

Climate change set to damage biodiversity of Sundarbans Says BEA president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Climate change is set to damage biodiversity of the Sundarbans increasing the inundated areas and salinity in water in coastal areas.

As a result, crops, fisheries, forests and livestock will be at high risk in the country.

This was stated by Prof Qazi Kholiuzzaman Ahmad, lead author of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s Working Group-2, at a press briefing organised by Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) and Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the city yesterday.

"Though Bangladesh is committed to conserve the World Heritage Sites in the Sundarbans, those are at great risk due to climate change," he said referring that two of the total 104 islands of Sundarbans in the Indian side have been lost due to rise of sea level.

Prof Kholiuzzaman said due to climate change, around two crore people in flooded areas will lose employment and their socio-economic security and millions will

be forced to become refugees and face various diseases like malaria, diarrhoea and skin diseases.

On the other hand, the climate change caused by global warming, will deepen drought in north-western region leaving agriculture and farmers at great risk, he added.

Citing researches, Prof Kholiuzzaman, also president of BEA, said a huge number of hard-core people will turn into beggars, the poor into ultra-poor and the lower income groups into poor.

"The consequences of ice-melting in the Himalayas caused by global warming will be devastating for Bangladesh," he said, adding, with more floods, there will be more people migrating to cities creating immense pressure on urban areas and compelling them to live in inhumane life in the slums.

In the wake of such research-based apprehensions, Prof Kholiuzzaman said Bangladesh as well as other developing countries should be united against the industrialised nations, which are mainly responsible for global warming, but are passing the

burden on the developing ones.

According to a report of IPCC, on an average global temperature will increase from 1.8 degree Celsius to 4 degree Celsius, while sea level will increase by 18 to 59 centimetres by next century.

Another IPCC report, published early this year, said 120 crore people of Asia and 25 crore people of Africa will suffer from scarcity of water in the case of increasing temperature by 1 degree Celsius.

"And if the temperature increases by 2 degree Celsius, productivity of rice in China will come down by 12 percent, 20 lakh people will face coastal flooding in Asia and 160 crore more people in Africa will suffer from scarcity of water," it added.

Increasing capacity of adaptability and controlling the global warming process are now very urgent, the report suggested.

BEA General Secretary Prof Abul Barakat and Prof Zahurul Karim, chairman of Centre for Agri Research and Sustainable Environment & Entrepreneurship Development, also spoke.

Seven children rescued

UNB, Benapole

BDR rescued seven children while they were being trafficked to India through the Dhanyakhola border and held two miscreants in this connection on Friday.

The rescued were identified as Parveen, 8, Ramzan, 7, Sheuli, 12, Abu Saleh, 13, Jarina, 10, Ameer, 8, and Taslima, 16.

They said they all hailed from Bahilapota village of Benapole.

The traffickers brought them to Dhanyakhola alluring them of giving lucrative jobs, they added.

Two suspected traffickers Ali Hossain and Momtaz, hailing from Shibchar in Madaripur district were arrested.

The rescued children were being sent to their parents.

Another report said BDR seized 217 containers of AC Gas worth about Tk 17 lakh before they were being smuggled out through the Puthkhal border early hours of yesterday.

20 fortune seekers held at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Immigration police at Zia International Airport (ZIA) held 20 fortune seekers on Saturday as they gave twisted information and failed to satisfy the immigration officials with proper documents of their destinations.

The job seekers approached immigration section at 8:30am. The immigration police challenged them on suspicion and inquired about their destinations and checked necessary papers. Police also inquired about the travel agencies and the process through which they were being sent abroad.

The fortune seekers informed immigration police that they were supposed to go to Delhi at first in a flight of GMG airlines from where they would fly for Kabul. Brokers at Kabul were supposed to receive them and lead them to different countries, including some in European ones.

Immigration police said five travel agencies from outside the capital took money ranging from Tk 1.30 lakh to Tk 1.50 lakh from the fortune seekers pledging to get them an access to Kabul. Eight brokers negotiated with the fortune seekers for the travel agencies.

"They were prevented as the way they were being sent promising a better future is nothing but risking their life. They were prevented to resist recurrence of any tragic incident that happened in the recent past leading an unknown number of them to death," said an Immigration official preferring anonymity.

The official said they prevented the job seekers, most of whom from greater Sylhet, Comilla, Feni and Munshiganj, as their passports carry tourist visa for Kabul.

Police however released them after questioning and a case was filed with Airport Police Station on Saturday accusing eight brokers.

ONE-YEAR INTO JOURNO REPRESSION BFUJ, DUJ concerned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) expressed concern as the culprits responsible for repression on journalists on this day last year are yet to be brought to book.

