

Commoners

FROM PAGE 1

In 1989, the government stopped to lease out Khas land. As a result people are turning into sharecroppers due to crisis of land.

On the other hand, thousands of acres of government Khas land are being transferred to the non-farmer local gentry in the name of promoting rubber garden, horticulture and tourist zones, Thoi Nue added.

On the occasion of the 12th anniversary of the peace deal he demanded lifting of ban on leasing out government Khas land in CHT. If needed, the government can impose some conditions before a piece of land is leased out, he said.

The peace agreement has created mixed reactions among the politically conscious people.

A high official of Bangladesh Bank and an ethnic preferring anonymity said, "Different UN agencies and donor agencies have made huge investment in the region after the peace agreement. It has increased the buying capacity of local people to some extent but it doesn't really help to strengthen people's economic condition permanently."

Juamlian Amlai, a senior citizen of indigenous Bom ethnic group, pointing to the shanties at Ujani Para, Madhyam Para and Jodi Para by the bank of the River Shankha said, it would be really meaningful when the outcome of development activities percolates to the lowest rung of the society.

Juamlian said: "Arms from the hill people were taken away in the name of peace agreement but they were given nothing so that they can do something for their survival."

As per the conditions of the peace deal, a separate ministry, CHT Regional Council and Task Force on Refugees were set up with local leaders running those organisations.

Chittagong Area Commander (GOC) was replaced by an elected lawmaker from the CHT as the chairman of CHT Development

Board.

Replying to a question as to how much liberty he has in planning development activities as the chairman of the CHT Development Board lawmaker Bir Bahadur who enjoys the status of state minister said, "100 percent."

He said, "Instead of big projects we have given much importance to connecting the growth centres with district and upazila headquarters."

Bir Bahadur claimed that before the peace agreement the headquarters in three CHT districts could not be completely connected with the capital. In last 12 years even the remote areas have been brought under the communications network.

After the peace deal was struck the enrolment in educational institutions in different areas has gone up, the lawmaker said, adding that girls have outpaced the boys in the sector as a result of constant motivation.

CHT Board chairman said the benefits of development do not become visible overnight. But if different indexes are reviewed the signs of positive development can be realised.

Bahadur said, after signing the agreement on December 2, 1997 the Awami League government was not in power for long. He alleged that the successive governments, instead of following the conditions of the peace agreement, took anti-people steps to hinder the implementation of the deal.

The ruling Awami League lawmaker said, "Within a few months of assuming power we have revised the Peace Agreement Implementation National Committee. We have also activated the CHT Land Commission. Khagrachhari MP Jatindra Lal Tripathy has taken over the charge of the Task Force on Refugees."

"We think we will be able to implement 100 percent of the peace agreement before the tenure of this government is over. This is our government's political good will and election pledge," added Bahadur.

Worn-out vessels

FROM PAGE 1

KoKo-4 that capsized in the river Tentulia near Nazirpur launch terminal on November 27.

MV Rustam was expected to join the operation by yesterday though Hamza and Rustam jointly are unable to rescue the KoKo-4 properly as they together have only 120-tonne capacity and the weight of capsized launch is around 550 tonnes, said the BIWTA chairman.

The government will procure two salvage vessels at a cost of around Tk 263 crore with the assistance from South Korea, said another official of BIWTA.

A Minutes of Discussion in this regard was signed between the two governments on January 31, 2005, he said.

Korea will provide around Tk 180 crore as soft loan while the government the remaining fund, he said adding the loan would be repaid in 30 years with a 10-year grace period.

Both the vessels, each 250-tonne capacity, will have modern equipment to detect sunken launches rapidly in deep water, he said. "They will enhance the capacity of salvage drive and speed up the operation ultimately reducing death toll in launch accidents."

143 AIDS

FROM PAGE 16

society due to government's various programmes.

"However, the government has long, short and medium term plans to boost the programme that include preparing strategic plan for 2011-2015, ensuring funding, expanding service among the high risk people and increasing institutional capacity for implementing the programme," said the health minister.

On corruption in some previous HIV/AIDS programmes, he said they had found some loopholes and investigation is being carried out to dig out the facts.

He also admitted that the National AIDS and STD Programme should be strengthened to contain HIV/AIDS as Bangladesh is at high risk of the epidemic.

