

# 23 ethnic people killed last year

Says Human Rights Report 2016

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 23 people, including six women and girls of indigenous communities, were killed in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and elsewhere in the country last year, according to Human Rights Report 2016 on the ethnic people.

In 2015, seven indigenous people were killed in the CHT and three others elsewhere.

Last year, the most atrocious incident was the killing of three Santals allegedly by police in Gobindaganj of Gaibandha following a dispute regarding land, mentioned the report which was revealed at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

"2016 was one of the critical years for the indigenous people of Bangladesh, especially for the Santals of Gobindaganj in Gaibandha," observed the report prepared by Kapaeng Foundation, a human rights

organisation for indigenous peoples of Bangladesh.

Claiming the ownership of the land of Sahebganj-Bagda sugarcane farm of Rangpur Sugar Mills, the Santals started erecting houses on the disputed land in June last year. They had cultivated paddy on 100 acres of land.

On November 6 last year, a tripartite clash broke out between the Santals, factory employees and police over eviction of indigenous people from the land. The forcible eviction drive led to the killing of the Santals whilst many others were left injured.

"Every year after disclosing the report on human rights violations against indigenous peoples, we expect that the situation will improve. Unfortunately, that never happens," said Pallab Chakma, editor of the report and also executive director of Kapaeng Foundation.

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People at the waiting area of a bus counter in Benapole yesterday. The indefinite strike called by transport workers in 10 south-western districts left them stranded for hours.

PHOTO: STAR

# Boy killed in violence

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Sadipur Union former chairman and Awami League leader Kabir Uddin, Arzu Miah and Bahar Miah and their supporters in Banglabazar area under same Upazila on Saturday afternoon.

Abdul Awal Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Osmaninagar Police Station said six supporters of AL nominated chairman candidate Ataur Rahman were having tea at a tea stall when Jaglul Chowdhury's supporters approached them. They wanted the boys to support Jaglul instead which the boys refused to do. This confrontation ended in a big argument.

The issue was to be resolved through arbitration yesterday morning but before that Jaglul's supporters including Bahar Miah attacked the boys with firearms and sharp weapons.

The clash that ensued lasted for nearly two hours as more people

got involved. At one point Saiful was shot dead on the spot.

The victim's body was sent to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital for autopsy and the injured were admitted in Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital and Jaganthpur health complex, the OC said.

Afterwards Ataur's supporters blocked the Dhaka-Sylhet highway for about two hours withdrawing it after the local administration assured them of proper investigation into the incident.

Meanwhile Jaglul Chowdhury refused the allegations against him. He said Ataur Rahman was trying to besmirch his reputation.

Ataur Rahman claimed that Jaglul had attacked his supporter Saiful Islam out of his animosity towards Ataur.

# People suffer in pointless strike

FROM PAGE 1

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday evening, Abdur Rahim Box Dudu, senior vice president of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation, said they would continue the strike until they get assurance from the government of a "just trial".

Manikganj Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court on February 22 pronounced the verdict in the presence of the accused, Jamir Hossain, 50, holding him guilty of "reckless driving and negligence" that led to the deaths of the five in 2011.

"We have been deprived of justice because the driver was not tried under proper legal provisions," Abdur Rahim told The Daily Star yesterday.

The state counsel of the case, Afsarul Islam, told this correspondent, "I definitely think that the court came with the just verdict. If they [the defence] disagree with the verdict, they can file an appeal with the High Court."

Yesterday, hundreds of passengers had to endure immense sufferings due to the transport strike that came at a time when a latest government survey shows as many as 64 lives are lost a day from injuries suffered in road accidents across the country.

Rokshana Yesmin Tithi, a private job holder, was scheduled to travel to India from Dhaka for medical issues. But she had to reschedule her visit as the bus operation was suspended.

"I made an appointment with doctor in India just two days ago. But I don't know when the bus operation will resume. Now I will have to cancel my appointment and wait for the next couple of weeks to get another appointment," said Tithi.

Many of those who entered Bangladesh through Benapole border in Jessore got stuck there due to transport crisis, reports our Benapole correspondent.

