



PHOTO: STAR

Participants observe a two-minute silence at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday before taking out a mourning procession in memory of those killed in police firing in Phulbari. The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Electricity and Port organised the programme.

Regulatory policy key obstacle to growth of media: Study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A study on the media's role in development underscored the need to diversify terrestrial television and radio broadcasting in order to improve access to information for the economically and socially disadvantaged people.

The study, conducted by a media advocacy group facilitated by civil society think-tank Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), identified the regulatory policy for the electronic media as the key constraints to the growth of media landscape in Bangladesh.

With the vision to create a policy environment conducive to the growth of diverse terrestrial broadcast industry, the study titled 'Me-

dia in Development: Linkages between Socio-Economic Development and Diversified Media in Bangladesh' offered detailed insights into the current state of the media from socio-economic perspectives and defines the role of the media in achieving the country's development goals.

"A large section of the population lack access to reliable regular channels for information," said Shahab Enam Khan, a lecturer of international relations at Jahangirnagar University, while briefing reporters on the study report yesterday.

The country has witnessed diversification of satellite and cable broadcasting, but the poor cannot

afford to watch those channels, which are also unavailable in many rural areas, he said.

The print media is inaccessible to those who are illiterate or have low education levels and is often unavailable in rural areas, while Internet remains primarily the preserve of the urban, wealthy and educated elite, he added.

He also said no governments took any initiatives to give autonomy to Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar although they always highlighted the issue in their election manifestoes.

"This is a subject that should be the concern of all political parties because opening up the media is crucial to fulfilling the development goals," said BEI President Farooq

Sobhan.

The study recommended establishing a permanent and independent National Broadcast Commission to regulate broadcast media and enacting legislation to create and enable public service broadcasting, private commercial broadcasting and community broadcasting systems.

It also recommended providing licence for terrestrial broadcast frequencies for private use and autonomy to Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar.

The BEI will hold a national workshop on 'Diversification of Broadcast Media in Bangladesh' at its office today for better understanding of the issues.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Constitutional recognition a must to ensure rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Constitutional recognition of indigenous communities is the first step towards ensuring their rights, observed the speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They underscored the need for collective action to elevate their living standard as well as to uphold their distinct identity on equal footing with others.

They also opined that the launching of special development programmes for indigenous people and inclusion of their rights in the election manifestos of political parties would greatly contribute to their development.

The seminar titled 'Celebrating 109th Anniversary of Munda Uprising' was organised by Bangladesh Adibasi Odhikar Andolon (BAOA) at the National Press Club in the city.

Speaking at the programme BAOA Convenor Dr Mesbah Kamal said during colonial rule Munda community fought against the British rulers to establish their customary rights to land and forest which ultimately led to their movement for political power.

"The struggle for establishing their rights is not over. Still they are fighting to achieve their rights," he said.

"In their movement Beersa Munda was an inspiration who led Munda uprising against the British colonial power in 1897," said Dr Kamal.

Saying that the country's indigenous communities have distinct socio-cultural settings and are more vulnerable compared to mainstream population, Justice KM Sobhan stressed the need for special legislation to protect their rights.

"And there is no legal bar in such legislation as our constitu-

tion permits the government to take special arrangement for the development of marginalised sections of the society," he said.

Country Representative of Oxfam GB Bangladesh Anil Prabhakar Tambay said, "Only through a collective action the indigenous communities can improve their overall condition."

He suggested people of indige-

nous communities to celebrate their self-identity with special reference to their own history and culture so that the good aspects of their life do not die out.

Prof Muntassir Mamoon of Dhaka University said a pro-people government is a precondition to uplift the status and condition of the indigenous people.

Woman activist Prof Maleka

Begum chaired the programme which was also addressed by BAOA General Secretary Sanjib Drong,

Ashraf ul Alam Tutu, Merina Juthi, Budu Munda, Harikrishna Munda and other leaders of indigenous communities.



PHOTO: STAR

Rajshahi University Alumni Forum forms a human chain at Mukhtangan in the city yesterday protesting the death threat to Prof Hasan Azizul Haque and Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal.



PHOTO: STAR

Women's rights activist Sultana Kamal speaks at the eighth expert group consultation meeting on 'Vision 2021 for Bangladesh: Goal 8: To be a more inclusive and equitable society' at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On her left is Prof Rehman Sobhan, convener of the Nagorik Committee 2006, and on her right is Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of CPD. The Nagorik Committee 2006 organised the meeting.

DU exams postponed

BSS, Dhaka

All examinations of Dhaka University (DU) under course system scheduled for August 30 have been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances.

Fresh date for these examinations will be announced soon, said a DU press release.

1,671 arrested on various charges

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,671 people from across the country on various charges in the last 24 hours as of 6:00am yesterday.

During the drive, the law enforcers also seized six firearms, 25 rounds of bullet and nine hand-made bombs, said a police headquarters release.