

Hasina assures Tanor peasants of legal protection

UNB, Rajshahi

As peasants complained of certain injustice, Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said none would be allowed to play with the lot of the farmers and assured them of legal aid to protect their rights.

"If necessary, we will go to the court and do whatever necessary for protection," she said this while she was addressing a huge public meeting at Tanor Collapara playground. The farmers of Barind Project joined the meeting.

Tanor Peasants Association under the Barind Development Project is operating some deep tubewells. In course of time, they will be owners of the DTWs paying Tk 1.75 lakh. Initially they have paid Tk 13,500 and are paying Tk 10,800 per year from their incomes.

There are total 6,000 such wells under the Barendra Prokoplpa which are being operated by a 10-member committee across a huge tract of land spreading over four districts - Rajshahi, Chapaiwabganj, Natore and Noagan.

The local people alleged that after coming to power, the BNP-Jamaat coalition government, in the name of appointing operators, started the process of evicting real owners. Several thousand farmers are being affected for the step. They have gone to the court to protect their ownership.



Renowned French anthropologist Dr. Anie Montigny delivered a talk at the National Museum in the city on Saturday. The subject of her talk was 'The Development of Anthropological Science in Mankind Museum in Paris'.

Thousands of those affected farmers thronged the rally addressed by the former prime minister, where she said the past government of Awami League took a number of steps for the welfare of the peasants, ensured fertiliser and loans for farming.

The Awami League president mentioned the torture and repression on mass people and the Awami League workers and called upon the people to resist unitedly all the repression and torture.

She said BNP-Jamaat alliance had won the election through a mechanism and resorted to torture and repression on the people to stay in power.

"They are trying to eliminate us but it is not possible. They are living in fool's paradise."

People from all walks of life and the indigenous Saotol people joined the meeting at different places on her way to Tanor.

It took over one hour to reach Tanor, 30 km off Rajshahi city as she stopped several places to exchange pleasantries with the local people.

Al leaders Abdul Jalil, Mohammad Nasim, Abdul Latif Siddiqui, Prof Latifur Rahman, S K Mollah Hossain, Enamul Haque Shamim, Asrafur Azim Rubon and local leader Faruk Chowdhury addressed the meeting presided over by Saiful Islam.

This government wants to

Krishna-lila Kirtan begins

BSS, Rajshahi

A 6-day 'Krishna-lila Kirtan' started at Shatabdi Shib Temple at Naohata in the city yesterday.

The Hindu religious ceremony will end on Friday. Many 'Kirtan' parties from home and abroad are participating in it with their spectacular performances.

