

Form nat'l commission to ensure indigenous people's rights

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A study of Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) yesterday revealed that some 61.44 percent of indigenous people still face discrimination, 41.86 percent are victims of corruption, and 18.67 percent evicted from their ancestors' land.

The study titled 'Legal and human rights of ethnic minorities in Bangladesh' was conducted on 332 indigenous people of Jessor, Mymensingh, Chapainawabganj, Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Pabna, Rangamati and Sylhet districts from April 2007 to March 2008.

According to the study, 50 percent of these people are not getting fair price of their agricultural products while 49.39 percent complained that they are not getting treatment in public hospitals.

Presenting the findings at a

workshop at the Cirdap auditorium in the city, Prof Nazrul Islam of Dhaka University said as around 1.2 million indigenous people of the country are yet to be recognised as special or indigenous communities constitutionally, they are deprived of enjoying their rights and facing discrimination.

He said some 30.12 percent of indigenous people are not getting educational facilities while 22.89 percent of them are facing threats and violence.

He called for strengthening security of life and property of the minority communities in the country and upholding the basic human rights of all citizens as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Prof Nazrul also called for halting land grabbing and forced eviction of the indigenous communities ensuring full implementation

of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Treaty, and monitoring the activities of law enforcement agencies in the CHT by an independent body.

"Laws in the CHT should be revised to meet international human rights standard and a National Human Rights Commission should be formed as a matter of priority to address the human rights situation in the CHT," he added.

It is very expensive to ensure Human Rights (HR) through the High Court, it is a must to establish an independent National HR Commission immediately, said Prof Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University, adding that the representation of indigenous people in the HR Commission must be ensured.

He said by providing voter ID cards, a process is going on to legalise the settlers including those who went to CHT areas even two to three months ago.

"The problems regarding ethnic minorities will remain until the plurality is recognised in the country," said Prof Kamal, highlighting the grabbing of lands of indigenous people in different areas.

Demanding institutional recognition, Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, urged the government to enact national laws in the light of ILO Convention, Conventional Biological Diversity and Child Rights Convention (CRC) that have been ratified by the government.

He also called for recognising the human rights of indigenous people.

Presented by Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelly, the workshop was moderated by Advocate Alena Khan, executive director of BSEHR. The call was made at a national political dialogue titled 'Remedies of present crisis' at the National Press Club in the capital.

Leaders of around 33 small political parties attended the dialogue organised by Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) President Kader Siddique Bir Uttam.

The leaders said the only way to come out of the crisis is to hold the national election and form a democratic government.

Kader Siddique said they would formulate a guideline soon for forming unity with other political parties.

"The country got its independence under single leadership, then was run for long under a single leadership in many forms, but now people do not want single leadership anymore," he added.

Kader Siddique said only collective leadership can ensure the fruits of independence for all.

He blamed the political leaders for irresponsibility that caused the changed in January 2007.

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) Secretary General Maj (retd) Abdul Mannan said owing to weak

Create alternative force to overcome present crisis

Leaders of small parties call at dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of different small political parties yesterday called for unity among themselves to create an alternative force to help overcome the present crisis.

He said the political parties should get united to bring out the country from the crisis.

Maj Mannan said handing over power to an elected government is the only way to end the crisis.

"If the caretaker government fails to hold the election by December then the people would have no other option but to go for movement," he added.

Najim Uddin al Azad, president of Bangladesh Liberal Democratic Party (BLDP), said unity among the

political parties is the need of the hour.

He said some try to divide the parties forming small and big ones, but the fact is that the big one cannot go to power without the help of small parties.

National Peoples Party Chairman Sheikh Shawkat Hossain Nilu, Jatiya Gonotantrik Party President Shaiful Alam Pradhan, National Awami Party (Bhashani) President Sheikh Anwarul Haque, and Chairman of a faction of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) Misbahur Rahman were present at the dialogue.



PHOTO STAR

Krishak Sramik Janata League President Kader Siddique speaks at a political dialogue at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Maj (Retd) Abdul Mannan and on his left are Shaiful Alam Pradhan, Shawkat Hossain Nilu and AB Khandaker Golam Mortuza.

