



Indigenous people bring out a colourful procession with their traditional tools at Jalchhatra in Madhupur upazila of Tangail yesterday marking International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Below, scenes of programmes by ethnic communities in Gobindaganj upazila of Gaibandha, Rangamati town, and Sreemangal in Moulvibazar yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

INT'L DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CELEBRATED

Vow to establish constitutional rights

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Indigenous peoples in different districts across the country observed the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples amid festivity yesterday.

Ethnic Garo people wearing their traditional colourful dresses brought out a procession at Jalchhatra in Madhupur upazila of Tangail.

They held cultural function, sports competitions and a discussion at Corpus Christi High School premises.

Speakers at the programme raised their eight-point demand for protecting the rights of the indigenous people in Madhupur Garh region.

Later, crests were awarded to educationists Protibha Sangma and Maria Chiran of Madhupur, and writer and researcher Shubhash Jemchang of Mymensingh in recognition of their contribution for the Garo community.

The day was also observed at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University at Santosh in Tangail with a discussion following by cultural function.

Wearing traditional dresses and holding musical instruments, indigenous people belonging to Munda, Santal, Urang, Kharia, Urisha, Khasi and Garo communities joined a daylong programme on Notre Dame Junior School premises in Sreemangal upazila of Moulvibazar.

St Joseph Mission in Sreemangal organised the programme in cooperation with Sokhomota project of Caritas' Sylhet chapter.

The speakers urged preserving unique culture and traditions of indigenous people. Santal community of Joypurpara and Madarpur in Gobindaganj upazila of Gaibandha observed the day with a vow to establish the rights of indigenous people in the society.

They demanded exemplary punishment of the people involved in killing three Santal men and torching hundreds of sheds of the community people in the name of an eviction drive on November 6, 2016 at Shahebganj sugarcane farm.

Hundreds of Santals of Joypurpara and Madarpur villages hosting banner, festoons and placards marched towards eight kilometres off Gobindaganj upazila Sadar for holding a meeting at local Shaheed Minar.

As police intercepted them at the turning near Gobindaganj Girls' School, they held a meeting there.

Hundreds of indigenous people from different areas took part in the colourful procession organised by Mymensingh Adivasi Dibos Udjapon Parishad at Krishnachura Chattar beside Mymensingh Railway Station in the morning.

Wearing traditional dresses and holding musical instruments, indigenous people belonging to Garo, Hajong, Cooch, Banai, Dalu, Khatriya, Hodi and Mandai communities from Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Tangail and Netrakona joined the programme.

Later they submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner of Mymensingh, placing their seven-point demands including constitutional recognition of the indigenous people, formation of a separate land commission to protect their ancestral land, a separate ministry for indigenous peoples living in plain lands and reservation of five per cent seats for indigenous peoples in parliament.

The day was observed in Dinajpur, Rangpur and Joypurhat with different programmes.

In Rangpur, the indigenous people brought out a procession from Dharmadas Kuthipara in Rangpur city on Thursday.

Later, a discussion meeting was held at Adivasi Community Centre in the city.

In Birampur upazila of Dinajpur, a procession was brought out from Birampur Pilot High School. Later a discussion meeting was held there.

In Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur, a procession was brought out from Sujalpur Model High School. A discussion was also held.

In Joypurhat, people brought out processions in Kalai and Panchbibi.

Indigenous people brought out a procession from Rajjyamonni Para in Khagrachhari Sadar at 9:30am.

Afterwards they organized a meeting in front of Yangdha Buddhist Bihar gate.

Jana Sanghati Samiti (MN Larma) organized a discussion at Khagrachhari Sadar. Speakers demanded constitutional recognition of indigenous people and full implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord.

Bangladesh Adivasi Forum's CHT chapter organised a programme on Rangamati municipality premises yesterday.

The speakers demanded constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples in the country and ensuring their basic rights.

They demanded justice for heinous crimes like rape and murder to prevent such incidents in CHT.

Indigenous people in Bandarban observed the day with demand for ensuring their constitutional recognition.

Speakers at a rally in Bandarban town demanded full execution of the CHT peace agreement.

People of different communities including Marma, Chakma, Tripura, Tongchyang, Khyang, Bawm, Mro, Lusai, Khumi and Chak celebrated the day with different programmes.

A seven-year-old girl was raped allegedly by her middle-aged neighbour at Majhipara village in Panchagarh Sadar upazila on Wednesday.

The victim, a Class I student at a local primary school, is now undergoing treatment at Panchagarh Sadar Hospital.

Meanwhile, victim's father, a day labourer, filed a case with Panchagarh Police Station yesterday accusing his neighbour Abdul Aziz, 45, a rickshaw-van puller.

