

'Recognise our rights in Constitution'

Indigenous groups, workers submit proposals to JS body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Representatives of indigenous communities and workers yesterday demanded constitutional recognition for Bangladesh's different nationalities and the inclusion of workers' rights as fundamental rights in the Constitution.

At a meeting with the Special Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Amendment, they called for measures to reduce income, wage and wealth inequality and ensure workplace safety.

The committee met representatives of workers, indigenous peoples and ethnic minority communities who contributed to the July uprising at the parliament complex, according to a press statement from the parliament secretariat.

Several discussants told The Daily Star after the meeting that indigenous representatives demanded the removal of the terms "small ethnic groups", "minor ethnic entities", "communities" and "tribes" from the Constitution.

They proposed recognising these groups as either "Indigenous peoples" or "Janjati" (ethnic nations).

Representatives also proposed reserved seats in the upper chamber of parliament for indigenous peoples, marginalised

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Three-and-a-half-year-old Ayesha plays with her younger brother while undergoing dengue treatment alongside her mother, Sonia, at Bangladesh Shishu Hospital in Dhaka yesterday. Her younger brother and grandmother had come to visit them, bringing a brief moment of comfort amid the illness.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

IN BRIEF

Expedite Inner Circular Road project: PM

UNB, *Dhaka*



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday directed the authorities concerned to expedite the Inner Circular Road project to ease traffic congestion in Dhaka.

He gave the directive at a meeting to review progress on the project at the Cabinet Division of the Bangladesh Secretariat, said PM's Deputy Press Secretary Hasan Shiplu.

The PM also asked the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges and the Local Government Division to jointly review the existing project plan and take steps to speed up construction work.

He stressed for identifying and removing obstacles to implementation, ensuring effective coordination among the agencies concerned, and setting a realistic deadline for project completion.

Tarique also called for the project's visible progress at the earliest.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Shaikh Rabiul Alam, State Minister for LGRD Mir Shahe Alam, and State Minister for Road Transport and Bridges and Railways Habibur Rashid Habib were present at the meeting, among others.

Akhtaruzzaman sent to jail

BNP, Jamaat-backed lawyers scuffle during bail hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



A Dhaka court yesterday sent former lawmaker Major (retd) Akhtaruzzaman, who joined Jamaat-e-Islami last year, to jail after remand in a case filed over the alleged assault of an on-duty security official, obstruction of government work and creation of disorder at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Jamshed Alam passed the order, rejecting his bail petition, said Additional Public Prosecutor Muhammad Shamsud Doha Sumon.

Meanwhile, pro-BNP and Jamaat-backed lawyers got into a scuffle inside and outside the courtroom during the hearing.

Amid tight security, Akhtaruzzaman was brought to court around 2:30pm. A few minutes into the hearing, the prosecution sought his detention in custody.

Around 2:40pm, some BNP- and Jamaat-aligned lawyers got into a heated argument that soon turned into jostling. The

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Zero-cost Malaysia jobs for 10,000 Workers

Recruitment to prioritise skills, employers' requirements

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Bangladesh is preparing to send 10,000 workers to Malaysia at zero migration cost, with recruitment to focus on skills, experience and employers' requirements as the two countries move ahead with restarting labour migration.

Malaysian employers have started issuing demand letters, while a delegation from the country is expected to visit Bangladesh next week to discuss the types of workers, skills and experience required.

Labour and Employment Minister Ariful Haque Chowdhury, who is also the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment minister, said Malaysia had agreed to receive 10,000 workers initially and that the process would begin with workers being sent free of migration costs.

Speaking to reporters at the labour and employment ministry's conference room yesterday, he said workers would be trained according to employers' requirements before selection and sent through Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL) and other recruiting agencies.

Malaysian employers have started issuing demand letters, while a delegation from the country is expected to visit Bangladesh next week to discuss the types of workers, skills and experience required.

Ariful said the Malaysian labour market had reopened following discussions between the two countries, but the government wanted to prevent a repeat of the problems workers had faced under syndicate-based recruitment.

"For a long time, people going abroad have faced different forms of harassment through syndicates," he said, adding that the government has set conditions while discussing the reopening of the market.

According to officials from the expatriates' welfare ministry and

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Govt has no right to stay if it fails to ensure safety

Says Jamaat chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition and Jamaat-e-Islami Chief Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said a government that "fails to ensure people's safety" has no right to remain in power.

He made the remarks while inaugurating a weeklong dengue-prevention awareness campaign organised by Dhaka north city Jamaat at Madhubagh Field in Hatirjheel.

Jamaat will observe the campaign till October 10.

Claiming that all state institutions, including the health sector, were in a "devastated" state, he said the deteriorating law and order situation had allowed various crimes to take place in broad daylight in the capital.

"The situation in the capital reflects what is happening across the country. It is deeply concerning," he said.

He also called for immediate government action on dengue.

