



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presided over the meeting of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) National Standing Committee at her office yesterday.

'Govt losing fund for failing to keep int'l commitments'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has been losing funds from donor agencies because of its failure to honour its international commitments to safeguard the environment, said the speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They said in most cases, the government could not meet the obligations under the international treaties due to lack of proper knowledge and co-ordination among the different agencies.

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised the seminar to present a report on 'International Environmental Treaty Obligations' at its auditorium in the city.

"Sometimes we do not even know how many treaties we have signed and what we are supposed to do for that," said Sabihuddin Ahmed, secretary of the environment and forest ministry.

He laid emphasis on developing proper cataloging system in the ministry so that the officials concerned could get all the documents easily.

Dr Asaduzzaman presented a keynote paper on 'Obligations of international treaties on environment towards a sustainable development' at the seminar.

He said in most cases, the government officials in our country sign the international conventions without understanding the issues properly.

But in developed countries, the government always examines and fakes the opinion of the lawyers before signing any treaty to avoid unwanted obligations, he added.

Although we face some obligations by signing a treaty, we also get facilities from the international bodies to protect and develop our environment, said Dr Ainun Nishat, the country representative of IUCN-World Conservation Union.

Presided over by BIDS Director General Dr Shahabuddin, the seminar was also participated by Mahfuzul Khan, Dr Fahmida, Naser Khan and Dr Moqsood Ali.

Bangladesh land of communal harmony: German envoy

BSS, Dhaka

German Ambassador Dietrich Andreas yesterday praised Bangladesh as a land of communal harmony with a rich cultural heritage evolved from different religious cultures over thousands of years.

Addressing a press conference at a city hotel, he underscored the need for proper preservation and studies of sculptures of different ages.

The press conference was organised by The International Centre for Study of Bengal Art (ICSBA) on the activities of German-Bangladesh Collaboration Project for Inventorying and Studying Mediaeval Sculptures of Bangladesh.

The Tk 51.83 lakh project has been undertaken to make an inventory and catalogue of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain Sculptures, mostly known as Pala-Sena sculptures, during the pre-Muslim period since 500 AD.

The German ambassador said his country, as part of its worldwide collaboration in cultural promotion activities of various countries, has been extending cooperation to Bangladesh in various fields of culture and art.

He said the project would properly catalogue the Pala-Sena sculptures that would help retrieve the materials from the darkness of the stores and rooms and the scholars all over the world get an opportunity to study them.

"It would also help raise the awareness of people about their art and heritage as well as contribute to communal harmony," he added.

Chairman of ICSBA Professor Dr Enamul Haque, German expert Professor AJ Gail and third secretary of German embassy Azza Harter were present.

Both German and Bangladeshi experts are serving in the two-year project from the middle of 2003.



Mohila Awami League took out a procession in the city yesterday opposing the four-party decision to increase Jatiya Sangsad seats and demanding direct election to the reserved seats for women.

Indian River-Linking Project 'Convene special JS session to formulate nat'l policy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Farakka Committee (IFC) has recommended that a special session of parliament should be convened to discuss and formulate a national policy on the adverse impact of Indian River-Linking Project on the ecology of Bangladesh.

The New York-based committee placed the 17-point recommendation at a press conference in the city yesterday.

S I Khan, a former UN expert, read out the recommendations at the press conference.

The recommendations were drawn out at a national conference

on 'The impact of upstream water diversion from the international rivers: Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna' at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre on January 12.

The IFC organised the seminar to help safeguard Bangladesh's due share in trans-boundary rivers.

As the Indian project to divert water from the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna is of highest public concern, the role Bangladesh government needs to be well defined and action oriented, said the IFC.

It also urged India to revise its policy on the sharing of international rivers in line with the international practices and UN

Conventions of 1977.

The IFC said a regional commission like Mekong River Commission and other international bodies comprising all the riparian countries should be formed under the auspices of the UN to frame policies on water sharing of the common rivers.

US Congressmen Joseph Crowley and Gregory Meeks, present at the conference, were also urged to initiate a hearing in the Congress to deter upper riparian India from withdrawing water of 54 international rivers.

IFC Chairman Atiqur Rahman Eusufzai said experts, environmentalists, different organisations and members of the civil society of

India itself have raised strong opposition against the river-linking project.

S I Khan said India's proposed water diversion mega-project comprises 30 inter-linking components with 14 in the Himalayan region and 16 in the Peninsular region.

"India has already completed feasibility study of six such inter-linking components," he added.

Nazma Ahmed, an activist of the IFC, said according to international laws, women, affected anyway by the water withdrawal, could go to the International Court of Justice to seek measures against the offender.

DHAKA TODAY

Craft exhibition
The inaugural ceremony of first solo craft exhibition titled 'Nature and Beauty' by Hasina Begum Shanju will be held. Venue: Gallery Chitrag, House-21, Road-4, Dhanmondi. Time: 4.30pm. The exhibition will remain open till January 29 from 10.00am to 8.00pm daily.

Net meeting
A general meeting of Management Net, an organisation of old students of management department of Dhaka University, will be held. Venue: Business Studies Bhaban. Time: 3.00pm.

Art exhibition
The opening ceremony of a solo art exhibition titled 'Ruposhi Bangla' by Mokhlesur Rahman will be held. Venue: Shilpangan Art Gallery, House-25, Road-5, Dhanmondi. Time: 4.30pm. The exhibition will remain open till January 30 from 10.00am to 9.00pm daily.

