

Rights groups

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number, they further demanded.

The country's national poverty rate is 23.20 percent. However, poverty rate among indigenous people in the plains is 80 percent and it is 65 percent among indigenous people of Chattogram Hill Tracts area, according to the keynote paper presented at the roundtable.

Government data shows the number of indigenous people is 15.86 lakh. However, unofficial estimate says over 30 lakh indigenous people belonging to 54 different communities live in the country, said the paper.

On the other hand, budget for the CHT Affairs Ministry is Tk 1,309 crore in current fiscal year, while the "annual development allocation" for indigenous people of the plains is Tk 40 crore, it says.

Although the size of national budget has been increasing each year, the gap between the rich and poor is widening, and situation of indigenous people remain underdeveloped, said Kapaeeng Foundation Executive Director Pallab Chakma.

Supporting their demands, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said the country's indigenous population was marginalised not only because of poverty, but also in terms of their languages, land, and cultural identity.

Saying that their entire identity has been marginalised, Shaheen Anam added that to materialise any demand, there should be a movement.

Additional budget allocation is required to reduce discrimination faced by indigenous people, especially those living in the plains. A monitoring mechanism is required to ensure accountability of the budget expenditure, she said.

Addressing as chief guest, Workers Party President and lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon said indigenous people's issues should have been addressed specifically.

"Although there is development, disparity prevails acutely [in the country]," Menon said on the country's current development trend.

Their situation in the plains was worse than that of the hills, Menon said, adding indigenous people in the plains faced land grabbing while many of their women were raped, which remain unreported.

Indigenous people need to forge unity among themselves to overcome challenges, he said.

Economist Prof MM Akash, indigenous community leader Sanjeeb Dron, and Citizen's Platform for SDGs Convener, Anisatul Fatema Yousuf spoke among others.



Doctors who passed the 39th BCS examinations in non-cadre category formed a human chain in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanding that 8,360 such physicians be employed as cadres.

PHOTO: STAR

Peers issue 24hr

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Poet Sarder Faruq said free thinkers like Sawpon and Imtiaz Mahmud are being held as there was an attempt to create an "environment of fear."

"Detaining such liberal people creates fear, so that the artists remain silent about the ongoing disorder taking place across the country," he added.

Poet Shaheed Kayes said, "There was no contempt of religion in Henry's Facebook post. The case against him is nothing but a conspiracy."

He demanded Henry's unconditional release, withdrawal of false case, abolishment of Digital Security Act and bringing those who threatened Henry to book.

"How does the government formulate an act that makes citizens suffer? We have to find a solution to this," said filmmaker

Abu Sayed.

Dramatist Ananta Hira, also a friend of Henry, urged the poets and writers of Barisal to march towards the church concerned with the demand of Henry's release.

Mentioning Digital Security Act as a repressive law, a lawyer named Hasan Tareq Chowdhury said, "This is a black law and government has formulated such law to suppress the voice of protest."

"You [government] will have to suffer as well if you do not remain in power," said Abdul Baten, teacher of a private university.

Lackavalier Gomes, a priest of a Barishal Catholic church, filed a case with Kotwali Police Station on Tuesday noon against Henry Sawpon, 48; Alfred Sarkar, 52, and Jewel Sarkar, 40, for hurting religious sentiments through comments on social media.

Mangoes start

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Visiting Baneswar -- the largest mango market in Rajshahi -- yesterday morning, this correspondent saw some ten farmers bringing mangoes on a few rickshaw-vans. Mango traders said hundreds of farmers bring hundreds of mangoes to the market when the season begins in full swing.

"Harvest is yet to begin fully. The mangoes still need a week to ripen," farmer Abdur Razzak said. He said his mango orchards are bearing some 60 percent less fruits than last year's.

Razzak said the farmers have not been getting fair price of mangoes for the last three years. "If we don't get fair price this year, we cannot sustain ourselves," he said.

