

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Recognition a must to implement CHT laws

Says Raja Devashish

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Until indigenous people are given constitutional recognition, laws regarding Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) would not be properly implemented due to mismatch with the constitution, said Chakma Circle Chief Raja Devashish Roy yesterday.

"Many Chittagong Hill Tracts laws are out of sync with the constitution and so, including the peace accord, would continue to face questions from constitutional point of view unless indigenous people are constitutionally recognised," he said.

Devashish was speaking at the launching programme of a book titled "Compendium on national and international laws and indigenous people in Bangladesh" in the city's National Planning Academy Auditorium.

Kapaeeng Foundation and Oxfam GB jointly organised the programme, presided over by Kapaeeng Foundation Chairman Rabindranath Soren.

On recommendation by parliamentary special committee on constitutional amendment to identify indigenous people as "Tribal", Devashish said, "We expect the government to identify indigenous people by a term, at least accepted by the people themselves."

The book contains all laws relevant to CHT.

"Actually it is not a book of laws but history. It recognises the fact that under circumstances, traditional norms have also been recognised as laws," said Justice SK Sinha.

Zi Khan Panna, chairman of human rights and legal education committee of Bangladesh Bar Council; former chief justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman; journalists and human rights activists attended the programme.



Slum dwellers voluntarily dismantle their makeshift homes at Raiway Hospital Colony in CRB area of Chittagong yesterday when Bangladesh Railway authorities went there on an eviction drive.

PHOTO: STAR

Speaker slates lawmakers for violating rules of procedure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Abdul Hamid yesterday strongly criticised lawmakers for holding conversation occupying other lawmakers' specified seats during the House proceedings violating the rules of procedure of parliament.

"It is total violation of the rules of procedures of parliament as well as illegal to occupy other lawmakers' seats and engage in conversation during the House proceedings," said Hamid, who was presiding over the sitting yesterday morning.

A lamented Hamid called upon the lawmakers to remain in their own seats in the chamber of the House.

"Many of you pass hour after hour occupying others' seats. It looks very odd. If you have any important issue to discuss with others, you should go to the House lobby," Hamid said.

This has become a very usual scene in parliament as many lawmakers occupy others' seats to have conversation.

"A lawmaker shall keep to his usual seat while addressing the House and shall maintain silence when not speaking in the House," read the rules of procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad.

It also says an MP "shall not interrupt any member while speaking by disorderly expression or noises or in any other disorderly manner, shall not read any book, newspaper or letter except in connection with the business of the House".

Earlier on different occasions, lawmakers engaged in discussion with each other leaving their respective seats when the House was in function.

Both Speaker Abdul Hamid and his deputy Col (ret) Shawkat Ali several times warned MPs and issued ruling not to violate the rules of procedures in vain.

During the parliament proceedings in every session, a good number of lawmakers are seen discussing randomly with other members, especially with the ministers and state ministers, without paying heed to parliament proceedings.

On October 11, 2009 Speaker Abdul Hamid expressed annoyance at some lawmakers' making noises by engaging in conversation during disposal of call attention notices for around two hours into that day's sitting.

Call to stop water pollution by sewerage waste

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a discussion stressed the need for integrated measures of Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk), Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and civil society members to stop water pollution by sewerage waste.

They said a coordinating task force should be formed immediately to save the surface water from pollution.

They made the remarks at a roundtable discussion titled "Combating Water Pollution through Human Excreta and Stakeholders' Role for Dhaka City" at the city's Institution of

Engineers, Bangladesh yesterday.

Speakers emphasised production of biogas from human excreta to save environment and meet the increasing demand of fuel.

Uttam Kumar Roy, manager (commerce) of Wasa, said waste treatment plant should be installed soon to stop water pollution.

Sirajul Islam, DCC chief Town Planner, blamed non-coordination among the authorities concerned for mismanagement of wastages.

Eng Abul Kashem, director of Wasa Sanitation Project, recommended proper monitoring and legal action against the unruly developer compa-

nies, who are much responsible for setting up unplanned buildings without required sewerage lines.

Reba Paul, director of Water Aid Bangladesh, said the Department of Environment can play a vital role as one of the best stakeholders.

Dr Iqbal Kabir, coordinator of Health Promotion and Climate Change Unit under the health ministry gave a power point presentation.

Milon Bikash Paul, executive director of Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC), gave the welcome address. PSTC organised the programme in collaboration with Water Aid Bangladesh.



Dhaka Wasa Masterroll Shakal Karmachari (employees on temporary basis) forms a human chain in front of Wasa Bhaban in the city yesterday demanding regularisation of their jobs.

PHOTO: STAR

STRANDED IN MALAYSIA FOR OVER 13 MONTHS

Sailors return home without salary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirteen Bangladeshi sailors stranded for over 13 months in their ship detained by Port Klang authorities in Malaysia on May 4 last year returned home on June 21. But they are still waiting for salaries pending for nine months from the shipping company HRC Shipping.

"I have never been detached from the family for so long and am extremely happy to be reunited with my family.

"But the thought of our pending salary is greatly troubling us," said AKM Alamgir, captain of the ship MV Banga Biraj, over phone from Noakhali. Malaysian authorities arranged the repatriation following a case filed against HRC Shipping for damages to a crane made by the ship in 2008.

It is the Malaysian government, journalists and Suhakam, Malaysian Human Rights Commission, who should be credited for the repatriation,

Alamgir said. "We are grateful to them." Their plight came to limelight after a report was published in The Star, a Malaysian newspaper, on May 25.

