



Evicted Dayamoi can now shed tears only, sitting on the piece of land where her family had lived for about 40 years. She is among 82 landless families driven out from government lands in Baradal village under Mostafapur union in Parbatipur upazila in Dinajpur district, reportedly for a rehabilitation project for the landless.

English course by Peace Corps in Nilphamari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Fifty students have been awarded certificates after conclusion of a three-month English Conversation Course here, conducted by the US Peace Corps.

The certificates were given at a simple function, held at the Sadar Upazila Auditorium on Saturday.

This was the second batch of trainees, who included females. The programme is being conducted in cooperation with Youth Development Department.

The Peace Corps will continue its programme for two years with a target to train 400 students in eight batches.

Peace Corps volunteers are also providing Reproductive Health Care for women as well.

Presided over by Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer A K M Masuduzzaman, Saturday's function was addressed by, among others, ADC (General) Mohammad Alef Uddin, Assistant Director of Youth Development Department. Sheikh Abdur Rahim Liton, Upazila Engineer Hasan Mohammad and Miss Jill Evans, Peace Corps Volunteer and Senior Instructor of the course.

The Peace Corps started functioning in the district in January this year.

REHABILITATION PROJECT FOR LANDLESS

Muslemen evict 17 more Dinajpur landless families

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

More 17 poor landless families of minority Hindu and indigenous communities were evicted yesterday and the day before from 10 acres of government land in Baradal village in Mostafapur union under Parbatipur upazila.

Earlier, 65 families were evicted from the lands since the drive began on Wednesday. All the victims are now under the open sky.

The authorities say they have a plan for a rehabilitation project for the landless on the lands but could not give details when asked by newsmen.

Allegations have it that the poor landless people were evicted by an influential quarter to grab the lands.

A group of newsmen went to

the village on Friday but they were harassed by some people, alleged to be muslemen of local BNP leader and Mostafapur Union Parishad Chairman.

The evicted people told the newsmen that they had been living on the lands for about 40 years. They were evicted without any prior notice by the administration or the UP chairman.

On Wednesday, about 150 people allegedly led by the UP chairman swooped on the area.

They evicted 65 families, saying that a rehabilitation project for landless people will be built there.

A magistrate and some policemen were present during the eviction on Wednesday, the victims said.

But no official was present during the eviction on Friday and Saturday, they told a group of newsmen who visited the area

again yesterday. They said they were earlier threatened by muslemen of the UP chairman to leave the place.

When contacted, Dinajpur Deputy Commissioner had said on Friday that he asked Parbatipur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Saharifuddin Ahmed to visit the spot. He had said that there was a plan for a rehabilitation project on the lands but did not detail the plan.

But the victims said yesterday that neither the UNO nor any government official visited them till Saturday evening.

On contact over phone, the UP chairman Shamsuddin Mondol said, "This Abasan (rehabilitation) project is being built as per a government plan."

The reason behind the killing is yet to be known. None was arrested.

Japanese envoy praises WFP flood recovery operation

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Japanese Ambassador Matsushiro Horiguchi has praised WFP's ongoing flood recovery and rehabilitation operations for assisting ultra-poor families in some of the areas worst hit by last year's flood.

The Ambassador on Saturday saw rice distribution under WFP's Flood Recovery Operation (EMOP) in Sayedabad union in Sirajgonj district. Japan donated 12,528 tonnes of rice now being distributed in six districts under the programme.

The EMOP programme was started in August last year immediately after the flood, targeting about five million people. The programme will end in August this year.

"WFP is helping to rehabilitate flood affected poor families through food-based activities," said the ambassador.

"I am particularly glad to learn that female-led households, pregnant and nursing women, children under 3 and primary school children have been receiving specific assistance in the form of blended food, rice and fortified biscuits".

The ambassador, on his way to Sirajgonj, visited a biscuit factory at Kaliakoir. Gazipur, where biscuits enriched with vitamins and minerals are produced for WFP. WFP gives these fortified biscuits under its School Feeding/Nutrition for Education programme to over one million school children in 6,000 primary schools located in food insecure districts.

Describing Japan as a very sincere partner of WFP and Bangladesh, WFP Representative Douglas Casson Coutts said, WFP Representative Douglas Casson Coutts accompanied the ambassador during the visit. He said the Japanese government earlier provided about 6,000 MT of wheat for WFP's VGD programme.

Couple killed in Tangail

A CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A couple was killed here by unidentified assailants on Friday night.

Police and witnesses said a gang of eight to 10 criminals stormed into a house at Sitalpara Bankata village in Mirzapur upazila at about 2 am and killed both the housemaster, Mohammad Jamaluddin, 80, also a homeopath and his wife Alea Begum, 45.

