

Changes a must

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Justice Habibur hoped that with such a response from the young generation, the nation would be able to materialise its dreams. "Lots of people made many pledges during the campaign and we have to respect what other people pledged," he added.

Welcoming people at the programme Prothom Alo Editor Matür Rahman said, "We worked for the last 10 years with the slogan 'Prothom Alo is with what is good' but now we have changed this and our new slogan is 'Change yourself, change the society' since we believe that nothing can be changed unless we change ourselves."

Scientist and author Prof Mohammad Zafar Iqbal administered the oath for change at the programme. They pledged to solve problems in family, society, educational institutions and in their respective areas to build a developed country.

Over 10,000 people, mostly students from different parts of the country, took part in the exhibition of banners containing pledges collected from people of the country since May 21.

Members of the Bandhababha and other participants started arriving at the beach city early yesterday morning. People of different walks of life including renowned writers, artists and celebrities joined the programme.

Among the people who participated in the programme were educationist Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, writer Syed Shamsul Haque, poet Nirmalendu Gun, cartoonist Rafiqunnabi, writer Anisul Haque, businessman and TV personality Annisul Haque, Kutub Uddin, Aziz Khan, noted columnist Syed Abul Maksud, Channel 1 Managing Director Faridur Reza Sagar, Sanaulah Lavlu of ABC Radio, writer Emdadul Haque Milon, Dr Shamonto Lal Sen, former adviser to the caretaker government Rashed K Chowdhury, The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam, cultural personality Nasiruddin Ahmed Bachchu, civil society member Prof Badiul Alam Majumder, TV celebrity Hanif Sanket, actors Abul Hayat, Afzal Hossain, Ilias Kanchan, Bipasha Hayat, singers Kanak Champa, Samina Chowdhury, Fahmida Nabi, Shafin Ahmed, Mahmuduzzaman Babu, SI Tutul, Asif, Dhaka University teacher Asif Nazrul, barrister Tanjib-ul Alam, and model Nobel.

Fatema Tabassum, a class-VI student of Baitush Sharaf Jabbaria Academy of Cox's Bazar, came with 300 students of her institute holding a banner. She said she believes that some changes will come through this campaign.

Sabuj Pal, a class-IX student of Kurushkul High School, echoed the same views.

Visitors who went to the beach were seen looking at the pledges with interest. Many of them also took part in the exhibition by holding the banners up.

A number of the pledges drew a lot of attention of visitors. One of those was, "I will try to persuade all to switch off gas stoves immediately after using them" written by Limon of Kushtia. Rickshaw-puller Joinal of Gaibandha wrote, "I will not charge passengers high fare". Another person wrote, "I will try to reach my office on time and stop using the office

telephone for personal purpose."

Talking to The Daily Star Nirmalendu Gun hoped that the campaign would have a positive impact on the young and fresh who always try to do something different.

Ilias Kanchan said, "Efforts of many have gone in vain but we have to keep faith in the future generation who will have a lot of things to do for country."

Abdus Salam, who went to the beach with his family from Dhaka, termed the initiative a unique one and said the young generation should take a more active role in the social movement this way.

Different private television channels including Channel i, ATN Bangla, ntv ABC Radio telecasted the programme live.

SL hammer

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And that was all before spin stars Ajantha Mendis (two wickets for nine runs) and Muttiah Muralitharan (three for 29) had entered the fray.

The West Indies were chasing the game and they finished on 101 all out despite captain Chris Gayle carrying his bat for 63 not out.

Mathews took three for 16 in his four overs.

Earlier, Dilshan's knock was the centrepiece of Sri Lanka's 158 for five.

His 57-ball innings, featuring two sixes and 12 fours, was the equal third-best in Twenty20 international history.

Only fellow opener Sanath Jayasuriya (24) and Mathews (12 not out) also made it into double figures.

Mathews struck second ball when Xavier Marshall, brought in as an opener after Andre Fletcher had made three straight ducks, went for nought when he inside edged onto his stumps.

Lendl Simmons then saw the ball come off his thigh pad as, two balls later, he also fell for nought and Dwayne Bravo, off the last ball of the over, astonishingly also played on to be out for a duck.

It was only because Gayle, who'd won the toss and chosen to field, had got a single off the first ball that his side had a run at one for three.

Gayle tried to counter-attack by launching Isuru Udana for six over long-on.

But when the experienced Shavirnarine Chandepaul was lbw to Mendis for just seven, the West Indies were 43 for four.

