

No backtracking

FROM PAGE 16
Indigenous Peoples Forum at the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh. CHT Regional Council Chairman Jyotindra Bodhipriyo Larma alias Santu Larma chaired the programme.

Indigenous peoples observed the day through cultural programmes, rallies, film shows and photography exhibitions, with the call for establishing a separate land commission for indigenous peoples living in the flat lands, stopping creating more eco-parks on their lands and providing ethnic minorities with more educational facilities.

Stating that the present administration will not be able to address all the issues concerning the indigenous peoples as its tenure would end in about four-five months, the law adviser said the administration rather wants to keep the process alive by implementing a few more steps so future governments do not back-pedal on the issues.

Raja Debashish Roy, special assistant to the chief adviser, said the judge courts and mobile-phone network in the CHT are steps in the right direction, but establishing the rights of the indigenous peoples in full is still a long way up the road.

Referring to the land commission as enshrined in the CHT peace treaty but hitherto unimplemented, he stressed the need for installing a separate such commission for indigenous peoples living elsewhere in the country.

Executive Director of Manusher

Jonno Foundation Shaheen Anam called for focusing on one or two significant issues a year in the process of resolving the issues.

Santu Larma called for full implementation of the CHT peace treaty, saying rights would not be bestowed on the indigenous peoples, they would have to achieve them through struggle.

He urged them to join hands in the movement for installing a secular, democratic and progressive government.

Danish Ambassador in Dhaka Einar Jensen, executive director of Ain O Shalish Kendra Sultana Kamal, Brian Forey, chargé d'affaires of the delegation of the European Commission to Bangladesh and Dhaka University teacher Dalem Chandra Barman also spoke at the programme.

Cultural Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury, meantime, said the government was finalising rules and regulations in order to ensure that indigenous peoples get employed in government departments.

She said this while inaugurating the day at Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka.

Communist Party President Manjurul Ahsan Khan, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Gano Forum presidium member Pankaj Bhattacharya, Awami League leaders Dr Dipu Moni and Dr Abdur Razzak, Jatiya Party leader GM Quader, Dhaka University teachers Mesbah Kamal and Sadeka Halim attended the inauguration.

New militant group

FROM PAGE 16
eight Islami Samaj members from the premises of District and Sessions Judge's court in Bandarban and seven others in Jamalpur while the Islami Samaj members were distributing leaflets of the organisation.

In the four-page leaflet, Islami Samaj says the nation and the country is in grave danger and human rights in the country are severely violated as the country is being run by a man-made constitution that allows sovereignty and laws of the humans.

At such a dreadful state of the nation and the country, establishing the sovereignty of Allah and Islam, a comprehensive lifestyle guideline of Allah, in the country can only pull the country out of the crisis and protect rights of the people, the leaflet adds.

Democracy and all other man-made laws are curse on humans and "if the man-made system remains in the society and the state, good governance and justice will not be established, discrimination will not be eradicated and people's basic rights will not be ensured," the leaflet signed by Islami Samaj Ameer Syed Humayun Kabir reads.

The leaflet also called upon all to revolt against people's sovereignty and the man-made system and establish sovereignty of Allah and Islamic rule in the country.

Humayun Kabir told The Daily Star that he had refrained from

Syria turned away IAEA: Diplomats

AP, Vienna

Syria has blocked a new visit by International Atomic Energy Agency experts seeking to follow up on intelligence that Damascus built a secret nuclear program built with the help of North Korea, diplomats told The Associated Press yesterday.

The diplomats also said Washington was circulating a note among members of the IAEA board opposing a Syrian push for a seat on the 35-nation board. The board normally works by consensus and a seat held by Damascus could thus hamper any investigation into its alleged nuclear activities.

Syria fears a massive atomic agency investigation similar to the probe Iran has been subjected to more than five years.

"Syria's election to the board while under investigation for secretly building an undeclared nuclear reactor not suited for peaceful purposes would make a mockery" of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, said the note, as read to the AP.

The diplomats said that the US was pushing to encourage Kazakhstan to challenge Damascus for the seat, but the Kazakhs apparently are reluctant to do so, fearing lack of support.

Syria rejected the IAEA request for a visit late last month, the diplomats said. The visit would have been a follow up to an initial trip by IAEA inspectors in June.

"The Syrians said that a visit at this time was inappropriate," said a senior diplomat, who, like two others agreeing to discuss the issue, demanded anonymity because their information was confidential.

That appeared to leave open the possibility of a later visit. But one of the other diplomats said members of the Syrian mission to the IAEA were spreading the word among other missions that further trips beyond the one in June were unlikely.

