

'Declare Bhabodaho a disaster area'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different short and long-term initiatives should be taken immediately to reduce the plights of the people of water-logged Bhabodaho area in southern region of the country, said the speakers at a seminar yesterday.

The seminar titled 'Reasons of waterlogging in Southwestern region, their solutions and the ways to protect the water bodies of the region' was organised by Nagorik Sanghati at the National Press Club in the city.

Nagorik Sanghati President Dr ASM Atikur Rahman said a short-term intervention by the army could play an important role in this regard.

"Waterlogging at Bhabodaho area is not new. Since 60s different steps were taken to reduce the problem but those steps did not bring any long-term benefits," said water expert Dr Anil Nishat.

Criticising the Water Development

Board, the speakers said the local influential people and miscreants had been hindering the initiatives with the nexus of the ministries concerned.

Life of the people living in this region has become miserable for the unplanned development initiatives, they added.

The speakers suggested for Tidal River Sediment Management (TRSM) along with Tidal River Management (TRM) so that the water bodies are dredged and level of the lands is made high.

They said Bhabodaho should be declared a disaster area and block allocation should be provided for the people.

Besides, the Bhabodaho area should be brought under the supervision of Navy as short-time step, they suggested.

The speakers said as long-term measures, technological perspectives should be considered and coordinated

efforts by the army, local government and central administration are needed.

They also stressed the need for community participation along with strong monitoring mechanism.

Highlighting the plight of the water-logged people, founder President of Water Management Association (WMA) Mohir Uddin Biswas in his keynote paper recommended for implementing long-term plan following the regional studies.

He also called for Tidal River Management, halting river grabbing, unplanned fish cultivation and formulation of a water usage policy.

Nagorik Sanghati Secretary Sharifuzzaman Sharif, Prof Firoz Ahmed of Buet, Hamidul Hossain Tarek Bir Bikram and Shoyeb Siddiqui of ActionAid also spoke on the occasion.

Int'l Education Exhibition begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Education Exhibition-2007 organised by SSBC group began at the Ball Room of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

Malaysian High Commissioner Datu Abdul Malek bin Abdul Aziz inaugurated the two-day exhibition.

The exhibition will also remain open today for all from 10:00am to 8:00pm.

Information regarding admission and scholarships of 30 universities from 18 countries are available at the exhibition.

The participating universities are University of North Alabama-USA, University College of the Fraser Valley-Canada, The Canadian Education Centre Network-Canada, Institute of Business & Technology (IBAT)-Ireland, Fryderyk Skarbek Graduate School of Business Economics-Poland, CHN-Netherlands, AEC-Australia, NZEC-New Zealand, Charles Sturt University-Australia, Ability Academy-four-Spanish Universities including University of Salamanca, University of Malaga, University of Santiago de Compostela and University of La Rioja, Help University-Malaysia, Eurasia Institute-Germany, Woosong University-South Korea, Tomsk Polytechnic Institute-Russia and University of Debrecen Medical School-Hungary.

SNM and Eastern Bank are partner and associate partner of the exhibition respectively while The Daily Star, daily Janakantha, ATN Bangla and Radio Today are the media partners.

The American Centre, Russian Cultural Centre, Alliance Francaise de Dacca and Democracywatch will also present their activities at the exhibition.



PHOTO STAR

Students visit a stall of a foreign institute to get information regarding admission and scholarships at the opening day of International Education Exhibition-2007 organised by SSBC group at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

Saarc peoples' summit begins in Nepal

UNB, Kathmandu

Thousands of people gathered at the launching of a three-day Saarc peoples' summit titled 'Imagine a New South Asia' that got underway in the Nepalese capital of Kathmandu yesterday.

Subash Nembang, speaker of Legislative Parliament of Nepal, inaugurated the summit at Rastra Shabha Griha.