Gayle though completed a 39-ball fifty with a six and eight fours.

Dilshan got Sri Lanka off to a flyer, sweeping a Jerome Taylor fall toss for six and handing out similar treatment to off-spinner Gayle.

But a first-wicket stand of 73 was ended when Jayasuriya, who had been unusually subdued, flicked Bravo straight to Taylor at short fine leg.

It was the start of a collapse that saw three wickets lost for four runs in eight balls.

Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara fell for a duck when Kieron Pollard leapt at point to hold a well-struck cut shot off medium-pacer Bravo.

Mahela Jayawardene had made only two before he too was caught at short fine leg, by Chandepaul, off Pollard.

Mathews added late impetus by striking Gayle for a six and a four off successive balls in the final over.

Dilshan needed to hit a six off the last ball to become only the second player, after Gayle, to score a Twenty20 international hundred but was unable to clear the ropes.

RMG factory

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for dousing the fire.

Eight units of fire fighters put out the fire after seven hours of efforts. Fire fighters Shahidul Islam, Rezaul Karim and Nurul Islam were among the injured while identity of other injured could not be known.

Abdul Matin, a security guard of the factory, said he saw smoke on the 2nd floor and tried to put it out. But the fire spread to the entire 2nd and 3rd floors shortly, he said.

Production manager of Intraco Sweaters Ltd Mohammad Yunus Ali told reporters that the fire originated from the finishing section and damaged around 1,100 machines, lots of readymade sweaters and furniture.

He said assistant manager Mamunur Rashid who stayed inside the factory could not come out of the building during the fire.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Ashulia Police Station Monwar Hossain told The Daily Star that fire fighters recovered the body of Mamunur in the afternoon and an unnatural death case was filed in this connection.

Fire service sources said they are yet to ascertain the cause of the fire.

Factory authorities claimed that the fire damaged valuables worth about Tk 10 crore. However, fire service sources said the fire gutted properties worth about Tk 5 crore.

Faruk warns

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Chief Whip Abdus Shahid who chaired the function said the real history of the liberation war was being distorted for long.

Those who had done it despite knowing the real history are wilful sinners and this country could not be their place of living, he said urging everybody to work together to implement the dream of the Bangabandhu.

The festival was organised in observance of the 7th founding anniversary of Bangabandhu Shishu Academy.

The minister later distributed prizes among the winners of different events of the competition.

Among others, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University AAMS Arefin Siddique, President of Institute of Engineers Bangladesh SM Nazrul Islam, Organising Secretary of Bangladesh Krishak League MA Karim and General Secretary of Bangabandhu Shishu Academy SM Shahidul Islam addressed the function.

Evicted

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and women of the victim families. "Our houses were looted the next day for giving them shelter," lamented one of them.

They added the indigenous men now live under the open sky, while the children and women sheltered at some other houses or under the make-shift shades.

Over 300 members of the 74 families are living in the open almost without food and security.

"If it rains now, we will have nowhere to go," said Basona Hembram.

Nur Hossain Master claims he bought some 6 acres of land from Chhotka Mardi, Churka Mardi and Hudur Mardi in 1976. But the indigenous men allege they were not paid for the land.

They also allege Nur Hossain's claim of the land is based on forged documents.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Adibashi Parishad started movement demanding justice for the incidents. They will hold a protest rally on July 5 and are holding token protests every day.

"Land grabbing from the indigenous people is nothing new," said Anil Marandi, president of Jatiya Adibashi Parishad.

He said around 2,000 indigenous families in 10 districts have so far lost their 1,748 acres of ancestral land.

Different organisations including the forest department also grabbed or acquired the land showing forged documents or in the name of social forestry, he added.

A team of National Coalition on Indigenous Affairs visited the scene on Tuesday.

The team includes Jayanta Acharya, representative of Adibashi Odhikar Andolan, Mohua of Manusher Jonno Foundation, VSO staff SM Saikuluzzaman and Action Aid representative Manjur Rashid.

A team of five rights fronts - Ain O Salish Kendra, Blast, ALRD, Nijera Kori and TIB -- is likely to visit Naogaon today.

MRP scheme

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appointed, he said, expressing the hope the PD will be appointed next month. The DG added a local expert will be made the PD since the army was given the responsibility to implement the projects.

Issuance of MRP and MRV was supposed to start from next July as per a previous plan, but it seems very unlikely considering the presence context. The passport DG said delay in appointment of the PD has put the entire process back.

