

'Form high-powered body to protect rights of indigenous people'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society members yesterday called on the government to form a high-powered commission to recommend policies and action plans for the welfare of indigenous people.

The successive governments have rarely paid attention to the well-being of indigenous community, journalist Syed Abul Maksud said, adding that it is time to correct mistakes of the past.

The government should form a high-powered commission, which would recommend ways and means to establish the rights of the indigenous people and that the government should act as per its suggestions, he said at a press conference jointly organised by Astha Network and Nagorik Sanghati at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

The commission should be headed by a sitting or retired justice of the Supreme Court, he added. Gonesh Majhi, president of Astha Network, a platform for indigenous people in Rajshahi, placed their 40-point demand, including ensuring their traditional rights to land, a halt to the construction of eco-parks, introducing education in their mother language and establishing a separate ministry for them.

Dr Shafiqul Alam, general secretary of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Rajshahi, spoke of the maltreatment of indigenous people living in plain



Journalist Syed Abul Maksud speaks at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

lands. "Still today, access to some restaurants in Rajshahi for the indigenous people is restricted," he said.

Dr Abdul Matin, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), said indigenous people are still living in an inhuman condition, although several non-government organisations have been working for their welfare.

"We should identify and address the problems facing the indigenous people," he added.

Bapa would organise an international conference of indigenous people in the capital in December, he said.

President of Nagorik Sanghati Dr ASM Atikur Rahman, General Secretary of Nagorik Sanghati Shariuzzaman Pintu, Prof Khondkar Mukaddem Hossain, human rights activist Prashanta Saha and Anil Marandi were present at the press conference.

Absconding JMB militant held in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Police arrested an absconding Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militant at Baliaadanga Bazar in Kalaroa upazila yesterday.

JMB militant Noor Ali Member of Kulla in Assassuni upazila is charge-sheeted accused in five cases filed in connection with five blasts in Satkhira during the August 17, 2005 countrywide bomb blasts.

Noor Ali went into hiding soon after the incident, police sources said. All the five cases were filed with Satkhira Police Station.

Police said law enforcers are now interrogating him at Kalaroa Police Station after arresting him following a tip-off.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Munshi Atiqur Rahman, also the investigation officer (IO) of the five cases, submitted supplementary charge sheets against 19 JMB activists, including executed JMB king pins Shaikh Abdur Rahman, Siddiqui Islam Bangla Bhai and Ataur Rahman Sunny, before a Satkhira court on March 23, 2006.

The other accused in the cases are Nasir, Munna, Khokan, Ujjal, Momtaz, Asadul, Belal, Khayer, Sayeed, Nayeem, Noor Ali, Gias, Habib, Fakor Uddin Raji, Palash and Liton.

Noor Ali, Nayeem, Raji, Habib, Khayer, Momtaz and Sayeed are still absconding.

The five cases were transferred to a special tribunal in Khulna for trial.

Resettlement policy fails to rehabilitate affected people

Says Mainul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The caretaker government is going to adopt the Draft National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy (NRRP) 2007 as the existing NRRP has failed to rehabilitate the affected people properly, said Law Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain yesterday.

"A vast number of people are displaced every year due to acquiring of land for different development projects. Besides, over one lakh people are evicted annually due to river erosion. But the current NRRP has failed to safeguard the interest of the affected people," said the adviser while inaugurating a workshop.



Law Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain addresses a workshop at a city hotel yesterday.

The national workshop on 'Draft NRRP' was organised jointly by the Ministry of Land and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) at Sheraton Hotel in the capital.

ADB Country Director Dr Hua Du and Secretary to land ministry M Mosleh Uddin also addressed the seminar.

"The new draft will give due consideration to the interest of the affected people and for this the total expenditure of development projects would be increased," the adviser said, adding the draft will be adopted amending the NRRP 1982. "Development is for all, and not for some people. We are going to adopt the draft giving much priority to compensations of the affected people who are displaced for acquiring their land in the name of development projects," he added.

The adviser said people evicted for development projects, slum dwellers as well people affected by river erosion would be benefited from the draft NRRP.

While talking to the reporters after the inaugural session, Barrister Mainul said foreign assistance is needed to rehabilitate the flood-affected people.

He said the floodwater has started receding and this is the proper time for undertaking rehabilitation programmes.

Hua Du said ADB would continue its support for affected people.