According to the case statement, Aziz lured the minor girl into his house while she was playing beside her house on Wednesday afternoon and raped her there.

2 sisters beaten by criminals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Two sisters suffered severe injuries, one on the head while the other bled from the nose, as criminals beat them after breaking open one of the windows of their room in East Dinshad area of the district town on Wednesday night.

Injured Monika Rani Bhowmik, 28, and her sister Tara Rani Bhowmik, 35, daughters of Nikhil Chandra Bhowmik of Mulkandi village in Daulatpur upazila, were first taken to 250-bed Manikganj Government Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) as their condition deteriorated.

Victims' family members said Tara, an apprentice lawyer working under lawyer Shipra Rani of Manikganj District and Sessions Judge's Court, and her younger sister Monika, a master's final-year student at Manikganj Government Debendra College, live at a rented house owned by Amulya Chandra Mandal.

House owner Amulya said his wife Archana called the duo, both unmarried, yesterday morning and failing to get any response, she informed her neighbours.

After repeated calls by the neighbours Tara managed to open the door and fell to the ground, while neighbours found Monika on the bed with severe head injuries, he said.

Later, Amulya with the help of locals took the injured sisters to Manikganj Government Hospital.

Officer-in-Charge of Sadar Police Station Rakibuzzaman said he visited the spot and the motive behind the attack would be clear after the victims are released from the hospital.

"As we found a brick inside the room, we suspect that the criminals might have beaten the girls and hit them with the brick," the OC said.

Waterlogging for years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Hundreds of residents of Thana Road area in Kalmakanda upazila headquarters in Netrakona are suffering immensely due to severe waterlogging for years.

Suffering of the people, including school and college going students, reaches its peak during the rainy season as the rainwater cannot drain away due to unplanned construction of buildings, locals said.

During rain, the road gets submerged by water that overflows from a pond belonging to the Zila Parishad as there is no drain through which the water can be pumped out, they added.

"We requested the authorities concerned several times to set up a proper drainage system, but no step has been taken yet," they said.

Ashrafia Qaumia Madrasa Principal Maulana Osman Gani said there are 175 students at the madrasa and they have to use the road to get to the madrasa. "After even light rainfall, the area becomes flooded," he added.

"We are the worst sufferers this year as all the passages have been blocked," he added.

Angur Hossain, a cloth trader at Thana Road, said it takes around a week for the water to recede after heavy rainfall, and business in the area is stopped during that time.

A planned drainage system is the permanent solution to this long-term menace, the trader said.

Raisa Akter, a sixth grader at Kalmakanda Girls' High School, said they cannot use the road after rainfall.

Admitting the sufferings of the local people, Netrakona Zila Parishad Member Idris



Waterlogging in Thana Road area under Kalmakanda upazila of Netrakona has been a long-standing problem due to lack of a drainage system.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Ali Talukder said a pump was set up around seven years ago to pump out the rainwater from the pond, but it could not carry the load and is out of order.

"The issue was discussed at a recent meet-

ing of the Zila Parishad to mitigate the sufferings and find a permanent solution. We have started making concrete drains with culverts under a project of the Zila Parishad," the member said.

15 injured as pro-AL rivals clash in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least 15 people were injured when two pro-Awami League (AL) groups clashed over establishing supremacy in Mondolpara area of the municipality on Wednesday night.

The clash between the men of Swachhasebak League member Habban and AL activist Shahinur Rahman Shahin erupted at around 9:00pm.

Pabna Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Md Obaidul Haque said a tense situation had been prevailing in the area for the last few days. The clash erupted when the two groups chased and counter-chased each other at Mondolpara road on Wednesday night.

At least 15 people were injured during the clash. Hasina Khatun, 45, Rosina Khatun, 42, Muslika Khatun, 46, Sajeda Khatun, 40, Russel, 25, Akash, 22, Pappu, 20, Jahidul Islam, 26, and Rana Ahmed, 40, were critically injured and are undergoing treatment at Pabna Medical College Hospital.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, the OC said, adding that additional police have been deployed in the area.

Nobody filed a case in connection with the incident, the OC said.

Municipality Councillor Riazul Haque told journalists that the clash between the groups took place due to a long-standing feud between them over establishing influence in the area.

Minor girl raped by her middle-aged neighbour

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A seven-year-old girl was raped allegedly by her middle-aged neighbour at Majhipara village in Panchagarh Sadar upazila on Wednesday.

The victim, a Class I student at a local primary school, is now undergoing treatment at Panchagarh Sadar Hospital.

Meanwhile, victim's father, a day labourer, filed a case with Panchagarh Police Station yesterday accusing his neighbour Abdul Aziz, 45, a rickshaw-van puller.

According to the case statement, Aziz lured the minor girl into his house while she was playing beside her house on Wednesday afternoon and raped her there.