

HUMAN CHAINS, RALLIES ACROSS COUNTRY 'Say indigenous, not ethnic people in constitution'

STAR NATIONAL DESK
Indigenous people across the country yesterday rejected a parliamentary committee's decision to give them constitutional recognition as 'ethnic groups' and urged the government to consider them as 'indigenous people'.
They organised human chains and rallies to press home their demand and submitted memoranda to the district administration of Rangamati, Khagrachhari, Barisal, Thakurgaon, Natore, Sylhet and Moulvibazar.
After a meeting of the parliamentary special committee on constitutional amendment on March 15, its co-chair Suranjit Sengupta told media that the committee would recommend constitutional recognition of the ethnic groups.
The indigenous people across the country yesterday urged the government to recognise them as 'indigenous people', not 'ethnic groups' or 'ethnic minorities'.
Our Rangamati correspondent

reported that the indigenous people formed a human chain in front of the deputy commissioner's office in the town yesterday and later held a rally at the venue. Addressing the rally, the adivasi leaders urged the government to meet their demand. Otherwise, they threatened to launch a tougher agitation programme.
Chaired by Goutam Dewan, president of CHT Nagorik Committee, the rally was addressed, among other, by Prakriti Ranjan Chakma, president of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum CHT unit, Nirupa Dewan, member of National Human Right Commission, Shakti Pada Tripura, organising secretary of the central committee of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, Prof Mounghshanu Chowdhury and Anjulika Khisa. CHT Nagorik Committee and Bangladesh Adivasi Forum CHT unit jointly
In Khagrachhari, Bangladesh Marma Unnayan Sangsad, Bangladesh Marma Students Forum, Bangladesh Tripura Kalyan Sangsad, Tripura Students Forum, Khagrachhari Zila

Headman-Karbari Association and Bangladesh Adivasi Forum jointly organised a human chain in the district town to press for the same demand, according to a correspondent.
Our staff correspondent from Sylhet reports, Sylhet Bibhagiya Adivasi Janogoshi, a forum of indigenous people in the greater Sylhet, yesterday formed a human chain in front of the Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar, urging the government to recognise them as 'indigenous people' instead of 'ethnic groups'. The forum also held a similar programme in Moulvibazar yesterday.
Jatiya Adivasi Parishad Thakurgaon unit formed a human chain in the district town yesterday demanding their constitutional recognition as 'indigenous people' instead of 'ethnic groups', says our correspondent.
Rakhine community in Patuakhali and Borguna formed human chains, took out processions and held rallies at the district headquarters yesterday on the same demand, reports our Barisal correspondent.

21 shops gutted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj
At least 21 shops were gutted in a fire at a market in Mithamoin upazila yesterday.
Locals said, the fire originated from the burning mosquito coil at a grocery shop and soon engulfed the adjoining shops of Sikdar market and Hye markets early in the morning.
Locals doused the flame after three hours of hectic efforts as there was no fire service station in the upazila.
The affected shop owners claimed that the extent of loss from the fire could go up to Tk one crore.
Another fire gutted at least 22 shops damaging property worth Tk 4 core in Bhola district town early Wednesday, reports our Barisal correspondent.
The shops included cloth, medicine, stationary, shoe, restaurants, cosmetics, confectionary, rice and cotton.
Electric short circuit was suspected as the cause of fire, fire service sources said.



This memorial of Liberation War martyrs who were buried at Sreepatpur mass grave in Kalaroa upazila of Satkhira district remains in utter neglect, bearing testimony to the authorities' callousness about preserving the memory of the heroic sons of the soil.