Shahidul Islam, another mango trader, said he procures 50 to 100 maunds daily from the market and supplies those to other districts.

"Farmers are demanding high prices as production is low this year," he said.

Visiting Shaheb Bazar and Shalbagan markets, this correspondent saw a few fruit traders selling mangoes. Their shops were still stocked with watermelons, pineapples and other summer fruits and only a few baskets of mangoes.

Abkar Ali, owner of Phal Bhandar at Shaheb Bazar, said, they would stock the shops with mangoes in two weeks.

HC bins Dhaka city

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pre-monsoon mosquito control in a month.

The court also exonerated CEOs Mostafizur and Abdul Hye from personal appearance before the court.

During the hearing, the court said knee-deep waterlogging takes place in Dhaka after rain, and mosquito menace is felt even on the 20th floor of buildings in the capital. "What are the steps taken by the Dhaka city corporation authorities?" the HC bench questioned.

On a different note, the court said people become injured due to barriers set up on footpaths in the city to stop plying of motorcycles. Footbridges have been constructed on the spaces of footpaths, and roads are dug abruptly in Dhaka city, the court said, adding that if these would take place in foreign countries the authorities would not get allocation of development budget.

The court said it had earlier directed the authorities concerned to act so that on-going development and repair works at construction sites in Dhaka do not further pollute the air and also ordered authorities concerned to spray water twice a day at the dust affected areas in the city, but proper implementation of the directives is not seen.

"The then DNCC mayor Anisul Huq had taken some good initiatives to curb pollution and mosquito menace in Dhaka. We hope the new mayor will continue to implement the initiatives," bench said.

During the proceedings, writ petitioner's lawyer told the HC that the compliance reports of the city corporation authorities were not submitted to the HC through due process of law, and are ambiguous.

Following the same petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), the HC on January 28 ordered director general of Department of Environment to take steps to conduct mobile court twice a week against those responsible for air pollution in Dhaka.

Advocate Nurunaher Akter appeared for the city corporations, while Deputy Attorney General ABM Abdullah-Al Mahmud Bashar represented the state.

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Bangladesh

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and members of domestic corps based in Riyadh, said a press release yesterday.

Moshi requested the invited ambassadors to communicate to their respective headquarters for their support in favour of Shahidul Haque.

He said migration is a priority for Bangladesh as more than 10 million migrant workers from the country are living across the world and contributing to the economy of Bangladesh directly.

Referring to 1.2 million displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar, he said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina showed utmost humanitarian generosity by giving them shelter, food and other support.

Moshi said Haque has been working as the foreign secretary since 2013 and his professionalism, efficiency, integrity and wisdom will definitely enrich the IOM.

Haque also served at IOM in several senior positions from 2011 to 2012, he said.

Advance train tickets

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routes from June 2 to Eid day (expected to be celebrated on June 5). All tickets for these eight trains will be sold at counters. Adequate security measures will be taken to prevent ticket scalping and other irregularities, he added.

Sujan said sale of online tickets would also start on May 22 and if they are not sold out by May 27, they will be sold at counters.

Responding to a question, the minister said CNS Limited, on behalf of railway, will sell the tickets online and if they fail to serve people properly, railway will consider changing the company.

About delay of trains during Eid rush, Additional Director General (operation) of Bangladesh Railway Miajahan said they have to carry a huge number of passengers during the rush and trains are operated in relatively slow pace considering people's safety.

He said railway is expected to see the highest pressure on June 3 and thus, schedule of June 4 may be somewhat disrupted.

Meanwhile, the minister said they will launch a new train service with only three stoppages on Dhaka-Panchagar route on May 25.

Obaidul Quader

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On March 20, the minister's bypass surgery was conducted successfully at the Singapore hospital.

With gradual improvement, he was shifted to a cabin from the ICU on March 26.

On April 5, Quader was released from Mount Elizabeth Hospital but stayed in Singapore for further check-ups and complete recovery.

 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Vacancy Announcement

Closing date: 23 May 2019

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