Health Adviser Prof Syed Modasser Ali, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mozibur Rahman Fakir, Secretary Shaikh Altaf Ali, Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services Prof Shah Monir Hossain, Director General of the Directorate General of Family Planning Abdul Quayum, Secretary General of Bangladesh Medical Association Sharfuddin Ahmed also spoke, among others.

Sahara

FROM PAGE 1

Bangabandhu assassination case, from Canada, she said, "It's not right to disclose the information about the procedure the government is following now. The fugitive convicts may get the opportunity to flee from the countries they are hiding right now to evade capture."

Shafique on Monday said Canada has agreed to deport Nur Chowdhury. He told journalists the Canadian authorities seized Nur Chowdhury's passport for residing illegally in the country and rejected his appeal for a residency permit and asylum.

Sahara said the convicts are adopting a modus operandi to change their location in a continuing method. "We must bring all the convicts back through mutual agreement with the countries that have no extradition treaties with Bangladesh," she added.

Ombudsman

FROM PAGE 1

a committee to scrutinise the amendment bill. However, there was no development, sources said.

Shafique yesterday said the president would appoint the ombudsman for five years on recommendation of parliament.

If anybody is victimised by any government, semi-government, autonomous and statutory organisation, the ombudsman can investigate the complaints and direct the government to take steps in this regard, he said.

The minister said the law regarding appointment of the ombudsman was enacted in the 1980s but the present government is going to implement it for the first time.

Shafique said the ADB country director assured him of providing fund for establishing the office of the ombudsman and its functioning, and also for making a separate service cadre for the government attorneys.

BNP council

FROM PAGE 1

election of party chairperson ahead of the fifth national council.

BNP National Standing Committee (NSC) member RA Gani has been made returning officer and former state minister MA Mannan assistant returning officer for the election to be held on the council day.

The constitution and declaration sub-committee formed for the national council headed by party Vice President Tariqul Islam has handed over to Chairperson Khaleda Zia the finalised draft proposals for amendments to the party constitution.

The foreign affairs sub-committee is now working on inviting foreign delegates including a number of internationally renowned political leaders from at least 12 countries, and it might finalise a list of these personalities today.

Sources said the sub-committee sought about Tk 35 lakh from the party high command for accommodation and entertainment of the foreign guests.

The three-member election commission of the party headed by justice TH Khan a press briefing yesterday morning announced the schedule for election of chairperson at the party's at Naya Paltan central office.

According to the schedule, the last date for submitting nomination papers is today, these will be scrutinised tomorrow and the deadline for withdrawal of nominations is 5:00pm on December 4.

The minimum age of aspirants for the post of chairperson is 30.

Nomination papers free of cost could be collected from and submitted to the returning officer or his nominated representative at the party central office from 11 am to 6 pm.

Replying to a question about election schedule for other office bearers of the party's central executive committee including secretary general, TH Khan said there is no such provision in the existing party constitution.

He however said inclusion of such provisions in the party's draft amended constitution is in process but the councillors will decide on this.

Election Commission members Abdur Razzak Khan and Sanaullah Mia, assistant returning officer MA Mannan and party's Office Secretary Rizvi Ahmed were present at the press briefing.

Later in the evening, Khaleda Zia collected nomination papers for election of party

WTO

FROM PAGE 16

moment to intensify negotiations on lowering tariffs on technologies that help in mitigating the effects of global warming.

"It's riding with the political wave... This is just elementary common sense," Tim Groser, New Zealand trade minister said during a forum on the sidelines of the WTO meeting.

World leaders are set to gather over December 7-18 in Copenhagen to draft a successor treaty to the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012.

"With momentum building to advance climate change policies, we must show, through concrete actions, that trade is an important part of policies to combat climate change," Naohimasa said.

Two major players, the United States and the European Union, also pledged support on environmental goods and services.

"We fully support fast-tracking action in the WTOs work on liberalizing trade in climate-friendly technologies," US Trade Representative Ron Kirk told a working session of the ministerial conference.

Meanwhile, outgoing European Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton also pledged the EU's engagement on the issue.

"Trade policy can make a significant contribution, through the liberalisation of trade in relevant environmental goods and services," she said on Monday.

"We in Europe invite all Members of the WTO to intensify work in this area," added Ashton, who took up her new post as EU Foreign Policy chief on Tuesday.