He however is hopeful to meet the international obligation although they have only 10 months to introduce the sophisticated passport and visam system.

In March, the government gave the armed forces the responsibility to introduce the MRP and MRV before the deadline considering their success in making the national identity card.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was supposed to be signed with

the army before start of the projects. Senior officials of the army and the immigration and passport department sat on several occasions in the last couple of months but failed to do so.

"We are holding meetings and the MoU will be signed once the PD is appointed," said Abdur Rob Hawlader.

Bangladesh first took an initiative to introduce MRP and MRV in 1998 when the Awami League was in power. But frequent changes of mind in the governments about the project and its budget delayed the move.

Of the 181 member nations of the ICAO, 115 including India and Pakistan have so far issued MRP to their citizens.

Bangladesh is a member of the ICAO, a global forum for civil aviation and a specialised United Nations agency that codifies principles and techniques of international aviation and fosters the planning and development of international air transport.

Environmentalists

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He said expatriate experts like him however favour coal export under special circumstances.

For instance, he said, Petrobangla wants to export the coal mined at Barapukuria as it has difficulty storing the fossil fuel with most of the power plants unable to work at full capacity.

Prof Muzaffer said it is surprising that Petrobangla, the state body to oversee activities regarding gas, oil and other mineral resources, wants to export coal despite an acute crisis in power generation.

"Obviously the situation has arisen out of a lack of coordination between the mining and power generation authorities," he added.

Thanking Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for taking steps to save rivers and stop pollution, he requested her to consider the environmental implications while formulating the coal policy.

The government should consider food and human security before settling on a mining method, he added.

The coal policy must incorporate industrial and agricultural issues. "Industrialisation will not be of much use if you fail to ensure food security. Likewise, energy security too will not be of benefit to people without food security."

Muzaffer requested the government to make public the outcome of the four-day Tangail workshop where non-resident Bangladeshi experts discussed coal mining issues and drew up a set of suggestions meant to be included in the draft coal policy.

Prof Anu Muhammad, member-secretary of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources, alleged that power generation at the Barapukuria

power plant was being hampered intentionally to allow coal export from the mine.

He also alleged that the workshop at Tangail's Jamuna resort was organised by the government to legitimise open-pit mining in the coal policy and allow Asia Energy's Phulbari project.

Dr Sarwat Chowdhury, another NRB energy expert, said coal could be exported if there is no way for it to be stored or preserved.

He also observed that there would be adverse effects on the environment if the government opts for open-cast coal mining.

He said the government should legislate a coal strategy.

Prof Nurul Islam of Buet, Bapa General Secretary Mohammad Abdul Matin and Vice-president Syed ANM Wahed were present, among others.

Turag freed

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and filled up by land grabbers on the south of Ghabtali-Amin Bazar bridge," said BIWTA Deputy Director Saiful Islam.

He said they also broke a bamboo-made structure built on the riverbank to run sand business.

The drive and excavation will continue till completion of excavation of around 7.5 acres of foreshore of the river. It might take 15 days to complete, Saiful said.

Earlier, an eviction drive was carried out against the grabbers of Turag near Gabtali and Amin Bazar during the caretaker government in 2007.

A total of 3,194 illegal structures were demolished along the bank of Buriganga during 2001 and 2007. But most of them came back.

World's hungry top

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Organisation (FAO) said that "one sixth of humanity," or 1.02 billion people, do not get enough to eat. It predicted an 11 percent increase for all of 2009.

An estimated 642 million of the total are in the Asia-Pacific region, the agency said in a statement. Some 265 million are in sub-Saharan Africa, 53 million in Latin America and the Caribbean and 52 million in the Middle East and north Africa.

But the FAO said there are some 15 million hungry in developed countries.

"The most recent increase in hunger is not the consequence of poor global harvests but is caused by the world economic crisis that has resulted in lower incomes and increased unemployment," the statement said.

The FAO had initially revised downward its estimate of hungry people from 963 million to 915 million because of a "better-than-expected global food supply," the agency said.

However, "a dangerous mix of the global economic slowdown combined with stubbornly high food prices in many countries has pushed some 100 million more people than last year into chronic hunger and poverty," said FAO Director General Jacques Diouf.

"Whereas good progress was made in reducing chronic hunger in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, hunger has been slowly but steadily on the rise for the past decade," the FAO said.

