

Boosting local govt must to reduce disaster risk

Say experts
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Successful disaster risk reduction can only be possible through strengthening the local government and utilising the experience of grassroots communities, said disaster management experts yesterday.

Development policies should be aimed at ensuring combined efforts of government and non-government organisations, and local communities, they added.

They made the observations at an experience sharing meeting at Jatiya Press Club in the capital, organised by the National Alliance for Risk Reduction and Response Initiative (NARRI), an alliance of ten international NGOs.

Farah Kabir, ActionAid Bangladesh country director, announced that Bangladesh had made a remarkable progress and earned global appreciation for reducing disaster risks facing the vulnerable population.

"The country owes much of the success to the grassroots communities' involvement in disaster management," she said.

From Bangladesh, NARRI won this year's UN-Sasakawa Award for setting up examples of success in reducing disaster risk, she informed.

Abdul Wazed, director general of the Department of Disaster Management, said the coordinated efforts of the government and non-government agencies in NARRI were commendable. "The local government also need to be strengthened to make effective risk reduction efforts in the future," he said.

The NGOs forming the NARRI alliance are, ActionAid, CARE, Concern Worldwide, Concern Universal, Handicap International, HelpAge International, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Oxfam International, Plan International, and Solidarités International.



The newborns in the photo, conjoined twins born with four hands and three legs at Natore Maternity on Thursday, were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) yesterday by their parents Ismail Hossain and Sonali Begum of Chhatni Datter in Natore. Prof Asgar Hossain of paediatrics department of RMCH said the twins needed surgery for separation and were primarily given some medicine and blood.

PHOTO: STAR

WAR CRIMES TRIAL OF MOBARAK HOSSAIN PW narrates how FFs were killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A prosecution witness narrated to the International Crimes Tribunal-1 how his fellow freedom fighters were killed in 1971 in Brahmanbaria; while he was giving deposition against war crimes accused Mobarak Hossain yesterday.

The war crimes victim, Abdul Malek, who was about 25 years old in 1971, told the ICT that war crimes accused Mobarak Hossain abetted Pakistani army in killing the freedom fighters.

"On a November night in 1971, Razakar Mobarak Hossain along with others cordoned my house and tied me up," said Malek, a freedom fighter, adding that he was taken to 'Brahmanbaria Government College'.

He said another freedom fighter, Siraj Mia, was also taken there the same way.

"They whipped us with twisted electric wire there," he said, adding that at one stage he lost consciousness.

Sometime later, Malek discovered himself at the Brahmanbaria Jail. He was forced to donate blood there.

"About two or three days later, they picked up about 25 youths including Siraj and I. Since there was not enough space in the car, I was left behind", he said.

Later, Malek learnt that those 25 persons were killed on the bank of 'Comilla Canal'.

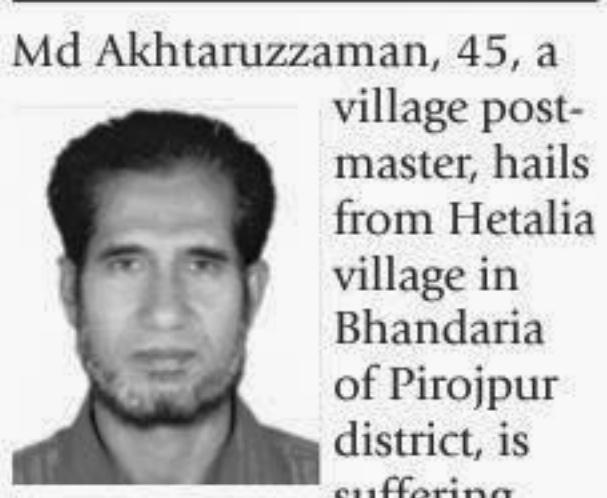
Malek was freed by the freedom fighters after the independence.

The proceeding of the case was adjourned until July 16.

Meanwhile, the ICT-1 yesterday adjourned the proceeding of the case against Salauddin Quader Chowdhury until July 16.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Md Akhtaruzzaman, 45, a village postmaster, hails from Hetalia village in Bhandaria of Pirojpur district, is suffering from heart disease.

Doctors said his treatment would cost about Tk 4 lakh. But his family cannot afford the treatment as he has no savings or any property except his village house, says a press release.

His family and friends fervently appeal to the well off of society to extend their financial support to save his life.

The assistance can be sent to SB A/C no. 180774, Rupali Bank, Sadar Road Corporate Branch, Barisal; SB A/C no. 45982, Islami Bank, Barisal; or bkash (cellphone) no. 01715384110.

BAF training plane crashes in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A training aircraft of Bangladesh Air Force crashed at Baralia union in Patiya upazila of Chittagong yesterday.

Flt Lt Abu Jihad Arafat escaped unhurt in the incident that took place around 3:30pm at Melghar village.

Quoting Abu Jihad Arafat, senior assistant superintendent of police Shafiqul Islam (Patiya Circle), said the training plane A-5 set off from Jahurul Haque Air Base in Chittagong city around 3:00pm.