Workers blocked roads and several points on Benapole-Jessore highway.

A few drivers, including those of private cars, tried to hit the road, only to come under attacks by agitating workers at different spots in Jessore.

Furthermore, delivering of imported goods remained suspended due to the shortage of trucks at Bhomra land port in Satkhira and Benapole port in Jessore, report our correspondents.

A number of vehicles carrying raw materials of different industries and five trucks loaded with fish remained stuck at Benapole. The items were imported from India.

Talking to reporters at a programme in the capital yesterday, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader termed the strike "illogical".

"They have the chance to file an appeal with the High Court. I have suggested they use the opportunity. This illogical strike will only cause sufferings to people; it will not benefit them [workers]," the minister said.

Talking to this newspaper, Road Transport and Highways Division Secretary MAN Siddique said, "The court has given the verdict, but they [workers] are not obeying it."

Road safety activist and film actor Ilias Kanchan said that while enforcing laws, the government should not show leniency just because of workers' strike.

Experts working on road accident-related issues Road accidents with heavy casualties are common in Bangladesh but the drivers responsible escape trial in most of the cases. Awarding life imprisonment for reckless driving leading to death is rare.

According to experts and observers, reckless driving, run-down and unfit vehicles, roadside kitchen markets, unauthorised three-wheelers on highways and operation of vehicles by unlicensed drivers are mainly to be blamed for road accidents.



This multi-storied warehouse capable of storing 25,000 tonnes of rice was inaugurated at Santahar in Adamdighi upazila of Bogra yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

# PM opens first solar-powered

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controlled temperature for a long time.

They said the related structures like railway track and internal roads were built, and necessary power systems were also installed to make the plant operational.

The PM said the present government kept on its efforts for enhancing food stocks.

"It is expected that the country would be able to build 100 percent food storage capacity by 2021," she said and expressed her hope that the newly built Santahar warehouse would help massively in this regard.

The PM also visited different sections of the warehouse and planted a mango sapling on the silo premises.

She went there to open various development projects and lay the foundation stones of several others.

Hasina also urged the people to re-elect her party in the next general election, giving it another chance to serve people and maintain the current massive development activities.

"If you want to see massive development activities, then there should be the continuation of the government. If the BNP-Jamaat alliance, which had grabbed power illegally, unleashed terrorism, militancy, comes to power, then the country's development will get stalled," she said.

Hasina, also the president of the ruling AL, was addressing a rally organised by its local unit at Santahar stadium.

The AL chief said whenever her party assumed office, people got something, but when the BNP-Jamaat took office, the "sheaf of paddy" turned blight, as there was food deficit in the country.

Mentioning that her government believes in balanced development, she said Bogra has witnessed massive development like other parts of the country in the last

eight years.

She said a special economic zone would be set up in Bogra while law is being enacted to establish a university there.

Land Minister Shamsur Rahman Sherif, Food Minister Qamrul Islam, AL joint general secretaries Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Abdur Rahman, AL Organising Secretary Abu Sayed Al Mammud Swapon, MP, Bogra district AL President Momtaz Uddin, Whip of parliament Shahiduzzaman Sarker, Abdul Mannan, MP, Habibur Rahman, MP, Bogra district AL General Secretary Mujibur Rahman Moju, among others, spoke at the rally chaired by Adamdighi AL upazila unit president Ansar Ali Mridha.

Earlier, the PM inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of 17 projects, worth Tk 316.87 crore, from the rally venue through unveiling the plaques digitally.

From the stadium, Hasina inaugurated the extended part of Nandigram Upazila Complex, Shahjahanpur Thana Bhaban, Integrated Education Programme Building for Visually Impaired Persons, Shibganj Upazila Muktijoddha Complex Bhaban, Siharpar Cluster Village Project-3, 12 Ashrayan Project at Sariakandi, Irrigation Programme through Solar Panel at Adamdighi upazila, District Family Planning Office Bhubing and Children Welfare Centre at Nungola of Bogra Sadar.