Delwar

FROM PAGE 1
with its president Fazlur Rahman in the chair.

The BNP secretary general said the government has been running the country illegally through promulgation of ordinances one after another beyond its constitutional jurisdiction.

"The present government came to power illegally and now it is trying to stay in power for long."

Referring to the demands of district level leaders of Jatiyabadi Ainjibi Forum for announcing agitation programmes to get party chairperson Khaleda Zia released, he said they will announce programmes phase by phase to force the government to free her.

Demanding immediate release of Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman, Delwar said people know the reasons of their arrest. He also urged the party men to remain united to free them.

Accusing the government and the election commission (EC) of doing things beyond its constitutional jurisdiction, he said both the government and the EC have been very enthusiastic about holding the local body polls rather than the national elections.

"The government has lost its neutrality and come up as an opponent of BNP. If Khaleda Zia is released, those who brought this government to power will face debacle in the national polls," he said.

He said now there is no alternative but to go for a movement to save the people who are in grave danger.

"BNP is an election-oriented party and Khaleda Zia is the most popular leader in the country," Delwar said.

He asked the government to hold a free, fair and credible election without any further delay to avoid instability in the country.

Adviser Zillur

FROM PAGE 1
with political parties and other stakeholders, have been saying for some time now that the government is working on the release of Khaleda Zia and her sons -- Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko.

Koko was released for two months on an executive order from the government on July 17 but there has been no tangible development with regard to the release of Khaleda Zia or Tarique.

In reply to a question about what the government would do regarding the fact that none of the political parties were willing to participate in polls under a state of emergency, the adviser said, "the caretaker government would sit for a second round of dialogue with political parties."

He said he was very optimistic about a positive outcome of talks with the political parties and that the government would be able to arrive at the right decision on the matter in good time.

Earlier on July 11, the government released Awami League President Sheikh Hasina for two months on an executive order to facilitate her treatment in the USA.

Khaleda Zia was arrested on September 3 last year in connection with Gato graft case. Later several other cases were filed against her.

Money laundering

FROM PAGE 1
repatriation of the smuggled money later on," the source adds.

Many corruption suspects of Bangladesh invested huge money in Malaysia taking advantage of the Malaysian "Second Home Project".

The foreign ministry last year requested the Malaysian government to provide Bangladesh with a list of the people, who had availed the opportunity of the Second Home Project. But Malaysia did not respond to that.

"Once the MoU is signed, Malaysia will help Bangladesh if requested to provide information on a particular Bangladeshi who has utilised the Second Home Project," the source points out.

The 25 other countries with which the central bank is trying to pen similar agreements include India, Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Mauritius, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, Maldives, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Vietnam and Cambodia.

"But we have not initiated fruitful negotiations with some major countries, which have served as destination of money launderers and corrupt people," the source adds.

Countries like Canada, the UK, the US and Australia have asked Bangladesh to become a member of Egmond Group -- a worldwide association of agencies operating against money laundering.

Sources say upon becoming a member of this group, these countries will cooperate with Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh has applied to become a member of the Egmond Group. As a follow-up, a six-member delegation is expected in the country on August 17 to see if our country qualifies to become its member," says an official.

Some political bigwigs of BNP are accused of smuggling out hundreds of millions of dollars to Malaysia and some other destinations.

EC registration

FROM PAGE 1
in line with the criteria before submitting applications.

Once the parties' links with their existing student and professional wings are severed, they will lose control over those auxiliary organisations, which currently implement party programmes.

AL will have to sever its links with at least six auxiliary organisations -- Krishak League which is its farmer and peasant wing, Jatiya Sramik League its worker wing, Chhatra League its student wing, Awami Ainjibi Parishad the lawyer wing, Tanti League the weavers' wing, and Swadhinata Chikitsok Parishad the physician wing.

According to the party constitution, AL central working committee determines the policies of auxiliary organisations. The party secretaries concerned supervise and coordinate the programmes of those organisations which are accountable to the central working committee through the secretaries.

Similarly, BNP will have to amend its constitution severing its ties with at least five organisations -- Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal, Jatiyabadi Sramik Dal, Jatiyabadi Krishak Dal, Jatiyabadi Matshojibi Dal which is its fishermen wing, and Jatiyabadi Tanti Dal.

The party constitution fully empowers the party chief to consider any organisation as an auxiliary of the party.

Jatiya Party (Ershad) will also have to amend its constitution severing ties with at least six

450 tonnes

FROM PAGE 16
from Malaysia while the pre-shipment inspection (PSI) was done in Singapore.

Bureau Varitus in the CRF (Clean Report Finding) of the pre-shipment inspection showed November 2007 as the manufacture date and November 2009 as the time of expiry.

