



Artistes of Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha perform Tagore song at the Shaukat Osman auditorium at Central Public Library in the city yesterday to mark the 66th death anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore.

# Ensure sustainable agriculture to reduce poverty

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should ensure rural development through sustainable agriculture in the country to halve the level of poverty by 2015, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

Saarc Agricultural Centre (SAC) organised the seminar titled 'Rural development for sustainable agriculture' at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council auditorium in the city.

Presenting the keynote paper, Director General of the CIRDP Dr Durga P Paudyal stressed the need to strengthen rural infrastructure and greater market connectivity for agricultural products of the country.

Lamenting that policymakers have showed some sort of negligence towards the agricultural sector since independence, he said agro-based industries should be the main destination of foreign aid.

He also called for promotion of the use of technology among the farmers in order to boost productivity in the agricultural sector.

Although the Saarc nations have set Saarc Development Goals to be achieved by 2012, very little has been done to meet the target, Dr Durga said.

He also suggested devising country-specific policies and programmes for each country.

Identifying centralisation of power as one of the major obstacles to rural development, he suggested that the sooner the decentralisation would take place, the faster would be the pace of rural development.

SAC Director Dr Wais Kabir said that although the contribution of agriculture to gross domestic product is decreasing day by day, the sector has always contributed to poverty alleviation.

Apart from traditional agriculture, forestry and fisheries can largely

contribute to poverty alleviation and sustainable agriculture, he said.

Emphasising greater investment in this sector, he said that a thriving agricultural sector would ensure food security and bring in foreign currency as well.

## Minor earthquake jolts city

UNB, Dhaka

A minor earthquake, measuring 3.8 on the Richter scale, jolted the capital yesterday.

The epicentre of the tremor that was felt at about 16 hours 35 minutes 01 second (BST) was about 73 kms from Agargaon, Dhaka Seismic Observatory.



Prof Sadeka Halim speaks at a seminar at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On her left are Rokeya Kabir, Prof Ajoy Roy, Khushi Kabir and Chaitali Tripura.

# Protect rights of indigenous women

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The rights of indigenous people are being violated in various ways and the women are more vulnerable to exploitation as their right to security is also threatened, speakers at seminar said yesterday.

Demanding steps to protect the rights of indigenous women, they also criticised the previous governments for not observing the International Indigenous People's Day at the national level and not giving constitutional recognition to the indigenous people.

Since the United Nations has been observing the day for the last 13 years, Bangladesh, being its member state, could not neglect any international issues, they added.

Sampriti Mancha organised the seminar titled 'Rights of indigenous and minority women' at the National Press Club ahead of the International Indigenous People's Day to be observed on August 9.

Chaitali Tripura presented the keynote paper at the seminar presided over by Prof Ajoy Roy of Dhaka University.

"Indigenous women are severely affected by the acquisition of lands. The displaced women usually move to urban areas where they are also exploited in various ways," said Prof Sadeka Halim.

The speakers said the land allocation system should be gender sensitive.

They also called for inclusion of indigenous women issues in the Women Development Policy.

President of Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples' Forum Sanjeeb Drong said some reserved seats for women in parliament should be set aside for indigenous women.

Farida Akhter of Ubing, Khushi

Kabir of Nijera Kori, Rokeya Kabir of Nari Pragati Sangha, Dr Ishani Chakrabarti and Gobinda Mondol of Dhaka University also spoke at the seminar moderated by Associate Prof Robayet Ferdous.

## Orientation programme on birth registration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nari Maitree, an NGO, organised an orientation programme on birth registration at Biam in the city yesterday for local organisations and schoolteachers in Ward Nos. 25, 27 and 28.

At the orientation, the organisation decided to take several programmes with a view to implementing the Birth and Death Registration Law, 2004.

The programmes include bringing all students of local educational institutions and targeted people under the birth registration programme and ensuring birth registration of the children coming to local health centres for vaccination and garments workers.

Presided over by Nari Maitree Executive Director Shahin Akter Doly, the programme was addressed by DCC Chief Health Official Dr Col Md Shawkat Ali, Unicef Project Officer Azizur Rahman, Social Development Adviser of Plan International Zinat Afroz, Theme leader of Actionaid Munmun Gulshan and Samia Akter.

Nari Maitree organised the programme in association with Actionaid Bangladesh and Dhaka City Corporation.