

Indiscriminate felling of trees at Khashia Punji protested

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Bangladesh Adivasi Forum (BAF) yesterday formed a human chain at TSC intersection on the Dhaka University campus protesting the indiscriminate cutting down of trees at Khashia Punji in Moulvibazar.

Bapa President Prof Muzaffer Ahmed said wholesale cutting down of trees at Khashia Punji not only poses a threat to the environment, but also it is an issue of justice.

The environment, biodiversity and livelihood of the local indigenous people are facing threats due to such type of whimsical act of the government, he added.

Prof Ahmed said the government decision would put questions to the future national plan to face the impacts of climate change.

At the programme, he called on the government to be careful not to take such decision immediately.

The speakers said a huge number of trees have already been cut down as part of chopping down 4,000 trees in Khashia Pan Punji at Nahar Tea Garden at Srimangal and process of felling down more trees underway.

They placed a five-point demand, including immediate halt to cutting down of trees and their sale and stop taking tax from the local indigenous people.

The speakers said though only 864.58 acres of land is registered with the tea garden, it is using more than 1200 acres of land.

Though the news of corruption by the local official of forest departments is published in the media, they are still cutting down trees indiscriminately, they added.



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UNITED NATIONS DAY TODAY Bangladesh reaffirms strong commitment to ideals of UN

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday reaffirmed Bangladesh's strong and unwavering commitment to the ideals, values and principles of the United Nations.

"The UN Charter -- which came into effect on this day in 1945 -- embodies the hopes and aspirations of the six billion people to live in peace and harmony," chief adviser said in a message on the occasion of the United Nations Day today.

He said the world body has been relentlessly promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and sustainable development towards this end.

The chief adviser said since its emergence sixty-three years ago, United Nations has remained steadfast in fulfilling the aspirations of the people across the world. It has supported its member states in their fight against poverty, diseases and hunger. UN has always been by the side of millions of disadvantaged and distressed people, affected by man-made or natural disasters.

He further said the United Nations ever-increasing relevance is all the more evident in numerous peace keeping and peace building missions. One can hardly imagine a world without the United Nations.

Fakhruddin said Bangladesh remains avowedly committed to the objectives of the United Nations.

"This finds reflection in the 'culture of peace' resolution of the UN General Assembly, which takes into account the diversity of the states and their rights to development," he added.

He said Bangladesh has been one of the key countries in promoting a culture of peace at the UN. As one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping operations, we have demonstrated our unwavering commitment to protect humanity from the scourge of war. Our troops, deployed in many countries of Africa, have earned the highest accolade for their professionalism and their unwavering commitment to the ideals of the United Nations.

The chief adviser pointed out that over the years United Nations had significantly evolved and reformed itself to meet the expectations of its members. Bangladesh has always remained engaged in the process to make it a more dynamic and responsive organisation.

"We have always believed in the indispensability of the UN, not just to promote peace and set norms and standards but also to foster development and eradicate poverty," he added.

The world owes the millennium development goals to the UN. "We believe that only the UN -- upholding the spirit of mutual respect and cooperation -- can meaningfully help the developing countries achieve their MDGs. The international community must further strengthen and democratise the UN to make it more effective in meeting the challenges of the 21st century," he said.



An army contingent comprising 163 members boarding a UN chartered plane on Wednesday night in Dhaka to join a UN mission in Sudan.

CU to introduce artist quota in admission test

BSS, Chittagong

Chittagong University (CU) authorities have decided to introduce a quota for artists from 2008-2009 academic sessions to enroll certain number of students having talents in cultural arena on priority basis.

A recent meeting of CU admission test committee approved the decision.

"We are going to introduce quota for artists this session and 10 eligible students will get the opportunity to avail the quota," Prof Dr Harunur Rashid, dean of CU business administration faculty and a member of the committee, told BSS.

"Only singers will be considered for the quota system," he added. Sources said the authorities will form a selection committee to judge the merit of the admission seekers under this quota.

Fertiliser dealer arrested in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police yesterday arrested a fertiliser dealer and seized 50 sacks of Potash and Phosphate fertilisers from his possession at Godagari while he was allegedly attempting to sell them in black market.

Police said fertiliser dealer Abu Hossain was caught when locals informed that he was taking away the fertiliser sacks to other places of Kadam Sahar in a truck.

A case has been lodged against him, said police adding that Abu Hossain was also held for the same charge last year.

Anti-sculpture body warned

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at the roundabout where the Baul (folk singer) statues used to be.

However, Chairman of the committee Mufti Noor Hossain Nurani told The Daily Star yesterday, "The programme will go ahead at any cost... cancellation of the programme is out of the question."

Meanwhile, different organisations continued with their protest against the removal of the Baul sculptures and demanded their reinstatement.

In Netrakona cultural activists tried to form a human chain in front of the local press club yesterday demanding reinstatement of the statues. Police, however, prevented them from carrying out their programme, our Netrakona correspondent reports.

Charan Sangskritik Kendra, a cultural organisation, yesterday formed a human chain in front of the National Museum protesting the

removal of the sculptures.

They also held a rally there. Speakers at the rally demanded that the government try war criminals and ban religion-based politics.

Central Coordinator of Charan Sangskritik Kendra Jahedul Haque Milu, Samajtantrik Sramik Front General Secretary Rajekuzzaman Ratan, Coordinator of Democratic Left Alliance Abdus Salam and General Secretary of Krishak Front Bazlur Rashid Firoz spoke at the rally, among others.

