



PHOTO: PID
Vice-President of World Bank for South Asia Prful Patel called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office in the city yesterday.

Take rehabilitation programme for rickshawpullers

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called upon the government to stop eviction of rickshaws from the capital with a view to rehabilitating 20 lakh people engaged in the profession. They also urged the government to take a rehabilitation programmes for rickshawpullers and end their harassment by the members of the law enforcing agencies. The speakers said rickshaws are environment-friendly vehicles that don't emit toxic fumes and help save hard-earned foreign currency as those don't use fuel. The discussion on the 'Rights of rickshawpullers and their empowerment' was organised by Bangladesh Environment Development

Organisation (BEDO) at the National Press Club in the city. Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Abdul Awal Mintu attended the function as chief guest. With BEDO Executive Director Abdul Bari in the chair, the discussion was also attended by Chairperson of AIDS Network of Bangladesh Wahida Banu and Md Aftabuddin, former principal of Pakshi Railway College as special guests. BEDO Project Co-ordinator Zainul Abedin said his organisation has already trained up 17,000 rickshawpullers and they were given identity cards. He said as many as 2,500 rickshawpullers were offered insurance as they always perform their duties in

enormous risks. Zainul Abedin said under the programme a rickshawpuller annually pay a premium of only Tk 31 to get accident insurance coverage of Tk 40,000. BEDO with the assistance of Progoti Insurance has already paid insurance claims of two rickshawpullers, headed. Abdul Awal Mintu praised the insurance programme of the BEDO and said, "This programme would help rickshawpullers greatly in their dire need." Abdul Bari underscored the need for providing licenses to rickshawpullers. The function was also addressed by Dr Munir Hossain, Abdul Hamid Sharif and Mahtabuddin.

Communications secretary gets extension for third time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday extended the service of Communications Secretary Shafiqul Islam for one more year on contract from today, according to an official notification. With this, his service has been extended for the third time.

Eviction of indigenous people from their lands protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Uttarbanga Adivasi Unnayan Parishad yesterday protested the eviction of indigenous community from their lands in Dinajpur and demanded immediate rehabilitation of the displaced people. The government is driving the indigenous people from their lands in violation of human rights, the Parishad leaders said at a protest rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city. "Such activities of the government are inconsistent with the ILO convention ratified by the government in 1972. According to its Section 107, the indigenous people have the rights to lands where they have been living for decades, even if they do not have any document," said Sanjeeb Drong of Bangladesh Indigenous People's Forum. "We strongly condemn the uprooting of the indigenous people at Mostofapur union under Parbatipur upazila in Dinajpur and demand their immediate rehabilitation. Otherwise, a tough movement will be launched soon," said cultural activist Mamun-ur Rashid.

The government has been oppressing the indigenous people and now it started driving them from their own lands to set up an 'ideal village' there, he added. A total of 77 families were ousted from Parbatipur upazila on June 22 without any prior notice. They are now passing their days under open sky, said the leaders. A move is underway to uproot 50 indigenous families from Godagari in Rajshahi, they added. The leaders also demanded a separate land commission and ministry for the indigenous people to protect their rights. President of the Parishad Surendranath Sarder, Convenor Joseph Mohipal Malo, General Secretary Dulal S Tudu, Mathai Tudu, President of Santal Students' Union Subodh Baskey, General Secretary of Bangladesh Christian Association Nirmal Rozario and Advocate John Gomez also attended the rally.

'Withdraw false cases against garment workers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Garments Sramik O Shilpa Rokkha Jatiya Mancha, a national platform for the garments workers, yesterday demanded immediate release of the arrested workers of Ring Shine Garment at the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Savar. They also called for withdrawal of

'false cases' against the workers, treatment of the injured workers and immediate reopening of the garment factory. The workers were arrested for staging demonstrations in the EPZ area demanding a pay rise, said the leaders at a press conference. The factory authority did not pay any heed to their demands, rather

cases were filed against about 1,200 workers and 23 of them are now in jail, they said. They also called on the government to allow trade union activities in all the EPZs in the country. The government only allows workers to form Workers' Welfare Committee (WWC) which could not play any major role in ensuring their

rights, said Abul Hossain, convenor of the Jatiya Mancha. The leaders said they would hold a national convention soon with the experts to resolve problems in the EPZ and protect the workers' rights. Moinuddin Mandol, Nazrul Islam Sabuj, Md Hossain Mollah and Afzal Hossain Bepari were present at the press conference.



PHOTO: STAR
Uttarbanga Adivasi Unnayan Parishad stages a demonstration at Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday protesting eviction of the indigenous people from their lands in Dinajpur.