

CLIMATE CHANGE

Failure to take effective steps to make situation severe

Agri adviser tells workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture and Environment Adviser Dr CS Karim yesterday said climate change with loss of biodiversity and land degradation will put the nation into a serious problem in two to three decades, which will be the main obstacle to the national development.

"Climate is changing every moment. We are now facing early winter, delayed winter, early rain, advance flood, over rain, drought and rise of sea level water due to global environment changes," adviser said while addressing as chief guest at a national workshop.

He emphasised the need for national capacity building to face the present as well as future problems, which will arise due to climate change.

"The situation will be more severe after two to three decades if we fail to take effective measures and do not implement the Capacity Development Action Plan (CDAP)," CS Karim, also the adviser of Fisheries and Livestock ministry, said at the concluding session of the two-day long workshop.

The ministry of Environment and Forest in collaboration with World Conservation Union (IUCN), Bangladesh organised the two-day mid-term national workshop on

'National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) for Global Environmental Management' at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

The draft CDAP was presented at the workshop and participants reviewed the draft document.

Renowned Water Expert Dr Ainun Nishat, country representative of IUCN Bangladesh, said lack of understanding among the policy makers and international environmental agreement is the main obstacle to take effective programmes on environment.

He identified capacity constraints and limited financial resources as the main obstacles for

realising the international obligations.

Manoj Basnyat, country director of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), said UNDP will continue its support to realise the aim of capacity building and achieve sustainable development.

Among others, Joint Secretary (Development) of Environment and Forest Ministry Tariq-ul-Islam and representatives of public and private sectors, and NGOs, researchers, teachers, development partners and training institutes participated in the workshop.

Strong democratic institutions to ensure freedom of speech

Says Nayyar Zaidi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Freedom of speech in the developing countries will not be ensured until the democratic institutions become strong through free flow of information, viewed a Pakistan-born US journalist yesterday.

"The people should speak and seek their basic freedom in all small countries, including Bangladesh. Until basic freedom is established, there is little possibility to attain the rights to free flow of information," said Nayyar Zaidi, chief correspondent of the daily Jung of Pakistan in the US, at a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club in the city.

Anannya, a fortnightly magazine for women, in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation organised the discussion.

At the discussion, Zaidi delivered a speech on 'Freedom of information in a democratic society' while former ambassador Mohammad Zamir gave a lecture on 'Making Saarc effective for its citizens'.

Prof Sonia Nishat Amin of the Department of History of Dhaka University moderated the discussion where Anannya Editor Tasmina Hossain delivered the welcome address.

Zaidi said the executive branch of government likes secrecy and restricts freedom of information and expressions as they always go against their interest. Access to information was curtailed even in the US immediately after the 9/11, he added.

He said though the government

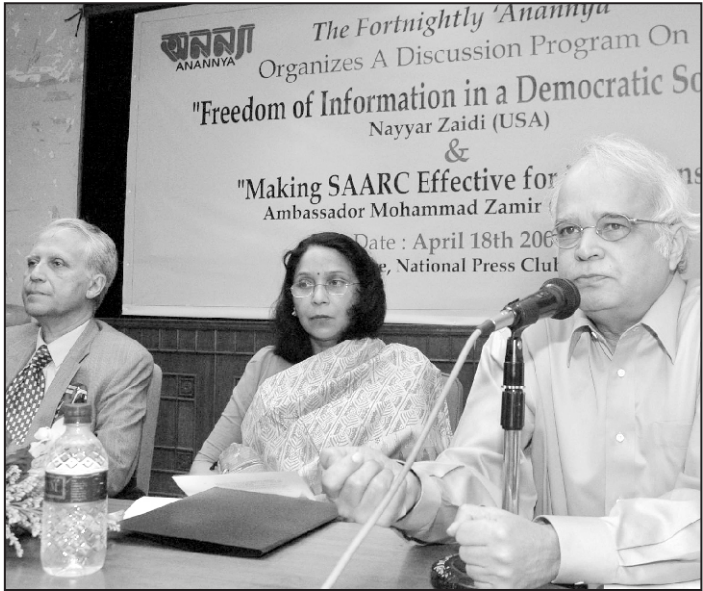


PHOTO: STAR

Pakistan-born US journalist Nayyar Zaidi speaks at a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Prof Sonia Nishat Amin and former ambassador Mohammad Zamir.

speaks that there is freedom of information in Pakistan. But surely there is actually no such freedom there, said Zaidi.

Zamir, an eminent columnist, said to make the Saarc effective in real sense it is necessary to involve members of the civil society before finalising its declarations and agendas. He also emphasised increasing inter-communication among the Saarc countries.

Bangladesh Observer Editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, Sadeque Khan, GM Quader, Sagupta Yasmin Emily, Advocate Salma Ali and members of the civil society, former lawmakers, senior journalists and human rights activists participated in the question-answer session of the discussion.

Mamun's brother Hafiz Ibrahim on one-day remand

UNB, Bhola

A court here yesterday granted one-day remand for former BNP MP Hafiz Ibrahim in another case.

Magistrate Gopal Chandra Das granted the remand when Hafiz Ibrahim, also elder brother of controversial businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun, a close associate of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, was produced before the court.

