



Indigenous people of the country put up a great show at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday marking International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. With their rich culture and flamboyant use of colours, they celebrated their origins on the day the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations sat for the first time 20 years ago. Minister for Tourism Rashed Khan Menon, bottom right, is seen speaking before inaugurating the festivities.

PHOTO:
ANISUR RAHMAN

Unique protest by Adivasis

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avoid the word 'Adivasi' at discussions and talk shows on the international indigenous peoples' day.
The PID also mentioned in the release that under the 15th amendment of the constitution, indigenous (Adivasi) people would be termed as "small ethnic groups or tribes".
However, every banner, festoon and speech by civil society members and politicians at the indigenous day celebration used 'Adivasi' to describe the indigenous people, not the terms dictated by the 2011 amendment.
"Who are those intellectuals who say that Bangladesh will face security problems if the term 'Adivasi' is recog-

nised?" asked Mizanur Rahman, chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, in the opening speech of the programme.
The security of a country cannot be ensured through a military equipped with modern arms. It is rather unity among all in a country free from torture and discrimination that can ensure peace and security, he observed.
"Non-recognition of the word 'Adivasi' is an argument of the ignorant," said Rashed Khan Menon, civil aviation and tourism minister.
Menon, who was a member of the constitution amendment committee, had opposed the move regarding non-recognition of indigenous people.
A member of the parliamentary

caucus on indigenous people, Menon yesterday expressed his frustration over the insignificant budget that had been allocated this fiscal year for indigenous people living on the plains.
Prof Mesbah Kamal, technical coordinator of the caucus, said Tk 16 crore has been allocated this year for about 20 lakh plainland indigenous people of the country.
Expressing concern over recent incidents of torture on indigenous leaders in the northern region, Mesbah urged everyone to join a conference on plainland indigenous communities on September 1 in Rajshahi.
"Ninety-nine families were evicted and around 250 acres of land belonging to indigenous people were grabbed

across the country in the last four months," said Shaheen Anam, executive director of the rights organisation Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF).
The state, the government and society in general have failed to ensure the safety of indigenous women, who are increasingly falling victim to torture used as a means for grabbing their land.
A two-day long programme, which includes an indigenous fair and seminars on problems faced by indigenous communities, began at the Bangla Academy premises yesterday. The MJF organised the programme to mark International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, 2014.
Menon, along with rights activist

Sultana Kamal and CHT Regional Council Chairman Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, known as Santu Larma, inaugurated the programme, which was moderated by Shaheen Anam.
Santu Larma thanked MJF for the arrangement and hoped that the NGO would continue its support for the preservation of the unique cultures of the indigenous communities.
Meanwhile, CHT Equal Rights Movement claimed that there was no rationale behind celebrating the day in Bangladesh as there were no indigenous people in the country like the "Red Indians in America and Australia".
The group celebrated 'Upojati-

Bangalee Sanghati Dibosh' [Tribal-Bangalee solidarity day] yesterday in Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban by holding rallies and forming human chain, the civil platform said in a statement.
It claimed Bangalees as the original owners of the land in the hill tracts and all indigenous communities as outsiders. They criticised the media's use of the term 'indigenous' despite government advice.
Referring to the UN convention, which prohibits entry of police and military in indigenous neighbourhoods, the group said that the sovereignty of the state would be at stake if the term 'Adivasi' was allowed to be used.

Commission first

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about the policy," said BFUI President Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, adding, "We can say that no timeframe for the formation of the commission was kept in the policy to give the information ministry the authority to implement it. This will send the wrong message at home and abroad."
The cabinet on August 3 approved the policy on TV and radio, imposing some restrictions on news, talk shows and ads.
The information ministry on Thursday published a gazette, which means the policy had come into effect and the ministry could enforce any of the provisions in the policy.
Signed by Bulbul and BFUI Secretary General Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, the union issued a statement terming the policy a product of journalists' demand. It also explained its position and the negative sides of the policy too.
"The move is good but we have concerns about some issues ... We want those removed ... The good move will yield a good policy and an act in the end," read the statement.
Bulbul said the policy did not reflect the main issues that he, as a member of the policy formulation committee, had put forward. "Even I could not see the draft policy after it was finalised," he said.
He said the policy did not mention anything about job security and

