

Protect rights of ethnic people

Speakers urge media

METRO DESK

Indigenous community leaders, social activists, government officials and journalists yesterday stressed the need for proactive role of the media to protect the rights of ethnic communities through projecting their sufferings.

Speaking at a roundtable, they said the media could be used as a powerful tool of disseminating information about the ethnic groups and drawing attention of the policymakers to resolve their problems.

The roundtable titled 'Bridging the gap between media and ethnic communities' was organised by Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) at Madhupur in Tangail.

The roundtable was held under a project titled 'Bridging Media and Ethnicity' which was supported by the Delegation of the European

Commission to Bangladesh.

The main objective of the roundtable was to reduce the gap between the media and GO/NGOs/CBOs working for ethnic rights, says a press release.

Indigenous leaders told the roundtable that most of the ethnic issues are ignored in the local and national media, and ethnic voices are almost absent.

Media portray some stereotyped images of ethnic life and highlight only some cultural activities and incidents, they added.

On the other hand, journalists said they need authentic sources of information while reporting on major ethnic issues, but very few people dare to provide information.

For in-depth reporting on ethnic issues, they sought cooperation from the community people.

Two keynote papers were presented at the roundtable by Runa

Laila, assistant professor of Women and Gender Studies at Dhaka University, and journalist Quratul-Ain-Tahmina.

The indigenous people are deprived of adequate media coverage, said Tahmina, adding, issues relating to their rights and sufferings are not adequately reflected in the media.

She suggested that journalists should concentrate on objective and in-depth reporting on the ethnic communities.

Runa highlighted the history and lifestyle of indigenous people.

She described how the indigenous people are deprived of their rights and how other people treat them.

Speaking as chief guest at the roundtable, Dr MA Parvez Rahim, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Madhupur, stressed the need for objective reporting in media.

"Media should not write any-

thing which can affect the long tradition of peace and harmony between the plain land people and the indigenous community," he added.

The UNO said more interactions between the media people and indigenous community would help reducing communication gap.

Hasibur Rahman, executive director of MRDI, said indigenous people have been suffering for decades.

Although HR groups are trying to address ethnic issues, still there is a lot to do, he added.

He stressed that the educated ethnic youths should come forward and write their own issues in the media.

The roundtable, moderated by Special Correspondent of the Financial Express Syed Ishtiaque Reza, was attended by about 20 indigenous community leaders, GO/NGO officials and journalists.



PHOTO: ZOBAIR HOSSAIN SKIDER

More and more brick kilns are being set up on farmlands in Chittagong to meet the growing demand for bricks. As a result, poor farmers are losing their arable lands. This photo was taken at Paindang-Chhotochhonia in Fatikchhari yesterday. There are several other brick kilns in nearby areas.



PHOTO: PID

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed calls on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

Create professionals in disaster management

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former adviser to a caretaker government Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury yesterday called for starting formal education on disaster management in the universities of the country.

He was speaking as chief guest at the inaugural session of a workshop on 'National Plan for Disaster Management' at the Biam auditorium in the city.

The workshop was organised by Disaster Management Bureau (DMB) which is preparing the national plan in collaboration with the UNDP.

Prof Jamilur also the vice-chancellor of Brac University, said the country is more efficient than any other developed country in disaster management but we should further develop the skill and we need to create professionals in this field.

"Not many universities across the globe have opened disaster manage-

ment as a formal discipline. So we have to be the pioneer in disaster management education," he added.

Prof Jamilur, an expert in disaster management, also said collaboration between the governmental and non-governmental organisations is needed in disaster management.

He said the country is already recognised as highly efficient in disaster management and this was also recognised by the US media during the hurricane Katrina that hit Florida recently.

"We now need to enhance our capacity in the field," he added.

Additional Secretary to food and disaster management ministry AKM Abdul Awal Majumder said it is difficult to handle the disaster management programmes.

He called for coordination among the ministries that are related to disaster management saying every stakeholder should be included in the disaster management plan.

He also called for starting campaign for creating awareness among the people.

He said his ministry will launch a campaign very soon in the school and colleges in the capital to raise awareness about earthquake.

Speaking as chair the DMB director general said, "With the new plan for disaster management we want to bring a paradigm shift in the disaster management process by more focusing on risk reduction with pre-disaster assessments rather than rushing to the disaster-hit areas with relief."

