

ACADEMIA RAISES VOICE AGAINST MILITANCY



With protests sweeping the country, teachers, students, and employees of educational institutions yesterday joined in to show their support for the anti-militancy campaign. (1) National University in Dhaka, (2) Barisal University, (3) Rajshahi University, (4) Independent University, Bangladesh, (5) Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BuEt), (6) North South University, and (7) Signature collection campaign against militancy at ASA University Bangladesh.

PHOTO: STAR

CHT water crisis acute even in monsoon

UNB, Dhaka

Now it is monsoon -- water is everywhere! But Hinmoy Bawn, a woman of the ethnic minority community and mother of three kids, has to walk a long and rough hilly path every day to fetch drinking and household water.

Hinmoy along with her five-member family lives at Betonipara of Bandarban sadar upazila. There is no source of water in her locality.

So she has to endure the hassle of going to a hilly spring, one kilometre away from her neighbourhood, twice a day to fetch water.

"It's really a hazardous task to walk through a hilly path. But I have to walk half an hour to go to the spring to collect water and need the same time to return home," Hinmoy, a woman in her 40s, told the news agency.

During a recent visit to Betonipara, a locality of 25 Bawn families, this correspondent found that a number of women of the ethnic minority community were involved in collecting water from a spring located nearly 100 metres down from the hilltop.

In ethnic communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), it is women's responsibility to collect water. They collect water for their households from surface sources walking a long distance as groundwater is not available there due to the unique land formation.

Hinmoy said they use spring water for their household chores and drinking. And all the 25 Bawn families have to come to the spring to do so.

"As we have no alternative, we have to use spring water. Collecting water in hills at day-

time is a hard task, and it is even harder at night. We have to walk through jungles for water at night amid the fear of snakebite and attacks by other wild animals," she added.

"We have to suffer a lot in collecting water during dry season. We have to walk even two miles or more through the hilly paths to collect water," said Estar Bawn, another woman of the Bawn community who regularly fetches water for her family.

She said sometimes they collect water from Bandarban sadar during winter and bring it in vehicles, spending Tk 300 per trip, but the poor families cannot afford it.

Hinmoy said, "We want to store water harvesting rainwater. About Tk 25,000 is required to install a rainwater harvesting system. But we do not have the money to install such a system."

Abdul Mannan, a programme officer of Arannayk Foundation, also known as the Bangladesh Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation, said climbing up the hills with jars full of water by women and girls is a common scenario in the remote mountainous areas of the CHT.

The Arannayk Foundation is a joint initiative of the government and the USA government, which seeks to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity assets of tropical forests.

The country's three hilly districts -- Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachhari -- have long been experiencing drinking water crisis, particularly during the dry season. Groundwater cannot be lifted through tube-well within miles in many areas, officials said.



Onlookers around a dead wild elephant in Sharishachali border area of Jhenigati upazila in Sherpur yesterday. Forest officials say the animal, aged around 30 years, might have come from neighbouring India. Its body bore marks of injuries on the back and right eye. It was buried in the area under the supervision of the officials.

Keep drivers' identity details for security

DMP asks CNG-run auto-rickshaw owners, union leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police asked CNG-run auto-rickshaw owners and workers' union leaders to keep identity details of the drivers after coming to know of instances where militants worked in liaisons with drivers.

There were four recent examples of CNG drivers helping militants to travel in the capital, a police official told a meeting between Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) and the union leaders at DMP headquarters yesterday.

Addressing the meeting, DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia urged the union leaders to provide name, address, and a copy of national identity card of their drivers to the police stations.

He cautioned them against employing any driver without having copies of their NID cards and driving licences.

He added that police should be informed before employing a young, educated and newcomer as a driver.

He also urged them to see whether the drivers are involved in any religious groups.

Police should be meticulously informed about the number of auto-rickshaws in each garage, registration numbers of the vehicles.

The DMP chief also stressed that auto-rickshaw drivers should wear uniforms, and keep identity cards. He also urged them to install security cameras in the garages.

Ctg 'shipyard' worker dies in accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A worker was killed in an accident inside a shipyard in Sitakunda upazila of Chittagong on Sunday, alleged the deceased's family.

The matter came to light after the victim's relatives took his body to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) yesterday afternoon, a day after the accident.

Dead Salam Bari, 55, of Ikri village in Bhandari upazila of Pirojpur, used to live in Sitakunda's Akilpur Chhoto Kumira area and work at Master and Brother Ship Breaking Yard, according to the relatives.

Quoting Salam's son Rashed, his neighbour Yakub said Salam was hit by a truck inside the shipyard

On-duty cop killed as truck hits him

CITY DESK

An on-duty policeman was killed when a speedy truck hit him near Bangabandhu Bridge in Sirajganj early yesterday, reports our correspondent in Pabna.

Dead Md Johurul Islam, 45, of Nindah village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila was a constable of Bangabandhu Bridge West Zone Police Station.

"The truck abruptly hit him when he was crossing an intersection near the bridge, leaving him dead on the spot," said Md Rakibul Islam, officer-in-charge of the police station, adding that he was patrolling the area with other colleagues at that time.

Police seized the vehicle, but its driver managed to flee.

A case was lodged.

Meanwhile, in Dinajpur, a woman was killed when a truck hit her at Chaklabazaar in Parbatipur upazila on Sunday evening while she was returning home, adds our Dinajpur correspondent.

The deceased was Arzina Begum, 50, of the upazila's Haripur-Munshipara village.

Our staff correspondent in Chittagong reports, Md Ramij, 55, of Pekua upazila in Cox's Bazar, was hit by a speedy micro-bus at Bhatiary of Sitakunda upazila yesterday evening.

He was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries.

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