The lone pilot sent message to the control room when he started facing trouble at the cockpit soon after several minutes of taking off and he was disconnected from the control room.

The aircraft slammed into a field. The pilot, however, safely parachuted half km away from the crashing spot, the ASP said.

Two air force helicopters rescued the pilot and rushed him to air force hospital in Jahurul Haque Air Base.

Rights of people with disabilities needed for country's development

Roundtable told
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Socio-political rights of people with disabilities are needed to recognise their potential for developing the country, speakers told a roundtable yesterday.

They said like any common individual, people with disabilities have the right to take part in civic activities such as national and local elections.

The roundtable on "Civil and Political Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Bangladesh" was organised by ADD International and The Daily Star in association with the German embassy at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

In his keynote presentation, Mosharrar Hossain, country director of ADD International, Bangladesh made some recommendations to political parties in this regard.

"There is no provision in the election commission regulations which says that persons with disabilities cannot take part in elections," said former election commissioner M Sakhawat Hossain.

The speakers urged the Election Commission to create a friendly atmosphere for persons with disabilities during elections.

"As schools are mostly used as voting centres, those should be built with facilities for people with disabilities such as having a ramp for those with wheelchairs," said Sakhawat.

Speaking as the chief guest, Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haque Mostafa Shahid said his ministry is working on a new law at present for the rights of people with disabilities.

"The bill was vetted by the law ministry and it will be placed before the cabinet soon," he added.

"The civil and political rights of a person are not only concerned with participating in elections; it is a much bigger issue," said Barrister Sara Hossain. Columnist Syed Abul Maksud, lawmaker Sanjida Khanam, Prothom Alo Joint Editor Mizanur Rahman Khan, Managing Editor of Samakal Abu Sayeed Khan, International development Head of ADD International Karen De Cokere, and former VC of Chittagong University Prof Abdul Mannan also spoke.

INCIDENTS OF WAR CRIMES

Yusuf directly involved in nine

Prosecutors tell tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami leader AKM Yusuf was "directly involved" in nine incidents of war crimes while he had "instigated" six other incidents in greater Khulna district during the Liberation War, the prosecution said yesterday.

Yusuf was the first to "establish" the infamous Razakar force in Khulna, Prosecutor Hrishikesh Saha told International Crimes Tribunal-2 while placing submission in the charge framing hearing in Yusuf's case.

Yusuf was also "involved" in at least seven instances of genocide, five incidents of murders and three incidents of lootings and arson in 1971, added Hrishikesh.

The prosecution ended the submission yesterday and the three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan fixed Thursday to hear the defence's arguments.

On May 8, the prosecution pressed 15 war crimes charges against the Jamaat Naye-e-Ameer, including genocide, killing, looting, arson, forceful religious conversion and deportation of people.

Hrishikesh said Yusuf got involved in Jamaat-e-Islami in 1952 and became the chief of its Khulna district unit in 1957. He became the deputy ameer of Jamaat in

1971 and a member of the cabinet of puppet governor AM Malek in September 1971.

After the formation of the Central Peace Committee, Yusuf became chairman of the Peace Committee of greater Khulna district (Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat), said Hrishikesh.

Yusuf, as the chairman, had formed peace committees in every sub-division, police station and union and gathered men to form the Razakar force since mid-April 1971, he said.

Yusuf established the Razakar force, an auxiliary force of the Pakistani army, on May 5, 1971, at an Ansar camp on Khan Jahan Ali Road in Khulna with 96 Jamaat and anti-liberation activists, he added.

As a prominent Jamaat leader, Khulna's Peace Committee chairman, founder of Razakar force and a minister, Yusuf was involved either directly or indirectly with the crimes mentioned in section 3(2)(a)(c)(g)(h) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973, said Hrishikesh.

He said Yusuf, after the Liberation War, was tried under Collaborator Act-1972 but was released after the act's cancellation.

The prosecutor afterwards read out all

the 15 charges and informed about the prosecution witnesses and their statements supporting the charges.

"We have submitted documentary and oral evidence (statement of prosecution witnesses) in support of the charges, which are well-founded and we believe that framing charge is possible on basis of these evidences," said Hrishikesh.

On several occasions during the submission, the tribunal expressed discontent over the prosecution's "lack of preparation".

Charges: Looting in two Hindu houses in Rampal, Bagerhat; looting and arson in 300/400 Hindu houses in Kachua, Bagerhat; looting and arson in Morelganj Market in Bagerhat; genocide in Ranjitpur, Bagerhat Sadar; genocide in Morelganj Market; genocide in Dakra, Rampal; genocide in Chulkathi, Bagerhat Sadar; genocide in Maghia, Kachua; genocide in Shakhrikathi, Kachua; genocide in Shakhrikathi, Kachua through forceful religious conversions; killing of one Abu Bakkar Siddique in Morelganj; killing in Rayenda Girls' School in Sharankhola, Bagerhat; killing in Tafalbari, Sharankhola; killing of one Dr Majid in Morelganj; and killing of one Salam in Sharankhola.

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