

'Indigenous people still neglected in all sectors'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Constitutional recognition of the indigenous people, formation of a separate land commission for them and introduction of primary education in their mother language must be ensured to establish their rights, speakers at a view change meeting said yesterday.

Although some progress regarding the issue of indigenous people have been made in the last couple of years, they are still neglected and deprived in all sectors, the speakers said.

They also called on all to make concerted efforts and launch a movement to protect the rights of the ethnic community.

Bangladesh Adivasi Odhikar Andolan and Bangladesh Adivasi Forum jointly organised the meeting at the National Press Club in the city

ahead of the International Indigenous People's Day to be observed on August 9.

Prof Mesbah Kamal said indigenous people are still facing discrimination in every sector, including education and employment.

Despite their significant contribution to the Liberation War, they are yet to get constitutional recognition, a longstanding demand of the community, he said.

"No successive governments observed the International Indigenous People's Day at the national level and even the present government is yet to take any measure in this regard, although it has been being observed for the last 13 years," Prof Mesbah said.

Golam Murtaza, acting editor of the Shaptahik 2000, said the media have been playing a major role in raising awareness about the rights of ethnic community and they have

to do it more and more.

Rabindranath Soren, an indigenous rights activist, said a sense of insecurity has gripped the ethnic people living in the northern region as the forest department has acquired 6,500 acres of lands of the minority community in the name of afforestation and filed several hundred cases against them.

Development of indigenous people is not possible without support from the government, he said.

Secretary of Bangladesh Adibashi Forum Sanjib Drong said the rights of indigenous people would not be established unless democratic, secular and progressive people come to power.

Bazlur Rahman, Prof Hayat Mahmud, Sanaulah Lavlu and Sohrab Hasan also spoke at the meeting.

HC declares detention of Mintoo illegal, grants him bail

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday declared illegal the confinement of ex-FBCCI president Abdul Awal Mintoo under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR) and granted him bail.

It also stayed the operation of another preemptive detention order given on Monday night against him under the Special Powers Act.

A division bench comprising Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury passed the orders following a habeas-corpus petition filed by Mintoo's son.

Earlier, Barrister Rafique-ul Huq, the counsel for Mintoo, moved a supplementary petition informing the court that the government, in the meantime, served Mintoo a 30-day detention order on Monday night under the Special Powers Act (SPA).

Termining the government action 'breach of word', the counsel told the court that the government attorney had assured on Monday during the hearing of the habeas-corpus petition that it would not take any step against Mintoo before court orders set for Tuesday.

Graft Case Against Ershad Next hearing today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Four prosecution witnesses of a graft case filed 16 years ago against former president and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad and five others gave their statements to a Dhaka court yesterday.

Judge Malik Abdullah Al Amin of the Special Court for Dhaka Division recorded statements of the witnesses and fixed today for next hearing of the case.

Defence lawyers also completed cross-examination of the witnesses in Ershad's presence. Earlier, complainant of the case Golam Mortuza, an official of the now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption had given his deposition before the same court.

Though the charges were framed on July 7, 1992, the trial of the case was stayed for a long time due to a High Court order.

Ershad and former chairman of Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB) AKM Mosharraf Hossain directed the authorities concerned to waive Tk 35 lakh loan taken by M/S Three Star Poultry Farm Limited on September 4, 1979.

Later, a graft case was filed with Motijheel Police Station against Ershad, Mosharraf, BSB Managing Director Jahangir Kabir, Directors Firoz Kabir and Borhan Uddin and Jahangir's wife Nurunnahar Shelly.

Of them, Jahangir and his wife Shelly are still at large while others are now on bail.

The investigation officer pressed charges against Ershad and five others on November 6, 1991.

Lift restrictions from relief collection campaign

Sangskritik Jote urges govt

DU CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, a platform for cultural organisations, yesterday urged the government to withdraw all restrictions from campaign for collection of relief for flood victims in view of the immense suffering they are facing.

