

Indigenous leaders want primary education in mother tongue

Expect PM's declaration on Int'l Mother Language Day

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

Indigenous leaders have called on the government to start primary-level education in their mother languages and demanded an announcement by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in this connection on International Mother Language Day.

The leaders placed the demand while they were being interviewed by this correspondent yesterday regarding their expectations on the occasion of this year's Ekushey February.

Ujjal Smrity Chakma, coordinator of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) Khagrachhari, said members of 13 minority indigenous communities, who speak in 10 separate mother tongues, had been demanding for long to start primary education in their own languages to ensure their rights.

"I call on the prime minister to declare her government's roadmap to start mother tongue-based primary education and I expect an announcement by her on

February 21," he said.

Indigenous leader and former Khagrachhari Hill District Council chairman Monindra Lal Tripura said as per Article-3 of the Parbatya Zila Parishad Act 1989, the government should start primary education for indigenous children in their mother languages.

"We expect the official declaration in this connection on February 21."

Another indigenous leader Shaktipado Tripura said the government signed a peace accord with Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) on December 2, 1997. As per Article-33 of the deal, the government should ensure primary education of all indigenous children in their mother languages.

Sudha Sindu Khisha also said as per the peace accord, it was mandatory that the government ensures at least primary-level education for indigenous children in their mother tongues.

"Actually, we included the section aimed at ensuring quality education, increasing children's ability to learn,

having a clear conception of their own languages and tradition, stoppage of child repression, child marriage as well as child labour, decreasing dropouts and increasing attendance in schools," he added.

Another PCJSS leader Sudhakar Tripura said if indigenous children learn their own cultural tradition through their mother tongues, schooling could have become more enjoyable. They might come to schools regularly.

Chakma language is being used at Chakma villages, Kokborok language at Tripura villages while Marma language at Marma villages, he added.

JSS leader Jatindra Lal Chakma said the government needs to mother tongue-based primary education in CHT area.

"It will encourage our indigenous children to go to schools and learn practically."

He expects that the incumbent premier will deliver her commitment to begin primary education in indigenous languages.



Family members of language martyrs pose for photograph with the guests at a view exchange meeting on the present status of the family members at the conference hall of Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Hall at Dhaka University yesterday. Jute and Textile Minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui, former adviser to the caretaker government Syed Manzur Elahi and Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique were present. (Story on page 3)

Garment workers beat up traffic constable for taking bribes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agitating garment workers took an on-duty traffic constable to their factory from the street and beat him up as he allegedly took bribes and released a private car which hit and injured a fellow worker seriously at Banani in the city yesterday.

On receiving information, Gulshan police rescued the injured constable Rafiqul Islam from Shikha Garments at Chairmanbari and took him to Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital.

Witnesses said garment worker Khaleda Akhter, 20, was injured in a hit and run accident by the private car on Mymensingh road at around 1:30pm.

She is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Following the accident, the traffic constable intercepted the private car but released it after taking Tk 700 as bribes, they alleged.

Angered by the traffic constable's act, the garment workers who were with Khaleda took the constable to the factory and beat him up.

Officer-in-charge (OC) Kamal Uddin of Gulshan police station said they rescued the constable from the grab of the agitating workers.

However, he could not say whether the constable took bribe or not.

5 lakh metres of current net seized

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Coastguards seized 5 lakh metres of banned current net and some Jatkas (Hilsa fry up to 9 inches) from different confluences of the river Meghna in Chandpur yesterday.

The nets were seized under a special drive of the coastguards to contain fishing of Jatka. The drive will continue from Shatnal Char in Chandpur to Char Alexander in Laxmipur till Monday.

Concerted efforts a must to curb militancy

Says Sahara

UNB, Manikganj

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday called upon the people to play an active role alongside the law enforcement agencies in curbing militancy and terrorism.

"The militants having strongholds in the country are trying to create anarchy in the name of holding meetings and gatherings. They must be wiped out from the soil of this country," she said.

The home minister was speaking as the chief guest at the monthly meeting on the district's law and order situation at the Deputy Commissioner's conference room. Deputy Commissioner GM Saleh Uddin presided over the meeting.

Sahara said, "Overall development of the country is not possible without improving law and order.

Opposition party and the anti-liberation elements are still engaged in conspiracy to destabilise law and order."

The home minister asked the law enforcement agencies to discharge their duties impartially, rising above any party influence or opinion.

Criminals would have to be ruled with an iron hand regardless of their identity, she said.

She reiterated that the country's law and order situation is now better than at any time in the past.

Sahara said the trial of the Bangabandhu's killers was a demand of the people and the people's aspiration was partly fulfilled by executing the five killers.