"This year, mainly due to the shocks of the economic crisis combined with often high national food prices, the number of hungry people is expected to grow overall by about 11 percent," the agency projects.

"The silent hunger crisis ...

poses a serious risk for world peace and security," the statement warned. "We urgently need to forge a broad consensus on the total and rapid eradication of hunger in the world and to take the necessary actions."

The agency noted: "The economic crisis also comes on the heel of the food and fuel crisis of 2006-08." It added that at the end of 2008 food prices "remained on average 24 percent higher in real terms... compared to 2006."

"Unlike previous crises, developing countries have less room to adjust to the deteriorating economic conditions because the turmoil is affecting practically all parts of the world more or less simultaneously."

It noted that poor consumers spend up to 60 percent of their incomes on staple foods.

The agency will release its annual "State of Food Insecurity in the World" report in October.

During a Rome summit one year ago, FAO member states reaffirmed their commitment to halve world hunger by 2015, a Millennium Development Goal set in 2000 by the United Nations.

Diouf said last year that "with current trends, that goal will be attained in 2150, rather than 2015."

The food agency warned that "the urban poor will probably face the most severe problems in coping with the global recession, because lower export demand and reduced foreign direct investment are more likely to hit urban jobsharder."

However, it said, "rural areas will not be spared. Millions of urban migrants will have to return to the countryside, forcing the rural poor to share the burden in many cases."

Tipaimukh

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state of Manipur and submit a report to the government.

"We will scrutinise the data and report of the parliamentary delegation. The government will do whatever is good for the country," said the foreign minister.

She was confident that the Indian government would not do anything harmful to Bangladesh but said government would do everything possible if the dam proves to be a threat to Bangladesh's environment.

India started the construction of Tipaimukh Dam on river Barak in 2003 to generate electricity. The construction halted due to national and international uproar and resistance against probable environmental degradation inside and outside Indian territory. It resumed the construction late last year.

Environmentalists, politicians and conscious section in Bangladesh are protesting against the construction of the dam fearing that India would unilaterally use water of the river, which may turn Bangladesh's north-eastern lush-green fertile soil into a dry wasteland during dry season.

Since the river Barak-Surma-Kushyara is an international river, Bangladesh as a lower riparian country should have an equitable share of water. The Barak River enters into Bangladesh as Kushiyara and travels further downstream by the name Surma.

Criminals gun

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his private car at around 11:15pm on Thursday.

At around 4:00am yesterday they came to know that a person was shot dead on the Tajmahal Road. They rushed there and found Shipu's body, he said.

Earlier they went to the nearby police stations and Rab offices to know about his whereabouts. As they failed to trace him his wife Hasina Morshed filed a general diary with the Mohammapur Police Station early Friday.

Tazmahal Road security guard Titon said hearing a gunshot he rushed to the spot and saw some people speeding away on a bike before seeing a man shot dead.

Dhaka Medical College morgue sources said Shipu was tortured before he was shot in his head.

Shipu's close friend Syed Barkat Hossain said Shipu had declared he would be commissioner candidate of the ward-44 in the upcoming city corporation election.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain and other senior BNP leaders visited Dhaka Medical College to have a glimpse of him where they condemned the grisly murder.

They also demanded the arrest of the killers and their punishment.

Evicted people

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The team published their report yesterday at a press briefing at the Dhaka Reporters Unity in the afternoon.

"The role of administration has come into question after the heinous attack. The government must address the problems of indigenous community," said Saikhuluzzaman of Volunteer Services Overseas, who read out the written statement at the press briefing.

"We demand immediate arrest of the attackers and masterminds behind this incident. They are nothing but land robbers," said Mahua Leya of Manusher Jonno Foundation.

"Indigenous community will not get rid of their problems unless a separate land commission is established for indigenous people living in the plains and the land commission formulated for those living in hill areas is made effective immediately," said Manjur Rashid of Action Aid.

The demands include arrest and exemplary punishment of the perpetrators, withdrawal of Officer-in-charge of Porsha Police Station Zahid Hossain and SI Pabitra Kumar Sinha, formulation of judicial enquiry committee, making National Human Rights Commission effective, formation of separate land commission for indigenous people living in the plains and making the land commission for indigenous people in hill areas effective, and constitutional recognition of indigenous people's right to land.

The team's findings say that police abetted the goons in looting, attacking and carrying out arson on the indigenous community in the area on June 13 and 14.

Pak militants

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reported to have dropped four missiles on a training school for Islamist extremists in the lawless South Waziristan tribal zone near the Afghan border on Thursday.