It would be difficult to collect relief materials from people of all walks of life as per government directives as a rickshawpuller would not go to the chief adviser's office to donate Tk 5 or Tk 10 or a housewife would not feel free to go to district commissioner's office to donate 10 breads, they said at a press conference.

The leaders said they want to conduct mass relief collection drive so that people willingly come forward to donate money or any other materials for flood-affected people.

Sangskritik Jote President Nasiruddin Yusuf, General Secretary Golam Kuddus, Vice-President Prof Md Samad Azad and Ramendu Majumder were present at the press conference held at the Teacher Student Centre of Dhaka University (DU).

The leaders urged the students of DU to participate in the relief activities.

Later, former president of the organisation Ramendu Majumder formally inaugurated a relief collection drive by donating Tk 10,000 from his fund and Tk 25,000 from 'Expressions'.

The DU authorities have allocated one room of the TSC building to the organisation to conduct their relief activities properly.

Besides, Dhaka University (DU)



Air Chief Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman makes a courtesy call on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

FUNDS FOR FLOOD VICTIMS Banglalink music festival Aug 17, 18

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a view to creating awareness and raising funds for the flood victims, Banglalink, a private cellphone operator, will organise a music festival on August 17-18.

Noted singers and musicians of the country will perform live in the two-day 'banglalink desh music fest 2007' at Fantasy Kingdom, a theme park near Dhaka.

"The country is undergoing a catastrophic situation due to flood and all should come forward to face the situation," said Solaiman Alam, senior manager, public relation and communication, Banglalink, while addressing a press conference at Spectra Convention Centre in the city yesterday.

Solaiman also said the festival will create a platform for the music celebrities of the country where they can motivate people to extend their helping hands towards the flood affected, Solaiman added.

"The proceeds from the event will be donated to the Chief Adviser's Relief Fund," he added.

He also urged all Banglalink customers to donate for the flood victims through sending short message services (SMS) that will be deposited at the Chief Adviser's Relief Fund.

Banglalink customers will have to write 'help' and send SMS to 1010 to donate Tk 10.00 (vat inclusive) for each SMS for the flood victims.

Concord Group, Channel i, Radio Foorti, SAS-a sound and recording company and amadergaan.com are the partners of the festival.

Speaking at the press conference, Faridur Reza Sagar, managing director of Channel i, urged all to cooperate in combating natural disasters like flood.

Eminent artists Ayub Bachchu and Maksud, Shahriar Kamal, deputy managing director, Concord Group and Sayyied Kabir, chief executive officer of Radio Foorti, also spoke on the occasion hosted by singer Alif.

A total of 31 band group, including LRB, Miles, Warfaze, Souls, Feedback, Maksud O Dhaka, Aurthohin, Artcell, Bangladesh, Pentagon, Lalon, Raga, Nemesis, Black, Dolchut, Shironamhin, Tahsan and Friends along with Hyder Hussain, Kaniz, Mehreen and James will perform in the festival.

Gas cylinder explosion kills one in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One person was killed in a gas cylinder explosion at a cylinder repair workshop at Moghbazar in the city yesterday.

Witnesses said a fire extinguisher cylinder exploded with a huge bang at around 2:00pm, killing Mukul Sarkar alias Nitai, owner of the workshop, Nitu Enterprise. The explosion took place when he was testing the pressure of the cylinder at around 2:00pm with the shutter of the workshop half open. He was alone at the workshop at that time.

The force of the explosion was so intense that parts of the cylinder blew away the shutter before

smashing a wall of a room of a tin-roofed building located opposite the workshop, some 10 feet away.

Six people lived in the room but all of them were out for lunch during the incident.

"I heard a huge bang and then I saw the wall of my room collapse as something hit it," Shaheen Sheikh, a welding mechanic, told The Daily Star.

He also said that when he looked at the workshop, he saw the beheaded body of Nitai.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Nitai was a resident of Bashabo area in the city.



Solaiman Alam of Banglalink speaks at a press conference at Spectra Convention Centre in the city yesterday. On his right is Shahriar Kamal and on his left are Faridur Reza Sagar and Sayyied Kabir.

