

Local govt needs rules to end suffering to Adivasi people

Badshah tells international conclave

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badshah yesterday said the indigenous people living in plain land would continue to suffer across the country unless the local government system is guided by specific rules to deal with it.

"The suffering of Adivasi people, especially those who are living in plain land, will continue if it is not described in the local government system what would be our outlook to them or how to deal with Adivasi people," said Badshah at the panel discussion of a two-day international conclave.

The international conclave titled "Discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation: diversity perspective," jointly organised by Research and Development Collective and ActionAid, began at the Biam auditorium.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique inaugurated the

conclave.

"Beside removing discrimination, fundamentalism and militancy also have to be eradicated from the society to ensure rights of the indigenous people as the fundamentalists do not tolerate any diversity," said Prof Kabir Chowdhury in his speech as the special guest at the inaugural ceremony.

He also said it is the government who has to take the initiative to end discrimination against the indigenous people and development of the people will not be ensured unless their economic condition is improved.

Prof Mesbah Kamal gave the address of welcome at the inaugural session. A number of panel discussions on different topics were held simultaneously focusing on Dalit, tea workers, sex workers and deprived and disadvantaged marginalised people, including Adivasi people throughout the day.

"Generally we do not con-

sider indigenous people as citizen of the country as they are always deprived of important citizen rights, especially communication, power and treatment. There is no example that the indigenous people are given allotment on any Khas land and deprivation continues by the state," Badshah said.

"The indigenous people do not have any other option but to wage a movement as they live under many social pressures. They even cannot maintain their cultural and religious rights and rituals freely due to the pressure," he added.

Referring to the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace agreement, Badshah said only implementation of the agreement will not end their all problems as the problems are multifaceted.

"Ending discrimination is not enough as it would equate their condition with the mainstream population. More proactive measures must be taken

to ensure rights of indigenous people living in plain land," said Prasenjit Chakma, a representative from UNDP.

"The problem concerning indigenous people's livelihood is linked with the government market policy. There is no way to ignore the fact that besides aggression on their land, aggression on indigenous market has also taken place," said RIB executive Director Dr Meghna Guha Thakurta.

She said land is more important for them than Bangladesh as it is related to their identity.

Syed-ul-Alam Kazal from Ashrai presented the keynote paper titled "Ethnicity and Identity: Challenging discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation" while Prof Dr Buddhadev Chaudhuri of Calcutta University, Prof Amena Hossain of Dhaka University and Prof Dr Ratan Khasnabis of Calcutta University presented theme speeches.



PHOTO: STAR

Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum forms a human chain in front of the High Court in the city yesterday protesting the move by India to construct the Tipaimukh dam.

Hasina, Rehana to get homes as per law

Says Matia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday said the government would provide Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana with two 'secured' homes as per the Father of the Nation's Family Members Security Act 2009 when they would desire to have them.

The cabinet on Monday approved the draft law, in principle, to ensure foolproof security to the prime minister and her family members.

Talking to reporters at her ministry's office, Matia said neither Hasina nor Rehana have expressed their desire for homes as yet.

Hasina is among the 10 persons in the world whose lives are at high risk, she said, adding that security has already been provided to the two sisters.

Criticising BNP leader Moudud Ahmed for raising question about the law, the agriculture minister said it is BNP which wants to assassinate Hasina, no matter whether it is in power or in opposition.

"When BNP was in power, many attempts, including grenade attack, were carried out to kill Hasina," she said.

Matia, also presidium member of ruling Awami League and a close aide to the prime minister, said people's mandate is the main strength for them to enact the law.

She said the security act for the premier and her family members has been formulated so that they can get state security while they are in power or in opposition.

Earlier, Saudi Ambassador in Dhaka Dr Abdullah Bin Naser Al Busairi paid a courtesy call on Matia at her office.

Cargo operation suspended for 4 hrs at Ctg port

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Cargo operation remained suspended for over four hours following a clash between the dock workers and truck drivers inside the Chittagong Port here yesterday.

Sources said the incident occurred when several bags of cement clinkers during offloading by dock workers from a vessel - MV Khadija Jahan - fell onto a truck and the driver dashed the workers with the truck at Jetty No 3 around 4:30pm.

The confrontation triggered an altercation between the dock workers and truck

drivers. At one stage, the truck drivers beat up three workers.

Following the incident, the dock workers got united to drive out the truck drivers and stopped working at all the twelve general jetties (from Jetty No 2 to Jetty No 13).

Loading and unloading of nine vessels remained suspended at this time, said supervisor Md Kashem of Jetty no 3.

However, the loading and unloading activities resumed after Chittagong Port Authority Director (traffic) Ahsanul Kabir held a meeting with the feuding groups and reached an amicable settlement.

Special VGF programme during Ramadan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will introduce special VGF programme in the upcoming month of Ramadan to provide relief to the lower-class people during the Islamic holy month of fasting.

The decision was made yesterday at a meeting of food monitoring committee with Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzak in the chair.

A total of 1500 families will be given 10 kg rice each in every union across the country at a rate of Tk 16 per kg. However, 20 kg will be given to per family in the munga-hit areas.

The garment workers and tea garden workers would also be given the rice if the owners of the garment industries and tea gardens demand.

In that case, the meeting decided to sell the rice at Tk

14.50 per kg to the owners. The owners will sell the rice at Tk 16 per kg to the workers concerned.

Workshop on food security begins today

METRO DESK

A workshop on food security will begin today with the participation of senior officials from the government, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), development partners and civil society members, says a press release.