Garment workers

FROM PAGE 1
They called for immediate action against those responsible. But as the factory authorities did not respond, they attacked the Ansars camp.

The Ansars fired at least 15 shots to disperse the demonstrators armed with sticks and stones.

During the clashes, workers Faruq Ahmed and Atiqur Rahman were shot in the leg while security officer of the factory Abdul Qaiyum and laboratory in-charge Abul Hasan were wounded in stone throwing.

The situation came under control with police reaching the scene after about an hour.

In response to the workers' complaints, the Ansars high command in the evening ordered withdrawal of the camp and closed those who were on duty there to the battalion headquarters.

Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, told The Daily Star, "The workers were already annoyed with behaviours of some Ansars men. Friday night's incident only added to their anger."

He said a magistrate would carry out an executive enquiry into yesterday's shooting.

Ctg customs house

FROM PAGE 1
culprits be arrested and punished.

The customs authorities and the taskforce formed by the joint forces, which is helping in the automation system implementation process, started an investigation into the matter immediately and interrogated people involved with the operation of the IGM-EGM module in the server room.

The authorities held a meeting in presence of taskforce members and others concerned in the afternoon to find ways and means to stop repetition of the incident, sources said.

The meeting decided on a number of precautionary measures and formed a committee comprised of people from Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), CCCI and customs house for round-the-clock monitoring of the system's operation, sources said.

The CCCI was installing the full automation system in the customs house with funds provided by stakeholders.

A vested quarter is against the full automation system since customs authorities at the initiative of joint forces formed a taskforce and started the process of implementing the system.

Under the new system, every stage of taxation comes up on a monitor screen and checking irregularities in customs procedures is made easy.

Sources said around Tk 240 crore have been spent in the name of modernisation and automation of customs since 1994 but the

organisations --- Jatiya Krishak Party, Jatiya Sramik Party, Jatiya Ainjibi Federation, Jatiya Chhattra Samaj, Jatiya Matshojibi Party, and Jatiya Tanti Party.

After political parties sever their links with auxiliary organisations, the latter may continue their operations as independent entities with their own programmes, as the proposed new electoral law does not impose any restriction on their independent operations.

Legal experts however are skeptical about the success of the move as they think the new provisions might contradict the fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution.

They said the constitution ensures the fundamental rights of freedom of movement, assembly, association, thought, conscience, and speech.

Under the state of emergency, the new electoral law might be enforced as the emergency automatically suspends the fundamental rights, they said.

But it might be difficult for the EC to enforce the restrictions on political parties, after the state of emergency is lifted, the experts added.

Islami Samaj

FROM PAGE 16
who in 1983 formed a dissident group of Jamaat following his disagreement with Jamaat leader Golam Azam. Syed Humayun Kabir, the ameer of Islami Samaj, made the claim while responding to a query at the conference held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Kabir also claimed that he was the president of Jahangirnagar University unit of Islami Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami.

Dr Abul Khayer, chief director of Islami Samaj, Mohammad Hossain, director of the organisation's Dhaka metropolitan unit, and Abu Zafar Mohammad Iqbal, attended the press conference, among others.

Reading out a written statement, Kabir said the main objective of Islami Samaj is to organise a movement against the country's man-made laws, democracy and sovereignty of the people and replace those with divine laws of Allah.

However, they do not intend to resort to militancy, extremism or terrorism to achieve their goal.

The 15 members were arrested as they were participating in a Dawaat (invitation) programme organised across the country by Islami Samaj, said its leaders.

When asked to comment on whether Ansar Ali, one of the Islami Samaj leaders arrested in Jamalpur, had been detained twice before on charge of his ties with banned Islamist militant outfit Jama'at ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Kabir said he was cleared of the charge.

"We have no association with JMB as we do not believe in their type of politics," he added.

3 'robbers'

FROM PAGE 1
robbers and sent them to Jessore Sadar Hospital.

The law enforcers also seized the private car and recovered sharp weapons from it.

48 rebels killed

FROM PAGE 16
a roadside mine inside rebel territory on Friday, killing a civilian.

Separate confrontations in Weliya region killed six rebels, he said.

The two days of fighting raised the number of rebels killed by troops to 5,673 since January, while 519 soldiers have died in combat during the same period, according to ministry figures.

Rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan could not immediately be reached for comment on the military's casualty figures, which were impossible to verify because reporters are barred from the war zone.

Both sides routinely exaggerate enemy casualties and underreport their own.