Road accidents kill 4

STAR REPORT

At least four people were killed and 41 others injured in separate road accidents in Rajshahi and Khulna yesterday and on Monday night.

RU correspondent adds: Two people were killed in separate road accidents at Godagari upazila of Rajshahi yesterday.

Sources said Habibullah, 70, former Thana Education Officer of Godagari upazila, was killed when a bus knocked him down while he was walking in Lal Dighi area at around 7:30 am.

On the other hand, Abdul Alim, 40, a mango trader of Rajshahi, was killed in a road accident at Kadirpur highway under Godagari upazila on Monday night.

Sources said the accident

occurred when driver of a mango-laden truck from Chapai-nawabganj lost control over the steering. The truck fell into a ditch at Kadirpur, leaving Alim dead on the spot and driver injured.

Staff correspondent from Khulna reports: Two people were killed and 40 others injured in a road accident at Kudir Battala under Rupsha upazila.

The dead were identified as Sirajul Islam, 28 and Javed Sarder, 35.

The injured were rushed to Rupsha Upazila Hospital, Tilok Private Hospital, Khulna General Hospital and different clinics.

The accident occurred when a Mongla-bound passenger bus from Khulna dashed against a roadside billboard of CityCell mobile phone company.

More aid for flood victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations and individuals yesterday donated over Tk 1.62 crore at the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund for the flood victims.

Mutual Trust Bank and Jamuna Bank donated Tk 50 lakh each while Sonali Bank donated Tk 30 lakh, Bangladesh Krishi Bank Tk 25 lakh, ICDDRBT Tk 20 lakh, Karmasangsthan Bank Tk 4.16 lakh, First Service Bank Tk 10 lakh, Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry Tk 10 lakh, Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters' Association Tk 5 lakh, Bangladesh Administrative Service Association Tk 2 lakh and Anti-Corruption Commission Tk 1 lakh as one day's salary of their staff.

Besides, Bangladesh Scouts donated Tk 19, 300, Chief Adviser's Office Tk 72, 864, chairman of Privatisation Commission Tk 27,353, Archbishop Polinos Costa Tk 5 lakh, Rahman Haque, Ashrafal Alam Biswas and four others Tk 13,200 and Bazlur Rahman Gonu Tk 10,000.

Meanwhile, UNICEF Representative Louis George Arsenault at a meeting with Foreign Affairs Adviser Ittefkar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday said the organisation would donate about Tk 3-4 lakh with a view to enhancing its role in providing relief materials.

Dr Kamal Hossain visited the flood-hit people at Nandipara, Trimohini, Madartek and Bank Colony areas in the city and distributed dry food.

Janata Bank will soon donate Tk 40 lakh as one day's salary of its staff while Bar Council will also donate Tk 10 lakh to CA's fund.

Moreover, the Bar Council members would distribute relief materials worth Tk 10 lakh among the flood victims.

Besides, Dhaka University (DU)

decided to conduct its relief and rehabilitation activities only through its 13 sub-committees under the banner of the university. The authorities have also banned collecting donations by students and have decided to collect the money through its current Account No 71013958 at the DU branch of Sonali Bank.

Students of Rajshahi University are collecting money, while the Rajshahi College students have collected food, clothes and money from different organisations and individuals.

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Goshthi, Bangladesh Jubo Union and Dhaka University Sanskritik Union are also continuing their relief distribution programmes.

Bangladesh Medical association (BMA) has asked all the doctors around Bangladesh to form medical teams and donate at the 'Emergency Aid Fund', savings account no-8816, Rupali Bank, Corporate Branch, Ramna, Dhaka.

Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) would distribute relief materials worth \$2 million among 77,000 families in 15 districts.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission distributed flattened rice, molasses, oral saline, water purifying tablets and soaps among the flood affected people in Jamalpur and Sunamganj districts and it is considering offering house building materials among the flood victims in Netrokona, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Gaibandha, Narsingdi and Bogura.

Brac yesterday distributed reliefs among 10 lakh people in 26 districts. Faculty members and staff of Brac University would also donate their one day's salary to Brac's flood relief fund.

