

Recognise us as FFs Indigenous people who took part in the War of Liberation urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tracts.

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said the indigenous people who took part in the War of Liberation have not yet any recognition from the government as freedom fighters.

They said indigenous people have been facing gross human rights violations land grabbing and creation of eco-parks posing threat to their habitats. Besides, filing of false cases, harassment and threat to their lives are common, they added.

The speakers demanded cancellation of the Modhupur Eco-park project and return of the land to Khasiyas in Sylhet. They also called for meeting the demands of indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill

Tracts. Presenting the keynote paper, Secretary General of the Bangladesh Forum for the Indigenous People, Sanjeeb Dronng said, "Even after 33 years of independence, the government has not yet recognised the role of the indigenous people in the War of Liberation."

The Forum organised the seminar with Shaktipada Tripura, organising secretary of the Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity in the chair at the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) office.

Sanjeeb demanded constitutional recognition of the indigenous people. He also urged the government to take steps to rehabilitate the freedom fighters belonging to the indigenous people and their families.

'Constitution needs further amendment'

SATFF CORRESPONDENT

Constitution needs further amendment to institutionalise democracy in the country, said the speakers at a regional conference in the city yesterday.

They said there are some articles in the constitution which are not democratic resulting centralisation of power at the top.

Organised by the Centre for Alternative (CA) in collaboration with Delhi-based Lokniti, the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, the two-day conference on "The State of Democracy in South Asia: Indexing Bangladesh Democracy," was held at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies.

Prof. Syed Anwar Hossain said democracy cannot be functional in Bangladesh as some of the articles of the constitution is undemocratic.

"If we don't have a political culture, we can't have functional democracy", he added.

FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo said nothing was done for the welfare of the people through fourth to 11th amendments to the constitution. Instead, these were made to protect the interests and illegal activities of particular individuals, he added.

Mintoo said everything was controlled from the prime minister's office during the last 12 years. Amendment to the constitution is needed to decentralise the power, he added.

The speakers said the political parties in the country could not establish democracy as they themselves do not practice it within their parties.

The conference was a part of the research programme titled "The State of Democracy in South Asia," undertaken by Lokniti in collaboration with the CA and other institutions from Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan.

The study will specifically focus on the four domains including state institutions, electoral systems, party politics and civil societies.

Peter d' Souza and Suhas Palshikar of Lokniti presented pros and cons of the study programme on the state of democracy in South Asia.

Eminent economist Prof. Mozaffar Ahmed, CA Executive Director Prof. Imtiaz Ahmed, Dr. Binayak Sen and Dr. Hossain Jillur Rahman of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies and Waliur Rahman of Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs also spoke.

One gunned down at Tejgaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown assailants gunned down a person at Tejgaon in the city yesterday.

The victim was identified as Dulal Mian, 35, an employee of a wholesale potato shop at Karwan Bazar.

A gang of three called Dulal out of the shop at around 3:00pm and took him to West Tejturi Bazar where they shot him four times. Dulal died on the spot.

Police sent the body to the morgue of Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

"Earlier in the morning, three unknown people went to Dulal's house at 109, East Tejturibazar and looked for him," said a police sub-inspector of Tejgaon Police Station quoting the victim's wife.

Police suspected that he might be killed as a sequel to previous enmity.

JCD cadres go on rampage at JU

JU CORRESPONDENT

Tension has been running high on Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus since Thursday's clash between two factions of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) that left at least 22 students, including seven JCD activists, injured.

The clash erupted after both the factions of the JCD, student front of the ruling BNP, tried to occupy a room at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall.

A group of 30 armed JCD cadres led by Sohel, a student of history, came to the hall at around 9:30am and asked all the residents of Room No. 222 to leave the room as well as campus.

The cadres, belonging to the group led by president and general secretary of the JCD, also beat up Alamgir, a resident of the room which is under the control of Mamun Group.

They left the hall after the students led by Parvez, president of the hall's JCD unit, protested the incident.

Later, about 60 JCD cadres of the same group equipped with firearms, hockey sticks and other sharp weapons launched an attack on Shaheed Salam Barkat Hall and vandalised two rooms.

They beat up Mamun Mintu, a student of history, ransacked his room and set fire to a motorcycle of

Rezaul Karim Razu, a member of their rival faction (Mamun group).

The armed cadres again swooped on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall at around 11:30pm and started searching for Mamun. They confined Shakil, vice-president of the hall's JCD unit, to a room on the ground floor.

Ashtami Snan begins today

UNB, Narayanganj

Hundreds of Hindu pilgrims from home and abroad thronged Langolbandh to have a dip in the river Brahmaputra on the occasion of Ashtami Snan beginning at 2.06 pm today.

The Snan committee leaders said pilgrims from Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and India and different parts of the country will take a dip in the water of sacred river that will continue till Monday 4.00 pm.

Illegal constructions at all the 13 ghats have been removed and water hyacinth cleared to facilitate the sacred dip.

A three-day fair has been organised in connection with the Ashtami Snan. Adequate police have been deployed to maintain peace.