However, Indonesian trade minister Mari Pangestu stressed the importance of financing to developing countries preparing to deal with the effects of climate change.

"Lowering tariffs on clean technology is not going to be enough... to address the climate change objective," she said.

"From a developing country perspective, we also need to have financing and capacity building," she added.

India, China and other growing developing nations have been pressing for Western nations to offer technology and other support to help them reduce the intensity of emissions blamed for global warming.

chairperson. On behalf of her, Rizvi Ahmed took the nomination papers from Mannan.

At a separate press briefing at the party office, Rizvi said they have completed councils of 70 percent party units across the country.

"Forty-eight district units successfully held councils, and conveners and first joint conveners of the remaining units will attend the national council as councillors," he said.

None will represent Dhaka city unit as there is no committee for this unit now, he added.

But the existing committees of Manikganj and Dhaka districts will represent the units at the national council.

Earlier, the party had announced convening committees for 72 of the 75 organisational districts.

Rizvi said 2,512 councillors and 12,000 delegates will attend the council.

Forty party leaders from each of the 300 parliamentary constituencies will be invited as delegates to the council, he mentioned.

According to the BNP constitution [amended till August 16, 2009], president and general secretary of each upazila/thana unit, municipality unit, district unit and city unit will be councillors, and each district and city unit will nominate two female members as councillors.

Members of the party's parliamentary party, national executive committee, national standing committee, and additional 10 percent nominated by the chairperson will be treated as councillors.

Rizvi said amendments are being made so that conveners and joint conveners of the units which have failed to hold councils can attend the national council. There is no provision in the existing constitution that allows them to be treated as councillors.

Meanwhile, reception and refreshment sub-committee Convener Sadeque Hossain Khoka said yesterday they have completed preparations for the council.

And Mirza Abbas, convener of management sub-committee, already announced that they have solved venue-related problems, and the council will be held at the international conference centre.

Babar, Salam

FROM PAGE 1

its operatives, and procurement of firearms for fellow militants fighting in India and Afghanistan.

"Huji grew desperate to execute the plan after the Awami League rule ended [in 2001]. At that time, they had assistance from Babar and Pintu through Pintu's brother and Huji leader Moulana Tajuddin," Akand said in his remand prayer to Metropolitan Magistrate Zulfikar Hayat.

Some other individuals too had aided Huji in its failed bid to assassinate Hasina five years ago, he added.

Akand said Babar and Pintu, then state minister for home and deputy minister for education, had directly helped Tajuddin flee the country and take shelter in Pakistan.

Tajuddin, still at large, had supplied the grenades used in the August 21 blasts that killed at least 23 AL leaders and workers and injured over 300 others, he added.

Both Salam Pintu and his brother are charge-sheeted accused in the August 21 carnage cases.

The Criminal Investigation Department pressed charges against them and 20 others including Huji boss Mufti Abdul Hannan during the last caretaker government tenure.

It arrested Babar after a court on August 3 ordered further investigation to find out the patrons of the attackers and suppliers of the grenades.

Akand, an additional superintendent of police at CID, said they had lately seized some documents and Tajuddin's journal following up information gleaned from Salam. The papers may hold important clues.

At present, the investigators are working to hunt down the others who had aided and abetted the Huji men in the attack.

Salam, now convener of Islamic Democratic Party, was earlier remanded for 14 days. He was arrested on November 2 for suspected links with the August 21 blasts.

During interrogation, he said he returned to Bangladesh after the end of Afghan war against former Soviet Union and formed Huji along with other war returnees.

He said they had trained many youths, mainly madrasa students, how to operate firearms and bombs. Most of their recruits came from Pakistan-administered Kashmir and Bangladesh.

They had also mobilised funds, arms and ammunition for insurgents in Kashmir of India.

But the going got tough after AL came to power in 1996.

Outlaws kidnap

FROM PAGE 16

Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) arrested on Monday.

Police quoting the outlaw said a gang led by Manik abducted Mehedi Hasan Sohag from Majampur area in Kushtia on November 1.

They later demanded a ransom of Tk 30 lakh from Sohag's family.

Hasan Arif, father of Sohag and an officer of IFIC Bank of Kushtia branch, filed a general diary (GD) with Kushtia Sadar Police Station on November 2. But police failed to trace the victim.