Syed Anisul Huq, president and managing director of Bank Asia Limited, hands over a cheque for Tk 10 lakh to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for the flood victims at his office in the city yesterday.



Osman Morad, chief executive officer of Standard Chartered Bank, hands over a cheque for Tk 1.5 crore to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for the flood-affected people at his office recently.



Muhammad Farid Khan, vice-chairman of Summit Group, hands over a cheque for Tk 10 lakh to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for the relief fund at his office recently.



Sajjatzum Jumma, chairman of Shahjalal Islami Bank, hands over a cheque for Tk 20 lakh to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for the relief fund at his office on Sunday.

Dr Kamal leaves for Colombo

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain left for Colombo yesterday to attend the third plenary session of the International Independent Group of Eminent Persons (IIGEP), says a press release.

IIGEP is an international group of observers who monitors the work of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry established to investigate the alleged serious violations of human rights in Sri Lanka.

Dr Kamal is expected to return on August 21.

Female central jail starts functioning tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time in the country, the government is going to start operation of a central jail for female detainees at Kashimpur in Gazipur tomorrow.

Dhaka Central Jail-3 has been set up for female detainees as their number has increased rapidly.

Currently there are 3090 female detainees at different jails across the country against a capacity of only 1159.

"The central jail for female detainees will be inaugurated day after tomorrow by IG Prison Brigadier Kazi Zakir Hossain," said DIG Prison Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui while talking to The Daily Star.

He said the jail has been set up for 212 female detainees but around 700 detainees could be kept there.

Some 20 detainees who got division as per jail code will be able to stay there, he said, adding although the jail has been built for female detainees,

the male jailers would maintain outside security of the jail.

He said taking female detainees from Dhaka Central Jail and Narayanganj jail will start soon.

"There are around 6500 jailers currently against around 84000 detainees across the country. We need 2000 jailers more to maintain proper security at different jails," said the DIG prison who thinks there is security threat at the jails due to lack of sufficient staffs.

"There are currently around 360 female jailers across the country, and we need at least 60 more female staffs," he added.

The DIG prison said the numbers of jailers are decreasing day by day as many of them are going to LPR while the numbers of detainees are increasing rapidly in all the 66 jails. "To perform our duties properly, we need additional and efficient staffs," he added.

Diarrhoea Medical centre opens at Hajj camp

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Army has opened a temporary medical centre at Hajj camp in the city's Uttara for the treatment of diarrhoea patients.

The 61 Field Ambulance under 46 distinct brigade of the army is operating the medical centre, said an ISPR press release.

Diarrhoea-affected people are being sent to various city hospitals after emergency treatment at the Hajj camp centre.

PEOPLES JUTE MILLS 514 more workers get arrear wages of 15 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A total of 514 more retrenched workers of the laid-off Peoples Jute Mills yesterday received arrear wages of 15 weeks.

Abdur Rahman, a leader of Patkal Sangram Parishad (PSP), said the retrenched workers are not satisfied only by the payment of arrear wages of 15 weeks. They also want payment of all other financial benefits, including Provident Fund, said the PSP leader.

Meanwhile, workers of this laid-off jute mill yesterday decided not to vacate the colonies until full payment of all arrears.

20 Ctg structures demolished

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A mobile court in the port city yesterday demolished 20 illegal structures to recover a canal.

Sources said the court in a drive at the city's SS Khaled Road under Kazir Dewri area demolished 20 structures, including 16 tin-roofed houses and 4 shops built illegally on the eastern side of a branch of Mirza Khal (canal).

During the drive the court found that the occupants were disrupting the normal flow of the canal by encroaching it through building different illegal structures.

Urs at Azimpur Dayera Sharif

The 214th Urs Mubarak of Hazrat Shah Sufi Syed Mohammad Dayem (R), the founder of Azimpur Dayera Sharif Khankah, was held at Dayera Sharif in the city yesterday, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani, Salatul Aker, Fateha Khani, Zeker, milad mahfil and discussion on the life of the spiritual leader Hazrat Shah Sufi Syed Mohammad Dayem (R) was held.

A large number of followers from across the country attended the Urs. Alhaj Maulana Abdur Mannan and Alhaj Maulana Aktaruzzaman spoke at the programme.

Alhaj Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmed Ullah Zubair (MA) led the concluding prayers seeking divine blessings for peace and prosperity of the country and greater unity of the Muslim Ummah.