"The process is underway to bring back the remaining six fugitive killers from abroad."

Referring to the trial of war criminals, she said they

would be tried on the soil of the land, as it is now "a demand of time".

The home minister mentioned that the government has allocated Tk 476 crore to modernise the police force. The amount would be spent for providing them with logistic supports, including two pick-ups, two motorcycles and necessary river craft for each thana, she said.

Earlier, in the morning, the home minister exchanged views with the district police at the Police Lines auditorium here.

She also attended a function marking the 10th founding anniversary of Sahera-Hasan Memorial Hospital.

Food Minister Abdur Razzaque, Industries Minister Dilip Barua, Chief Justice Fazlul Karim, political leaders and senior government officials were present.

Dacoit killed in mass beating

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cnawaganj

An alleged dacoit was killed in mass beating at Chohar beel under Mobarakpur union of Shibganj upazila here on Thursday.

The victim was identified as Abdul Quddus, 50, of Kalichak Battala village under the same upazila.

Police said a gang of robbers, including Quddus, tried to rob some people along with one Touhidul Islam at Goabari Chandpur under Shibganj upazila while they were returning home.

When they started shouting for help, locals rushed to the spot and gave Quddus a mass beating.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the dead body.

WEATHER TODAY

Temperature may rise

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Light fog may occur over the river basins, Met Office said, adding that night temperature may rise slightly.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:57pm today and rises at 6:28am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 31.4 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and the lowest of 8.3 degrees at Srimangol.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	28.8	14.4	37	37
Chittagong	30.0	18.0	40	47
Rajshahi	28.3	11.5	74	56
Khulna	29.0	15.5	51	56
Barisal	29.3	14.0	70	54
Sylhet	28.6	13.7	45	40
Cox's Bazar	31.4	20.0	34	35

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

Pharmacy Graduates' Association, Bangladesh and Bioequivalence Study Centre, Jadavpur University will jointly organise a seminar on the 'Importance of bio-equivalence, bio-availability and toxicity studies of pharmaceutical products'. Venue: Senate Bhaban, Dhaka University. Time: 10:30am.

Premiere

The premiere of 'Visionary and Missionary Dr Mohammad Ibrahim', a documentary on the life of the noted physician, will be held. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 4:30pm.

Rotary Dhaka Central

The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.



Women who were accorded a reception by Dhaka Business and Professional Club for their contribution to different sectors pose for photograph with Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and other guests at a programme marking 50 years of the club at Hotel Sheraton in the city yesterday.

Govt halts Odhikar's HR project again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has stopped the 'Human Rights Defenders Training and Advocacy Programme' project of rights organisation Odhikar for the second consecutive time without giving any specific reasons.

"It is for the second time NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) cancelled the project showing a cause of the home ministry's objections, nothing specific about the objections," said Adilur Rahman Khan, secretary of Odhikar.

Odhikar has been implementing the project having approval from NGOAB on April 28, 2009 with the fund of the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims (RCT) in Denmark as part of a large project on the Convention Against Torture (OP-CAT) funded by the

European Union.

After receiving EU approval for an extension of the OP-CAT project by three more months on completion of its term on December 31, Odhikar submitted the project again on January 17, 2010 to NGOAB for extension.

On February 11, the bureau issued a letter rejecting the proposal for the extension of the project.

Without giving any specific reasons, the letter said the bureau could not allow the extension of the project as the home ministry had objection to it.

The aims of the project are to educate human rights defenders in the OP-CAT and highlight the fact that the persisting acts of torture by law enforcement agencies go against both national and international laws.

Earlier on August 31, 2009, Odhikar received a letter

dated August 17, 2009 from the bureau, cancelling the project halfway. Without giving any specific reasons, the letter said the project had been cancelled as the home ministry had objection to it.

On October 11, the High Court, after hearing a writ petition filed by Odhikar, halted the cancellation of the project and asked the government to explain why the cancellation would not be declared illegal.

The HC also extended the period for next three months on February 10 to continue the project.

Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), expressed its concern in an open letter to the prime minister.

Unsuccessful bid by police to grab farmers' land

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Farmers of Char Gobra in Gopalganj did not dare to go to their fields along the Gopalganj-Bagerhat border yesterday although police, after an unsuccessful attempt to grab the farmers' land, left the area.

A visit there yesterday revealed that the signboards, which the police had put up claiming the fields, were removed Thursday night.

Locals said police took away crops from the fields. Ranjit Biswas, Kartik Biswas, Bijoy Krishno Paik, Awal Sardar, Mokhter Sardar, Haider Sardar and Jyotish Biswas are a few victims among others.

The farmers now fear attacks on them and kept themselves from going to the fields yesterday, added the locals.