The rugged northwest area is the stronghold of Pakistan Taliban chief Baitullah Mehsud, and Washington also alleges that al-Qaeda fighters who fled Afghanistan after the 2001 US-led invasion are holed up in the region.

"Intelligence reports suggest the Taliban have dug out a total of 13 dead bodies, some of them badly mutilated," an administrative official based in the northwestern capital Peshawar told AFP on Friday.

Another security official in South Waziristan's main town Wana confirmed a death toll of 13, and said some of them were foreign fighters.

The US military does not, as a rule, confirm drone attacks, but its armed forces and the Central Intelligence Agency operating in Afghanistan are the only forces that deploy the unmanned planes in the region.

Pakistani war planes on Friday also hit targets in South Waziristan, apparently in preparation for a full-scale military onslaught into the hostile peaks to track down and eliminate Mehsud and his network.

"Jet fighters on Friday started bombing suspected locations of Taliban militants in South Waziristan," said an intelligence official in Wana, who did not want to be named as he was not authorised to speak to the media.

A security official in the area told AFP that two militant compounds, three religious schools and a suspected training camp under the command of Mehsud were targeted in Sarwakai and Barwand villages near the Afghan border.

Paramilitary forces, meanwhile, engaged militants in a firefight at Tanai Fort about 20 kilometres (12 miles) east of Wana, the official said.

Elsewhere in Bajaur on Friday, a roadside bomb exploded and wounded a tribal policeman while he was on patrol, an official said.

Bajaur lies just to the west of Dir and Swat districts, where

the military is locked in a nearly two-month-long offensive against Taliban insurgents.

Militants in Swat have destroyed nearly 200 schools, mostly for girls, in the valley during a two-year campaign to enforce Sharia law.

Pakistani security forces launched an offensive to dislodge Taliban guerrillas from three northwest districts around Swat valley in late April, after militants flouted a peace deal and thrust towards the capital Islamabad.

The army on Tuesday confirmed long-circulating rumours that the campaign would expand into the tribal belt, although it is unclear when a full-scale offensive involving ground troops will begin.

Pakistan's military said in a statement Friday that they had secured a number of villages in the tribal district of Mohmand and seized weapons.

In Buner -- one of three northwest areas targeted in late April -- military officials said that the district was almost cleared of militants.

"About 99 percent of the area has been secured. A lot of miscreants were killed or wounded. The rest of them are hiding in the mountains," Naseer Janjua, Buner military commander, said from a hill overlooking Daggartown.

Muggers stab

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According to police, Malek and Mizanur were returning to the Daulatpur Police Station from Kushtia Police Line riding a motorcycle at about 11:30pm.

A gang of five to six men way-laid them at Hauskhali and asked them to handover their belongings.

The miscreants stabbed them indiscriminately as they identified themselves as police and snatched their belongings including money, wristwatch, mobile phone set.

Local people rushed to the spot as they cried for help.

Sensing the presence of the locals, the muggers fled the scene.

The injured policemen were admitted to the Daulatpur Upazila Health Complex. A case has been filed.

Supreme leader

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The supreme leader demanded that the street protests that have rocked the capital for the past week now cease, warning that otherwise there risked being further bloodshed beyond the seven deaths reported by state radio so far.

"I want to tell everyone these things must finish. These street actions are being done to put pressure on leaders but we will not bow in front of them," he said.

"Those politicians who somehow have influence on people should be very careful about their behaviour if they act in an extremist manner," the supreme leader warned.

"This extremism will reach a sensitive level which they will not be able to contain. They will be responsible for the blood, violence and chaos."

The opposition has been planning a new mass rally in Tehran on Saturday, to be addressed by the Ahmadinejad's principal challenger, moderate former premier Mir Hossein Mousavi.

There was no immediate word from the reformist clerical association, which is organising the rally on whether they still planned to go ahead.

Another of the defeated candidates, reformist former parliament speaker Mehdi Karubi, had urged his supporters to stay away from the Tehran prayers addressed by the supreme leader and instead join Saturday's rally.

Unlike the rallies held by the opposition, foreign media were allowed to cover Friday's prayers.

Khamenei's sermon came after Ahmadinejad's principal challenger told the latest mass protest by his supporters on Thursday that their gripe was only with the election results not the regime itself.

Speaking through a loud-hailer, Mousavi reiterated his demand for a re-run of the election,