Interest-free ASA loan for flood victims

BSS, Rangpur

ASA, an NGO, launched a programme on Monday to distribute interest-free loan among the worst flood-hit people of Chilmari, Roumari and Rajibpur upazilas on the bank of the river Brahmaputra in Kurigram.

Under the programme, a total of Tk 43 lakh will be distributed among 4,300 flood-affected member families of ASA in the three upazilas. Each of the families will receive Tk 1,000 while the distribution process will be completed by the next weekend, ASA officials said.

Of the total amount, Tk 23 lakh will be distributed among 2,300 families in Chilmari and Tk 20 lakh will be disbursed among 2,000 families in Rajibpur and Roumari upazilas.

Chilmari UNO Abdur Rouf launched the programme by handing over Tk 80,000 among 80 flood-affected member families of ASA in a ceremony organised at ASA Chilmari office.

Chaired by Kurigram District Manager of ASA Arbinda Sarker, the programme was also attended by Senior Warrant Officer of the Joint Forces Syed Alimul, Fisheries Officer Anwarul Islam, senior ASA executives Abdur Mannan, Abdur Razaque and Shawkat Ali, Thanahat UP Chairman Abdur Jalil Sarker and President of Chilmari Press Club Nazmul Huda Parveez.

In another ceremony organised by ASA at its Rajibpur upazila office, Rajibpur Press Club President

Kuddus Biswas launched the loan distribution programme among 2,000 flood-affected member families of ASA in Rajibpur and Roumari upazila on the same day.

Regional Manager of ASA Mamunur Rashid, Rajibpur Branch Manager Jahangir Alam, Roumari Branch Manager Manoranjan Sarker and social worker Kabez Uddin were present on the occasion, the officials said.

Female worker dies in wall collapse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A female construction worker was killed as a boundary wall of an under-construction building collapsed on her at Kafur in the city yesterday.

Kafur police quoting witnesses said the dead identified as Fatema Begum, 50, was injured seriously as wall of the under-construction building of Opex Garments' fell on her at about 9:00am. She was removing sands from near the wall.

Fatema was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead at around 10:00am.

Quarishi refutes reports of motorcycle procession

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) coordinator Ferdous Ahmad Quarishi yesterday refuted newspaper reports that he took out motorcycle procession during his party's relief distribution programme at Manikganj on Sunday in violation of the emergency rules.

He also said that he never allows such processions; he even does not believe in 'motorcycle politics' at all.

Speaking at a press conference at his party office, the PDP coordinator also described the photographs of the procession published in several newspapers as 'misrepresentation of the facts'.

When asked about his party leaders who moved from one party to another several times in the past, Quarishi replied, "Rather, those leaders are guilty who did not quit their parties to protest irregularities and illegal activities of the party leader."

ship." "Why did not they quit their parties in the last five years protesting the wrongdoings?" he asked.

Explaining the situation regarding the motorcycle procession, Quarishi claimed in his written speech, "I have seen some of our workers waiting with motorcycles near the Aricha Ghat 1 just exchanged greetings with them and then pulled away. But I got annoyed as several motorcycles were ahead of us. So, my car quickly went ahead of them and reached the site of relief distribution before them [motorcyclists]."

"Some newspapers published it intentionally so that the government think we have violated the law," he said. But they do not see that Khaleda Zia is regularly arranging teleconference and others are also doing politics, he added.

Replying to a question, Quarishi, who floated his new party despite a ban on political activities, said, "I know many persons have opposed the launching of our party... They do not want to see the success of PDP."

"But we want to see other political parties undergo reforms as destruction of old political parties will not bring any good to the nation," he said, adding that PDP wants to do a good job and everybody should cooperate with it.

He also appreciated the authority as well as the joint forces for conducting relief operations in flood-affected areas.

Fazlur Rahman, Maj Gen (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam, Afzal H Khan, Golam Sarwar Milon, Tajul Islam Chowdhury and Shakhawat Hossain were also present at the press conference.

SEDITION CASE Warrant for arrest against Bahauddin Nasim

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday cancelled the bail of Awami Swechchhasebok League President AFM Bahauddin Nasim and issued a warrant for arrest against him in connection with a sedition case filed five years ago.