BFUJ President Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul and Secretary General Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, DUJ President Altaf Mahmud and General Secretary Omar Faruq in a joint statement demanded that the police officials responsible for the atrocity must be brought to book immediately.

A photo exhibition of journalist Zahurul Huq will be held at the National Press Club in the city containing the violent activities of the law enforcers on the journalists at Chittagong stadium on this day in 2006. Journalist ABM Musa will inaugurate the exhibition at 11:00am.

Anti-corruption body launches website

National Coordination Committee of Anti-Corruption launched a new website www.ekhoni-shomoy.net for the people to lodge complaints against corrupt people, says a press release.

Victims can lodge their specific complaints to the law enforcing agencies through this website.

People will be able to send their complaints at complain@ekhoni-shomoy.net or durnite10@gmail.com or durnite1@hotmail.com.

People may also send specific information about any offence taking place at their surroundings at 8827829 or 01713047336.

They can also send fax at 8752925, 87117660 and 8711764 or send letters to GPO Box no: 2260, 2560 and 2760.

While lodging any complaint or allegation, the complainants would enjoy the right not to provide his/her personal information.



PHOTO: STAR

Artistes of Chhayanaut, *top*, and Hrishij Shilpi Goshti, *bottom*, perform at Ramna Batamul and Shishu Academy in the city celebrating the Bangla New Year on Saturday.

Create mass awareness for implementation of PRSP

Speakers urge media at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged national dailies to play vital role in creating awareness about the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) among the mass people by giving extensive coverage to it.

They said progress reports on all development documents including the PRSP prepared by the government, civil society organisations and donors should be made public through different mass media.

The speakers said there should be strong monitoring system towards transparency, accountability and proper implementation of the poverty reduction programme.

They also stressed the need for translating the PRSP into Bangla before implementing it so that the mass people can understand what is PRSP and what is its utility.

The speakers were speaking at a roundtable titled "Transparency and ownership in poverty reduction strategies" was organised by Panos Institute Bangladesh in the city.

"When most of the journalists of local newspapers do not know about the PRSP, how will they inform their readers about it through their writings?" questioned Fedousi Ali, editor of the Purbanchol, a local newspaper of Khulna.

So the Dhaka-based newspapers

will have to take the key responsibility to let the people know about the PRSP through publishing more news items and articles on PRSP, she said.

Jon Barnes, head of globalisation project of Panos London, said, "Media can play an watchdog role to create a wider political and public awareness regarding poverty reduction strategy."

Stressing a stronger media coverage on poverty reduction strategy, he also said interaction between the media and other key actors of PRSP such as civil society and research organisations is very much needed.

Farhana Ahmed, representative of World Bank, emphasised more involvement of the government, media, civil society and the bureaucrats in PRSP implementation process.

Presenting the findings of a survey conducted by the Panos Institute Bangladesh at the roundtable, Khawaza Mainuddin, senior staff correspondent of the New Age, said more than 91 percent of the journalists working outside Dhaka have not read the government's PRSP styled "Unlocking the Potentials: National Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Poverty Reduction."

The survey was conducted amongst the participants who were invited by the local media and com-

munity organisation to attend an opinion exchange workshop titled 'Reporting poverty' in August and September of 2006.

Replying to a questionnaire, Mainuddin said, out of 94 respondents as many as 86 journalists replied that they had not read the PRSP document.

"Only eight of them said that they had read the government document," he added.

Giving a brief history how PRSP was prepared, Quazi Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, former member of PRSP preparation committee, said it has been prepared to fulfill with the conditionality given by the World Bank for getting soft loans and also bringing the poorest of the poor in the poverty reduction programme.

No five-year plan was ever approved by parliament, but the PRSP has been approved, he said.

Nurul Kabir, editor of the New Age, said a better political system is needed which will work for poverty reduction.

Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kari and Mustafa Kamal Majumder, editor the New Nation, also spoke at the function which was moderated by Afsan Chowdhury, director of Brac.

Evicted slum dwellers to be rehabilitated on govt land: Mainul

UNB, Dhaka

Evicted slum dwellers would be rehabilitated immediately, Housing and Public Works Adviser Mainul Hosen said yesterday.

He was addressing a meeting at his ministry yesterday.

Works are going on to gradually rehabilitate the evicted slum dwellers on government land in different parts of the city.

The adviser assured that the government would provide all possible cooperation for the rehabilitation of the evicted slum dwellers.

Representatives of ADB, UNDP and DFID were present on the occasion.