22 killing grounds in Satkhira lie neglected

ABU AHMED, Satkhira
At least 22 killing grounds (Bodhyabhumi), where hundreds of Bengalees were massacred by the Pakistan occupation forces during the War of Liberation in 1971 here are lying neglected even after 40 years of independence of the country.
No government or non government initiatives were taken to preserve or renovate these killing grounds.
Not only that, many of the killing grounds have already been grabbed by local influential people.
Local administration and Muktijoddha Sangsad have so far identified 22 killing grounds in the district which have almost vanished or lost area mark.
Being a bordering district headquarters and a safer place, thousands of people fleeing from different areas of the country came to Satkhira town for shelter and gathered at Town High School premises and other areas.
One of the main killing grounds of the district is 'Katia Bodhyabhumi' in the town.
On April 20 Pakistan Army attacked and killed about 1500 people who took shelter in Town High School building. They were buried at the residence of Dinesh Karmakar near the school at Katia.
Over 400 skeletons, bone and skulls were recovered from the mass graves in this area soon after the independence.
Jhhaudanga mass grave has almost been grabbed and a number of houses have already been built there. Over 2000 people who were fleeing to India met the tragic end of their lives on April 26, 1971 as the Pakistan army opened fire indiscriminately on them near Jhhaudanga Bazaar.
There is no sign of any mass grave at Sreepatpur Palpara where nine innocent potters were brutally killed and buried on April 28, 1971 by Pakistani forces, said Moslem Uddin of Kalaroa upazila.
The Sreepur mass grave in Debhata upazila has also turned into a grabbed land. At least 59 Pakistani soldiers were killed while eight freedom fighters including Samsuzzoha Kajal, Narayan Dhar and Abul Kalam Azad lost their lives in a dreadful fight on June 12, 1971 at Town Sreepur in the upazila.
On July 27, 1971 twelve freedom fighters were killed in Narayanpur of Kaliganj upazila. Zobeida Begum, 70, of Narayanpur village told this correspondent that her sister-in-law Ayesha Khatun buried the bodies in a bush near their house at Narayanpur.
The other mass graves at Keargati, Kalaroa football ground, Sonabaria, Panchnal, Bamankhali, Bhadiali, Chandanpur, Khordo and Madra in Kalaroa upazila are also lying uncared for.
The occupation forces and their collaborators killed over 200 innocent people and buried them at the aforesaid places during the War of Liberation in 1971.
Satkhira Sadar upazila Muktijoddha Sangsad Commander Abu Bakar Siddique demanded memorials at the mass graves of the martyred freedom fighters.
"The memories of the heroic sons of the soils must be kept alive in the mind of future generations", he said.



Indigenous people form human chains in front of Khagrachhari Press Club, and Central Shaheed Minar in Sylhet city yesterday demanding their constitutional recognition as indigenous people, not 'ethnic groups'. Similar programmes were held in several other places of the country.



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A YEAR AFTER SYLHET COLLEGE TEACHER MURDER No charge sheet yet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet
The law enforcers are yet to submit the charge sheet a year after the gruesome killing of Sylhet Government Women's College teacher Harun Ur Rashid.
Tired of waiting for justice, the deceased's wife Afroza Harun at a press conference in the capital on March 13 pleaded for sending the case to the monitoring cell of the home ministry.
Talking to The Daily Star on March 15, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Inspector Muhibul Islam, also investigation officer of the case, however claimed that the investigation is complete and the charge sheet will be submitted soon.
Criminals beat up and stabbed to death Harun Ur Rashid, associate professor of philosophy department of Sylhet Government Women's College, in front of his rented house at the city's Goura Govinda Tilla area on March 21 last year.
Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on March 28 caught Sujina Akhtar Munni, her classmate Safia Khatun Lipi, Russel Ahmed, Alimul Islam and Lokman Ahmed while prime suspect Abdul Latif

FOLLOW-UP
Kawsar, also boyfriend of Munni, was arrested on November 24.
The six people, all on bail now, will be included in the charge sheet, sources said.
Kotwali police on March 30 last year took Munni, Lipi, Russel, Alimul and Lokman on three-day remand.



Prof Harun Ur Rashid
Munni and Lipi, who had witnessed the murder from the teacher's house, gave its description to the law enforcers.
On April 1, the Judicial Magistrate of Sylhet recorded under Section 164 Munni's confessional statement that narrated how her boyfriend Kawsar beat and stabbed Prof Harun Ur Rashid while Kawsar's friends Russel and Alimul helped.
Sources said Kawsar got

furiously as Prof Harun rebuked him for having an affair with Munni, who used to join private tuition at the teacher's house. However Munni claimed that Kawsar became angry as he had heard about the teacher's indecent approaches to her.
Following the killed teacher's wife Afroza Harun's appeal to the inspector general of police and the home minister for a proper enquiry and action against the killers and college teachers' work abstention and agitation across the country demanding the same, the case was transferred to the Detective Branch but it did not proceed much.
As Afroza again moved to the police high ups and the home minister for proper investigation, the case was shifted to the CID.
Immediately after the gruesome murder, police arrested Jamal Ahmed alias Kala Jamal, Dulal Ahmed, Ataul Gani Umon -- all activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, but CID did not find their complicity in the killing, sources said.
Meanwhile, Afroza Harun is yet to get the financial benefits that she is entitled as widow of a government service holder.

