

Tea Workers Day today

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Tea Workers Day, a day commemorating massacre of tea workers 98 years ago, will be observed today in a befitting manner. On May 20 in 1921, around 30,000 tea labourers left their workplace in Sylhet region and started walking towards Meghna Ghat in Chandpur. When they reached there, the then Assamese police opened fire on the protesters. Many of the workers were killed, and their bodies were thrown into the river. The rest fled. It was a protest march they called "Mulluke Cholo" (Let's go back home). The protest was against the inhumane working conditions and torture at the hands of British owners.

Now the British are gone, but the plight of the tea workers has not changed much. Furthermore, around seven lakh indigenous tea workers, paid only Tk 102 a day, are on the verge of losing their language and cultural identity. The government has yet to recognise Tea Workers Day at the national level and take effective steps to preserve different spoken languages as well as distinct cultural practices of different communities spread out in 158 tea gardens of Sylhet division.

The use of their mother tongues is diminishing day by day as Bhojpuri or Bangla are the two most commonly used languages among all communities in the region, according to Bangladesh Tea Workers' Union. Besides, local schools not having any curriculum in their mother tongues is adding to the problem.

British Munda, 45, a tea worker at Mirtinga Tea Garden in Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila, said their children lost interest in learning their mother tongue Mundari because Bangla is the common language of everyone outside their homes. Without knowing the mother tongue, the community lost touch with its culture and heritage, he added.

Echoing the sentiment, his neighbour Dipali Kanda, 34, said she does not know the language of her ancestors, nor does she know much about her cultural identity. Arjun Orang, 28, a member of Urao community and a worker at Deorachhara Tea Garden in the same upazila, said only recently he realised that he has been spelling his last name wrong for all his life. But he cannot do anything about it now as the spelling has already been included in official records.

He could have averted the error if proper education in his mother tongue was provided to him in his childhood, Arjun lamented. "With the daily wage of Tk 102, it's already difficult to make ends meet. How would we afford to seek knowledge or education?" said Satyajit Mahali of the same tea garden.

Mamata from Santal community, also in the same garden, said, "There's no scope for us to learn about our heritage. I know a bit of Santali dance. But I cannot speak the language." Contacted, Jyoti Sinha, Moulvibazar cultural officer, said the government is taking steps to preserve different languages and cultures of tea workers through various interactive programmes.

Mesbah Kamal, professor of history department at Dhaka University, said the indigenous tea workers living in poverty are losing their culture and heritage. Their cultural identity is now under threat due to socio-economic circumstances, he added. AFM Zakaria, head of anthropology department at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), said the government will have to come forward and protect the small indigenous communities and their culture.

Bangladesh Tea Workers' Union Vice President Pankaj Kanda said 98 years have gone by since the workers lost lives demanding a better life, but no significant steps were taken to recognise Tea Workers Day.



Indigenous tea workers pluck tea leaves at Deorachhara Tea Garden in Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila recently.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA



A bulldozer demolishes illegal structures on government land in Supari Bagan Road area of Tangail town yesterday as the local administration started a six-day drive to remove unauthorised set-ups to ease traffic congestion in the area.

PHOTO: STAR

Over 100 illegal structures demolished in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Tangail district administration yesterday removed around 100 illegal structures, erected after occupying government land, at different places in the town.

Executive Magistrate Al Mamun and Assistant Commissioner (AC-Land) Sukhamay Sarkar led the hours-long drive till noon.

The officials of Roads and Highways Department, Tangail Municipality and different other departments were present during the drive along with a large number of law enforcers.

"We are conducting the drive for removing the illegal structures on occupied government land in order to ease traffic congestion and mitigate sufferings of the townspeople," AC (Land) Sukhamay Sarkar said.

The removed illegal structures included

different shops, tea stalls and other makeshift structures in Kumudini College Gate, Supari Bagan Road and Old Bus Stand areas.

Some local influential people had constructed most of the shops and structures beside the important roads and rented those to poor traders or hawkers.

"Earlier, about 90 percent of the illegal occupiers removed their structures at their own initiative, following publication of notices in newspapers and announcement through loudspeakers on several occasions regarding the drive. The drive will continue at other places in the town for the next five days," the official said.

Quite a few affected people expressed dissatisfaction over the eviction drive, saying that the action would cause problem for poor people, especially before the Eid.

Schoolgirl found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A schoolgirl was found dead in Nawabganj upazila of the district yesterday.

The victim was Sumaiya Khatun, 14, daughter of Abu Sayeed of Naleyga village, and a student of Class VIII of Noleya Junior School in the upazila.

She lived with her grandmother Hafiza Begum as her parents work at a garment factory in Dhaka. Hafiza Begum works at a hair processing plant in the upazila.

Hafiza Begum said she went out of home in the morning to attend her job.

At the time, Sumaiya used to go to school every day, said Hafiza, adding that as she did not go to the teacher for tuition yesterday, some of her classmates came to call her and found her hanging from the ceiling of the room.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the body and sent it to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital for autopsy, said Subrata Sarkar, officer in charge of Nawabganj Police Station.

Woman hacked dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A woman was killed allegedly over a family feud at Monoharpur village in Sadar upazila of the district on Saturday night.

The victim, Rosy Khatun, 45, was wife of Amin Uddin of the village.

Meanwhile, police detained deceased Rosy's elder son Ranju's wife Rukaiya Khatun, 22, for interrogation the same night.

Sadar Police Station OC Obaidul Haque said hearing screams villagers went to Rosy's house around 7:00pm, rescued her and took her to Pabna Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared her dead.