More than 200 prominent personalities representing social movements, trade unions, peasant organisations, youth and women as well as members of parliament from all the Saarc countries, including Afghanistan, attended the programme, which is the first part of a series to begin in South Asian countries.

The 'Imagine A New South Asia' Initiative, hosted by the NGO Federation Nepal along with 40 partner organisations, is conceived as a broad-based citizens' initiative to advance a shared sense of South Asian vision promoting increasing policy convergence on key issues, regional cooperation, joint initiative at the government as well as civil society level.

Dr Arjun Karki, the president of NGO Federation Nepal, said: "The initiative seeks to promote the vision of peaceful, prosperous, just and democratic South Asia."

He said the South Asians want to see democracy, peace, religious co-existence, end of wars and conflicts by building people's solidarity in the region.

Planned as a broad-based process, working with existing networks, alliances and South Asia-wide campaigns, the initiative aims to bring an end to increasing inequality, identity politics, social and political conflicts, fragmentation, mistrust and tendency to undermine each other.

On the first day of the summit, documentaries were shown on South Asian countries and then the delegates from across the region discussed in groups that were formed based on their interests and respective constitutions.

The delegates will participate in thematic group sessions, discussing their issues and concerns, on the second day today.

On the third and last day, they will participate in sessions on armed conflicts and their resolution as well as a shared vision for the whole South Asian region. The concluding day would also mark the joint declaration made by the South Asian delegates.

Prices of essentials ease in city market

BSS, Dhaka

Prices of essentials eased in the city markets this week with fall in prices of rice, onion, green chilies and other essentials including most vegetable and fish remained steady.

Adequate supply of essential commodities in the city markets and open market sale (OMS) of essentials have contributed in easing the prices, which is expected to normalise the price situation further, traders told BSS.

In the city's wholesale markets, najir shalli rice (better quality) was sold at Tk 24.50 to Tk 24.75 per kg this week. The price of minket (better quality) was between Tk 25.00 and Tk 26.25 per kg this week. Coarse rice was sold at Tk 18.00 per kg this week.

The price of local onion was between Tk 12 and Tk 15 per kg in the wholesale markets this week, while in the retail markets it was between Tk 20 and Tk 26 per kg this week.

The price of green chili fell to Tk 14 to Tk 16 per kg in the wholesale markets this week against Tk 18 to Tk 20 per kg last week, while in the retail markets it fell to Tk 38 to Tk 40 per kg this week against Tk 48 to Tk 50 per kg last week.

The price of garlic was between Tk 30 and Tk 35 per kg in the wholesale market this week. The price of the same was between Tk 45 and Tk 50 per kg this week.

The price of local onion was between Tk 12 and Tk 15 per kg in the wholesale markets this week, while in the retail markets it was between Tk 20 and Tk 26 per kg this week.

The price of moshur (imported) fell to Tk 55 per kg this week against Tk 65 per kg last week, moshur (local) Tk 68

per kg in the retail markets this week against Tk 50 and Tk 55 per kg last week.

The price of ginger fell to Tk 18 to Tk 20 per kg in the wholesale markets against Tk 26 and Tk 28 per kg last week and between Tk 36 and Tk 50 per kg in the retail markets against Tk 46 and Tk 50 per kg last week.

The price of soyabeans also remained almost unchanged between Tk 55 and Tk 60 per kg this week, while palm oil price at Tk 45 per kg and mustard oil at Tk 70 per kg this week.

Hilsa fish (big size) was sold at Tk 375 to Tk 380 per piece in the retail markets this week, while medium sized one was sold at Tk 150 to Tk 200 per piece this week. Big size Ruhu (local) was Tk 180 to Tk 220 per kg this week, medium sized Tk 150 to Tk 160 per kg.

The price of large size shrimp remained unchanged between Tk 560 and 600 per kg in the retail markets this week, and between Tk 300 and Tk 360 per kg for the medium sized one.