The rebels have been fighting for an independent state in the north and east since 1983, following decades of marginalization of ethnic Tamils by governments dominated by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

AL warns

FROM PAGE 1
even after 19 months of its takeover while, as per constitution, a caretaker government can stay for three months.

He also categorically said that AL as well as the people will not accept the parliamentary elections under the state of emergency.

He hinted that the AL-led 14-party alliance will forge greater alliance comprising other progressive forces ahead of the parliamentary elections.

Amir Hossain Amu came up with a proposal that the upazila elections be held on the same day of the parliamentary polls or three to seven days afterwards.

He asked the government to lift the state of emergency before the parliamentary polls, failing which neutrality of the interim government and the Election commission will be questioned.

Hosts off

FROM PAGE 1
three of the four finals being staged.

In the first event to test athletes' ability to withstand the heat and smog of a Beijing summer, Spain's Samuel Sanchez won the men's cycling road race along a gruelling 245-km route from the Forbidden City in Beijing to the Great Wall.

More than a third of contestants dropped out, including favourites like German, Stefan Schumacher who said the humidity and smog made a hard course even tougher.

"I have a very, very strong headache," said Schumacher, after abandoning the race. "I suppose it's the pollution."

The 2007 Tour de France winner Alberto Contador could not handle the heat either. "I just didn't have any more strength in the legs," said Contador after giving up.

Sanchez's Spanish teammates said they had decided to work together to support whichever of them had the best chance to win.

"In the end it turned out that Samuel felt the best and so we played his card," said Spain's Carlos Sastre, this year's Tour de France winner. The women's cycling road race is along the same route on Sunday when it is forecast to be wet and cooler.

Tennis officials said they may allow heat breaks during matches to help players cope with stifling humidity and heat in the high 90s Fahrenheit (above 35 Celsius). Competitors have said the conditions are among the toughest they have faced.

Warnings smog would hinder performance have persisted despite an 18-billion-dollar campaign to clean the air around the city by shutting down smokstack industry and forcing cars off the roads.

US President George W Bush watched the American beach volleyball teams practice, joining the women on court to volley a few balls, hitting two but missing the third.

At one point, 2004 gold medal winners Misty May-Treanor jokingly bent over and offered Bush a chance to give her a pat on the rear. Instead, he playfully tapped her back.

3 children hurt

FROM PAGE 16
cricket ball wrapped with tape at a lane near their house at about 4:00pm. "As soon as I unwrapped the object, it exploded with a big bang," he said.

Another injured Shahidul said, "When I along with my younger sister Kulsum, came out of my elder sister's house, we heard the sound of an explosion and received splinter injuries."

Shahidul and Kulsum came to Dhaka from Shariatpur to visit their elder sister.

Sutrapur police said they are investigating the incident.

Aman farming

FROM PAGE 16
it," he told this correspondent when he visited the area.

Another farmer of the same village, Abdul Mazid, said he spent Tk 6,750 per hectare for transplanting Aman seedlings this season while the expenditure for it was about Tk 4,500 a hectare last season.

2,000 killed

FROM PAGE 1
Georgia's Foreign Ministry said the country was "in a state of war" and accused Russia of beginning a "massive military aggression." The Georgian parliament approved a state of martial law, mobilising reservists and ordering government authorities to work round-the-clock.

Russia's Interfax news agency said at least 2,000 have been killed in the capital of South Ossetia and claimed the city has been destroyed.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told reporters in Moscow that some 1,500 people have been killed, with the death toll rising.

The figure could not be independently confirmed, but witnesses who fled the fighting said hundreds of civilians had probably died. They said most of the provincial capital, Tskhinvali, was in ruins, with bodies lying everywhere.

The air and artillery bombardment left the provincial capital without water, food, electricity and gas. Horrified civilians crawled out of the basements into the streets as fighting eased, looking for supplies.

Russian General Vladimir Boldyrev claimed in televised comments yesterday that Russian troops had driven Georgian forces out of the provincial capital. Witnesses confirmed that there was no sign of Georgian soldiers in the streets.

Georgia's President Mikhail Saakashvili proposed a cease-fire yesterday. As part of his proposal, Georgian troops were pulled out of Tskhinvali and had been ordered to stop responding to Russian shelling, said Alexander Lomaia, secretary of his Security Council.

Russia did not immediately respond to Saakashvili's proposal. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev had said earlier that Moscow sent troops into South Ossetia to force Georgia into a cease-fire.

Lomaia said there had been direct fighting between Russian and Georgian soldiers on the streets of Tskhinvali. He estimated that Russia sent 2,500 troops into Georgia. The Russian military has not said how many of its troops were deployed.