SCHOOLBOY KILLING Ten arrested in Narayanganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

An organised gang of ten kidnappers, who abducted and killed a schoolboy for Tk 50 lakh as ransom last month in Narayanganj, was arrested on Saturday night.

The victim was identified as Tuhin, a 16-year old student of class ten at Siddhirganj Laksmi Narayan Cotton Mills High School.

Police said all arrestees are professional killers and kidnappers.

They abducted the victim on March 24 and killed him on March 31, as they did not get Tk 50 lakh as ransom, police added.

Police at first arrested Kalimuddin alias Baila, 45, from Nurullahpur at Madhabdi upazila in Narsingdi district using mobile network.

Getting information from Baila, police arrested chief of the gang Mojibur alias Maija, 38, from Patuakhali. Following the same way, police also arrested other members of the gang from Uttara and Shyampur of Dhaka, Madhabdi of Narsingdi, Futullah, Kutubail and Lamapara of Narayanganj and Arambagh of Siddhirganj.

Other arrestees are Iqbal, 22, Maham, 37, Rustam, 30, Siraj alias Kutti, 45, Ramjan, 21, Zahurul Islam Rana, 20, Dalim, 18, and Liton Sardar, 28.

Police said all arrestees confessed their involvement in abducting and killing the boy.

Tuhin's father Kazi Nazrul Islam, an Ansar VDF official, said his son was abducted on March 24 when he was going to school from his house at Araihaaz upazila and later the kidnappers demanded Tk 50 lakh as ransom through mobile phone.

"I did not agree to pay ransom and informed police. At last we recovered our son's body from Menukandi grave-yard of the Araihaaz on March 31," Nazrul told the reporters.

Obituary



Mahbub Alam Chowdhury, strategic planner of Madonna Advertising Ltd, passed away due to a massive cardiac arrest on Saturday at the age of 38, says a press release.

He was buried at his family graveyard in Bogra.

Death anniversary

Today is the 4th death anniversary of KM Ataul Huq, former general manager of Jiban Bima Corporation, says a press release.

On the occasion, Quarakhwani and milad mahfil will be held. All have been requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Abul Basher Joardar



Today is the first death anniversary of Abul Basher Joardar, a freedom fighter and a retired deputy secretary of Ministry of Finance, says a press release.

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

Maulana Abdul Goni Mia



Today is the third death anniversary of social worker Maulana Abdul Goni Mia, son of Maulana Mohiuddin Master (Sona Mia), says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and Quarakhwani will be held after Asr prayers at Mia Bari Jame Mosque in Sarail upazila of Brahmanbaria.

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

STAR REPORT

At least 13 people were killed in separate road accidents in Munshiganj, Manikganj, Tangail, Netrakona and Sherpur yesterday and on Saturday.

UNB from Munshiganj adds: Four people were killed and five others injured in separate road accidents in the district yesterday.

Police said two people were killed when a bus rammed a rickshaw at Kakoldi in Sirajdikhan upazila yesterday morning.

Rickshaw-puller Nuruzzaman alias Nuru Rahman, 50, died on the spot while its passenger Shamsul Haque succumbed to his injuries at a hospital in Dhaka.

Agitated mob caught the driver and handed him over to the police along with the bus.

An unidentified man was killed and five others were injured when an ambulance hit an auto-rickshaw at Tin Dokan in Lauhajang upazila.

Of the injured, Parul Rani, 60, and Masuda Begum were admitted to Lauhajang Upazila Health Complex.

Police arrested driver Aminul Haq Farayazi along with the ambulance.

Meanwhile, Chandra Ban Bibi, 70, died on the spot when an auto-rickshaw hit her at Hoglekandi in Sadar upazila.

Our Correspondent from Manikganj reports: Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Manikganj on Saturday.

A jewellery businessman was seriously injured when a Balirtek-bound bus from Dhaka hit him while he was talking over cellphone sitting on his standing motorcycle beside the road at Baimail area under Singair upazila on Dhaka-Singair-Manikganj road at around 12:00 noon.

The victim identified as Akter Hossain, 25, of Charigram village under Singair upazila succumbed to his injuries on the way to hospital.

A child was run over by a speeding bus while he was crossing the road at around 6:00pm at Golora area on Dhaka-Aricha highway.

The victim was identified as Russel, 13, an employee of Nahar Food Industries at Golora.

The bodies were taken to Manikganj Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Our correspondent from Tangail adds: Two women were killed and one was seriously injured in a road accident on Tangail Bypass Road on Saturday evening.

The dead were identified as Shahanaz Begum, 22, of Akur Takur Para in Tangail town and her cousin Bithi, 20, of Sakhipur upazila in the district.

