

'Provide budgetary allocation for indigenous people of plains'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indigenous leaders demanded that the government provide budgetary allocation for advancement of the indigenous people of the plain lands and ensure their active participation in using the block allocation provided for them.

They said the governments have the perception that the indigenous people's fate will change if the fate of common people changes, but this perception has been proved wrong in the previous years because fate of the backward indigenous people has not changed yet.

They made the comments at a

post-budget discussion organised by Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Research and Development (Ciprad) at its office in the city recently, says a press release.

Tribal Welfare Association Central Chairman and former Awami League lawmaker Promod Mankhin, Vice Chairman Tapan Marak and Ciprad Director Albert Mankhin among others were present at the discussion.

After critical analysis of the budget, the leaders said the budget was allocated for the indigenous people of the hill tracks, but not for about the 20 lakh indigenous people of the plains that include Mymensingh, Sylhet and

North Bengal.

The recommendations of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) that suggested necessary budgetary allocation for advancement of the cultural, social, political and economic status of the indigenous people were also not considered in the budget.

"It is very important for the government to have guidelines for education, health and cultural development of these people," the speakers said.

The amount of block allocation given by the prime ministers for the indigenous people is also very small, they said urging the government to increase its amount.



PHOTO: STAR

Young visitors admire paintings at an art exhibition displaying children's artworks on use of children in political activities at Shishu Academy in the city yesterday.

Art exhibition on children in politics

The National Children's Task Force (NCTF) opened a two-day art exhibition at the Shishu Academy in the city yesterday displaying children's artworks on involvement of children in political activities, says a press release.

The exhibition was inaugurated by former NCTF President Shahidul Islam Shanto.

The exhibition is part of the NCTF's protests against the hazardous involvement of children in political activities, with children given the opportunity to express their experiences, concerns and expectations through sketching and painting.

The art exhibition showcases the first, second and third place-winners from an art competition held by the NCTF's recently, which asked children 'what dangers exist for children in political activities?'. A total of 1788 girls and boys aged between 12 and 18 participated in the competition, which was held in partnership with Bangladesh Shishu Academy and Save the Children Australia.

Also displayed in the exhibition is artwork from a group of working children in Dhaka, based on their personal experiences in political activities.

The NCTF central committee said, "We hope that the duty bearers, who are responsible for ensuring the protection of children, realise the depth and intensity of the problem raised by the children in this art exhibition. They need to be aware and alert, and be encouraged to take prompt action to protect children as they prepare to hold the election."

The NCTF is supported by Save the Children Australia's Listen to Children's Voices programme.

8x3



Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Afghanistan Ameerah Haq receives Malalai medal from Afghan President Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan recently.

Ameerah Haq awarded Malalai medal

Ameerah Haq, deputy special representative of the UN secretary general for Afghanistan, was awarded Malalai medal by President Hamid Karzai recently, says a press release.

The medal was awarded in recognition of her services to Afghanistan, and it came on the eve of her departure from the country after more than three years with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

"I am touched, and honoured to have had the opportunity to serve in this country," Ameerah said. "Over the past three years I have watched tremendous progress here despite the difficulties. I leave Afghanistan with great hopes for its future."

The Malalai medal is among Afghanistan's highest awards for citizens of Afghanistan and foreign countries. It is bestowed in appreciation of remarkable services in defence of the country, and in ensuring peace, stability, and other civil and military services.

The medal is named after Malalai, a woman hero of Afghan history who helped defeat British forces at Maiwand in 1880 in one of the largest battles of the Second Anglo-Afghan War. On seeing Afghan forces falter, Malalai issued a rallying call that breathed fresh life into the Afghan effort, leading to victory.

Foreign adviser meets speaker of Australian parliament

UNB, Canberra

Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury met Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives David Hawker MP at the Australian Parliament in Canberra yesterday morning.

"It was an excellent interaction and Mr. Hawker was very eager to learn about Bangladesh in general and our current activities in particular," the foreign adviser told the media after the meeting.

"Both of us saw the need for closer Bangladesh-Australia cooperation for we share similar pluralistic values," he said.

During the meeting, the Australian speaker said the reforms being undertaken by the government would benefit the country.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Australia Humayun Kabir and Director General of Bangladesh Foreign Ministry Shahidul Islam were present on the occasion.

Thereafter, Chairman of Bangladesh Australia Parliamentary Group Andrew Laming MP hosted a working lunch for Iftekhar Chowdhury in the Parliament House Restaurant. Chris Hayes MP and Stuart Henry MP, both members of the Parliamentary Group, also joined the event.

Seven killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Seven people were killed and scores injured in separate road accidents across the country yesterday.

Our correspondent from Magura reports: Three people were killed in two different road accidents in the district yesterday.

In one accident, two people were killed and two others injured when they were run over by a sand-loaded truck at Rajiadapur area on Arpara-Shalikh road in Shalikh upazila at around 3:30pm.

Budhiswar Mondol, 62, and Animesh died on the spot while Sukumar, 20, and Biswajit, 25, were critically wounded and were taken to Shalikh upazila health complex. The killer truck however escaped.

Meanwhile, one person was killed and three others injured when a Dhaka-bound bus hit a tempo at Khoitola area yesterday noon.

The deceased was identified as Abir Mia, 45, of Malainagar village in Sreepur upazila of Magura district.

It is learned Abir was crossing the road when the bus hit the tempo.

UNB from Habiganj adds: Two people were killed and 40 others injured in separate road accidents in sadar and Chunarughat upazilas of the district yesterday.

Witnesses said 40 people were injured as a bus fell into a roadside ditch at Durgapur on Chunarughat-Shayestaganj road in Chunarughat upazila when one of its front wheels deflated at about 10:30am.

All the injured were admitted to Chunarughat upazila health complex, where Mizan Mia, 25, of Srikuta village in Chunarughat upazila, succumbed to his injury.

In another incident at about 11:30am, a tempo helper, Sohag, 16, of Bahula village in sadar upazila, was killed when his vehicle turned turtle at Poddarbari on Habiganj-Shayestaganj road in sadar upazila.

The tempo helper met the tragic end of his life while reportedly learning how to drive the vehicle with the assistance of the tempo driver, local sources said.

Our correspondent from Dinajpur reports: One person was killed and another wounded in a road accident in Dinajpur yesterday, according to the police.

The dead was identified as Md Akbar Ali, 65, of village Suzalpur under Birganj upazila of Dinajpur.

Police sources said Akbar was run over by a Thakurgaon bound speeding passenger bus and died on the spot while he was returning home by rickshaw.

Mainul Ahmed, the rickshaw puller, received critical injuries and is now undergoing treatment at Birganj Health Complex.

Our correspondent from Rangpur adds: A minor girl was killed at Kounia bus stand over Rangpur-Kurigram highway in the morning yesterday.

The girl is identified as Arzina, 6, daughter of Fazol Hoque of Nijpara under Kounia upazila.

Police said a Kurigram bound bus of Hanif Enterprise ran over Arzina while she was picking up black berry from roadside killing her dead on the spot.

The locals seized the coach while its driver was running away with the bus.

5x3

8x3

8x3

4X2