

152ND ANNIVERSARY OF SANTAL HOOL OBSERVED

Constitutional recognition of indigenous people demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

The indigenous people yesterday observed the 152nd anniversary of Santal Rebellion or Santal Hool yesterday with a call to give constitutional recognition to them and ensure the right to their ancestral lands.

The constitution does not recognise the indigenous people of the country, which, sometimes, is considered to be a 'mistake by leaders of the country', but 'the mistake' was committed with an intention to sideline them, speakers at the programme said.

They said there are around 45 indigenous communities in the country and they contributed to all national movements, but the history does not mention their contribution. "Rather, they are being deprived, oppressed and tortured to death."

They also upheld the minority communities' demands for constitutional recognition, right to ancestral

land, primary education in their mother language, equal opportunity in job, and protection of their culture.

Bangladesh Adhivasi Adhikar Andolon organised the daylong programme at the National Museum in the city to mark the 152nd anniversary of Santal Rebellion against the British rulers and local landlords in the vast areas from Birbhum to Bhagulpur in the then Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

The rebellion, possibly the first ever methodical uprising against the British Colonial rule in 1855 and 1856, which later influenced the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857, Tebhaga Movement during 1946 and 1950 and other movement against the imperialism.

At a discussion on 'Contribution of Adhivasi in freedom struggle to liberation war', Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury said the minor nationalities in the country have not been recognised in the constitution, as the people at the

centre of the power want to see them sidelined.

"The British rulers had created a repression-based society destroying the traditional society. Now the situation has changed, but the British-made social structure is still in place. We are still applying laws and education systems introduced by the British," he said.

Prof Chowdhury also inaugurated a website, www.bangladeshindigenous.com, on the indigenous communities.

Presenting a keynote paper, Prof Ganesh Saren said the minority communities have contribution to every national movement of the country but they are being deprived of their rights.

Prof HKS Arefin, president of Bangladesh Adhivasi Adhikar Andolon, presided over the discussion.

Earlier, Adhivasi freedom fighters Rabon Kisku, Suren Chandra Singh Julius Hasda and Suresh Chandra Das inaugurated the

programme by lighting candles.

Justice M Golam Rabbani, former adviser to the caretaker government Advocate Sultana Kamal and Mesbah Kamal of Bangladesh Adhivasi Adhikar Andolon spoke at the inaugural session.

A total of 10 Adhivasi freedom fighters were also awarded Shidhu-Kani Medal in the third session of the programme. They are Champai Saren, Hemendra Kumar Murari, Rabon Kisku, Julius Hasda, Chaina Orao, Amin Murmu, Jahan Tudu, Suren Chandra Singh, Rabilal Rabi Das and Sukhchand Orao.

Freedom fighter Advocate Zi Khan Panna and former army chief Lt Gen (retd) M Harun-Or-Rashid Bir Pratik gave away medals and crests to them.

A cultural programme was also held in the evening where indigenous people and Bangalees rendered songs and staged a drama. A film on the life and struggle of Adivasis was also screened.



HR VIOLATION
211 killed last month
Says BSEHR report
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 651 people were killed in various mishaps and 211 were killed due to violation of human rights in the last month, revealed a report of the Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) yesterday.

These accidents include electrocution, road accident, fire, nor'wester and train accident while social violence, death under police custody, jail and death due to doctors' negligence are listed as violation of human rights.

The report also shows that a total of 42 women fell victim to repression and 32 women committed suicide. Twenty-eight women were raped and five were killed after being raped.

Six people were killed in mob beating while eight journalists were assaulted.

A total of 1,219 people were victim of mass arrest, the report added.

PHOTO STAR
BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia comes out of a clinic at Banani in the city yesterday after visiting an ophthalmologist for check-up. (Story on Page 1)

Tk 67.76cr CU budget approved

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong University (CU) Senate at its 19th annual meeting yesterday approved a budget of Tk 67.76 crore for 2007-2008 fiscal year (FY) with a deficit of Tk 2.65 crore.

The Senate also approved a revised budget of Tk 64.72 crore of the 2006-2007 FY.

Of the budget for 2007-2008FY, Tk 59.61 crore would come from government grants while the rest Tk 5.50 crore from the internal resources of the university.

Tk 46 crore was allocated for salary and other allowances for the teachers, officers and employees while Tk 4.31 crore was allotted for education and research.

For general expenditure Tk 6.46 crore was allocated for the next fiscal year while Tk 2.97 crore for repair and maintenance, sources said.

CU Vice Chancellor Professor Dr M Badiul Alam presided over the meeting at the conference room of the Academic Building.

Hawkers' Society AGM held

The annual general meeting (AGM) of Dhaka Newspaper Hawkers' Multi Purpose Cooperative Society Limited was held at the society's Motijheel residence in the city yesterday, says a press release.

In the meeting the annual audit report of 2005-2006 fiscal year (FY), estimated budget of 2007-2008 FY and supplementary budget were discussed and approved.

Society Chairperson Mostafa Kamal chaired the meeting.



Sitting from left, adhivasi freedom fighters Suren Chandra Singh, Suresh Chandra Das, Rabon Kisku and Julius Hasda inaugurate the programme of the 152nd anniversary of Santal Rebellion or Santal Hool by lighting candles at the inaugural function at the National Museum in the city yesterday. Standing from left are Prof Mesbah Kamal, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Justice M Golam Rabbani, Advocate Sultana Kamal, Dr Dalim Chandra Barman and Prof HKS Arefin.

PHOTO STAR