

Joint efforts a must to settle CHT land disputes

Says justice Khademul

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Chairman of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission (CHTLDR) Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury at a view exchange meeting here yesterday urged cooperation from

Larma, also the chief of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), and Chakma Circle chief Devasish Roy did not attend the meeting.

Asked about the matter, the commission chairman said, "It is their moral duty to attend the meeting. But I don't know why they are remaining absent. I think many problems could be solved if they come to the meeting."

"There is no scope for influence or politicisation of the commission. Everybody can take help from the commission for any land dispute, especially those who would be victimised by illegal settlement," Justice Khademul said.

Replying to a query, he said if anybody fails to show documents about ownership of a land, solution will be sought under existing 1900 CHT Regulation and traditional laws.

"We cannot sit idle as bringing amendment to the CHTLDR as per the demand of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity would be a lengthy process," he said.

Rangamati Hill District Council Chairman Nikhil Kumar Chakma and President of Rangamati Headmen Association Chingkie Roaza requested the commission chairman to take necessary steps for ensuring presence of the two members at meetings of the commission for early solution of land disputes in hill districts.

Rangamati Deputy Commissioner Sourendra Nath Chakrabarty, Superintendent of Police Masud-ul-Hassan, headmen, UNOs and local journalists attended the meeting held at Rangamati Circuit House in the morning.

Earlier two other commissions were formed for resolution of land disputes in CHT but the problem has remained unresolved.



Potato farmer Selim Golder of Pathorghata upazila in Barguna district gives a bleak look as the vegetable sees awfully low prices in local markets due to lack of storage facilities, right, the frustrated grower finds no better way than feeding the rotting potatoes to his cows.



PHOTO: STAR

COLD STORAGE CRISIS IN BARGUNA, PATUAKHALI Frustrated farmers feeding rotting potatoes to cattle

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Huge quantities of potatoes are rotting in different areas of Barguna and Patuakhali districts due to lack of storage facilities while the price has come down to as low as Tk 200-250 per maund in local markets.

The two districts saw huge potato production due to favourable weather this year but farmers are now worried about recovery of their production cost, let alone profit.

Many of them are feeding potatoes to their cows.

Potato was cultivated on 500 acres of land in Patuakhali and 650 acres in Barguna and the two districts produced about 15,000 tonnes and 19,500 tonnes of potato but there is no cold storage, said sources at the

Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

The best producing upazilas are Baufal in Patuakhali and Pathorghata in Barguna, they added.

"I cultivated potato on my 11 acres of land this year and spent about Tk 1.25 lakh for the purpose. But I will not be able to recover even my investment as price of potato is very low in the local market. The supply of potato is much higher than demand in this area. Some businessmen from Munshiganj are coming to buy potatoes from here at very cheap rates," said Asit Baran, a farmer of Kalaiya village under Baufal upazila.

Surat Ali Khan, 65, a potato farmer of Kakchira village in Pathorghata upazila, said he has been cultivating potato for

seven years but he has never seen such low price.

"On last Thursday, I went to Barguna with 10 maunds of potato but I did not sell it as the price is very low. Now I am feeding potatoes to my cows as it is rotting," he said.

Selim Golder, 50, a potato farmer of the same village, said last year he cultivated potato on one-acre land and earned a profit of over Tk 2,000. This year he cultivated potato on two acres of land by taking loan from a local NGO but he is facing losses due to low price of the produce.

Golam Sabur Tulu, lawmaker from Pathorghata, took an initiative to set up a cold storage for preservation of locally produced potatoes two years ago but it is still under construction.

RU expels BCL man for life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi University's (RU) disciplinary board yesterday expelled an activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) for assaulting and sexually abusing female students on the campus.

Kawsar Ahmed, the BCL activist and 4th year student of marketing department was also sent to jail custody by a Rajshahi court at noon as a Bengali department girl lodged a complaint with the police on Saturday night.

"He (Kawsar) has been permanently expelled from the university. He will not be allowed to study in any department of the university", said RU proctor Prof Chowdhury Muhammad Zakaria.

Prof Zakaria, also member secretary of RU disciplinary board said the board took the decision in an emergency meeting held at the vice chan-

cellor's office with VC Prof Abdus Sobhan in the chair.

Kawsar abused a Bengali department female student first in front of the Senate Bhaban on July 22 last year for rejecting his proposal.

Caught red-handed, Kawsar gave an undertaking to the RU authorities that he would never engage in any such activity.

But only three months later on December 9 last year, two other girls of the university brought allegations of sexual abuse against him, said board sources.

The RU authorities at that time also virtually did nothing but warned Kawsar.

Again on April 1 evening, Kawsar assaulted the aforesaid Bengali department student in front of Tapashi Rabeya Hall while she was returning to her dormitory by a rickshaw. He also beat up her friends as they tried to save her.

Police arrested Kawsar on Saturday following a case filed by the Bengali department student.



PHOTO: STAR

Mothers with their diarrhoea-affected children stay on the floor of Khulna Shishu Hospital as the lone child hospital in the division struggles to cope with around three times more patients than capacity.

Suspected JMB man arrested

UNB, Chandpur

Police arrested a suspected member of Islamist militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in Faridganj upazila on Friday morning.

The arrestee is identified as Maulana Abdur Rashid, 60, an Imam of a mosque of the village.

Acting on secret information, police conducted a raid at the village and nabbed Abdur Rashid.