Malaysian authorities gave an ultimatum to HRC Shipping, but the company took no initiative for the repatriation.

Suhakam Commissioner James Nayagam with port authorities brought the sailors out of the ship on June 3 and persuaded the government to provide them food and shelter for 17 days before the repatriation.

Alamgir said the company's Manager in Malaysia Kazi Nurul Alam told Malaysian authorities that they had paid the salaries at home, but upon return, the sailors found this was false.

"When we contacted the Chittagong office of HRC Shipping, they said they do not have the funds. Meanwhile, its Dhaka office does not receive our phone calls," said Musleh Uddin Ahmed, the ship's chief officer.

He said they were planning on taking legal action to realise their salary, which would amount to a few crores of takas.

Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not contact HRC Shipping's General Manager Captain Shahjahan Siraj over phone for his comment yesterday evening.

Meanwhile, the ship is now under the care of Marine Department of Malaysia and is likely to be sold. The money from the sale will be used to cover losses incurred in the accident, reported The Star on June 22.

Nayagam told The Star that the entire incident should be thoroughly investigated because it received international attention and brought shame to the country.

On the sailors being stranded, he said, "The culprits responsible violated Anti-Trafficking In Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007."

Former Shibir president on 4-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Mohammad Rezaul Karim, former president of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), on a four-day remand in connection with torching of a private car at Moghbazar that killed one in June last year.

Metropolitan Magistrate Tanvir Ahmed passed the order after Detective Branch (DB) of Police Inspector Fazlur Rahman, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, produced Rezaul before it with a 10-day remand prayer.

7 food factories fined, 17 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court yesterday fined seven food and ice-cream factories Tk 14.5 lakh for producing food stuff in unhygienic environment and not having approval from Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI).

It also arrested 17 persons of the factories during the drive and sentenced each of them to three months in jail if the factory owners default on paying the fine.

The mobile court aided by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) fined NST Diamond Food Products in Jatrabari, Yoko Food and Agro Ltd of Kadamtali, Kahinoor Food Products of Shyampur, Sheuly Ice-cream and Diploma Ice-cream in Khilgaon, Seema Sauce of Mugda and Haven Rose.

British envoy meets DU VC

DU CORRESPONDENT

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Stephen Evans called on Dhaka University (DU) Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique at the latter's office on the campus yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed different matters of mutual interests. Prof Arefin presented a DU crest to Stephen Evans.

Earlier Stephen Evans delivered a lecture on "UK-Bangladesh: 40 years of partnership" at a seminar organised by DU History Department at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban auditorium.

Chairman of History Department Prof Shireen Hasan Osmany presided over the function.

Bid to grab journo's house in city

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

A person trying for long to grab the residence of an elderly journalist has secured a High Court stay in a case involving the property, allegedly suppressing its earlier order on the same issue.

Journalist Abdur Rahim, the owner, said Shahjahan Mollah, a dismissed school teacher now out on bail in another case filed for fraudulence, had tried to sell the house on Road 26 at Gulshan in the city using a false power of attorney.

The fraud case, now pending with a court of additional chief metropolitan magistrate of Dhaka, was filed by Rahim on May 5, 2008 following Shahjahan's attempt to sell the property to a real estate company.

Rahim said an HC bench of Justice Nizamul Huq and Justice Syeda Afsar Jahan on February 24 last year had rejected Shahjahan's petition for quashing the fraud case.

Gulshan police had arrested Shahjahan and two other accomplices in connection with the case of 2008, he said.

But Shahjahan, suppressing the rejection order, has secured the stay order from another HC bench in a case he filed with second assistant judge's court in Dhaka in 2006.

In the case, he stated one Abdul Mannan is "illegally occupying the house" and needed to be evicted.

Rahim, former executive editor of The Bangladesh Observer, said the HC bench of Justice Sharif Uddin Chaklader on April 24

this year stayed the proceedings of the eviction case for six months.

"Shahjahan claimed his ownership over my house by virtue of a power of attorney obtained from his fictitious uncle Abdur Rahim," he said.

The veteran journo said he is the real owner of the house and has possessed it for 43 years. He is not that Abdur Rahim, who is a "relative" of Shahjahan Mollah.

He became a party in the eviction case following an order of the second assistant judge on April 1, 2010 as Shahjahan failed to

prove existence of the relative before the court.

On November 10, 2010, the District Judge's Court in Dhaka upheld the order of the second assistant judge permitting Rahim to become a party to the eviction case.

It also directed both parties to appear before it with relevant documents on May 5 this year. Abdur Rahim was present at the court with necessary papers.

Shahjahan did not show up. But his lower court lawyer Iqbal Hasan placed the stay order passed by Justice Sharif Uddin's bench, causing a further delay in the five-year-old eviction case.

Rahim said he recently filed a petition with the bench of Justice Sharif Uddin, seeking an order for quick disposal of the eviction case and justice.

Justice Sharif Uddin on June 19 declined to accept the petition, saying he would consider it on resumption of the court after vacation.

The vacation began on Sunday and the court will reopen on July 10.

Shahjahan's HC counsel Mohammad Ali told The Daily Star that he did not know anything about the rejection order of February 24 last year. And, they got the stay order on the basis of the documents of his client.

However, Abdur Rahim said he himself informed Mohammad Ali about the HC rejection order. A section of lawyers are doing the tricks with the court.

Shahjahan could not be reached despite repeated attempts.