"The new policy will focus risk reduction, capacity building, livelihood security, gender mainstreaming and many other aspects," the DG added.

Chief Technical Adviser of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) Ian Rector, and UNDP representative Tariqul Islam also spoke in the programme.

BNP celebrates Khaleda's birthday today

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia turns 64 today. BNP and its front organisations have chalked out programmes to observe her birthday.

In a latest turn of events in the country's political arena, she has been put behind bars under a purge in the interim period.

Jatiyatabadi Mahila Dal and Tanti Dal will cut a birthday cake after midnight tonight (00-01am) at BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain's Nam apartment.

Delwar and other BNP leaders will go to the makeshift jail to greet Khaleda Zia with bouquets at 9:00am today. A milad and doa mahfil will be held on the ground floor of Delwar's apartment at 10:00am.

JCD will cut a birthday cake at Madhu's Canteen of Dhaka University at 12:00 noon.

RMG worker dies after head trapped between lift doors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A garment worker died after his head was trapped between the doors of a lift at a garment factory at Badda in the city yesterday.

The victim was identified as Abdur Rouf, 32, a cutting assistant of Ha-Meem Design Ltd at Holland Centre at Middle Badda.

Witnesses said Rouf's head got stuck between the doors of the lift on the seventh floor of the building while entering the lift.

They also said his body was inside the lift when his head got trapped. Quoting witnesses, Maj (ret) Rezaul Karim, executive director of Ha-Meem Design Ltd, told The Daily Star that, "The lift came down quickly and those who were inside the lift could not stop the lift despite repeated attempts."

He said they finally rescued Rouf when the lift stopped on the fourth floor.

Rouf was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

The lift had remained out of order for two years and it started functioning recently.

Death anniversary of Aug 15 victim Rinto observed

BSS, Dhaka

The death anniversary of Abdur Nayeem Khan Rinto, a victim of August 15 killings in 1975, was observed with due solemnity yesterday.

A promising artiste, Rinto, son of late Abdul Khaleque Khan, founder chairman of Opsonin Group, came to the capital from Barisal leading a cultural group to perform music.

A close friend of the second son of the then minister Abdur Rob Serniabat, he went to his friend's residence on that fateful night and became victim of bullets of the assassins.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil was held and special prayers were offered at the Eskaton head office of Opsonin Group.

Shibir uses JCD image to establish dominance on DU campus

RAKIB AHAMMED

Leaders of Islami Chhatra Shibir, student front of Jamaat-e-Islami, are trying to establish their dominance on the Dhaka University (DU) campus using the image of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of BNP.

The process of enrolling Shibir men in JCD started after 1/11 changeover, when activities of the student bodies were restricted on the campus due to the state of emergency.

Paribesh Parishad, a platform

comprising DU authority and student representations, imposed a ban on the overall activities of Shibir in early 1990s.

On January this year, JCD allegedly enrolled Shibir men in their movement for the release of detained four DU teachers and eight students, who were arrested in connection with a campus unrest that occurred on August 20 last year.

The movement was launched under the banner of Nirjaton Protirodh Chhatra Andolon (student movement to resist repres-

sion) as JCD could not use its own umbrella due to the state of emergency.

After the release of the detainees, JCD launched a separate movement under its banner demanding the release of detained BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and other political leaders.

But Protirodh Andolon has been continuing its demonstrations separately on the campus on different issues, including the release of Khaleda Zia.

Meanwhile, a section of JCD leaders urged the top front leaders

to take steps to quit the Protirodh Andolon complaining that the banner is mainly being run by Shibir cadres using the image of JCD.

But Khomim Ahsan, convener of Protirodh Andolon, staged a demonstration on the campus on Wednesday evening allegedly taking around 300 Shibir men demanding the release of Khaleda.

JCD sources said following showdown by Shibir men under the banner, a clear conflict has occurred among top JCD leaders at the university and central level.

"Now it is quite clear that Protirodh Andolon is mainly run by Shibir taking shelter from JCD and its main target is to promote activities of Shibir on the campus," Obaidul Haq Nasir, organising secretary of JCD DU unit, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We demand punishment to the JCD men who supported Protirodh Andolon that gave shelter to Shibir men to run their activities on the campus," he added.