Discussion on dev of anthropological science

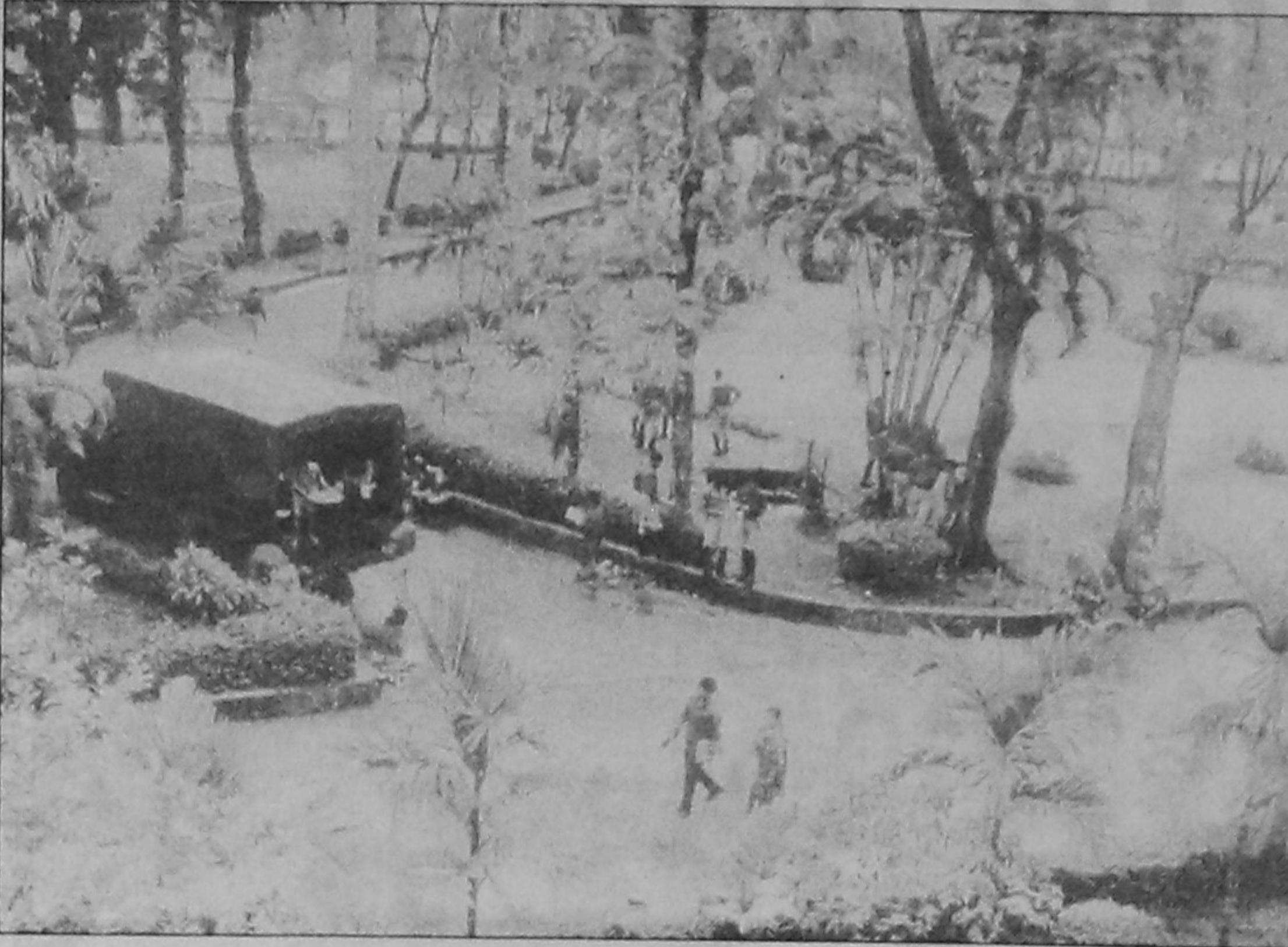
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A discussion on 'Development of Anthropological Science' was held at the National Museum in the city on Saturday.

Dr. Anie Montigny, a noted anthropologist and assistant director of Mankind Museum of Paris presented the keynote paper at the discussion.

Presided over by Dr. Ittekharul-Awal, director general of the National Museum, the meeting was addressed by Andre Raynouard, cultural counsellor of French Embassy and director of Alliance Francaise in Dhaka.

Some foreign anthropologists working at Mahasthan Gar took part in the discussion.



The Dhaka University campus during yesterday's strike called by the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

\$ 3.29 lakh Japanese grant for 4 NGOs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) will receive 3.29 lakh US dollar (approximately Tk 1.90 crore) from the government of Japan as grant assistance.

The NGOs are Tilottama Voluntary Women's Organisation (TVWO), Human Cooperation Centre in Bangladesh (HCCB), Institute of Allergy and Clinical Immunology of Bangladesh (IACIB) and Srimangal Foundation (SF), said a press release.

Japanese ambassador Jiro Kobayashi signed four grant contracts with the representatives of the NGOs in the city yesterday.

The TVWO will receive 93,456 dollar for setting up a

"Comprehensive Reproductive Health Clinic and Health Care Training Centre" in Rajshahi.

The clinic will provide mother and child health care facilities for pregnant women and laboratory facilities for the local poor and other beneficiaries of the organi-

sation.

The HCCB will receive 52,819 US dollar for constructing a "Primary School and Training Centre" for the rural poor at Barapaka in Agailjhora Upazila in Barisal and the IACIB will receive 91,206 US dollar for implementing a "Filarialis Treatment Project" for the rural poor at Sayedpur in Nilphamari.

The Srimangal Foundation will get 91,702 US dollar for setting up a "Community Health Care Clinic" for the rural poor, particularly the tea garden labourers and small tribal community, at Srimangal.

During the contract signing ceremony, the Japanese ambassador strongly emphasised the maximum and proper utilisation of the grant which are raised from the Japanese taxpayer contributions.

The government of Japan has been extending financial support through grant assistance for grassroots level projects in the country since 1989.



Japanese ambassador Jiro Kobayashi with the representative of Tilottama Voluntary Women's Organisation at the grant contract signing ceremony in the city yesterday.