Film show
Academy Film Society will screen two American films titled 'Gosford Park' and 'Autumn in New York'. Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 3.30pm and 6.30pm.

French film show
Alliance Francaise will screen a film titled 'Tosca' directed by Benoit Jacquot (2001). Venue: Alliance Francaise auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 10.30am and 6.00pm.

Matir Moina
On the concluding day of 8th Dhaka International Film Festival, 'Matir Moina' directed by Tareque Masood, will be screened. Venue: Shaheed Zia auditorium of National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 7.30pm.

Drama
As part of a week-long drama festival organised by Dhaka Theatre Mancha, two dramas titled 'Laily Majnu' and 'Birsamunda' will be staged. Venue: Mohila Samity auditorium. Time: 11.00am and 6.30pm.

AL meeting
An emergency presidium meeting of Bangladesh Awami League will be held with party President Sheikh Hasina in the chair. Venue: House-51/A, Road-3/A, Dhanmondi. Time: 10.00am.

Installation ceremony
The installation ceremony of the new executive committee of Bangladesh Association of Librarians, Information Scientists and Documentalists will be held. Venue: Bhashkar Novera Hall of National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 4.00pm.

Annual function
The annual function of Cephalon International School will be held with Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury as chief guest. Venue: Nazrul Institute, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.00pm.

Leo discussion
Leo Club of Dhaka Faridabad organises a discussion to mark its 30th founding anniversary. Venue: Faridabad High School. Time: 4.30pm.

Musical evening
Moureen Rahamn, multiple award winning Bangladeshi singer from Australia, will present modern Bengali and Hindi songs. Venue: Shaheed Zia auditorium of National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 6.30pm.

CD launch
Bengal Foundation organises the launching ceremony of a CD titled 'Urlo Sonar Paira by Mustafa Zaman Abbasi'. Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, House-275/F, Road-27, Dhanmondi. Time: 6.00pm.

Film show
Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'Straw Dogs'. Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Drama
As part of a week-long drama festival organised by Dhaka Theatre Mancha, Dhaka Theatre will stage a drama titled 'Banapangshul'. Venue: Mohila Samity auditorium. Time: 6.30pm.

Two get death, 3 others jailed for murder

UNB, Naogaon

A court here on Wednesday sentenced two people to death and three others to different terms of imprisonment for killing a villager about six years ago.

Of the convicts, Quamruzzaman, son of late Kasir Uddin, and Asfar Ali, son of late Sahir Uddin, were awarded death penalty.

Two other convicts -- Bablu, son of Zillur Rahman, and Rafiqul Islam, son of Monir Uddin, -- were sentenced to life term imprisonment and fined Tk 20,000 each, while Abdul Aziz, son of Abul Hossain, was jailed for six years and fined Tk 5,000.

All the convicts hail from Bahapur village in Sapahar upazila.

Two accused -- Abul Hossain and Zillur Rahman -- were acquitted.

According to the prosecution, Nurul Islam, son of Mofiz Uddin of Bahapur village, went missing after he had gone to a storeroom near his house on the night of October 25, 1997. Three days later, his mutilated body was found on the eastern side of the village.

A case was filed and police submitted charge sheet against the accused.

After examining records and witnesses, Additional District and Sessions Judge SM Solaiman handed down the verdict.

Morocco Award for former Bangladesh envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Morocco has conferred 'The Alwaite Grand Officer Wissam' award on former Bangladesh ambassador to that country Major General (Retd) Mohammad Anwar Hossain, Bir Protik, for his contribution to the promotion of bilateral economic relations.

King Mohammed VI of Morocco has honoured Anwar Hossain with the prestigious award recently.

Moroccan Ambassador in Bangladesh Mohammad Seghrouchni formally handed over the award to Anwar Hossain at a simple ceremony at the ambassador's residence at Baridhara in the city, said an ISPR press release.

Among others, members of the diplomatic corps and the city elite were present.

Anwar Hossain served as the Bangladesh ambassador to Morocco from April 2000 to November 2003. He took active part in the liberation war in 1971.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country during the next 12 hours till 6.00pm today.

Moderate fog may occur over the country in the morning. Met office said, adding that night temperature may remain unchanged.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 29.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Chittagong and the lowest of 11.0 degree at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:38pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature In Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	26.0	14.7	87	61
Chittagong	29.0	14.9	75	67
Rajshahi	24.0	12.5	98	80
Khulna	26.0	16.6	91	81
Barisal	27.0	15.4	94	79
Sylhet	26.1	13.5	78	68
Cox's Bazar	28.5	16.5	80	67



Traders of the old city staged a demonstration at Nawabpur yesterday protesting the killing of businessman Shariful Haque Siraji John



Model Nobel and Kaniz Subarna inaugurated the new showroom of Archies Gallery at Banani in the city on Wednesday.



East West University held an orientation programme for the newly admitted students of undergraduate courses at its auditorium in the city yesterday. Dr Mohammed Farashuddin, president, Board of Governors, was present as chief guest and Prof. Nasir Uddin Ahmed of Grambling State University, USA, as special guest.



The People's University of Bangladesh organised a seminar on 'Financial stability and Islamic finance' in the city recently. Prof. Dr M Kabir Hassan of University of New Orleans presented the keynote paper.