

Consider wetland issue for sustainable development

Water experts tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Wetland issue should be considered when national development policy will be formulated with a view to ensuring sustainable development across the country, said water experts and environmentalists at two separate seminars yesterday.

They said the country's sustainable development cannot be achieved ignoring the wetlands because Bangladesh has a vast wetland covering almost half of the total land.

One of the seminar was organised by Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Society at the National Press Club while the other by the Department of Fisheries at its conference room in the city to

mark the World Wetland Day. This year, the main theme of the day was 'Fish for Tomorrow'.

The speakers at the National Press Club said unplanned structural development in urban and rural areas is one of the main reasons for declining country's wetland and for this reason around 300 species of freshwater fishes and over 500 species of marine fishes are now extinct.

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, president of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), said the wetlands of Bangladesh are now under serious threat of gradual depletion.

The unplanned construction of structures and other human activities are mainly responsible for

creating imbalance in atmosphere, he added.

"We don't consider wetland while making development policy. Almost all of our rivers flow from north to south but most of our roads are extended from east to west setting up of many bridges, culverts and obstructing the natural flow of waters," said Prof Ahmad.

Inamul Haque, director general of Bangladesh Haor and Wetlands Development Board, suggested identification of one wetland in every union across the country for preserving all species of fishes for future generation.

Associate Professor of Sylhet Shah Jalal University of Science and Technology Dr Muhammad

Aktarul Islam Chowdhury, renowned Ecologist MA Ohab and Bapa Member-Secretary Dr Abdul Hai Majumdar also spoke on the occasion.

In another seminar titled 'Fish for Tomorrow', the speakers underscored the need for activating community-based organisations for efficient and productive management of the country's inland water bodies.

Speaking as chief guest, Country Representative of International Union for Conservation Network (IUCN) Dr Ainun Nishat said canals and other inland water bodies of Bangladesh are not interconnected which is why the area for fishes remains very limited during the dry season.

And for this reason, fishes cannot survive when one water body is dried up, he added.

Engineering interventions on water bodies usually damage their sustainability, said Dr Nishat and cautioned that such intervention should be made carefully so that the environment is least affected.

About declining fish production in the country, he said due to intensive cultivation on the lands, peasants could hardly afford time for fishing in their wetlands.

To increase fish production, he suggested inclusion of coastal areas under a comprehensive national policy.

Presided over by acting director general of fisheries department Md Nazrul Islam, the seminar was also addressed by Secretary to fisheries and livestock ministry Sayed Ataur Rahman and Dr Gias Uddin Khan of World Fish Centre.



Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty calls on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her residence in the city yesterday.

19 Bangladeshis killed by BSF in January

Odhikar report says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) committed terrible human rights violation in the border areas of the country last month, says Odhikar, a human rights watchdog of Bangladesh.

The BSF had killed 19 Bangladeshis, injured 16, abducted 11 and arrested three while four others went missing.

It also committed hijacking and looting along the border.

Meanwhile, 32 people were killed by law enforcers of the country during the period.

Of them, 16 were killed by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), nine by police, five by the army and two by joint forces.

According to Odhikar report, 18 people were killed in crossfire and the rest 14 in other ways.

Odhikar prepared the report on the basis of stories published in 11 national dailies and collected from its own fact-finding missions.

Besides, a total of eight people died in jail custody due to illness, the report added.

One police was killed in a bomb attack.

The report said a total of

40,059 people were arrested in January. Of them 36250 were arrested from January 12 to 31.

A total of 1223 were injured due to political violence.

The report covering human rights situation all over the country also shows that three journalists were injured, four arrested, six assaulted, 22 threatened and eight cases were filed against them in last month.

A total of 21 women were the victims of dowry, 29 victims of rape, and 13 victims of acid attacks. Seventy-two children were the victims of human rights violations.

Dhaka Math Olympiad today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka divisional Mathematical Olympiad will be held at Azimpur Girls' School and College in the city today.

About 1,600 students are expected to take part in the competition organised by Bangladesh Mathematical Olympiad Committee in association with Dutch-Bangla Bank and the Prothom Alo.

