



PHOTO: STAR

Hill people covering their faces with black cloths form a human chain at Shahbagh in the city yesterday protesting the violation of human rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Parbatya Chattagram Bon O Bhumi Odhikar Sangrakkhan Andolan, Hill Tracts NGO Forum, Kapeng and Tongya organised the protest to mark the World Human Rights Day.

BOMB ATTACKS

Hunger strike protesting killings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sammlita Sanskritik Jote, a combine of cultural organisations, yesterday staged a mass hunger strike at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city protesting killings of cultural activists, journalists, police and lawyers across the country and demanding punishment of the militants.

People from all walks of life, including national leaders, cultural personalities, teachers, students and labourers, took part in the programme.

Kamal Lohani, Rashed Khan Menon, AAMS Arefin Siddique, Alamgir Kumkum, Ali Zaker, Mahmud Selim, Dr Lenin Chowdhury, Hasan Arif, Mamunur Rashid and Masum Aziz were present.

General Secretary of the Jote Golam Kuddus announced a three-day programme.

Protest meeting and cultural programme will be held from December 11 to 13 everyday at 4:00pm at the Central Shaheed Minar.

The Jote will also arrange protest meeting and cultural programme throughout the country.

Meanwhile Udichi Shilpi Gosthi of Narayanganj staged a two-hour hunger strike yesterday at the Shaheed Minar at Chashara.

Chairman of Narayanganj Pouroushava Dr Selina Hayat Ivy, human rights activist Sultana Kamal, dramatist Mannan Hira and Jahidul Haq Dipu also spoke.

CG, not govt, responsible for electoral reforms

Moudud tells roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reform of electoral laws is not the responsibility of the incumbent government, said Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed at a roundtable yesterday.

He said since the general election will be held under the caretaker government, it is their responsibility to carry out reforms in the electoral laws.

The roundtable titled 'Tolerance in politics and the next election' was jointly organised by Bangladesh Human Rights Co-ordination Council (BHRCC) and Development Organisation of the Rural Poor (DORP) to mark the International Human Rights Day at the Biam auditorium in the city.

The minister said the next general election will be held as per the constitution, and the responsibility of holding a free and fair election lies with the election commission and the caretaker government.

He said the opposition can discuss those issues either at the Jatiya Sangsad or outside. But there is no scope for constitutional reform in this regard, he asserted.

Moudud said the government will not resign even one day before its five-year term.

Criticising the militancy, the minister said though the militants are carrying out bomb attacks across the country in the name of Islam, they are not doing it for establishing Islam.

The militancy is part of a political conspiracy by the vested quarters, he added.

Moudud said the Awami League (AL) wants to get benefit by lingering the militant issue and that's why it has not agreed to join the dialogue with the government on the issue.

He however urged the opposition parties to join the dialogue so that a solution can be found out to get rid of the situation.

AL lawmaker Abdur Razzak said the outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) is a secret organisation of Jamaat-e-Islami.

He alleged that Jamaat has 13 secret organisations like JMB and it can use them one after another to fulfil its ill motives.

Razzak said the JMB threats not to celebrate the Victory Day and play national anthem and hoist the national flag violates the constitution and sovereignty of the state.

"Now the existence of the country is under threat," he claimed.

Razzak said a vested quarter wants to push back the country to

Pakistan period by destroying the country through bomb attacks.

He urged patriotic people to be united to fight back those enemies of the state.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu said a free and fair election cannot be held under the present chief election commissioner as he takes decisions in an autocratic way without discussing with two other commissioners.

Former advisor to caretaker government Hafizuddin Khan, Gono Forum General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, BHRCC Advisor R W Timm, Dr Jafrullah Chowdhury of Gono Swasthya Kendra, New Nation Editor Mostafa Kamal Majumdar, Deputy Editor of the Inqilab Manjurul Alam, DU Teacher Dr Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, Brother D'Souza, Sharif A Kafi and Dr Khurshid Alam also spoke at the roundtable.

Presided over by BMBS General Secretary AHM Noman, the roundtable was moderated by noted TV presenter of 'Tritio Matra' Zillur Rahman.

'AL to join dialogue if patrons of militants ousted from govt'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) will join the dialogue if the identified persons patronising the Islamic militants are ousted from the government, said former state minister Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir yesterday.

He was speaking at a seminar titled "Militancy in the Eye of Islam and Our Responsibility" at the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday. The Islamic Front Bangladesh (IFB) organised the seminar.

Dr Alamgir, also a presidium member of the main opposition Awami League, said only dialogue can not stop bomb terrorism. He emphasised the need for government's stern action against the militants to end the militancy.

"On the one hand the government invites the opposition to join the dialogue, and on the other it has continued repression on the countrymen and its high-ups are patronising the militants," he said.

IFB Chairperson Syed Bahadur Shah presided over the seminar while Office Secretary Prof M Ibrahim Akhtari read out the keynote paper.

The speakers at the seminar said Islam is a religion of peace

and there is no place for terrorism and extremism. But a vested quarter is trying to capture state power using the name of Islam and has already challenged the constitution, they said.

It is time to be united against the fundamentalist forces and the government should take stern actions against them immediately, they said. It is duty of all pro-Islamic organisations and intellectuals to resist these fundamentalist forces, they added.

The speakers said the government is still indifferent to the issue of arresting the militants and backing the zealots only for votes in the next general election.

Golam Maola, vice chairman of the Islamic Front of Bangladesh, said Sufis preached Islam in the subcontinent with the message of peace and humanity. But now a vested quarter misinterpreted it and started to misuse it as a tool of their business.

Secretary General of Central Parishad Zoynal Abedin Zubair, Organising Secretary Prof SM Fariduddin and member Shahidul Islam Abedin were present at the seminar.



PHOTO: STAR

Youth Ending Hunger-Bangladesh arranges a cycle rally in the city yesterday demanding separate lane for cycles.

Clampcut launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Clampcut, a medical device to cut umbilical cord and clamp the severed ends simultaneously, was launched at a city hotel yesterday.

Danish Ambassador to Bangladesh Niels Severin Munk and Prof Abul Bayes, former president of Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB), jointly launched the device.

It is manufactured by Price Invena ApS of Denmark and distributed in Bangladesh by BioMed Services.

Speakers at the launching ceremony said it will replace the traditional cutting, clamping and or tying process.

They said the new device Clampcut is safer both for the newborn infant and the health practitioner and more cost-effective than the

traditional procedure.

As the cord is cut and its ends are clamped simultaneously, there is no risk of blood splashing which substantially reduces the danger of infection of the staff from the diseases like Hepatitis C and HIV carried by the blood, they added.

Managing Director of Price Invena ApS Knud Lykke Jensen, Managing Director of BioMed Services Sazzadul Bari, a Danish Consultant working in Bangladesh Helle Thorsdal, Prof Dr Maliha Rashid from obstetrics and gynaecology department of Sir Salimullah Medical College and Hospital, President of OGSB Prof Anwara Begum and Managing Director of UniMed Mosaddek Hossain spoke at the launching ceremony.

Clampcut, a disposable obstetric instrument, will be available in the country soon at Tk 325.