Police sent the body to the hospital for autopsy. No case was lodged in this regard as of filing of this report around 6:00pm yesterday, the OC said.

Victim's brother Idris Ali said, "There was feud between Rosy and Rukaiya over different family issues for long. Rukaiya with the help of her family members might have hacked his sister when everyone were busy in taking Iftar."

ORCHARD ON DISPUTED LAND

Clash over harvesting litchi leaves 15 people injured in Dinajpur

All of the victims admitted to upazila health complex

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 15 people were injured in a clash between two groups of villagers allegedly over the ownership of a disputed litchi orchard in Birampur upazila yesterday.

The injured are Emdadul Haque, 55, Babul Hossain, 38, Enamul Haque, 35, Monira Begum, 10, Mominur Rahman, 16, Kamruzzaman, 32, Abdul Kafi, 48, Mozammel Haque, 45, Moniruzzaman, 32, Afroza Khatun, 25, Mizanur Rahman, 38, Abdul Baki, 55, Mominul Islam, 20, Meem, 15, and Rozina Begum, 65.

They were admitted to Birampur Upazila Health Complex. Locals said there had been a longstanding rivalry between Abdul Kafi and Emdadul Haque over the ownership of a disputed litchi orchard at Munshipara village.

Yesterday morning, Abdul Kafi along with over 20 people went to the orchard to harvest litchi from the orchard.

Hearing the matter, Emdadul Haque with his men rushed to the orchard and locked into an altercation.

At one stage, both the groups swooped on each other with bamboos and sticks.

They engaged in a clash that left 15 people from both sides injured. Being informed by locals, police went to the spot and brought the situation under control, Officer in Charge of Birampur Police Station Moniruzzaman said.

RAPE OF 8TH GRADER

Court sends youth to Jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Netrakona court on Saturday sent a youth to jail after he was produced before it in a case filed against him for raping a 14-year-old physically challenged girl in Kalmakanda upazila of Netrakona.

Police arrested the youth, Akbar Ali, 23, on Friday, said Mazharul Karim, officer-in-charge (OC) of Kalmakanda Police Station.

Mother of the girl, now pregnant, filed the case against Akbar with the police station on Thursday night, he said.

The OC, quoting the case statement, said the eighth grader girl, with a birth defect in her right leg, met Akbar several months ago during a visit to her relative's house in the same upazila.

Akbar later took the underaged girl, whose father is a day labourer, to different places and raped her. Her parents came to learn that their daughter was three months pregnant after her mother took notice of physical changes in her daughter and had her tested at a clinic. Soon after the discovery, the teenager disclosed the incidents of rape to her parents.

The girl would be taken to Netrakona General Hospital for necessary tests today (Sunday) and afterwards she would be taken to the court for recording her statement, the OC added.

Food official confined to office

Rice mill owners allege graft

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Rice mill owners in Lalmonirhat yesterday confined the Sadar upazila food controller (UFC) to his office for nearly two hours, bringing allegation of irregularities in allotment of rice procurement by the government.

Lalmonirhat Sadar UFC Ayub Ali, who was confined at Local Supplied Depot (LSD) Office in Kalibari area of the town from 2:30pm to 4:30pm, was later released after he assured the agitated mill owners of discussing the issue at an urgent meeting today [Monday].

Khorshed Alam Dulal, owner of North Bengal Mill in Saptana area in the town, alleged the UFC Ayub issued a major portion of the allotment in favour of 70 out of 143 rice mills after taking bribe of Tk 70 thousand to Tk 1 lakh from each of the 70 rice owners, depriving the other 73 mill owners.

Protesting the illegal act, they have suspended paddy purchasing from the farmers, he said, adding that as a result farmers are also being deprived of fair paddy prices.

Jasim Uddin, owner of Nishat Mill in Mahendranagar area in Sadar upazila, said the government has decided to purchase 3,627 tonnes of rice from enlisted 143 mill owners this season, but only 70 mills, which remain idle in most of the time of the year, were allotted 2,100 tonnes.

However, denying the allegations brought against him, UFC Ayub said the allotment is directly issued from the ministry concerned and they just sent proper info about the mills.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach District Food Controller, in additional duty, Kazi Saifuddin as he didn't received the phone calls.

Abducted girl rescued, youth arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police on Friday rescued an abducted girl of Galachipa upazila from Chattogram city and arrested a youth in this connection.

The arrestee is Harun-Or-Rashid, said Akhter Morshed, officer-in-charge (OC) of Galachipa Police Station.

The victim passed SSC examinations this year, said the OC.

When the girl returned home at Amkhola village from her nearby relative's house on May 5, a gang, allegedly led by Tareq Mridha of Daribaherchar village, kidnapped her.

Later, the victim's father filed a case with the police station, accusing five people including the arrestee, said the police official.



Left Democratic Alliance forms a human chain at Satmatha intersection in Bogura town yesterday to press for their seven-point demand including early steps to ensure fair price of rice and other agricultural products and payment of arrears to jute mill workers.

PHOTO: STAR

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Corrigendum for e-Tender Notice

e-Tender notice reference No. 54.01.0000.679.04.001.18 date 10-04-2019 have been made the following amendment.

SI No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Previous selling date & time	Previous closing date & time	Amended last selling date & time	Amended closing date & time
1.	299197	CSTE/Telecom Project/575 OFC/WD1	22-05-2019 & 17:00	23-05-2019 & 14:00	28-05-2019 & 17:00	29-05-2019 & 14:00
2.	299240	CSTE/Telecom Project/575 OFC/WD2	22-05-2019 & 17:00	23-05-2019 & 12:00	28-05-2019 & 17:00	29-05-2019 & 12:00

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal.

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