India destroy Pakistan

FROM PAGE 1

removed as was the prolific Mohammad Yousuf. Akmal slammed two sixes and four boundaries but he tried one too many shots and capitulated at the hands of debutant Yusuf Pathan to give Praveen his fourth wicket. The Meerut-born swing bowler, who relies on his variation, took his third four-wicket haul in only his sixth ODI.

Pakistan skipper Shoaib Malik made a 57-ball 53 but by then, the game was well and truly over as Misbahul Haq and Shahid Afridi were gone by that time although their run-rate was above

five runs an over.

Piyush Chawla weaved his leg-spin around the Pakistan middle and lower order, taking four wickets for 40 runs and completed the rout with the wicket of Wahab Riaz in the 36th over.

But it was man-of-the-match Sehwag's initial explosion that destroyed Pakistan's morale. On a belter of a wicket, Sehwag cut and drove his way to nine boundaries and smashed a six over long-on as he reached 89 in no time. But it ended when he tried to play a late-cut off left-arm Wahab but it went as far as Akmal's gloves. His partnership with Gambhir yielded 155 runs in just 21.3 overs with the left-hander hitting a run-a-ball 62 with six boundaries.

Yuvraj Singh's half-century complemented the Delhi pair's opening act as India looked on course for a 300-plus score.

Not only through their poor bowling, the Pakistanis helped out in the field by dropping two chances offered by Gambhir and Sehwag, on 43, edged to Akmal but when he almost reached the dressing room, he was sent back by his teammates after replays suggested that the ball fell short of the Pakistani wicket-keeper. Third umpire ruled and the batsman was given a re-crease.

While the Pakistanis pondered who will bowl the four balls that remained, captain Shoaib Malik was seen pointing to his shoulders when Younis Khan suggested he bowled.

In the middle of all that mess, Suresh Raina slammed two huge sixes in his 22-ball 26.

Gul finished with three wickets and there were two each for Afridi and Wahab while Tanveer took one.

Tonight, Bangladesh take on India in the final league match of the competition at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

56 Bangladeshi return home after serving in Indian jail

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A total of 56 Bangladeshi citizens, who served two years in Indian jail, were handed over yesterday to the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel and immigration police by the Border Security Force (BSF).

Another 53 people were handed over a day before by the BSF. With this, total of 109 Bangladeshi citizens were handed over to the Bangladesh authorities.

Police said these people went to India two years ago searching for better jobs and were caught by Indian police and sent to Damdama Jail in Kolkata.

Of them, 54 workers were from Sathkhira, one from Sylhet and the other from Dianpur districts.

Bangladesh Mahila Ajinjibi Samity brought them back by contacting the jail authorities.

BMAS Officer Advocate Sadeka Khatun and Programme Officer Laviu Mia received the workers from the Benapole land port police.

Human chain to save N'ganj Kumudini sports ground

DU CORRESPONDENT

neither create any liquidity problem for the private sector, nor will it increase interest rates, the adviser said, noting that the private sector credit growth is already 20-21 percent.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Salehuddin Ahmed echoed the view, saying borrowing is not a major jump.

"Yet, if the public expenditure is qualitative, it will boost the private sector," he said.

Asked if following whitening black money is right at a time when the government is going aggressive against corruption, Mirza Aziz said the chance has been given for legal money from undisclosed income sources.

In the budget Tk 16,932 crore was proposed for social safety net and Tk 58,255 crore (58.3 percent) for poverty reduction. Implementation of the budget will not be difficult because the local government bodies, which will be elected soon, and the administration will implement it, he said.

The size of the budget, its deficit and bank borrowing—none of these are big and unrealistic compared to the GDP, he added.

Asked if the size of Annual Development Programme (ADP) is small this year, Mirza Aziz said the ADP should not be so large that it cannot be implemented. "We have prepared an ADP, which is realistic and can be implemented," he said.

In response to economists' criticism that too much bank borrowing will increase expenditures, he said a major portion of the interest to be paid by the government would be injected domestically, which will have a positive impact on the country's economy.

He said the expenditure for paying interests has been fixed at Tk 12,565 crore, of which Tk 11,274 crore will be paid domestically and Tk 1,291 crore as interests of foreign loans.

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