Metropolitan Magistrate Selina Akhter passed the order, as Nasim failed to comply with the court order issued earlier on August 5 for his appearance before the court yesterday.

In her order, the magistrate said on August 5 she asked Nasim's lawyer to produce him before the court within next seven days. But his lawyers yesterday told the court that Nasim was injured due to grenade attack at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004.

For the reason, he went to Kolkata for treatment in December last year. And they could not communicate with him during the last seven days. So, they prayed for extension of his bail until his return, as he was on bail from the High Court (HC) and his appearance was done through lawyers.

Nasim was granted an interim bail from the HC on November 16, 2002.

Earlier on August 5, the same court accepted the charge sheet of the case.

On July 25, Assistant Superintendent (ASP) of CID Munshi Atiqur Rahman, also the investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka showing 17 people as prosecution witnesses.

Police filed the sedition case with a Dhaka court on March 11 in 2002 accusing Nasim of acting against the country's sovereignty and tarnishing its image abroad.

Mohammad Dulal Uddin Akond, ASP of CID's Faridpur zone, arrested Bahauddin Nasim on February 27, 2002 from Zia International Airport and seized Tk 6,300, three passports, two tickets, eight books and some CDs.

The complainant alleged that the CDs contained 'false and fabricated scenes of torture' on the minority community, videos of ransacking of rooms at Dhaka University dormitories and houses at different parts of the country by the activists of the four-party alliance.

He said the CDs contained videos of attacks on the minority Hindu community and ransacking of puja mandaps after 2001 general election.

"Such activities might destroy the communal harmony and worsen the country's law and order," he observed.



Nayan Lynn, Ambassador of the Union of Myanmar in Bangladesh, hands over the Letter of Commission to H M Hakim Ali as the Honorary Consul of the Union of Myanmar in Chittagong.

WEATHER TODAY logo with sun and cloud icons.

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy rainfalls are also likely at places during the period, Met Office said predicting slight rise in day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 34.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Mongla and lowest 25.0 degree Celsius at Maidiye Court.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:32pm and rises at 5:34am 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.

DHAKA TODAY Roundtable meeting advertisement for Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB).

HOUSEWIFE KILLING Alico field worker held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested a person on charges of killing a housewife.

The victim, Nazmun Nahar Nila, wife of a textile engineer, was found slaughtered at her Uttara residence in the city on July 8.

Maniruzzaman Monir alias Manik, a field worker of American Life Insurance Company (Alico), was arrested from Kawla at 12:30pm with gold ornaments and two cellphone.

On July 14, the police also arrested Mukul, former house tutor of Nila's sons, after her husband Jahangir Alam filed a case.

Two children drown

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Two children have drowned in the district bringing a pale of gloom in the area.

Their bodies were retrieved from a pond at Shilmoon yesterday morning after they went missing on Monday afternoon when they left their homes at around 2:00pm.

They were identified as Mitu, 8, daughter of a mason Imam Hossain and Khushi, 7, daughter of a banana trader Khokon Miah.

Both Mitu and Khushi were students of Sisimpur School which is funded by a local NGO.

Their bodies were found floating in the pond.

Khushi was the only child of her parents while Mitu had a brother and a sister.

Officer in-charge of Tongi Police Station Abdus Salam said an unnatural death case was filed in this connection.

The two bodies were buried at Markoon Pouro Graveyard after a namaz-e-janaza.

sets. One cellphone belonged to Nila.

Monir told reporters at the Rab-1 office in Uttara that he frequented the residence of Nila after they became known to each other through conversation over cellphone. He got her cellphone number by chance.

Monir also confessed that he had murdered Nila out of greed for money he had seen inside the Almirah, which was open during the day of incidence. After committing the murder, he took away Tk 50,000, gold ornaments and a cellphone set.

On July 14, the police also arrested Mukul, former house tutor of Nila's sons, after her husband Jahangir Alam filed a case.

Programmes to observe death anniversary of Shamsur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Nagorik Committee have taken up various programmes to mark the first death anniversary of poet Shamsur Rahman on August 17.

The programmes include paying homage to the poet at his grave at Banani at 8:30am, placing wreaths at his portrait at the Teacher Student Centre (TSC) at 4:30pm, a discussion on his life and works and recitation of his poems.

A souvenir will also be published on the occasion.

Nagorik Committee members have requested the admirers of the poet to attend the programme.