Sub-Inspector (SI) of Faridganj police station Abul Kalam Azad said they arrested him on the basis of specific information about his link with the JMB.

He was produced in the court which rejected his bail prayer and sent to jail.

DIARRHOEA SITUATION ALARMING Lone child hospital in Khulna struggles to cope with patients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna Shishu Hospital, the lone child hospital in Khulna division, is struggling to provide medical service for increasing number of diarrhoea patients as the disease has broken out in Khulna city and neighbouring upazilas.

The 218-bed hospital run by Khulna Shishu Foundation can hardly accommodate around 500 patients, including those kept on floors under special arrangement, said hospital officials.

But 1,264 diarrhoea patients were taking treatment at four wards and 30 cabins of the hospital on Wednesday, acting Administrative Officer Shila

Halder said, adding that number of patients with other diseases like pneumonia, jaundice and intestinal disorders are also on the rise.

Diarrhoea situation, especially in slum areas of the city, is worsening due to hot weather and climate change while treatment at the hospital is being hampered due to shortage of doctors and life saving medicines including oral saline in addition to accommodation problem, said Dr Noor-e-Alam Siddiqui, medical officer of Khulna Shishu Hospital.

Guardians of children with usual diarrhoea are suggested not to bring them to the hospital as it can be cured with oral saline, and paracetamol tablets in case of fever, he said.

Several guardians alleged that children admitted to the hospital do not get proper medical services from doctors and nurses.

"I had to call in a doctor from outside when condition of my one-year-old daughter Pritha deteriorated as no doctor visited during 24 hours of her admission to Khulna Shishu Hospital on Tuesday," said Pranob Debnath of Rupsha upazila in Khulna district.

Contacted, Sheikh Abdul Kayyum, secretary general of Khulna Shishu Foundation, said, "Proper medical services cannot be provided to all the patients due to shortage of doctors and nurses. Still the hospital authorities are trying heart and soul to take proper care of patients."

Three AL men arrested for assaulting narcotics official, cop

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Police on Saturday night arrested Shyamnagar Juba League president and two activists of the unit for allegedly assaulting an official of narcotics control department and a sub-inspector of local police station.

The arrestees are upazila Juba League President Abdul Kader and activists Abdul Jalil and Shahid. Two separate cases--one by Inspector Mosharrar Hossain of Satkhira office of narcotics control department and the other by Sub-inspector (SI) Zafar--were filed with Shyamnagar Police Station against the three Juba League men.

Police quoted local people as saying that Kader and his two associates assaulted Inspector Mosharrar near Banshipur bus stand in Shyamnagar upazila while he was returning to Satkhira after investigating a case at Fultala Dhankhali village in the upazila at around 6:00pm.

Later, Inspector Mosharrar went to Shyamnagar Police Station and filed the case against Kader, Jalil and Shahid. Hearing the news of filing a case against them by Inspector Mosharrar, the Juba League leader and activists came to the police station at around 8:00pm and rebuked the officer-in-charge (OC) for recording the case against them.

At one stage, they assaulted duty officer SI Zafar and damaged some furniture of the police station. Police arrested the Juba League men on the spot and yesterday produced them in a court that sent them to jail.

Satkhira district Juba League General Secretary Asaduzzaman Babu condemned the incident. He said the party will take action against the persons involved.

Contacted, officer-in-charge (OC) Fazlur Rahman of Shyamnagar Police Station said they will press charges against the three after investigation.

Meanwhile, Shyamnagar upazila Awami League (AL), Juba League and Chhatra League yesterday took out a procession and held a rally at the upazila headquarters protesting arrest of Juba League leader Kader and activists Jalil and Shahid on Saturday night.

Procession, rally for smooth water, power supply

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Several hundred people including women held procession, rally yesterday in the district town demanding smooth water, power and gas supply.

The agitators also threatened to lay siege to the local power office and municipality building if their problems are not resolved soon.

The dwellers of Gangadharpatti and Banagram led by former commissioner Ratan Majumder brought out a procession and held a rally in front of the local press club at noon demanding sufficient water and power supply in the town.

District AL general secretary Gazi Kamrul Huda Selim, Ratan Majumder, Sarkar Masud and Rina Akter, among others, addressed the rally.

They said residents of the district town have been suffering much due to disruption in water and power supply.

The municipality authorities supplied water only once or twice a week during the last few weeks, they said.

They later submitted a memo to the municipal mayor to meet their demands without further delay.

Boro cultivation is being hampered in the

district as the farmers cannot irrigate their land timely due to persisting power crisis, reports UNB.

Farmers apprehended that the target of boro production may not be achieved in the current season.

Most of the lands are drying up for lack of irrigation causing frustration among the cultivators. Many farmers are using diesel run shallow machines in the power-run irrigation project.

Sources said some 58,000 hectares of land have been brought under boro cultivation in the current season in the district exceeding the target of 55,000 hectares.

Farmers said they brought more land under boro cultivation this season as price of rice is higher in the market than other crops.

They said one fourth of their boro land have dried up due to scorching heat and lack of irrigation.

Agitated by persisting power crisis the farmers also demonstrated in the district town and upazila headquarters recently.

Habul Mia, a farmer of Boilot village in Ghior upazila said, four bighas of boro land, out of 13, which he cultivated this season have been dried up for lack of irrigation.



PHOTO: STAR

Residents of Gangadharpatti and Banagram in Manikganj town bring out a procession yesterday demanding smooth supply of power and water and solution to drainage problem in the area.