Brac has committed to donate Tk 5 crore from its own resources and expects to mobilise donor funds. It is also operating a control room for

collecting relief materials, the phone numbers are 9881265, 8824180 Ext no 2305.

BDRCS relief work Bangladesh Red Crescent Society has started intensive relief operation in flood-affected areas all over the country, says a press release.

BDRCS has formed a flood control and cell at its National Headquarters to monitor the flood situation across the country. The Society Chairman Prof Dr Abdul Rob himself is monitoring round the clock the overall flood situation.

The Society distributed relief in Kirirgram, Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Sirajganj, Faridpur, Tangail, Sylhet and Sunamganj to support about 50,000 people under first phase. It also allocated relief for Manikganj, Lalmonirhat, Rajbari, Shariatpur, Bogra, Madaripur, Munshiganj, Netrakona and Sherpur.

Besides, BDRCS Chairman distributed relief goods among the flood-affected people of Sylhet and Sunamganj on August 4.

Concern Worldwide Unb adds: Concern Worldwide, an international NGO, and Faridpur Development Agency (FDA) jointly distributed relief among 500 flood-affected families in Sadar upazila under Faridpur district yesterday.

Law and Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain inaugurated the programme, as part of an effort of Concern Worldwide and FDA to support 2,000 families in the district.

Addressing the programme, the Law Adviser thanked Concern Worldwide for their assistance and also called upon all including, the political leaders and NGOs, to extend their support to the flood victims.

Concern Worldwide has already distributed relief among 9,000 families in Sirajganj and Manikganj in last few days.

Interference of Ban Ki-moon sought for Hasina's release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US chapter of Jubo League submitted memorandums to the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the Bangladesh consulate in New York to press home its demand for the release of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina.

The Jubo League sought the interference of Ban Ki-moon in releasing Hasina.

It also submitted another memorandum to Human Rights Watch with allegations against the caretaker government, according to a report of the News World, a news agency based in New York.

Earlier, leaders and activists of the Jubo League and Awami League staged a demonstration in front of the UN headquarters to press their 11-point demand.

The demands include declaration of August 15 as national mourning day, execution of the verdict in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman murder case, resumption of indoor politics and withdrawal of false charges against Hasina.

Misbah Ahmed, president of the US unit of Jubo League, told the America News Agency that they have handed over memorandums to at least 100 US Senators and Congressmen and urged them to put pressure on the caretaker government to release Hasina.

Arrested youths placed on one day's remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 24 youths who were arrested at Zia International Airport on Monday on charges of alleged link with the militants, were placed on one day's remand yesterday.

Although immigration police sought seven days' remand for them, the court granted only a day's remand.

Officer in Charge of Airport Police Station Ruhul Amin said, "All of them hailed from greater Sylhet. Although they said that they were going to Iran for jobs, we arrested them since the route seemed a bit fishy."

The youths, all aged between 20 and 25, were supposed to leave the ZIA in a Delhi-bound GMG airliner at 10:30am on Monday.

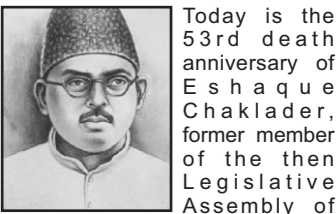
A police officer seeking anonymity said they are investigating whether the youths have any connection with militancy or just going abroad in pursuit of a better fortune.

DHL Yes Award Ceremony postponed

DHL Express has postponed the DHL Yes Award Ceremony, which was scheduled for August 9, due to the grave flood situation in the country, says a press release.

Fresh date and time of the award ceremony will be announced later.

Death anniversary



Today is the 53rd death anniversary of Eshaque Chaklader, former member of the then Legislative Assembly of East Pakistan, says a press release.

He was elected MLA from Munshiganj in 1954.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at Lalbagh Fort Mosque after Zohr prayers today.

Documentary show on tourist spots

DUTS launches website

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Tourist Society (DUTS) held a documentary film show and launched its website yesterday with a view to making the city dwellers, especially the students, more interested in visiting tourist attractions.

Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz inaugurated the documentary film show and the website at the Teachers Student Centre.

The DUTS has also organised a two-day tour of spectacular tourist spots in Khagrachhari and Bandarban.

Speaking at the programme, Prof Faiz said tourism as an industry has great potential to boost the economy.

The private organisations should play an active role alongside the government agencies to promote tourism, he said.

Documentary films on Lalbagh Fort, Bomang Palace, Hakaluki Haor, St Martin's Island, Nijhum Island, Hatibhanga Tikipara, Bull fight, Sari and Naf River were screened on the first day of the two-day show.

Proctor of Dhaka University Prof AK Feroz, Prof Khan Muhammad Kalimullah, Prof Saidul Hossain Shahed, DUTS President Johny Maung and its General Secretary Amanatullah attended the programme.

Channel i, The Daily Star, The Bangladesh Monitor and Radio Today were the media partners of the event.

The DUTS team will embark on their two-day tour on August 17 to visit the mysterious cave at Alurilla, the spring at Richhang, Chimbuk, Meghla, Shailakupa and other spots.

JMB chief's wife gets bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court, Sylhet, yesterday granted bail to outlawed JMB chief Abdul Rahman's wife Nurjahan Begum Rupa and daughter Affa Rahman.

The court also deferred the charge framing in the explosives case filed after the arrest of Abdul Rahman along with his family members and some JMB men at a house in Sylhet on March 2, 2006.

Court sources said Judge Ferdous Ahmed deferred the charge framing in the case as one of the accused, Sabbir Ahmed Dulal, could not be brought to the court from Dhaka. The court fixed September 11 for framing charges against the accused.

The law enforcers recovered explosives from 'Surjadighol Bari' in the city's Shapalabag area after the arrest of Abdul Rahman, his family men and others at the house on March 2, 2006.

Directive to demolish illegal structures in DND area

UNB, Dhaka

Local Government and Rural Development Adviser M Anwarul Iqbal yesterday asked the authorities concerned to demolish all the illegal structures in DND area to reclaim canals from land grabbers.

He made the directive while visiting a pump house of Water Development Board at Shimrail in Narayaniganj Sadar upazila.

He said all the illegal structures would have to be demolished immediately to remove stagnant water and keep the sewerage system functional.

Anwarul Iqbal also directed them to set nets on both the sides of the canals so that the wastes could not create obstacles in pumping outwater.

The adviser warned that the officials who will be found responsible for public sufferings would face punitive actions.



Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz speaks at the inaugural function of a documentary film show organised by Dhaka University Tourist Society (DUTS) at TSC on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

\$16 lakh Japanese grant for two projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government of Japan through its PHRD Grant programme will provide \$1,600,000 as grants to Bangladesh for preparing two projects on clean air and sustainable energy and water resources management.

The World Bank (WB), which will administer the fund, and the government of Bangladesh signed two agreements in this regard at a simple ceremony at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) yesterday.

ERD Secretary Aminul Islam Bhuiyan and WB Country Director Xian Zhu signed the agreements.

Of the total grant, \$900,000 will be used for preparing the Clean Air and Sustainable Energy (CASE) and \$700,000 for Dhaka Environment and Water Resources Management (DEWRM).

The Ministry of Environment and Forest will implement the CASE project to strengthen infrastructure, institutional and regulatory framework for air quality management.

23 missing as trawlers capsize in Bay

UNB, Bagerhat

Twenty-three fishermen went missing after four trawlers capsized in the Bay due to heavy current triggered by monsoon depression on Monday night.

Sources said the trawlers with 38 fishermen on board were caught in strong current near Nankelbaria and Dimer Char areas and capsized.

Fifteen fishermen were rescued by other trawlers, while the rest remained missing as of 6:00pm yesterday.



Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places over southern part of the country, Met Office said in a forecast.

It also said that day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 34.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and Rangpur and lowest 24.5 degree Celsius at Srirongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:37pm today and rises at 5:31am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.