Charges to be framed today against 21 mutineers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, C'naowabganj
The special court-12 will frame charges against 21 mutineers of 39 Battalion under Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in Chapainawabganj today.
Charges against the mutineers were brought by Prosecutor Lt Col Zayed Hossain, also the commanding officer of the battalion, on October 31 last year.
After hearing, the court headed by Rajshahi Sector Commander Col Ehia Azam Khan fixed March 20, 2011 for hearing of charges against the accused. All the 21 accused were produced in the court.
The other members of the court are Lt Col Gazi Mohammad Khalid Hossain and Lt Commander Muhammad Touhidul Islam.
Of the accused, 17 were arrested immediately after the mutiny on February 26 in 2009 while the rest on October 30 last year.
The accused are Subedar Md Mostofa Mia, havildars Benoar Rahman, and Ruhul Amin, nayeks Eskendar Ali, and Rahmat Ali, lance nayeks Shafiqur Rahman, and Tous Mia, sepoy's Mojibur Rahman, Zahangir Alam, Abdul Wazed Pramanik, Abdur Rahim, Syed Monirul Islam, Abul Bashar, Rani Ahmed, Zahidul Islam, Nazrul Islam, Jamal Mia, Panchanan Das, Moshfiqur Rahman, Muhammad Ruhul Amin Shikdar and driver Abdul Mannan.
The then Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station Ahsanul Haque filed a mutiny case with the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court on May 18, 2009 against 21 jawans of 39 Battalion.

Adulterated fertiliser seized, 3 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole (Jessore)
District Task Force members early yesterday arrested three people including owner of a fertiliser factory and seized one truck-load of adulterated fertiliser.
Sadar upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) Rezaul Karim said, on a tip off, upazila agriculture officer GM Abdur Rauf along with a joint team of Rab and police conducted a drive in Nowapara Kismat area.
The team seized 150 sacks of zipsium, 150 sacks of dolomite, 30 sacks of ammonia sulphate, 25 sacks of magnesium from a truck.
They also arrested two persons in this connection. They are Imdadul Haque, owner of Three Star Fertiliser Factory, Imdadul, son of Khalilur Rahman of Upasahar area and Ohidur Rahman, son of Yunus Gazi. The administration also seized the truck carrying the adulterated fertiliser.
Kotwali police station sub-inspector (SI) Kamruzzaman said that a big syndicate is manufacturing adulterated fertiliser in Jessore.
A source claimed the adulterated fertiliser was collected from AB Agro Chemical Industries at Lebutola, Jamuna Agro Chemical Industries at Baliadanga, factories of Shafiqul Alam alias Tota Miah at Kismat Nowapara, Anisur Rahman of Sheikh Hati and Kundu Brothers of Monohorpur.



A 30-minute nor'wester lashed Khashikona village under Barhappa upazila in Netrakona district Friday night injuring 30 people, damaging houses, boro paddy and uprooting trees.

SNIPPETS

Sister beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria
A woman was beaten to death allegedly by her elder brother centering a family feud at Leshiara village under Kasba upazila yesterday. The dead was identified as Chhaya Rani Das, 35, daughter of Horendro Das of Leshiara Uttarpara village. According to villagers, Uttam Das became furious following an altercation between him and his younger sister Chhaya Rani Das. At on stage, Uttam started beating Chhaya Rani with a bamboo stick and Chhaya died on the way to hospital. On information, police from Kasba PS rushed to the spot but Uttam fled the scene. Police sent the body to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Jubo League leader attacked

UNB, Munsiganj
A Jubo League leader was hacked by some activists of local Jubo Dal at Kazir Pagla Bazaar in Louhajang upazila on Friday. OC Subrato Kumar Saha said a group led by Jubo Dal president Khalil of Ward no 6 of Medinimandal attacked Jubo League leader Qamrul Islam of the same ward by sharp weapons when he was going to the bazaar, leaving him injured. Qamrul was admitted to a local health complex.

Stalker beaten up, fined

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha
A stalker was beaten by mob and later fined Tk 5,000 by a mobile court for teasing a schoolgirl at Madhapara village in Sundarganj upazila yesterday. Local people caught Shafiqul Hasan Jinnah of the same village and gave him a good beating as he continued to tease schoolgirl Ferdousi Begum, a student of class nine on her way to school. On Saturday morning, when the victim went to a nearby pond for taking bath Shafiqul sexually harassed her. As the victim cried for help, locals caught Shafiqul red-handed and took him to the mobile court led by Sundarganj UNO.

BNP office ransacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram
District BNP office of Kurigram was ransacked allegedly by BCL cadres on Friday. Office secretary of the district BNP Ashrafal Haque Rubel said following a quarrel between activists of Chhatra League and activists of Swechhashebak Dal near Kurigram Sadar Hospital gate, the BCL men attacked the district BNP office at night. They broke doors, windows, television and furniture of the office. They also hit convener of the district Hindu Welfare Parishad Drejendra Nath Shah with a billhook injuring him seriously. President of the district Chhatra League Minhajul Abedin however refuted the allegation.

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