the security of the huge investment in the sector. There should not be anything mandatory in the policy or else the commission will not be able to modify them in consultation with stakeholders.
Bulbul, who is chief editor of Boishakhi television, said there was no scope for giving false or misleading information on TV, even on talk shows and in discussions. If a broadcast media makes a mistake, there is always the opportunity to correct it.
If it goes uncorrected, steps could be taken against the media as per existing laws, he pointed out.
Bulbul said many of the points made compulsory in the policy were being nurtured by the electronic media already.
The Right to Information Act contradicted the provision of the policy that prohibits airing reports and footage that might demean the armed forces, law enforcement agencies, and government officials who can punish people for committing crimes, he said.
The BFUI leader demanded more clarity in the formation of the commission and the qualifications of its chairman and members. "The structure of the search committee, which will select the chairman and members, and its tenure should be determined," he said.
Broadcast journalists had been demanding a policy that would not curb their freedom but help the sector flourish.

Tuba's July pay today

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Khokon Mia, a worker of the Tuba Group, was unhappy. "We want all payment at one go. The BGMEA has been taking time for payment which is not right," he said.
The meeting was held at a time when Tuba Group Shramik Sangram Committee, a temporary platform of 15-trade union organisations, called upon workers in garment industrial areas to take part in a strike to help nearly 1,600 of their fellow workers get due pays.
Tight security, inadequate campaign for the strike, fear of detention by police, job loss and lack of willingness among workers resulted in the strike falling flat on its face, sources said.
Additional police were deployed in Savar and Ashulia industrial areas to

avoid any untoward incidents, reports our Savar correspondent.
"Police threatened to arrest us and file cases if anyone tried to bring out rally," said a trade union leader at Ashulia industrial area. He was present at a meeting held at the Industrial Police office in Ashulia on Friday.
Mostafizur Rahman, director of Industrial Police-1 in Dhaka (Ashulia), denied issuing any threats at the meeting and said he had called in the workers for "counselling".
Several workers in Savar, Ashulia and Gazipur industrial zones, however, claimed that their leaders did not inform them about the strike and that they had learned about it from the media.
Abu Sayeed, a worker of another garment factory in Ashulia, said he did not know about the strike and went to

work as usual.
Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan, who is the convener of Garment Shramik Samannay Parishad, said the Parishad comprising of 50 labour associations had nothing to do with the call for strike.
Moshrefa Mishu, president of the Garment Workers Unity Forum, a member of the Shramik Sangram Committee, said, "We want full payment of all dues. We demand the owner pays Eid bonuses within two-three days."
She also demanded resumption of production at the Tuba Group factories and the cancellation of owner Delwar Hossain's bail.
Delwar had been detained in jail since February in a case filed in connection with the 2012 fire at Tazreen Fashions that killed 112 people. Tazreen Fashions belonged to Tuba Group.

Gas supply

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including a backup one, but is currently running just one. The other two compressors will be ready for launching in September.
Another compressor station in Elenga will also start operation from the next month.
Fluctuating or low pressure of gas had long been affecting performance of all gas-based production -- from home burners to power plants. This fluctuation had been taking place for a decade due to gas supply shortfall against a much higher demand. This prompted the government to plan the installation of three compressor stations -- one in Muchai, one in Ashuganj and one in Elenga -- with loans from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
The first of these compressors was installed by US company Chevron in Muchai at a cost of \$52 million in 2012. Its addition has improved gas pressure and availability in the upstream Sylhet region.
The government in 2011 awarded contracts to Korean firm Hyundai to set up the remaining compressor stations. Hyundai was supposed to complete the installations in September last year.
"But various reasons like untimely disbursement of funds, delay in customs clearance of imported equipment and then political unrest, hartals and violence delayed the project by many months last year," said the GTCL source. The government then extended the deadline to May this year.
Hyundai faced another glitch while transporting three compressor units for the Ashuganj station. One of the compressors turned upside down and had to be sent to the Netherlands for repairs before being re-imported last year.
And this year, when Hyundai was ready to test-run all three compressors, one of them went out of order. This unit, meant to be used as the backup, is now being examined to determine the kind of repair it requires.
"In the meantime, we have completed installation of three compressors in the other station in Elenga. This is ready for operation. But as it is located further down, we cannot launch its operation without the Ashuganj unit running in full swing," said a Hyundai official.
With one compressor working, the Ashuganj unit is now processing 750mmcf of gas, one third of the country's total gas supply. In September, when the second compressor begins operation, it would handle 1500mmcf, bringing about a significant improvement in overall gas pressure scenario of the country.
For its failure to deliver the stations in time, Hyundai will have to pay liquidated damages to the GTCL which may turn out to be several million US dollars.