Russian military aircraft also bombed the Georgian town of Gori yesterday. An Associated Press reporter who visited Gori shortly afterward saw several apartment buildings in ruins, some still on fire, and scores of dead bodies and bloodied civilians. The elderly, women and children were among the victims.

"Georgia is facing Russia's military aggression," Saakashvili said, noting that Russian forces were attacking areas outside South Ossetia. "Georgian authorities support a cease-fire and separation of the warring parties."

It is the worst outbreak of hostilities since the province won de facto independence in a war against Georgia that ended in 1992.

The fighting threatens to ignite a wider war between Russia and Georgia, which accused Russia of bombing its towns, ports and air bases. Georgia, a former Soviet republic with ambitions of joining Nato, has asked the international community to help end what it called Russian aggression.

It also likely will increase tensions between Moscow and Washington, which Lavrov said should bear part of the blame for arming and training Georgian soldiers.

Moscow has said it needs to protect its peacekeepers and civilians in South Ossetia, most of whom have been given Russian passports. Ethnic Ossetians live in the breakaway Georgian province and in the neighbouring Russian province of North Ossetia.

Overnight, Russian warplanes bombed the Vaziani military base on the outskirts of the Georgian capital and near the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, Georgian Interior Ministry spokesman Shota Utashvili said. He also said two other military bases were hit, and that warplanes bombed the Black Sea port city of Poti, which has a sizable oil shipment facility.

Georgia, meanwhile, said it has

shot down 10 Russian planes, including four brought down yesterday, according to Kakha Lomaya, head of Georgia's Security Council.

The first Russian confirmation that its planes had been shot down came yesterday from Russian Col Gen Anatoly Nogovitsyn, deputy chief of the General Staff, who said two Russian planes were downed. He did not say where or when.

Russian military commanders said 15 peacekeepers have been killed and about 150 wounded. Russian troops went in as peacekeepers but Georgia alleges they now back the separatists.

Russian military spokesman Col. Igor Konashenkov accused Georgian troops of killing and wounded Russian peacekeepers when they seized Russian checkpoints. Konashenkov's allegations couldn't be independently confirmed yesterday.

Russia's foreign minister said that Georgia brought the airstrikes upon itself by bombing civilians and Russian peacekeepers, and warned that the small Caucasus country should expect more attacks.

"Whatever side is used to bomb civilians and the positions of peacekeepers, this side is not safe and they should know this," Lavrov said.

Asked whether Russia could bomb the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, Lavrov answered: "I don't think the bombing is coming from Tbilisi, but whatever part of Georgia is used for this aggression is not safe."

It was unclear what might persuade either side to stop shooting. Both claim the battle started after the other side violated a cease-fire that had been declared just hours earlier after a week of sporadic clashes.

Diplomats have issued a flurry of statements calling on both sides to halt the fighting and called for another emergency session of the UN Security Council, its second since early Friday morning seeking to prevent an all-out war.

President Bush said yesterday the outbreak of fighting is endangering peace throughout the volatile region, and he urged an end to the deadly outbreak of violence.

"I'm deeply concerned about the situation in Georgia," Bush said in a statement to reporters while attending the Olympics in Beijing. "The attacks are occurring in regions of Georgia far from the zone of conflict in South Ossetia. They mark a dangerous escalation in the crisis."

"The violence is endangering regional peace, civilian lives have been lost and others are endangered. We have urged an immediate halt to the violence and a stand-down by all troops. We call for an end to the Russian bombings, and a return by the parties to the status quo of Aug. 6."

Russia, which has granted citizenship to most of the region's residents, appeared to lay much of the responsibility for ending the fighting on Washington.

Georgia, which borders the Black Sea between Turkey and Russia, was ruled by Moscow for most of the two centuries preceding the breakup of the Soviet Union. Georgia has angered Russia by seeking Nato membership, a bid Moscow regards as part of a Western effort to weaken its influence in the region.

Georgia's President Mikhail Saakashvili, a US-educated lawyer, long has pledged to restore Tbilisi's rule over South Ossetia and another breakaway province, Abkhazia. Both regions have run their own affairs without international recognition since splitting from Georgia in the early 1990s and have built up ties with Moscow.

Georgia has about 2,000 troops in Iraq, making it the third-largest contributor to coalition forces after the US and Britain. But Saakashvili has called them home in the face of the South Ossetia fighting. The Georgian commander of the brigade in Iraq yesterday said they would leave as soon as transport can be arranged.

Musharraf

FROM PAGE 16
"We have good news for democracy. The coalition believes it is imperative to move for impeachment against Musharraf. We will present a chargesheet against Musharraf," PPP Chairman Asif Ali Zardari had said on Thursday.