At other retail markets in the city, price of moong pulse (imported) fell to Tk 55 per kg this week against Tk 65 per kg last week, moong (local) Tk 68

No restriction on NGO meetings, rallies

The Ministry of Law in a letter to the chair of the Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) has said there is no legal restriction on non-political meetings and rallies organised by the NGOs in conducting their normal activities, says a press release.

The letter was sent on March 20 a day after the FNB representatives led by its Chair Dr Muhammad Ibrahim met Law Adviser Barrister Moinul Hosein and raised the issue of the recent ban on all political activities, meetings and rallies, which has been affecting non-political development programmes of the NGOs.



PHOTO STAR

Khabir Uddin Khan speaks at the 5th Reunion 2007 of the Accounting Alumni of Dhaka University (DU) at Teacher-Student Centre on DU campus yesterday.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

Bangladesh Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology organises a seminar on 'The role of biochemistry in the pharmaceutical industries'. Venue: Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Dhaka University Auditorium. Time: 10:30am.

Speech

Former governor of Bangladesh Bank Dr Mohammad Farashuddin will deliver a speech on 'Expectations and achievements of the War of Liberation: Education'. Venue: Liberation War Museum. Time: 5:00pm.

Roundtable

Saptahik2000 organises a roundtable titled 'Public interest and the coal policy of Bangladesh'. Venue: Conference Room, The Daily Star. Time: 10:00am.

Seminar

Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit of the University of Dhaka organises a seminar on 'Accessing rights as citizens: The camp dwelling Urdu speaking community'. Venue: Brac Centre. Time: 10:00am.

Roundtable

Jatiya Grantha Kendra organises a roundtable in participation of the authors and publishers. Venue: Meeting Room, National Museum. Time: 4:00pm.

Launching ceremony

Centre for Policy Dialogue organises the launching ceremony of 'Collected Works of Rehman Sobhan'. Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 3:30pm.

Roundtable

Bari Literary Society organises a roundtable titled 'The past, present and future of the little magazines'. Venue: German Cultural Centre. Time: 3:00pm.

Seminar

Gender in Media Forum in association with Action Aid Bangladesh will organise a seminar titled 'Gender, rights and media'. Venue: Chhayanaut Sanskritik Bhaban. Time: 10:00am.

Rotary Dhaka Central

The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.

Global warming may be bad for asthma sufferers

REUTERS, Oslo

Global warming may be bad for asthma sufferers because of longer plant growing seasons and signs that weeds scattering vast amounts of pollen are conquering new territory, experts say.

But higher temperatures might bring benefits for some sufferers because house mites and viruses that thrive in winter in centrally heated homes will not flourish if people do not need to use their heat systems.

By Spring, pollen has been in the air for months in the northern hemisphere even in countries where snows bring a winter respite from coughing and wheezing for allergies.

In south Sweden, for instance, hazel trees have been flowering since December.

"In the United States the incidence of asthma is up nearly four times since 1980," said Paul Epstein, Associate Director of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School.

"No one has really been looking at the aerobiology dimension (such as pollen). But I think it helps account for it," he said. Other triggers range from mites and dust to viruses and food.

And any warming may make things worse, he told Reuters.

A draft UN climate report due for release on April 6 says that plant growing seasons have become longer because of a warming trend blamed on human burning of fossil fuels.

WEATHER TODAY

No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Dhaka, Chittagong, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna and Rajshahi divisions in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 35.8 degree Celsius was recorded at Ishwardi and the lowest of 18.9 degrees in Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:11pm today and rises at 5:58am 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
Dhaka	33.4	22.6
Chittagong	30.5	21.5
Rajshahi	33.5	22.3
Khulna	34.2	24.0
Barisal	33.2	20.4
Sylhet	28.3	18.9
Cox's Bazar	30.6	22.4

City/Town

Temperature in celsius

Humidity in percentage

Max

Min

78

60

75

85

84

53

80

56

89

73

94

74