

Present CHT situation threat for future

Say eminent citizens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing grave concern over the situation of the hill people in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), eminent citizens yesterday said it is frightening and might explode anytime, causing ripple effect across the country.

Quoting hill people, they said by continuing and strengthening settlement of the Bangalees in the hills and the land of the indigenous people, Bangalee settlers and the hill people are set against each other.

These observations were made in a report presented to journalists at the National Press Club in the city yesterday following the citizens' visit to CHT during January 28-30.

Professor Ajoy Roy, politician Pankaj Bhattacharya, journalists Kamal Lohani and Syed Abul Maksud, Dr Rashid E Mahub, Dr Shaurav Shikder of Dhaka University, social worker Belal Ahmed and former additional secretary Rabindranath Trivedi were in the team that toured the area.

Presiding over the programme, Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, former vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, said the present situation prevailing in CHT is a threat to the future of Bangladesh.

Some quarters might have been engaged to foil the next elections



Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui speaks at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Prof Ajoy Roy and on his left is journalist Syed Abul Maksud.

and the caretaker government must be aware of it and act accordingly, he said.

Pankaj Bhattacharya said, "A vested quarter is engaged in an ill effort to create anarchy in the country and hamper the national elections. I urge the government to look into the issue seriously."

He categorically said vested quarters are working with the agenda of Jamaat-e-Islami and fundamentalists in the name of Samadhikar Andolon (movements for equal rights).

Presenting the report prepared on their experience, Prof Ajoy Roy said taking advantage of the government's non-implementation of the CHT Peace accord, the civil

administration continued Bangalee settlement, identification of non-hill people and provided them with certificates.

The army's activities in the name of curbing extortion and militant activities of United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) and acquiring new hills have frightened the indigenous people, he said.

The hill people allege the government has conspiracy behind this, he said, adding that the programme that the government undertook in settling the Bangalees in the hills from the Guchchagram instead of rehabilitating the Jumma hill people has angered them.

Cancelling the previous land settlements, the district adminis-

tration is arbitrarily giving new settlements, which go against the interest of the hill people and in favour of the Bangalee settlers, Prof Ajoy noted.

As per regional council leaders, there are over one lakh hill refugees, but there is none to address the problem, Prof Ajoy said, adding that Bangalees are also occupying the religious structures.

The present ratio of hill people and Bangalees is now 52:48, but in the next census it will be tilted towards Bangalees, he said. Hill people think the number of voters will also override the number of the hill people in future, which is a threat to them.

On the other hand, the government is also helping the Rohingya Muslims who fled from Myanmar to settle at Naikhangchhari, Ruma, Lama, and Alikadam in Bandarban. "Does the government then want to form a new CHT with Bangalee and Rohingya Muslims?" Prof Ajoy posed a question.

In the report, the citizens said the number of Jumma people will come down for various initiatives when CHT will be considered extension of the plain Chittagong.

"Colonial attitude of the government, army and Bangalees cannot resist the movement of hill people. We must accept the CHT hill people. So, sooner the Bangalee settlers are removed from the CHT, better is the result," the report said.



Winners of inter-class debate competition titled 'Star Campus-Drishy Debate for Generation Next' pose for photograph with the guests at Radiant School and College in the port city yesterday.

STAR CAMPUS-DRISHTY DEBATE Osmani team wins inter-class debate

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Speakers at a function yesterday called upon the students to build up themselves as rational and logical rather than emotional ones to take up the future leadership of the country.

The function was organised to distribute prizes among the winners of inter-class debate competition titled 'Star Campus-Drishy Debate for Generation Next' at Radiant School and College.

Gen Ataul Gani Osmani team comprising students of class X coming champion defeating Bir Shreshtha Mañur Rahman team of class VII.

The topic of the final debate was 'Our past is more glorious than our present'.

Mohiuddin Ekram of the winning team was adjudged the best debater. Resident Editor of the Prothom Alo poet Abul Momen was the chief guest at the function chaired by school Principal Prof AJM Shahidullah.

Drishy, a cultural organisation, organised the competition while The Daily Star sponsored it. Radio Foort was the radio partner.

Abul Momen said, "We, the Bengali people are very emotional and overreact on various issues including tiny and trivial matters without thinking deeply."

Even the members of parliament were seen quarrelling over insignificant issues instead of taking constructive decisions through logical debates that caused much sufferings to the nation over the years, he added.

Abul Momen said students could be more factual, informative and correct in approaching any contemporary issues through practising debates in everyday life.

Principal Shahidullah, a former chairman of Chittagong Education Board, said students should not be confined to their academic study only but they have to take active part in different extra-curricular activities to face the challenges of present competitive world.

He assured that his institution would arrange such competition regularly to offer the students scope of expanding their faculty of knowledge.

Prashanta Bhushan Barua, head of laws of London Trinity College, Drishy President Masud Bakul, Bureau Chief of The Daily Star Shahidul Islam Bachchu and senior teacher Anurakshi Talukder were present at the ceremony.

A total of eight teams from class VII to class X participated in the nine-day-long contest.

Schoolteachers Subarna Chowdhury, Sanjana Rahman and Drishy Executive Member Syed Reefat Faruq were the judges at the final competition moderated by Prashanta Bhushan Barua.

BDB, JSD in favour of 'consensus govt' after election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) yesterday said they would back the move for forming a 'consensus government' after the national election.

A consensus government comprising the like-minded political parties could be formed after the election, said the leaders at a joint press briefing at KC Memorial Clinic in the capital's Baridhara after holding a two-hour-long meeting.