She also laid the foundation stones of the construction of Khoisha Kuri bridge on Sariakandi highway, Joybhoga bridge, Hatfulbari bridge on Bogra-Sariakandi highway, 10-km rural road at Sonatala, Bogra Press Club Bhaban and extended part of Sonatala Upazila Council administrative building and its hall room.

# ROHINGYA REFUGEES MPs denounce 'propaganda' against plan for relocation

UNB, Dhaka

The parliamentary standing committee on foreign affairs ministry yesterday denounced the "propaganda" against the government's plan to relocate Rohingyas to Thengarchar near Hatiya Island in Noakhali.

The parliamentary watchdog also supported the government plan and suggested continuing its diplomatic efforts engaging international community so that Myanmar takes back its all nationals from Bangladesh.

Committee members Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam, among others, attended the meeting with lawmaker Dipu Moni in the chair, said a PID handout.

It also recommended that the foreign ministry continue its efforts at regional and international levels to

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# New CEC 'subservient' to govt Claims Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terming the new chief election commissioner "subservient" to the government, Khaleda Zia last night said KM Nurul Huda was given job to facilitate Awami League's win in the next general election.

Nonetheless, the BNP will win the upcoming polls if it is held in a free, fair manner, the BNP chief told a programme at her Gulshan office.

"The Awami League has an evil plan centring on the next national election. They would not have appointed such a controversial person as the chief election commissioner if they thought of holding an impartial election."

She was talking to the newly elected leaders of Dhaka Ainjibi Samity, pro-BNP lawyers' body.

"You have already come to know everything about the new chief election commissioner. The appointment of such a controversial person indicated that they have an evil design

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# Babul, Mitu

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Mohammed Kamruzzaman of the Detective Branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police, said there was no significant progress in the murder probe.

The additional deputy commissioner travelled to the city to talk to Mitu's family as part of the investigation.

This was the first time investigators went to Mitu's parent's house to talk to the family members, said Mitu's father Mosharrif Hossain.

Mitu's father, mother and younger sister Shaila Mosharrif spoke about the relationship between Babul and Mitu before the investigators.

Shaila at the time said the couple were not on good terms, Mosharrif told The Daily Star over the phone.

The family told the IO that they heard about multiple affairs Babul had whilst Mitu was alive. There were even talks of Babul taking a second wife, the family told Kamruzzaman.

Asked if he would interrogate Babul, who is now working at a private hospital in the capital, or anyone else this time, the ADC replied in the negative.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner

of DB Paritosh Ghosh yesterday afternoon said the arrest of the former superintendent of police that has spread since Saturday night is nothing but a rumour.

Earlier on February 9, IO Kamruzzaman said police had already quizzed 50 people but made no breakthrough in the probe into the murder that took place in broad daylight on June 5, 2016 near the GEC intersection in Chittagong city.

Mitu was hacked and shot dead by three killers who went to the place on a motorbike.

Police claimed to have arrested Moteleb Mia Wasim and Md Anwar in the case on June 25 last year.

The two in confessional statements before a Chittagong court named five people - Musa, Nabi, Rashed, Kalu and Shahjahan - who took part in the killing along with them.

Of them, Nabi and Rashed were killed in a "gunfight" with police on July 5, 2016. Shahjahan, Wasim and Anwar are in jail.

Musa's family has repeatedly alleged that law enforcers picked him up on June 22 last year, but police said they have been searching for Musa and Kalu.

# Principals' conference at SSC exam venue!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When SSC examinees walk into the hall, most of them usually feel nervous, and all efforts are made to ensure there is no distraction.

The government even imposes section 144 around the examination centre during the public examinations like Secondary School Certificate (SSC) in order to provide the examinees a congenial atmosphere. No cars are allowed inside. Even the government officials cannot go inside

the centres when the exams are going on.

The examinees, a centre secretary and invigilators are allowed inside an examination hall. Even the education minister before the beginning of the SSC exams urged the people and public representatives not to enter the centre for the sake of students.

But the scenario at the Azimpur Government Girls' School and College, a centre for SSC exam, was different yesterday. The Directorate of

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The Azimpur Govt Girls' School and College where the SSC exam and a workshop of college principals were held together yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR