

'India indifferent to Bangladesh's plight for water crisis'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Water Resources Advocate Goutam Chakraborti yesterday blamed India for its apathetic attitude towards Bangladesh's plight for long-felt water crisis despite repeated urge from Dhaka for a solution.

"We have repeatedly requested India to resolve the crisis politically, but they did not respond accordingly," he said at a roundtable at the National Press Club in the city.

The roundtable on 'The role of PIC in constructing embankments in Sunamganj haor area: present situation', was organised jointly by Actionaid Bangladesh and weekly Saptahik 2000.

The state minister said Dhaka is ready to hold talks with India anytime on the issue of sharing the water of the common rivers.

He said henceforth instead of floating tenders, the government will develop the haors through Project Implementation Committees (PICs).

A survey is being conducted through Water Development Board (WDB), to design a master plan to make the best use of the aquatic resources in the haors, he added.

"As people of the area have appreciated the PIC system which was introduced this year on test basis, we will implement it in the development of other haors," Goutam added.

AL leader Suranjit Sengupta, who hails from Sunamganj, laid stress on the dredging of the rivers Kushiara and Surma, and said the boro cultivation might not be possible if the rivers are not dredged.

"Too many unplanned embankments without any sociological and hydrological survey will bring no good either to boro or to fish production in the area," he added.

Suranjit underscored the need for activating the Haor Development Board and agreement with India on the sharing of the waters of 54 common rivers.

Nirmal Bhattacharya of the Committee to Protect the Haors, suggested proper monitoring system in the construction process.

The embankments in Sunamganj haor area were constructed through the PIC following widespread irregularities, corruption and politicisation in the tender process.

The PIC is comprised of local leaders, stakeholders and administration that implement and monitor

the embankment construction. "The locals can complain and demand accountability to the PIC which is not possible in the case of the contractors who are usually politically influential," said Shihab Uddin Ahmad of Actionaid.

Due to timely construction of the embankments, the haor area yielded a bumper boro crops this year despite flash floods, said the locals, government and NGO officials working in the area.

According to Department of Agricultural Extension, the district incurred a loss of about Tk 349 crore in 2004, Tk 87 crore in 2003 and Tk 70 crore in 2002 due to flash floods.

According to WDB, there are 411 haors covering 8,000 square kilometers of area in the country.

Country Director of Actionaid Bangladesh Nasrin Huq presided over the roundtable, while Executive Editor of Saptahik 2000 Golam Mortuza read out the keynote paper.

WDB DG Sharif Rafiqul Islam, Haor Development Board DG Enamul Haque, Joint Secretary Habibullah Mojumder of water resources ministry, Khuku Chakraborti of Actionaid, environmentalists Abu Naser Khan, and Syed Shafiq Ahmed also took part in the roundtable.



Awami League Presidium member Suranjit Sengupta speaks at a roundtable titled "The role of PIC in constructing embankments in Sunamganj haor area: Present situation" at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

'Crisis due to plundering of state wealth by to major parties'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muktijoddha Gono Parishad at a ceremony yesterday honoured six noted personalities of the country for their contribution in respective professions and country's liberation war.

Those who got the recognition are country's first prime minister late Tajuddin Ahmed (posthumous), martyr Altaf Mahmud (posthumous), Language Movement veteran Abdul Matin, noted journalist Fayez Ahmed, freedom fighter Lt Colonel (ret'd) Quazi Nuruzzaman Bir Uttam and litterateur Shawkat Ali.

Speaking at the ceremony, journalist Fayez Ahmed said the country is now experiencing a crisis due to plundering of state wealth by the two major political parties.

Referring to the country's Liberation War, journalist Ahmed said the spirit of the war must be conveyed to the future generation with the objective to establish a truly secular and democratic country.

Noted journalist and advisory editor of the daily Amar Desh, Ataus Samad said efforts have been underway for spreading misleading information on country's liberation war.

Noted litterateur Shawkat Ali in his speech said the present and future generations must know the real history of country's liberation war.

He also regretted that those who opposed the country's liberation war are now in the driving seats in running the country.

Quazi Nuruzzaman said the freedom fighters have to be united to spread the essence of the liberation war to the present generation.

Presided over by Gono Parishad President Ishtiaque Aziz Ulfat, the ceremony was also addressed by its General Secretary Sadek Ahmed Khan and Bangladesh Economic Association General Secretary Prof Abul Barkat.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A patient, suffering from an acute ulcer, has appealed to the generous people for financial assistance for his treatment.

Md Shafiqul Islam, 36, who hails from Pandughur village of Comilla, has been suffering from ulcer for the last two years.

As his condition deteriorated last month, he was admitted to a local clinic in Comilla from where he was shifted to the Cantonment General Hospital in Dhaka in a very critical condition.

His family is currently spending Tk 4,000 on an average per day for his treatment.

Doctors at the hospital said he needs Tk 200,000 to complete his treatment.

As his family cannot afford the medical cost, Shafiqul has appealed for generous help.

Contributions can be sent to Shafiqul Islam Ripon, Savings Account No 22329/ 34086248, Janata Bank, Farmgate Corporate Branch, Dhaka.

INTRAPARTY CLASH BCL suspends DU unit activities

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of the opposition Awami League, yesterday suspended all the activities of its Dhaka University (DU) unit following an intra-party feud that left at least seven leaders and activists, including the university unit general secretary injured.

DU unit General Secretary Hemayet Uddin Khan Himu and activist Nazmul took first aid at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital. The other injured are Suryasen Hall unit Organising Secretary Kamruzzaman Shohag and activist Shahin.

The BCL formed a two-member committee with BCL President Liaqat Sikder and General Secretary Nazrul Islam Babu at an emergency meeting at its central office at Bangabandhu Avenue to investigate the incident.

Emerging from the meeting Babu said that they would take punitive measures against the persons responsible for the incident within 72 hours.

Party sources said the DU unit committee might be dissolved within a couple of days following the intra-party feud. The tenure of the one-year DU unit committee ended at least two years ago.

Tension has been running high among the two factions of the BCL. Party insiders said violent factional clash can erupt on the campus at any time.

Witnesses said a group of angry BCL activists loyal to DU President Delwar Hossain attacked the pro-Himu activists yesterday with sticks

in a sequel to earlier clashes. They beat up Shohag as he violated the order of Delwar. Earlier, Delwar asked him not to take part in any organisational activities due to his mugging blame. In retaliation, the activists loyal to Himu beat up another activist loyal to Delwar at the Curzon Hall area.

Meanwhile, panic gripped the students of DU after the two factions took position on the campus. Delwar along with his activists took position at the Mall Chattr area while Himu at the Curzon Hall area.

Delwar said, "General activists of the Chhatra League beat up a mugging as he tarnished image of the party."

Himu said, "I don't believe those who attacked me are BCL men."

Reception to new BB governor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 1969 batch of Dhaka University yesterday accorded a reception to the newly appointed Bangladesh Bank (BB) Governor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed in the city on Friday, says a press release.

CM Kayes Sami, managing director of Oriental Bank Limited, also the president of the alumni association, presided.

Vice president of the association, Ali Ahmed, General Secretary Abdul Khaleque Bhuiyan, Mustafizur Rahman Khan, Kamal Uddin Ahmed and Dilrose Mannan spoke at the function among others.

Dr Salehuddin was appointed a new governor of the BB on April 28.

WEATHER TODAY Thundershowers likely UNB, Dhaka

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

AURORA'S DEATH Govt slated for not observing state mourning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting yesterday slated the government for not observing state mourning at the death of Lt General Jagjit Singh Aurora, commander of Bangladesh-India Joint Forces in 1971.

They said the government, in fact, showed dishonour to the country's liberation war by not declaring a state mourning at the sad demise of Aurora.

The meeting was organised by Muktijoddha Oikya Parishad, a freedom fighters' organisation, in memory of Aurora at the Institution of Engineers in the city.

The government did not show any respect to Aurora as the war criminals are now in power, said Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil.

"However the people of Bangladesh are not ungrateful, they will remember Aurora for his contribution to our liberation war," he asserted.

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Veena Sikri said the people of Bangladesh has paid rich tributes to Aurora at his death.

For his great contribution to the liberation war, Aurora will be ever remembered by the people of India and Bangladesh, she added.

AL Presidium Members Amir Hossain Amu and Suranjit Sengupta, Abdur Razzak MP, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Bangladesh Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu, General (ret'd) KM Shafiqullah, Barrister Amir-Ul-Islam, and Muktijoddha Oikya Parishad Chairman Mahub Uddin Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

Dr Salehuddin was appointed a new governor of the BB on April 28.

BCL to form separate DU committee for female members

DU CORRESPONDENT

A full-fledge committee of the female members of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Dhaka University (DU) unit, will be formed soon.

Party sources said BCL parental organisation Awami League President Sheikh Hasina directed BCL President Liaqat Sikder and General Secretary Nazrul Islam Babu to form an independent committee for the DU unit female activists at an emergency meeting at the Sudha Sadan yesterday.

Emerging from the meeting, Babu told The Daily Star that Hasina directed them to form the committee to encourage the women participants in direct politics.

He said the central committee would look after the activities of the female committee.

Hasina to address victory rally in Ctg today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Sheikh Hasina will arrive in Chittagong on a five-day visit. She will address a rally at Laldighi Maidan as the chief guest this afternoon. She will also lead a procession followed by the rally.

Chittagong Nagarik Committee has organised the event to celebrate the win of its candidate ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury in the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) election on May 9.

AL President Sheikh Hasina will meet the members of different professional organisations at Chittagong Circuit House in the evening and Chittagong Nagarik Committee tomorrow.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Hasina will also attend at the concluding ceremony of the 49th convention of the Institute of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) at IEB, Chittagong Centre tomorrow as chief guest.

BSEC chairman's removal demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Employees of Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation (BSEC) submitted a memorandum to the prime minister on Wednesday demanding removal of BSEC chairman for corruption, anti-social activities and acts against the interest of the organisation.

Prior to submitting the memorandum, the BSEC employees laid a siege to the office of Chairman Mr Shakhawat Hossain in the morning and damaged the office by throwing stones.

They chanted slogans against the chairman and the controller of accounts for turning the BSEC into 'one of the most undisciplined public sector enterprises.'

The employees also demanded removal of Controller of Accounts Apurba Kanchan Das Gupta, who allegedly joined the corporation with counterfeit CA certificate, said President of BSEC Employees and Workers Federation Mostafizur Rahman Choudhury and acting general secretary Abdul Hakim.

Former BNP MP Laxmikanta passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Former ruling party Babu Laxmikanta Bal died at Azimpur here yesterday morning at the age of 92.

Laxmikanta was elected MP from Kotlajpara-Rajoir seat of Gopalganj in a by-election in 1982 on Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) ticket.

He left behind his three sons and a daughter.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has expressed deep shock at the death of Babu Laxmikanta Bal.

Prof Mohammad Ansar Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Mohammad Ansar Ali, associate editor of Banglapedia and educationist, died of cardiac failure at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases on Friday at the age of 62, says a press release.

Prof Ali is survived by his wife, three sons and a daughter.

He was buried at their family graveyard on Friday after his namaj-e-janaza at his village home at Barbaika in Gazipur. His qukhwani will be held at Barbaika after Asr prayers tomorrow.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The second death anniversary of Afazuddin Ahmed, former general secretary of Bangladesh Handloom Board and an

Awami League leader of Narsingdi district, will be observed today, says a press release.

He passed away on this day of 2003 at Birdem Hospital in the city. He left behind his wife, six daughters and two sons.

On the occasion, a Quarankhwani and feeding to the destitute will be held at his village home at Hasnabad under Raipura upazila of Narsingdi district.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Bimol Dutta

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the second death anniversary of Professor Bimol Dutta, a valiant freedom fighter and noted journalist, says a press release.

On the occasion, a Boishnob Sheba and Gatie Vojon will be held at Eskon Temple on Bonogram Lane at War in the city.

Bimol Dutta is the son of Bosonto Kumar Dutta of Manikdi Asrambari.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia addresses the inaugural session of the 49th conference of Engineers' Institution, Bangladesh in Chittagong yesterday.

WB seeks immunity as its actions go against people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank (WB) seeks blanket immunity in Bangladesh just to protect itself from any legal proceedings against its anti-people activities, speakers said at a discussion at the LGED Bhaban in the city yesterday.

The WB must not be treated as a UN organisation, as it is a banking institution, they said at the discussion organised by Alliance against World Bank Immunity in the wake of possible passage of The International Financial Organisations (Amendment) Act, 2004.

An amendment to The International Financial Organisations Order of 1972, likely to be passed in

the parliament, will provide the Bank with "immunity from every form of legal process."

"The WB is eager for immunity as it is aware that its actions go against people's interests," said Mohammad Zakaria of Action Aid Bangladesh.

Terminating the WB as an extension of the US treasury, economist Professor Anu Muhammad said the bank has incurred huge damage to the people's interests in the name of development.

If the Adamjee Jute Mills could be laid down at the dictate of the WB on the pretext that it had incurred a loss of Tk 1200 crore, what should be the fate of energy company Unocal that caused a damage of Tk 6,000 crore in the Magurhara gas explosion, he questioned.

Corrupt government officials and politicians make the WB function possible, he said.

The WB's hegemony is sponsored by the US hegemony, said Dr Salimullah Khan, research director of CACA.

Presenting the keynote paper, Rezaul Karim Chowdhury of Supra said the WB Country Director Christie Wallich 'told a lie' when she claimed on the BBC that the bank has institutional immunity across the world.

"It enjoys institutional immunity only in Ghana and in the US," he said.

Citing a correspondence between two ministers concerned, Advocate Mizanur Rahman Apel said the amendment in the immunity bill has been prepared as per dictation of the WB legal expert.

Such immunity goes against

people's aspirations, equity, justice and democracy, said the executive editor of the daily New Age, Nurul Kabir, who moderated the discussion.

If the WB works for welfare of the people, why does it ask for blanket institutional immunity in the first place, Swapan Bhuiyan of Bangladesh Krishak Federation wondered.

Granting institutional immunity to the WB will violate the constitutional rights of the people, speakers said.

Ahmed Swapan of Voice, Asst Professor Zakir Hossain of Rajshahi University, the Daily Sangbad Executive Editor Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, among others, spoke on the occasion.

2 killed in city road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 12-year-old boy and a woman were killed in separate road accidents in the capital yesterday.

Police said an undetected bus crushed Mohammad Ashraf, a sweeper at Gabtoli Bus Terminal, under the wheels at about 5:00am when he was crossing the road at Gabtoli in Mirpur.

In the other incident, an unidentified woman aged about 40 was rammed by an unknown vehicle at about 10:00am while crossing the New Airport Road near the Khilkhet Over Bridge in Badda.

They died on the spot. Police later took the bodies to Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy.



Abdul Ahad Smiritrakha Parshad organises a discussion on noted Tagore song exponent Abdul Ahad at the Sufia Kamal Auditorium at National Museum in the city yesterday. (From left) Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Mustafa Nurul Islam, Justice Habibur Rahman and Dr Anisuzzaman are seen.

INTER-SCHOOL DEBATE 3 adjudged best debaters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Sun Shine Grammar School, Bay View School, Oxbridge School and Summer Fields School yesterday moved to the next round of The Daily Star-Mutual Trust Bank 5th Inter-School English Debate Competitions.

On the second day yesterday at Lions Foundation auditorium, Sun Shine beat Green Vale while Bay View outclassed Cider International and Oxbridge defeated Bangladesh Elementary School.

Summer Fields got walkover against Little Jewels School.

Faiz Chowdhury of Sun Shine, Irfan Saqib of Cider International and Juher Mehtab of Oxbridge were adjudged the best debaters yesterday in their respective meets.

University of Science and Technology, Chittagong (USTC) Professor Dr Pradip Ghosh, BGC Trust University Professor Dr Kanchan Kumar Purahit and Education Ministry official Sajid Hossain Jamee presided over the sessions.

The third day encounter of the competition will be held tomorrow at the same venue.

Drishy, an educational and cultural organisation of the port city, has organised the weeklong event.

DHAKA TODAY Musical evening, Film show, Seminar, Pre-budget discussion, Inauguration, Film show. Includes details for various events like 'Musical evening' at Dhanmondi, 'Film show' at Academy Film Society, 'Seminar' on improved weaning practices, 'Pre-budget discussion' on Sustainable Development, and 'Inauguration' of IPOWVER.