

Form commission to resolve land disputes of indigenous people

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday demanded a separate land commission for the indigenous community living in the plains to settle their land disputes with the mainstream that displaced many indigenous people from their homesteads.

Bangladesh Resources Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (Barcik), presented a keynote paper. Traditionally, indigenous people practise community-based management of land not ownership, as they believe that land belongs to god and it cannot be owned by humans, he said.

Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, said political will is necessary to resolve the land dispute. She called on the government to include indigenous people in the next census to be held in 2011. No information is available about them in 2001 census.

committee would be formed at district and upazila levels to settle the land-related problems, he noted. If any dissatisfaction arises from any parties regarding their decision, the law will also have a provision for special tribunal headed by a retired High Court justice to settle the matters, he said.

Call to educate indigenous children in mother tongue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday called for partnership of the government and non-government organisations (NGOs) to address the issue of providing Adivasi (indigenous) children with primary education in their mother tongues.

their mother tongue across the country. She called on the government to formulate a compressive policy and implement it, adding that the government with the help of partner organisations, including NGOs and donor agencies, should begin pilot projects in this connection.

The minister said his ministry will definitely address the issue with due importance. Saima Anwar, deputy country director of Save the Children-UK, and Dr Shourav Sikder, chairman of Linguistics Department, Dhaka University, also spoke.

Unemployed nurses threaten immolation today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Diploma Unemployed Nurses Association continued their hunger strike for the 7th consecutive day yesterday. But being hopeful of getting a positive decision from the government, the association rescheduled their self-immolation programme for today at 4:00pm, which was supposed to take place yesterday.



Bangladesh Diploma Unemployed Nurses Association continues its fast-unto-death programme at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding recruitment of nurses based on their merit and seniority.



Amra Muktijoddhar Santan, a platform of the children of the freedom fighters, burn effigies of Jamaat leaders Matuir Rahman Nizami and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Call to execute verdict in Kazi Aref murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called on the government to take immediate steps to execute the verdict in Kazi Aref Ahmed murder case.

'Ban Jamaat-Shibir politics'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Amra Muktijoddhar Santan, a platform of the children of the freedom fighters, yesterday demanded ban on the political activities of Jamaat and Shibir permanently announcing them as militant organisations.

The demand came from a human chain formed in front of the National Press Club in the city. Jamaat or Shibir is not a political entity, they are fundamentalist and militant organisations, said the leaders of the platform at the human chain. They also demanded trial of the war criminals.

The platform members also burnt the effigies of Jamaat leaders Motiur Rahman Nizami and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid. President of central committee of the organisation Humayun Kabir and Secretary General Sayed Ashrafur Islam Nayan were present.

TRIAL OF WAR CRIMINALS Appointment of investigators, prosecutors next month Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said the investigators and prosecutors would be appointed in the first week of March for holding trial of 1971 war criminals. New judges will be appointed to the Appellate and High Court divisions soon, he said.

secretariat. During the meeting, the Jica DG urged the law minister to take necessary steps to clear the way for signing an agreement between the Bangladesh government and Jica on four development projects. Jica earlier offered the US \$400 million projects to be implemented in the country. Shafique said the government is working for holding trial of the war criminals at a special tribunal in a fair and transparent manner maintaining international standard. He said no unnecessary delay will take place in com-

pleting the trial. He also ruled out any political instability due to holding the trial. He did not make any comment on the relation between the judgement on the Fifth Amendment to the constitution and the renaming of different establishments. He, however, said after getting copy of the SC verdict, the matter will be sent to the law commission for necessary recommendations. On receiving the recommendations, the government will bring amendments to the constitution.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS FM for regional action

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said some of the most vulnerable countries to climate change are in South Asia and collective regional action is needed to combat its adverse effect. The foreign minister said this when Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of Bhutan and Minister of Economic Affairs Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk called on her at State Guesthouse Padma yesterday. The Special Envoy apprised Dr Dipu Moni of the preparations being taken for the 16th Saarc Summit to be held at Thimpu on April 28-29, 2010.

He informed that the theme of this year's summit would be climate change. During the meeting, the two ministers also discussed issues of bilateral interest. He observed that the recent visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Bhutan generated greater enthusiasm among the people of his country. The Special Envoy also conveyed his government's appreciation for Bangladesh's decision to extend zero tariff access to 18 commodities from Bhutan and also allowing export through Tamabil border check post. This would greatly facilitate Bhutanese export from eastern part of the country to Bangladesh, he observed.

MACHINE-READABLE PASSPORT Contract signing today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The contract signing ceremony of a project for introducing machine-readable passport (MRP) and machine-readable visa (MRV) for Bangladesh will take place today at the office of the Department of Immigration and Passport (DIP). The contract signing will take place between DIP and Malaysia-based IRIS Corporation Berhad in presence of Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder, Project Director Brig Gen Md Refayet Ullah and senior officials of IRIS. Earlier, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina approved awarding the contract for the long-awaited project to the Malaysian company. The contract signing is taking place when Bangladesh is having only 42 days to comply with an international aviation deadline. Bangladesh has to go for MRP and MRV from April 1 as per International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) for international travelling. No hand-written will be accepted after the deadline.

GRAFT CASE Special court verdict against Maya stayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed a verdict of a special court which sentenced Dhaka city Awami League general secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya to 13 years' imprisonment in a corruption case. An HC bench of Justice MA Wahhab Miah and Justice Md Abdur Razzaque stayed the verdict against Maya until disposal of the appeal against the verdict. Maya filed the appeal on Monday seeking stay on the order of conviction and sentence against him. On June 4 last year, the HC granted bail to him upon an appeal filed by him against the special court verdict passed on February 14, 2008.

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