This is the 13th divisional competition being held to select members of the Bangladesh team for the 48th International Mathematical Olympiad to be held in Vietnam.

Principal of Azimpur Girls' School and College Hosne Ara Begum will inaugurate the festival. President of Bangladesh Mathematical Olympiad Committee Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury and Managing Director of Dutch-Bangla Bank Mohammad Yeasin Ali will also be present.

The Mathematical Olympiad will be held under four categories during the daylong programme. Besides, math and science quiz, question-answer session and prize giving ceremony will be held.

The winners of a total of 14 divisional mathematical Olympiads will take part in the Fifth Bangladesh Mathematical Olympiad at Saint Joseph High School in the city on February 16 and 17.



Thick fog blankets Zia International Airport in the city, causing delay in flight schedule. The picture was taken at 10:00am yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Release of Hasina's APS demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (Ershad) and Dhaka city Awami League yesterday demanded immediate release of AL President Sheikh Hasina's assistant personal secretary (APS) Dr Awlad Hossain and two others, who were arrested on Wednesday night.

The two others are Mahmud Hasan Babul, a personal staff of Hasina, and Sarwar Hossain, president of Canada unit of AL.

In a statement, JP Chairman HM Ershad said the people heaved a sigh of relief when the drive against criminals and corrupt people was launched, but incidents of arrest of peace-loving and law-abiding people would hamper the main objective of the drive.

The arrest of the three would create confusion in the minds of the people as there were no allegations against them, he added.

In a separate statement, Dhaka city AL Acting President AKM Rahmat Ullah and General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya said the arrest of Awlad, Babul and Sarwar has dismayed the people.

They urged the authorities not to harass the law-abiding people and demanded immediate release of the three.

In another statement, Ershad urged the caretaker government not to change the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday, saying that the move to change the weekly holiday would hurt the people's religious sentiments.

Rather, weekly holiday on Saturday can be cancelled, he suggested.

Opposing the proposal of businessmen to set Sunday as the weekly holiday for the expansion of business, Ershad said business would get a boost if political stability returns, good governance is established and corruption and crimes are uprooted.

MEMO TO CHIEF ADVISER Cancel Phulbari Coalmine Project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Committee for Protection of Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power, Port in a memorandum to the chief adviser on Thursday urged the caretaker government to fully cancel the Phulbari Coalmine Project, as the immediate past government's agreement with the committee on the project was just 'ceremonial'.

They also urged the interim government to take action against the persons who had been allegedly trying to renew old projects or sign new treaties before unearthing the irregularities and corruption.

KILLING OF TEACHER Protest today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Shaheed Babul Academy, a private school in the city, will organise a protest rally on the Academy premises at 11:00am today demanding arrest and punishment to the killers of one of its teachers, says a press release.

Unknown assailants at Kuakata in Patuakhali killed Tahmina Sharmin Tania, a teacher of the Academy, on January 30.

Housewife murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A body of a housewife was recovered from Deotola village under Kaliganj upazila in Gazipur yesterday morning.

Jhama Akhter, 24, has been missing since Thursday night and her body was recovered from a cowshed of neighbour Billal.

Primary investigation proved that someone strangled Jhama.

Sources said Jhama got married five years ago and following a wrangle with her husband she was divorced six days ago and had been staying with her parents at Deotola village.

On the very day, she went to the neighbour's house to get back the money she lent and did not return home.

Jhama's father Abu Taher filed a case with Kaliganj Police Station in this regard.

Workshop on TV reporting for children held

A two-day workshop on 'Television reporting' for children and juveniles was held in the city recently, says a press release.

A total of 20 children took part in the workshop organised by the Children's Television Foundation of Bangladesh (CTFB) in association with Unicef.

The CTFB had also organised a three-month computer course and two-day training on script writing techniques for the 20 children.



PHOTO: STAR

PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE... Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) build offices illegally on the pavement at Eskaton Garden Road in front of Ladies Club in the city. The picture was taken yesterday.