Besides, separate groups of the same outfit abducted KARITAS employee Jahangir when he came to visit his village home at Sharsha upazila in Jessore on November 4 and Rassel from Bastubhita in Damurhuda upazila under Chuadanga on November 8.

All abductees were confined to a den of PBCP at Taragunia village in Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia.

Police said the outlaws killed the abductees in between November 15 and 20 as their families failed to pay the ransom and dumped the bodies at Taragunia graveyard.

Manik was also involved in the murder of two of his opponent outfit Gono Mukti Fouz cadres on October 22 at Majampur area in Kushtia.

On information, a police team led by Assistant Police Super (ASP-headquarters) Alamgir Hossain yesterday busted the house of one Rokan of Majampur area of the town at about 2:30pm and arrested him.

During the interrogation Rokan confessed to his involvement in the abduction and killing of the three persons. He said they buried the victims at Taragunia graveyard.

When contacted ASP Alamgir said the drive was on to arrest other PBCP operatives involved in the incident.

2 criminals

FROM PAGE 16

The criminals were being quizzed at Bongaon police station and might be produced before court today.

MUKUL SENT TO JAIL After a five-day remand ended on Friday, Mukul was produced before additional judicial magistrate's court in Bongaon on Saturday.

The court rejected Mukul's bail prayer and ordered to send him to jail for next 14 days.

CHT accord

FROM PAGE 16

The law minister said the CHT Peace Accord was signed on the basis of laws and the constitution of the republic and its implementation is now underway.

He made the remarks while talking to The Daily Star at his secretariat office on Monday.

Asked about two pending writ petitions in the High Court that challenge the legality of the treaty, Shafique Ahmed said there was no legal reason for challenging the CHT treaty.

In 2000 and 2007, Md Badiuzzaman, a Bangalee settler in CHT, and Tajul Islam, a pro-Jamaat-e-Islami lawyer, filed the writ petitions challenging the legality of the peace accord and its provisions. Following the writ petitions, the High Court issued separate rules asking the government to explain why the CHT peace deal and its provisions should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

Hearing on the rules is going on at the High Court. On October 19, the High Court appointed two senior lawyers-- advocate TH Khan and barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud--as amici curiae (friends of court) to give expert opinions during the hearing.

1 more missing

FROM PAGE 16

Bhuiyan was asked to conduct a probe into the incident and submit a report on his findings but he failed to submit the report on Monday. The ACF needs a few more days to unravel the mysteries of the incident, the DFO said.

However, the DFO did not mention the reason for the delay.

Earlier, three crocodiles were found on November 26 in the canal.

The DFO alleged all 18 crocodiles were released in the canal taking advantage of negligence of the staff in the breeding centre.

A section of forest guards said the centre remains unguarded most of the time of the day, as the presence of the staff is very irregular.

Launch salvage

FROM PAGE 1

upazila health complex.

Over one hundred passengers are still missing, local administration and sources said. Rescuers feared that many more victims were still trapped inside MV Koko-4, which capsized with around 2,000 passengers on board.

BIWTA chairman said whims and callousness of launch authorities, overloading and mismanagement are the main reasons of the accident.

For collecting ticket money, the Koko-4 authorities stopped the vessel around 20 yards away from bank and tried to drop the passengers one by one with help of a wooden plank. They even locked the collapsible gate and kept open only one exit.

He said, as the passengers got panicked they gathered on one side and the launch started to capsize.

The place where the launch capsized is not a place of accident for a launch like it, he said.

The Koko-4 was carrying four times its actual capacity which is one of the main reasons behind the accident, said AKM Fakhru Islam, chief engineer and ship surveyor of shipping department.

A case was filed with Lalmohon Police Station Monday night in this connection accusing eight persons. Kamal Hossain, a local politician, filed the case.

BIWTA has suspended three officials temporarily for negligence in duties and also for giving false information.

They are Abdur Razzak, director of BIWTA (Reservation and Operation), Rafiqul Islam, Senior Deputy Director also port officer for Barisal port and Shahjahan Khan, senior deputy director also commander of Hamza, the rescue ship, said chairman of BIWTA.

Joint Chief of the shipping ministry Jayanta Kumar Nandi, convener of the seven-member committee formed by the government to investigate into the launch capsize, visited the spot and talked to local people including relatives of missing persons.