Being informed, Mirzapur police rushed to the spot and recovered the Jamaluddin's body from the courtyard and that of Alea Begum from a nearby sugarcane field. The bodies were sent to Tangail General Hospital for autopsy.

The reason behind the killing is yet to be known. None was arrested.

DISCUSSION MARKING SANTAL REVOLUTION TOLD Land grabbing and inequality still haunt indigenous people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Jatiya Adibashi Parishad (JAP) held a day-long programme in Rajshahi city yesterday in observance of 150th anniversary of the Santal Hool (revolution).

Many guests from Dhaka and Chittagong joined several hundred indigenous people who came from different areas of Rajshahi and adjoining districts for the programme. The main event was held at the district council auditorium.

Uttar Bangla Adibasi Lahungi Network, an apex body of 17 aborigine people's organisations, is holding a month-long programme in Rajshahi commemorating the Santal people's heroic struggle against the British rulers.

The indigenous people are suffering now as under British rule and Zamindars 150 years ago, they said.

They demanded constitutional

discussion meeting was held.

Workers Party Politburo member Fazle Hossain Badsha attended the discussion as chief guest. Another WP member Anisur Rahman Mollik, Jono Shanghati Samity Organising Secretary Shaktipada Tripura, Prof Mesbahul Kamal, Rabeta Saren, sister of assassinated aborigine leader Alfred Saren addressed the rally, among others.

JAP President Anil Marandi chaired the discussion.

The discussants portrayed the indigenous people's plight due to alleged grabbing of their lands by local influential and indifference by the administration.

The indigenous people are suffering now as under British rule and Zamindars 150 years ago, they said.

They demanded constitutional

their affairs.

They also demanded construction of a permanent memorial to the Santal heroes, protection of their traditional culture and research on those.

The 1855-57 Santal revolution enkindled the spirit of independence from the then British rule. The imperialist forces killed at least two million people, mostly Santals and farmers and suppressed the uprising.

The participants at the discussion meeting observed one minute's silence to honour thousands of Santal heroes including Shidhu, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairab who sacrificed their lives for the cause of Santal rights and independence.

Later, aborigine male and females presented a cultural function headlined 'rise aborigines, work for the nation'. Songs, dances and recitation from poems in the function were for praise of the revolution heroes.



PHOTO: STAR
Proma, a cultural organisation, brought out a procession in Chittagong city on the occasion of Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam's 11th death anniversary yesterday.

CONTROVERSIAL APPOINTMENTS

Agitation in front of RU VC office

RU CORRESPONDENT

The controversially appointed 546 employees of Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday staged a demonstration in front of the administrative building demanding regularisation of their jobs.

The day's programme included rally, discussion meeting and prize distribution ceremony.

In

the

morning

Nari

Mukti

Shangha

(NMS), a local NGO, held a rally in the town, followed by a procession.

The district administration and the Narcotic Department jointly organised a discussion meeting, held at the Bhasani Hall.

State Minister for NGO Affairs

Lutfar

Rahman

Khan

Azad

MP

attended

the

function

as

chief

guest.

Tangail Deputy Commissioner

Safuddin

Ahmed

Majumdar

presided

over

the

discussion

meeting,

also

attended

by

Police

Superintendent

Mirza

Abdullah

-

he

Baki.

Later

the

chief

guest

distributed

prizes

among

six

school

and

college

students,

winners

of

an

essay

writing

competition.

AL won't join polls without caretaker, EC reform: Motia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Awami League (AL) Presidium member and former agriculture minister Motia Chowdhury yesterday said AL will not participate in the next general election unless the caretaker system is reformed and the Election Commission (EC) reorganised as proposed by her party.

"Awami League and its allies have placed specific proposals to the government to reform the caretaker government", she said while addressing a triennial council of Satkhira district Awami Juba League, held at Shahid Abdur Razzak Park.

Satkhira Juba League Convener Mahmud Ali Suman presided over the council while its general secre-

political parties in the name of curbing crime. But crimes are increasing. Crimes remained under control during AL rule when there was no such elite forces, she said.

She called upon the people to intensify agitation to topple the government because it has failed to run the country and ensure security of people's life and property but is trying to cling to power by repression.

Mirza Azam MP said fundamentalist forces are now out to capture state power at any cost. This is an ominous sign for the country.

"The immediate past Chief Justice who is likely to head the next caretaker government is known to be a man of ruling BNP's choice. Any election under him will not be free and fair", he said.



PHOTO: STAR
To create awareness against rising drug abuse, The Daily Star Reader's Club in Mymensingh brought out a procession in the town yesterday marking the International Day against Drug Abuse and Trafficking.