Rab detains Nur Hossain's driver

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32, was rounded up around 1:30pm, said Commander Mufti Mahmud Khan, director at Legal and Media Wing of Rab.
The detainee is from Amtoli of Barguna district. He went into hiding immediately after the abduction and killing of seven people in late April.
He was being brought to Dhaka last night for interrogation, added Mahmud.
According to sources, Dipu is the first man arrested by the elite force in

connection with the seven-murder incident. The Rab itself had drawn huge flak over the killing.
Rab officials Lt Col Tareque Sayeed Mohammad, Maj Arif Hossain and Lt Commander MM Rana were sacked and subsequently arrested in connection with the killing.
Seven people, including Narayanganj panel mayor Nazrul Islam and senior lawyer Chandan Sarkar, were abducted in Narayanganj on April 27.

Three days later, six bodies were found floating in the Shitalakkhya, while the other was recovered from the river the following day.
Nazrul's father-in-law Shahidul Islam complained that Nur Hossain, councillor of ward-4, and a few others had bribed some Rab-11 officials Tk 6 crore to kill the panel mayor.
Nur Hossain, who made a dash for the Indian border after the seven-murder, is now in a Kolkata jail in a case filed for illegal entry to the country.

Health insurance

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national budget by 2032. It is now less than 5 percent.
"Gradual increase in government allocation for health, earmarked tax from tobacco, premiums from insured and foreign funds will help increase the health budget," he added.
As part of health sector reform, the government will establish a Social Health Protection Scheme (SHPS) by 2016 to financially protect all sections of the population. It will have a fund with resources from both internal and external sources.
Besides, a National Health Security Office (NHSO) will be established to manage funds, set premiums of insurance and prices of healthcare.
These moves come at a time when people spend 64 percent of total health expenditure out of their own pockets. As a result, some 15 percent house-

holds are left economically vulnerable.
Less than one percent people are covered by health insurance, which they buy on their own, according to HEU statistics.
The public hospitals provide low-cost subsidised healthcare, while treatment at the dominant private sector is quite expensive. Except for certain institutions, quality of both the sectors is questionable.
"The idea of social health insurance is that all will pay, but those getting sick will benefit," said Paul Rueckert, health management expert of German cooperation agency GIZ, which is providing technical cooperation in the health insurance programme.
If hospitals come under contracts with insurers, healthcare of a certain quality will be maintained, he said. The rich, who might want extra facilities, will pay beyond what is covered by

the insurance.
However, government-provided preventive services like immunisation, maternal and child healthcare will have to continue, added the health expert.
Ahmad AN Neaz, public health professor at American International University of Bangladesh, lauded the national health insurance plan but emphasised producing skilled doctors, nurses and health technicians.
Professor Syed Masud Ahmed of Brac University thinks mobilising funds for the plan will be a great challenge. He has suggested the authorities create mass awareness to make the initiative a success.
"If there are good examples proving that people really get quality services through the scheme, the idea can be expanded fast," he told The Daily Star.

Food courts

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lakh for food adulteration and sentence him to a maximum of three-year rigorous imprisonment as per the relevant law.
However, nothing has been done to appoint food analysts or inform consumers that food courts are there to deal with their complaints of food adulteration.
Food Minister Qamrul Islam himself has recently said he did not know that food courts had been set up.
A law ministry high official requesting anonymity told The Daily Star on July 18 that there was no need to appoint food analysts as local health officials could test any food item for harmful chemicals and move a case with the food courts.
About raising public awareness, he said the government would not be able to go from door to door to do so.

Against this backdrop, HRPB President Murshid said he was thinking of filing another petition asking the government to recruit food analysts as per the HC directive.
Food analysts are supposed to play an important role in moving cases with the courts, he added.
Accepting a case from any aggrieved person, a food court will ask food analysts to conduct a test on the food item allegedly treated with harmful chemicals and then submit a report.
On receiving the report, the court will proceed with the case and deliver a verdict, Murshid said.
The HRPB president also said the government was not serious about making the food courts vibrant, which was necessary in the greater national interest. The government can make people aware about the issue through local information offices, he added.