"The Bagerhat superinten-

dent of police (SP) wished to buy my land. Failing, he tried to grab it. I am now in grave panic as to what will happen next," said farmer Ranjit Biswas.

People of Char Gobra fear that false cases might be filed against them as Bagerhat police failed to grab land in the area and threatened of consequences.

On Thursday, in the name of demarcating district border more than 100 police and 50 labourers reaped away crops from the fields along the border at SP Mizanur Rahman's direction.

Police also started constructing a road to demarcate the border by taking soil from the fields along the site. The unprecedented land-grabbing attempt by police however stopped Thursday afternoon when locals and Gopalganj district administration intervened.

Gopalganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abdul Matin said, "We are yet to decide about filling the dug out fields. I have estimated the amount of soil taken from the fields and a process is underway to submit a report in this regard."

"If the people of my area are afraid of the police or locals of Bagerhat, we settle the matter discussing with the Bagerhat district administration," he added.

Farmer Hanif Sardar said, "I don't care whether my land falls in Bagerhat or Gopalganj district. How come the ownership of a land changes when a piece of land falls in another district?"

Police have destroyed my crops and are now trying to grab it, he alleged.

On Thursday, the Bagerhat SP told reporters that he had done this to keep the law and order in the area as there had been disagreements over the border for a long time.



A microbus was damaged and two people were injured as a train rammed it at Mohakhali level crossing in the city last night. (Story on Page 16)

POLICE ATTACK

BNP protests on Monday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition BNP will hold a rally in the capital on Monday protesting against the police attack on the party's procession brought out from city's Muktangan on Thursday.

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, senior joint secretary general of BNP, yesterday said the protest rally would be held in front of party's central office at Naya Paltan.

Fakhrul said police had arrested at least 13 of their party activists on Thursday. He demanded their immediate release.

The BNP leader was addressing a press briefing at the Naya Paltan office.

Asked whether there is any possibility that the party would declare hartal, he warned that

they would announce tougher action if the government continues to obstruct the opposition's peaceful and democratic programmes.

"The government in a planned way is forcing us to take to the street, in order to destroy democratic atmosphere," he said.

Fakhrul added police and ruling party cadres also attacked BNP's programmes in different places including Munshiganj, Natore, Sylhet and Shariatpur.

He also said the Awami League-led government intends to establish Bakshal and this is why the ruling party men do not want democratic environment to prevail in the country.

On Thursday after a rally, BNP activists and police clashed in the city's Paltan area, leaving at least 10 people injured.

Hotel boy jumps to death during police raid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A hotel boy jumped to death from the fourth floor of a residential hotel at Mohakhali in the city during a police raid on the hotel last night.

The hotel boy, Ratan, worked at Hotel Sonali Abasik, a five-storey residential hotel, at Rasulbagh.

Officer-in-charge (OC) Omar Faruque of Tejgaon Industrial Area Police Station said they conducted the raid on the hotel at about 10:00pm acting on information that unsocial activities were taking place in the hotel.

Ratan jumped from the hotel during the raid, he added.

The police took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital immediately where the doctors declared him dead.

Quality of banking diploma questions stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank Governor Atiur Rahman yesterday said quality of banking diploma questions should be improved by incorporating encrypted bar coding system in processing the answer scripts.

Dr Atiur Rahman, who is also the president of Institute of Bankers Bangladesh (IBB), stressed the importance of efficient bankers in elevating Bangladesh as a mid-income nation by 2021 as well as meeting the challenges of world recession and international competition in financial markets.

The Bangladesh Bank governor was speaking as the chief guest at a seminar organised by IBB at the auditorium of Pubali Bank Ltd in the city.

Bangladesh Bank Deputy Governor Ziaul Hossain Siddiqui, Agrani Bank CEO and MD Syed Abu Naser Bukhtear Ahmed, Janata Bank CEO and MD SM Aminur Rahman, Bangladesh Development Bank MD Mizanur Rahman and Sonali Bank CEO and MD Kazi Fakrul Islam presided over the workingsessions.

IBB Secretary General Mujibur Rahman Khan coordinated the seminar.

Grand wedding reception

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

It was a grand wedding reception.

There were around 10000 people feasting at the Bera Abdul Khaleque Stadium and about 100 policemen were deployed to ensure security.

The wedding reception of SM Nafiz Shams, the youngest son of State Minister for Home Affairs Advocate Shamsul Haque Tuku, took place yesterday.

The decorations were brought from Bogra, at least 80 mounds of beef and 20 mounds of mutton were prepared and over 3000 chickens were roasted.

The programme that started at 2:00pm continued the whole day.

Political leaders, high officials and big guns of the locality were present at the programme.