Interpol

FROM PAGE 1

sought diplomatic aid in this regard, sources say. Hasib Aziz, assistant inspector general of police (AIG), who is also in charge of Interpol in Dhaka, told The Daily Star they sent another letter to the Interpol headquarters in Leon in France informing the latest developments and verdict in Bangabandhu assassination case.

"We have also sought help to trace the other fugitive killers for their deportation," the AIG-Interpol said. "We have sent a letter to the NCB office in Washington DC and another to the foreign ministry regarding deportation of Rashed Chowdhury."

Asked, Aziz said the NCB Dhaka office has renewed the red alert notices against the fugitive killers and is also continuing conversation with the Interpol office in different countries regarding deportation of the fugitives.

In reply to a question, he said, "A country had sought details of another fugitive convict Lt Col (retd) SHMB Nur Chowdhury, who is now staying in Canada. We have already met their demands collecting information through the CID."

Apart from Nur and Rashed, the Interpol red notice includes the names of four other convicted killers -- Lt Col (retd) Khandaker Abdur Rashid, Lt Col (retd) Shariful Haque Dalim, Capt (retd) Abdul Mazed and Risalder Moslehuddin Khan.

Talking to The Daily Star, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad said, "The deportation of the fugitive killers of Bangabandhu depends on the move of the government and its diplomatic achievement."

"Interpol can help in the deportation process if the countries concerned reach a consensus," the IGP added.

Earlier on Monday, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said the Canadian police have seized the passport of Nur Chowdhury since he has been illegally staying in Canada and submitted it to the Bangladesh High Commission in July last year.

Another convicted killer Lt Col (retd) Dalim had visited Canada some days ago and left that country after staying there for a few days.

DATE EXPIRED SURVEY REPORT

The date of survey report on the launch expired on November 5, 2005. According to existing rule, every water vessel must renew survey certificate annually. But the launch was plying on the route for long without such certificate.

OWNERSHIP CHANGED

Tareque Rahman was the first owner of the launch. Then Giasuddin Al Mamun, a bosom friend of Tareque, became the owner.

Nowadays, Fazlur Rahman alias Bachu Mollah, brother-in-law of Mamun and also UP chairman of Sachra Union Parishad under Borhan Uddin upazila, is conducting all businesses of the launch in absence of Mamun.

Bachu Mollah is yet to be reached for comment.

COMPENSATION

Chairman of BIWTA said they are giving Tk 2000 against each body and also granted Tk 20,000 for the family of each victim from a BIWTA fund.

Families with more than one victim will get Tk 30,000 each, he said.

Cop handed

FROM PAGE 16

recorded statements of 17 prosecution witnesses.

According to the prosecution, it was alleged that Nurul Islam, who was posted at Mirpur police station, took the victim on July 28, 2005 from Gabtoli bus stand and raped her at a hotel.

Later, the victim filed a case with Mirpur police station the same day. Police arrested Nurul Islam and hotel boy Jakir Hossain following the case filing.

Special Public Prosecutor Ali Asgar Swapan appeared for the state while advocate Monir Hossain defended the accused.

Green belt

FROM PAGE 16

saplings have been planted in several phases."

Of them, over 25,000 grew up to be trees before the plundering took place, said the DFO.

The DFO said, "We developed the green forest on the 125 acres of land as per law that entrusts DoF with the responsibility of afforestation on newly emerged shoals and shores, which are considered as khas land."

"The trees that grew there and the landscape itself would testify that the land is khas land. But unfortunately the land could not be included in the list of Khas land and some local influential people are now obtaining mutation of ownership," said the DFO blaming the district administration for indulging in bad practices.

The DFO also expressed resentment over the silence of Water Development Board saying, "The retaining walls of the ship-breaking yard are being erected on coastal embankment of WDB. If WDB came forward then DoF and WDB jointly could do something to check the advances."

When contacted Assistant Commissioner (land) Zakir Khondoker said, "As per the BS Khatian, the land, from where the trees were felled, belongs to private ownership. One has to take lease of shore or waterfront from the district administration for setting up any ship-breaking yard on his land behind it."

"We do not lease out shore that has forest on one side for proposed ship-breaking yards," said the AC adding, "We did not lease out the shore or waterfront around the land where the plundering took place Sunday night."