Lalon Bhaskarja Punosthapan Manch, a platform demanding reinstatement of the sculptures, yesterday held a day-long cultural programme on Dhaka University campus.

The platform displayed posters, photos, news clippings and cartoons on the removal of the sculptures at the TSC and in front of the Ducus building on the campus.

A recently launched political party, United Citizen Movement (UCM) led

by Kazi Faruk Ahmed, in a press release condemned the removal of the statues and demanded their reinstatement.

Samajik Pratirodh Committee (SPC), a platform of several non-government organisations, in a meeting said they were shocked to see the government remove the sculptures under pressure from activists of a certain students organisation.

They condemned the removal of the sculptures, vandalism at Dhaka University Vice-chancellor's office by madrasa students, sexual harassment of a female student at Jahangirnagar University and harassment of female students at BCIC College. They said these acts just before the elections are making them anxious.

Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, an organisation of labourers and employees, will form a human chain at the Central Shaheed Minar at 4:00pm today protesting the removal of the statues.

Moudud, Falu get bail

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Lutfuzzaman Babar in an arms case. The trial court sentenced him to 17 years' imprisonment in the case.

The full bench of the apex court, headed by Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin, also extended for three months its earlier order granting bail to Tarique Rahman in a Tk 21 crore bribery case involving the murder of a director of Basundhara Group.

Barrister Ahsanul Karim, counsel for Moudud, Babar and Falu, yesterday told The Daily Star that his clients were granted bail in all cases filed against them and there was no legal bar to their release from jail.

CASE AGAINST MOUDDUD

The HC bench comprising Justice Mohammad Anwarul Haque and Justice Farah Mahbub granted bail to Moudud Ahmed in a case, which was filed by the ACC on charges of amassing illegal wealth and concealing information of the assets.

The bench also issued a rule upon

the government to explain within four weeks why the petitioner (Moudud) should not be granted regular bail in this case.

The ACC filed the case against Moudud with Gulshan Police Station on September 16 last year. In the case, it was alleged that the former law minister had kept back information about his actual wealth and the wealth accumulated through illegal means in the statement submitted to the ACC.

CASE AGAINST FALU

Upon hearing on an appeal filed by Mosaddek Ali Falu, political secretary to former premier Khaleda Zia, the HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Farid Ahmed granted bail to him in a graft case filed on charge of misappropriating relief materials.

Earlier on June 2, a special court sentenced him to five years' rigorous imprisonment in the case.

Falu then filed an appeal with the HC against the judgement of the trial court. He was arrested at his

Cantonment residence in the capital on charge of corruption on February 6 last year.

CASE AGAINST BABAR AND TARIQUE

The Appellate Division yesterday upheld the HC order granting bail to Babar in the arms case. It also dismissed a leave-to-appeal filed by the government against the HC order.

On October 16, the High Court, following a pending appeal against the trial court judgment on October 30 last year, granted the interim bail to Babar on health grounds.

The Joint forces arrested Babar at his Gulshan residence on May 28 last year and recovered four firearms -- a shotgun, a 22 bore rifle, a pistol and a Brazilian revolver -- and 297 bullets.

Besides, the Appellate Division, upon a petition, extended its August 28 order granting interim bail to Tarique Rahman, now in the United Kingdom for treatment, in a Tk 21 crore bribery case involving the murder of Bashundhara Group director Humayun Kabir Sabbir.



A team of mobile court inspects a fish at a kitchen market at Bahaddarhat in Chittagong yesterday during an anti-formalin drive.

Pro-BNP teachers ask DU

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standards, not to exclude madrasa students from the admission process.

Progressive teachers and students of the university alleged that pro-BNP and Jamaat teachers are putting pressure on the university authorities and the departments concerned to help Islami Chhatra Shibir, student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, establish their supremacy on the university campus.

As per the Dhaka University Order, 1973, the academic committee of a department will make the decisions about the admission of students to the department concerned.

"All policy matters shall be dealt with by two departmental committees--Academic Committee and Co-ordination and Development Committee. The academic committee shall deal with--admission of students, syllabuses, examinations, teaching in the department and co-curricular activities of the students," mentions section 43, part one of the order.

Six departments -- English, Bengali, Mass Communication and Journalism, International Relations, Women and Gender Studies and Linguistics -- have decided not to allow students who did not study 200 marks in English and Bengali each in Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) or equivalent examinations.

The economics department also introduced a condition that

only the students who studied economics, not Health Economics or Islamic Economics, in HSC and equivalent exams will be eligible for admission to the department.

Over a hundred madrasa students mainly Shibir cadres vandalised the VC office on October 18 demanding cancellation of the decision.

Prof Harun-or-Rashid, dean of Social Science faculty, said the departments' rights given by the university order, 1973 to make decisions would be hampered if the conditions are changed.

VC Prof SMA Faiz told the reporters that he would call a meeting of the deans' committee if he receives any request in writing from any of the deans.

He said if the deans' committee thinks that the admission criteria can be relaxed he would ask the department concerned to revise the admission criteria.

Pro-Awami League 'blue-panel' teachers at a separate meeting with the VC urged him not to influence the departments' decision-making power given by the university order, 1973.

Asked why they demanded relaxation of the conditions, 'white-panel' Convener Prof Sadrul Amin told the reporters, "There should not be any discrimination against any section of students".

Advertisement for 'কিস্তিতে ফ্ল্যাট @ কাকরাইল' (Flat @ Kakrail) with contact information.

Large advertisement for BRAC University undergraduate admission, listing various programs and requirements.

Large advertisement for BRAC Career Opportunity, detailing requirements for Audit Officer-II and Audit Officer-I positions.