'Border demarcation issue with India under process'

BSS, Dhaka

Home Minister Vice Marshal (Retd) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury yesterday said the issue of border demarcation with India is now under process under the initiative of Home and Foreign Ministries.

"We are in touch with India on the matter and we expect to finalise it as early as possible," he said while replying to a question followed by several supplementaries in the fatya Sangsad here.

The question was raised by Jamaat legislator Shahjahan Chowdhury in place of Md Manirul Huq Chowdhury of BNP from Comilla, followed by supplementaries of Mozaher Hossain (BNP), Fariduddin Chowdhury (Jamaat), and Asadul Habib Dulu (BNP).

On a supplementary from Asadul Habib Dulu, the home minister said at least three members of BDR were killed and five others injured during a border clash with BSF in January last year.

"At least 16 members of BDR were killed inside Bangladesh," he added.

The minister said the valiant jawans of BDR in fact retrieved Padua at that time from Indian occupation, but that place had to be surrendered due to subservient foreign policy of the past government. "The BDR jawans at that time had proved their deep sense of patriotism, but that government did not give any reward or award to those valiant sons of the soil," he told another legislator Fariduddin Ahmed of Jamaat.

Air Vice Marshal Chowdhury said the present government had decided to evaluate the contribution of those BDR jawans during the next BDR day.

Besides, exchange of fire between BDR and BSF also takes place in case of backing civilians on both sides. "Through flag meetings, such problems are resolved," he added.

On another supplementary from Mozaher Hossain of BNP (Panchagar), the home minister said the government would soon repair the mosque and the bridge

near the Bangladesh-India border in Panchagar district.

Replying to the main question raised by Shahjahan Chowdhury of Jamaat, he said border clash between BDR and BSF took place only once for two days on November 18 and 19 in Sreepur under Jaintapur upazila in Sylhet district after October last year.

"The clash took place on harvesting of paddy and a Bangladeshi citizen named Shukur Mia was injured from BSF fire, but there was no loss of resources," he said adding, BDR has already undertaken measures with enhanced manpower and patrolling to avoid such clashes along the border.

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Consultative workshop on sustainable dev in Ctg today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A people's consultative workshop designed to come up with a national assessment report ahead of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa, will be held at the auditorium of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) today.

Jointly organised by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Divisional Administration in Chittagong, Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) and the Civil Society, the workshop will begin at 9.00am. Jafrul Islam Chowdhury, state minister for environment and forest, is expected to inaugurate it as chief guest.

Representatives from the government and local bodies, NGOs, professional groups, including journalists, and the civil society

from different administrative districts of Chittagong Division will take part in the workshop.

Explaining the background and objectives of the people's consultation workshops, Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, chairman of FEJB, pointed out that the workshops are part of the process of preparing a country paper which will be presented at the Johannesburg summit in August 2002.

The organisers said the workshops are designed to gather views of the grassroots people facing problems in fighting environmental hazards and degradation and to find out their solutions so that a sustainable and environment-friendly future can be ensured for the nation.

The organisers also underscored the importance of public participation in the policy-making process.

'Govt committed to safe motherhood'

BSS, Dhaka

Health and Family Welfare Minister Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday reiterated government's commitment to ensuring safe motherhood in the country.

"Government has prioritised the issue of safe neonatal and motherhood as key components of its maternal child health and family planning services as part of the campaign to reduce mortality and morbidity significantly among mothers and new-born babies," he said while addressing a seminar to mark the launching of Bangladesh Maternal Health Services and Maternal Mortality (BMHS) Report-2001 at a city hotel.

The minister said that in the past one decade efforts were focused on expanding Emergency Obstetrical Care (EOC) facilities and increasing access to safe delivery services.

"But still almost all childbearing in the country is taking place in home and under untrained persons locally known as dai," he noted.

Prof. Kenneth Hill and Prof. Michael Koenig of Johns Hopkins University, USA and Dr. Tulshi Salhi, demographer of USA-based ORC-Macro, presented findings of the national survey jointly conducted by NIPORT and ORC-Macro with financial assistance of USAID and technical support from Johns Hopkins University and ICDDR,B.

Presided over by secretary of the Health and Family Welfare Ministry Muhammad Fazlur Rahman, the seminar was addressed by Director General (DG) of Family Planning M Fazlur Rahman, acting DG of National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT) Dr. Ahmed Al Sabir and team leader of Population, Health and Nutrition of USAID, Dilika IL Anderson.

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