The workshop is part of a series of research workshops organised under the 'National food policy capacity strengthening programme (NFPCSP)', a project jointly funded by the USAID and the European Union.

ILLEGAL WEALTH Dr Afzal gets bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to Dr Afzal Hossain Raj, son of former adviser to the caretaker government Justice Fazlul Huq, in a case filed against him for amassing wealth illegally and concealing wealth information to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order upon a bond of Tk 50,000 each with two guarantors after Afzal along with his lawyers appeared before the court and sought bail in the case.

Moving the bail petitions, lawyers told the court that their client had earlier appeared before the High Court (HC) seeking anticipatory bail. After the hearing, the HC granted their client to bail till submission of the probe report of the case.

On September 14 last year, ACC Assistant Director Ibrahim filed the case against Dr Afzal with Ramna Model Police Station on charge of concealing information and amassing wealth over Tk 1.40 crore beyond his known sources of income.

Entries invited for painting contest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gandaria Kishalay Kochi Kanchar Mela and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy yesterday invited paintings from the children aged between three and sixteen for the Zainul Quamrul International Children's Painting Competition 2009.

The declaration was made at a press conference at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy at Segunbagicha in the city.

Paintings have been invited in four categories. A total of four gold medals, 84 crests and 116 certificates will be distributed among the winners.

Director of Kishalay Kochi Kanchar Mela Md Shafiur Rahman Dulu presented a keynote at the press conference.

The competition is open to the children from home and abroad. The last date of submission of paintings is September 30.

Interested students can send in their paintings with their detailed identity to the address: Director, Gandaria Kishalay Kochi Kanchar Mela, 15, Dinnath Sen Road, Gandaria, Dhaka-1204.

They will have to send their full names with the names of their parents, a passport-size photograph, names of their education institutes, dates of birth, e-mail IDs and birth certificates with their paintings.

For detailed information on the competition, anybody can log on to the website: 'www.gandariakochikachara.mela.org'.



PHOTO: STAR

Ashish Kumar Dey speaks at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Aminur Rashid Babul and on his left are Rafiqul Islam Pathik and Kamal Pasha Chowdhury.

Call to modernise water transport system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Safe Water Way Implementation Movement (SWWIM) yesterday urged the government to allocate Tk 500 crore to shipping ministry for modernising the water transport system and minimising the risk of water transport accidents in the country.

They also demanded an additional allocation of Tk 70 crore for dredging the rivers of the country to restore their navigability and to facilitate the movement of water transports through these channels

all the year round.

SWWIM leaders placed the demands at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city to commemorate the 6th anniversary of MV Nasrin launch accident.

In a written statement Aminur Rashid Babul, member-secretary of the organisation, said the government has allocated Tk 138 crore for the shipping ministry.

This amount is quite insufficient for developing the infrastructure of the water transport system of the country, he added.

Aminur said lack of attention by government officials, relaxation in implementing the existing laws, unskilled drivers and corruption of launch owners are the main causes of launch accidents.

Besides, there are some other causes of launch accidents which include movement of unregistered and unfit water transports and irregularities in fitness checking, he added.

Aminur also alleged that the government is pushing for the privatisation of the sector.

He informed that over 8000 people died in launch accident during the last 38 years.

He also made some recommendations for minimising the risk of launch accident and modernising the infrastructure of the water transport system.

These include amendment of Inland Shipping Ordinance 1976, establishment of four naval mobile courts, arrangement of life insurance for passengers, formation of a board to fix the charges of launch terminals, introduction of loan system for building new launches and declaration of July 8 as the Safe Water Way Implementation Day.

SWWIM President Ashish Kumar Dey, members Rafiqul Alam and Rafiqul Islam Pathik and Chairman of Paribesh Bachao Andolan Abu Naser Khan were present at the press conference.

Doctor's wife, two sons held for torturing domestic help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch of Police yesterday arrested the wife of a doctor and his two sons on charge of torturing their nine-year-old domestic help in the city's Azimpur area.

Tortured Tanzina was rescued from the house of Dr MA Islam Bhuiyan at 110 Azimpur yesterday evening and his wife and two sons were taken to DB office in this connection.

Dr Bhuiyan, however, was not at home as he stays in Faridpur for his job.

Sub-inspector Manirul Islam of DB told The Daily Star that the wife of the doctor and his two sons had been torturing Tanzina for long. Tanzina hailed from Kishorganj district. Manirul said the arrested would be produced before the court today.

Talking to The Daily Star, SI Kripa Sindhu Bala of Lalbagh police station, who was present during the DB drive, said marks of injuries were found at different parts of the body of Tanzina.

Last-minute campaign for Sundarbans in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Sundarban Academy and Sundarban Supporters' Committee (SSC) jointly brought out a colourful procession in Khulna city yesterday seeking votes for the Sundarbans, world's largest mangrove forest, to retain its third position among seven wonders of nature.

Hundreds of people from all walks of life joined the procession on the last day of the month-long campaign to vote for the Sundarbans.

Activists of the Sundarban Supporters' Committee continued their campaign till the last moment of voting for the world's largest mangrove forest. The time for voting ended yesterday evening (Bangladesh time).

SSC Member Secretary Rafiqul Islam Khokan said activists of their organisation went to different academic institutions, offices of civil and police administration, socio-cultural organisations and business firms as part of their campaign.



PHOTO: STAR

Carrying a symbolic coffin, JCD activists take out a procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday protesting the formation of its new committee with aged leaders. (Story on Page 16)

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