Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) at its annual general meeting at the Institution of Engineers in the city on March 18. says a press release

CAMPE Director Rasheda K Choudhury and RIC Director Abul Haseeb Khan were elected vicechairs and Zakir Hossain, Executive Director of BURO Tangail, treasurer.

Members are AHM Noman executive director, DORP, Dhaka: Kamaluddin Akbar, executive director, RDRS, Dhaka; Borhan Ahmed, chairman, ERDF, Manikganj; Md Azharul Islam, director, FDA, Faridpur and Lutfunnahar Runu, President, Faith and Hope, Dhaka.

Divisional members are: HM Zakir Ahmed, executive director, PRDS, Dhaka (Dhaka Division): Kazi Mizanur Rahman, executive director, VRDS, Chandpur (Chittagong Division); Harun-Ur-Rashid, executive director, Al Meraj Foundation, Chuadanga (Khulna Division); Nurul Islam Dulu, executive director, DCPUK, Rangpur (Rajsahi Division); Tahera Khanam, executive director, Srimangal Foundation, Moulavibazar (Sylhet Division) and Michael PK Bar, Executive Director, CSC, (Barisal Division)

Reserved women members are: Syeda Rizwana Hasan, director (programmes), BELA, Dhaka, Nargis Chowdhury, executive director, PALOK, Kushtia; Shamsijahan, executive director CAMS. Comilla. Jesmin Prema, chairman, SKUS Dhaka and Daisy Ahmed, executive director, PKSS, Natore Reserved disabled member is

Shahidul Huque, chief executive, SARPV, Dhaka. FNB chair Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury presided over the AGM

while Khushi Kabir, Coordinator of Nijera Kori, additional secretary (retd) Abdul Kader Miah and Shamsul Huda, executive director of ALRD, conducted the election

Eight submit nominations

MANIKGANJ BY-POLLS

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikgan,

Eight candidates submitted their nomination papers for the by-polls of Manikgani-4 constituency, which

will be held on April 19. The candidates are Engineer Mainul Islam Khan Shanto (BNP) Golam Sarwar Milon (Independent) Khalilur Rahman (Independent), Mushfigur Rahman Khan Hannan (Independent, supported by Civil Society), Krisak Mohammad Sadek (Krishak Sramik Mukti Andolon), Sirajul Islam (Independent), SM Abdul Mannan (BNP's rebel) and Moazzem Hossain Tusher (BNP's

rebel) The first four candidates submitted their nomination papers at the office of Assistant Returning Officer, who is the UNO of Singair upazila while the rest submitted at the office

of Returning Officer in Manikganj. Atotal of 2,03,928 voters will cast their votes on April 19.

The post fell vacant following the death of BNP MP Shamsul Islam Khan Noya Mia on January 22.

Golam Mahbub laid to rest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Language Movement veteran Advocate Kazi Golam Mahbub was laid to rest at his family graveyard at Kasba Kazi Bari under Gournadi upazila of Barisal district vesterday.

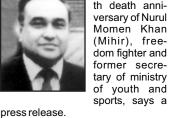
The body of Bhasha Soinik Kazi

Golam Mahbub, popularly known as Chharu Kazi, was brought to Gournadi at 11-00am yesterday morning from Dhaka. Different socio-political and

cultural organisations and individuals placed wreaths at his coffin covered with national and BNP party flags.

His Namaz-e-janaza was held at Gournadi College and Kasba Primary School ground attended by hundreds of people from all walks of life and political parties including Zahiruddin Swapan MP and Advocate Talukdar Md Yunus, Barisal District Bar Association president and district Awami League leader.

Death anniversary Today is the 14



tary of ministry of youth and sports, says a On the occassion. Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held for

salvation of the departed soul.

Mihir hailed from Shologhar,

Bikrampur in Munshiganj.