Khomim Ahsan, however, denied the allegation of Shibir men's involvement in Protirodh Andolon, saying, "JCD has turned into a dysfunctional organisation for a long time. That's why, top JCD leaders could not identify junior activists of JCD."

DU unit General Secretary of JCD Saiful Islam Feroz told reporters that Protirodh Andolon is a non-political organisation that has been demonstrating on the campus against repression and illegal activities in the society and state.



Chief Adviser's Special Assistant for Environment and Forest Raja Debashish Roy speaks at a roundtable at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is AHM Rezaul Kabir and on his left are Sultana Kamal and Dr Iftekharuzzaman. TIB organised the event. (Story on Page 1)

Land developers not applying quake resisting measures

Speakers say at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Land developers are filling low-lying lands around Dhaka city for the construction of buildings without applying earthquake resisting measures, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

The developers are also not following the National Building Code while filling the low-lying lands, they added.

"We need to update the National Building Code, which should feature the latest developments in earthquake-resistant design," Communication Adviser Maj Gen (ret) Ghulam Quader said as the chief guest.

He also stressed the need to enact laws requiring the land development agencies to consider site amplification, landslide and soil liquefaction issues during the construction.

Bangladesh Earthquake Society

Anwar Zahid laid to rest

UNB, Dhaka

Veteran journalist and former information minister Anwar Zahid was laid to rest at Buddhijibi graveyard in Mirpur yesterday after the last janaza at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Asr prayers.

Earlier, another janaza was held at the Jatiya Press Club with large number of his journalist, political and trade union colleagues and well-wishers. They also offered prayers for salvation of his departed soul.

Wreaths were placed at his coffin on behalf of the Jatiya Press Club and journalist unions. Anwar Zahid passed away on Wednesday night at United Hospital at the age of 73.

He had long been suffering from kidney and diabetic ailments. He was admitted to same hospital following deterioration of his condition on August 6. He was later put on life support.

Sweater factory gutted in Joydevpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Valuables of a sweater factory at Joydevpur in Gazipur were gutted on Wednesday night.

Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD) sources said the fire broke out at Nexus Sweater Industries at about 10:45pm and put out fire of four units at about 2:30am.

They said the cause of the fire could not be known immediately and amount of losses could not be ascertained.

The factory authorities, however, said the fire caused the loss of their valuables worth about Tk 10 crore.



Engineer Shahidullah and architects Shamsul Wares and Abdur Rashid visit Boro Kutra, one of the heritage buildings, at Chwakhazari in the city yesterday. Campaign for Heritage, Bangladesh organised the visit and a drawing competition for schoolchildren as part of its conservation campaign.

DCC waste management work brought under one unit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has formally changed the name of its conservancy unit to waste management department, bringing all waste management work of Dhaka city under its fold.

Dhaka mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka made the announcement yesterday at a ceremony jointly organised by DCC and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

Earlier, solid waste management services were provided by various departments of the city and required much effort and time to

coordinate their activities.

The resources in terms of manpower, equipment and financing now will all be put under the waste management department, which will be entirely dedicated to provide a single service.

DCC Mayor Khoka, speaking as the chief guest, said a better and developed service would be delivered to city dwellers now due to establishment of this department.

DCC has also taken up some pragmatic and modern programmes with the cooperation of JICA like setting up of a landfill at Matuail, he informed the guests.

According to JICA, after 20 years

of dumping waste at the Matuail landfill, the place will not be abandoned but used for other purpose-like setting up of a park.

Residential representative of JICA Bangladesh Nobuko Suzuki Kayashima, who attended the programme as special guest, said the setting up of a dedicated waste management department was a suggestion made by JICA in the master plan for Dhaka.

Md Alauddin, chief executive officer of DCC, told the meet that DCC has asked JICA to continue their cooperation so that a modern waste management programme can be run by DCC.

Project director of the sanitary

landfill Tariq Bin Yousuf said the waste management department has identified a number of initial tasks that will be given priority for implementation.

These include primary collection and secondary collection processes, training on safe working conditions for cleaners, strengthening of zone and ward offices for sweeping of streets, drain cleaning, waste collection and transportation, improvement of collection and transportation vehicle operation, promotion of community based solid waste management and handling of industrial, commercial and institutional waste etc.

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