However, they said it is too early to begin the process of forming such an alliance as the election schedule is yet to be announced.

The leaders of both the parties agreed to place common proposals before the caretaker government while holding political dialogue with it.

The elections must be held by December as per the electoral roadmap, said BDB President Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury.

"A national consensus government comprising the like-minded political parties can be formed after the election," he said.

JSD President Hasanul Haque Inu said a national consensus government can be formed for at least five to ten years after the national election.

He said they want the election to be held as early as possible. But it must not be held in a disorganised way, he added.

\$3m ECHO support for Sidr victims

The European Commission Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) has donated US\$3 million to World Food Programme (WFP) for its emergency operations to feed the cyclone-hit people in Bangladesh, says a press release.

Welcoming the donation WFP Country Director Douglas Broderick yesterday said by supporting its emergency operations ECHO has provided aid to more than two million people struggling to secure enough food after being hit by cyclone Sidr.

WFP's ongoing emergency operations are helping to secure food needs of many of the worst affected and most food insecure families. The assistance will prevent suffering associated with hunger, malnutrition and further deterioration of livelihoods.

Gold ornaments, cash worth Tk 4 lakh looted

CU CORRESPONDENT

Miscreants looted gold ornaments and cash worth around Tk 4 lakh from the residence of a businessman in the city yesterday.

Sources said four miscreants identifying themselves as policemen entered the house of Nurul Islam Bachchu, proprietor of Madina Electronic, around 4:00pm.

They looted 15 tolas of gold ornaments and Tk 80 thousand in cash at gunpoint and managed to decamp with the booties.



Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman Lt Gen (ret) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury speaks at the annual convention of Youth Engagement and Support (YES) at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)



PHOTO: STAR

'Preserve FF quota in all job sectors'

RU CORRESPONDENT

Amra Muktojiddhar Santan, a platform of the children of freedom fighters, yesterday urged the chief adviser to ensure that the freedom fighter quota is preserved in all job sectors, including the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examinations.

At a press conference on the central library premises they also demanded immediate trial of the war criminals.

Convener of the platform Masud Rana Mintu read out a written statement at the press conference.

They alleged that an anti-liberation force is trying to use the emotion of common students to make the campus unstable again.

Meanwhile, a section of students under the banner of 'General Students' led by Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS) activists at another press conference at the central cafeteria urged the education adviser and Public Service Commission chairman to abolish the quota system in BCS examinations.

67 new books arrive in Ekushey fair

BSS, Dhaka

A total of 67 new books arrived in the Ekushey Book Fair yesterday. Besides 12 novels, the new books include 15 on prose, 11 on poetry, five on essay, three on science, three on Liberation War, three on children literature, two on travel, one on history, one on politics, two on religion, two on biography and seven others.

On the 10th day of the fair yesterday, a larger number of booklovers thronged the fair venue to buy new books.

Talking to BSS, a number of publishers expressed their satisfaction over the sales of books this year.

Owner of the Shilpa Taru publishing house Toyum Rashid said the sales of books in the fair are increasing day by day.

Discussions and cultural functions that are being held everyday draw huge crowds.

A discussion on achievement in 36 years in arts, literature and folklore was held on the academy premises yesterday.

Prof Abu Hasan Chowdhury presented a keynote paper with Shamsuzzaman Khan in the chair.

Jatin Sarker, M Saifuddin Chowdhury and Shahida Khatun spoke on the occasion.

Workshop on autism spectrum disorders ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A three-day workshop on proactive and reinforcement classroom strategies for teachers ended here yesterday with a call for understanding inattentive and hyperactive pupils.

Autistic Children's Welfare Foundation, Chittagong and Froebel Play School jointly organised the workshop that aimed at developing skills among the teachers to address social skills deficits in children with Autism Spectrum Disorders in classroom.

Hannan Shah granted HC bail again

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday granted bail to BNP leader Brig Gen (ret) Hannan Shah in a case linked with alleged violation of the Emergency Power Rules (EPR).

A division bench comprising Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice MA Hye, following a petition, granted the bail and issued a rule upon the government to explain why the detainee should not be exonerated from the case under EPR.

Hannan Shah, adviser to detained BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, was first arrested on November 7 last year from his DOHS residence in Dhaka. He was granted bail several times by the High Court but he was re-arrested.

On February 7, he was arrested soon after he was released from a jail in Narayanjan.

Bird fair held on RU campus

RU CORRESPONDENT

A three-day bird fair, jointly organised by the Zoology department of Rajshahi University (RU) and Bangladesh Bird Club, was concluded on the RU campus yesterday.

Earlier, RU Vice Chancellor Prof M Altaf Hossain inaugurated the fair on Friday.

Prof Selina Parvin of Zoology department and also convener of the bird fair was present at the inaugural session.

On the first day, a workshop on identifying birds at RU campus was held at seminar room of the Zoology department.

Bangladesh Bird Club President Enam-ul-Haque moderated the workshop, where at least 200 students and teachers of the department took part.

A bird identifying and seeing programme was held at the Padma river on Saturday.

A drawing competition for children and quiz competition on birds were also held at the zoology department yesterday.

Every year the fair is organised to create awareness to preserve the birds, Zoology department sources



Police intercept a procession of the students of Jagannath University on the campus yesterday. The students take out the procession demanding expulsion of the outsiders from the residential halls.

PHOTO: STAR



Tyre sellers use a portion of the Syed Nazrul Islam Road in the city to clean the old tyres up, much to the suffering of the commuters and pedestrians. The picture was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

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