Police and witnesses said the accident took place at around 6:30pm on Saturday when a North Bengal bound speeding passenger bus from Dhaka crushed a rickshaw under its wheels at Bil Gharinda leaving rickshaw passengers Shahanaz and Bithi dead on the spot and the rickshaw driver seriously injured.

The injured rickshaw driver Zafar, 30, was admitted to Tangail General Hospital.

On information, police rushed to the spot, recovered the bodies and sent them to Tangail General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

The killer bus, however, escaped from the spot.

A case was filed with Tangail Police Station in this regard.

Our correspondent from Netrakona adds: A cycle rider was killed in a road accident on

Netrakona-Mohonganj road at Baluakanda area under Netrakona sadar upazila about 11:00am yesterday.

The dead was identified as Tofazzal Hossain, 32, of Nuapara village under Netrakona sadar.

Police sources said Tofazzal was going to Netrakona town from his house by riding the cycle and when he reached Baluakanda, a truck knocked him down killing him on the spot.

A case was filed with Netrakona Police Station in this connection.

BSS from Sherpur says: Two people were killed in a road accident at Kalinagar in Nalitahari upazila of the district on Saturday.

Witnesses said the accident occurred at about 12:45pm when a Nalitahari-bound goods-laden trolley hit a motorcycle. Both the

vehicles skidded off the road.

Motorcyclist Shahidul Islam, 31, and the trolley driver, 30, whose identity could not be known immediately, died on the spot.

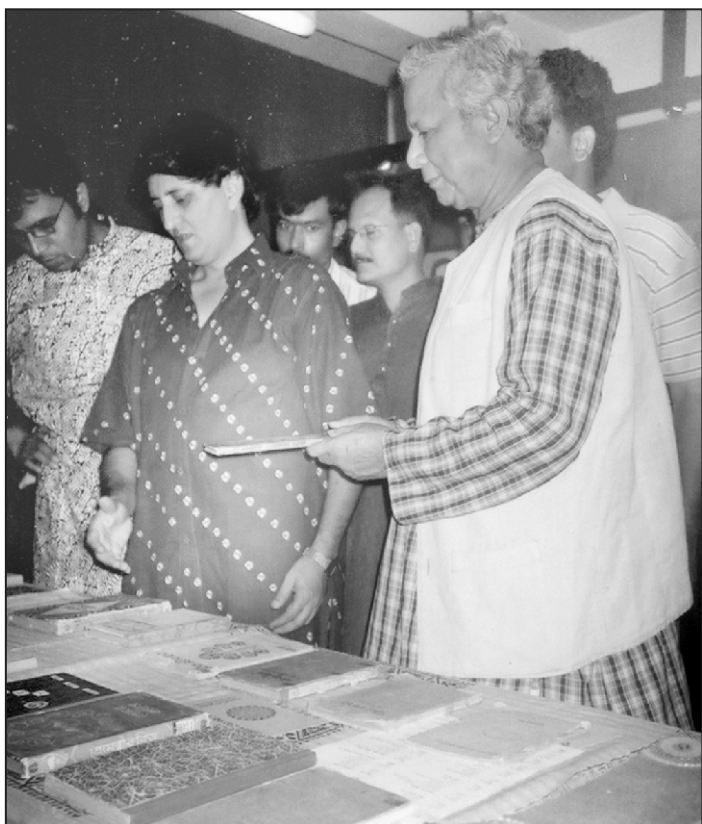
Police sent the bodies to hospital for autopsy.

Another report from Patuakhali adds: Mother and son were killed and 20 others injured in a road accident at Kalikapur in the district town on Saturday.

The accident took place when a bus fell into a roadside ditch as the driver lost control over the steering, police and locals said.

Bunia Begum and her son Sujan, 22, died on the spot.

Members of the joint forces rescued the trapped and injured passengers and sent them to Sadar Hospital.



Prof Muhammad Yunus goes around an exhibition of rare books at Bangalee Samagra Museum in the city on Saturday after inaugurating the Pahela Baishakh programme of the museum.

City/Town	Temperature in celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.8	24.5	68	56
Chittagong	32.1	24.0	74	77
Rajshahi	35.6	23.4	77	60
Khulna	34.4	25.0	76	57
Barisal	33.5	23.3	83	69
Sylhet	34.4	22.6	58	51
Cox's Bazar	32.4	24.5	72	78



WEATHER TODAY



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 35.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 20.8 degree Celsius at Srimangol.

The sun sets in the capital at 6.20pm today and rises at 5:36am tomorrow.

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