Daulatkhan Upazila Jubo League General Secretary Golam Sarwar filed a case against 15 BNP activists, including Hafiz Ibrahim, on March 13, 2007 for attacking and looting the residences of Awami League activists after the election in 2001.

Earlier on Monday, the court granted three-day remand for two other cases.

Girls-in-Scouts Unit Leader Workshop ends today

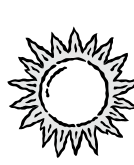
A three-day Youth Forum and Girls-in-Scouts Unit Leader Workshop will conclude at Mouchak in Gazipur today.

The Girls-in-Scouting division of Bangladesh Scouts has organised the workshop in observance of Centenary of Scouting, says a press release.

Earlier, Treasurer of Bangladesh Scouts Abdul Quayyum Thakur inaugurated the workshop on Tuesday.

Workshop Director Nazma Shams chaired the inaugural session of the workshop that was attended by some 100 Scouts and leaders.

The grand Campfire will also be held today.



# WEATHER

## TODAY

### Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Day temperature may rise 1/2 degree Celsius over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 36.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Ishwardi and lowest 21.4 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

**The sun sets in the capital at 6:22pm and rises at 5:33am tomorrow.**

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	34.5	24.6	65	75
Chittagong	32.8	25.3	75	83
Rajshahi	34.6	24.6	76	67
Khulna	34.5	24.6	76	63
Barisal	34.5	24.0	78	62
Sylhet	34.0	22.5	66	88
Cox's Bazar	32.5	24.0	71	71



Building Technology and Ideas Ltd (BTI) officials pose for photograph with the winners of Children's Art Competition at the prize giving ceremony at its corporate office at Pallabi in the city recently. The company organised the competition marking the Independence Day.

Pro-women policing needed to curb violence against women

Speakers say at workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday stressed the need for pro-women policing and recruitment of more women in the police service to effectively combat violence against women.

Some 47 per cent of women still face various forms of violence, they said, adding that pro-women policing, which includes sensitising the police to women's issues and imparting training to them, particularly women police, to behave more friendly with the victims of violence, could play an important role in encouraging the victims to come forward to seek justice.

UNDP organised the workshop on 'Towards a pro-women policing in Bangladesh' at Brac Centre Inn in the city under its Police Reform Programme. A group of women police officers took part in the workshop.

"The objective of pro-women policing is to improve the behaviour of police towards the citizens, particularly women," said UNDP Senior Adviser for Police Reform and former inspector general of police ASM Shahjahan.

A pro-women policing approach will gradually improve the police sensitivity towards women and the community. It will remove the barriers between the police and the community and help the police come out of its reactive nature and develop a community-friendly approach.

"We want to see every police personnel as the symbol of security and safety," said ASM Shahjahan.

Additional Inspector General of Police (admin) NBK Tripura said the pro-women policing approach would contribute progressive improvements within the police service and encourage more gender-sensitive behaviour in the policing system.

Although there is a 10 percent women's quota in the police force, women in the police service account for only 1.2 percent of police personnel, he said, adding that the recruitment procedure, infrastructure and working environment do not encourage more women to join the police service.

Advocate of Bangladesh Supreme Court Dr Faustina Pereira, International Programme Manager of PRP Hubert Staberhofer and National Consultant of PRP Fawzia Khondker also spoke at the workshop.

Former MPs Ani, Khayer sued for extortion

UNB, Laxmipur

Former lawmakers Ani Chowdhury and Abul Khayer Bhuiyan have been sued for extortion and cheating.

Khandaker Alamgir Hossain filed a case against Ani and his 11 associates with Sadar Police Station on Tuesday night.

Moulana Jahangir Hossain and Abbas Uddin filed two separate cases with Raipur Police Station accusing Khayer and six others accusing them of extortion.

Following the cases, police arrested Raipur upazila BNP secretary Hossain Bhahadur yesterday. He was sent to jail when produced before the court.



PHOTO: STAR

A mobile court raided a factory 'Lilen Metal' at Merajnagar in Shyampur in the city yesterday and sentenced two persons to five years' imprisonment for tampering with electricity meter.

Japan keen to help develop energy, railway sectors

Japanese envoy tells CA

UNB, Dhaka

Appreciating the chief adviser's address to the nation, Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Masayuki Inoue yesterday said Japan wants to cooperate with Bangladesh in all important development agendas, particularly energy, water and railway.

The Japanese ambassador made the remarks when he paid a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office in the morning.

Inoue also praised Dr Ahmed for mentioning the timeframe for the general election and reform agendas in his April 12 address to the nation.

Describing Japan as a major development partner, the chief adviser said his government would welcome any assistance for the development of Bangladesh.

He said the proposed Padma Bridge is the high priority project of

the present government, as it would open up economic activity with the western region of the country in addition to connecting the Mongla Port.

He said Japan has started a feasibility study on the Padma Bridge project.

Dr Ahmed urged the Japanese ambassador to encourage Japanese investors to invest in Bangladesh in a bigger way by projecting the prevailing ideal situation here for investment.

He said cheap labour in Bangladesh and Japanese technology and capital together would benefit both the countries.

The Japanese envoy said he would urge his country's investors to relocate various industries to Bangladesh from different countries.

He lauded many achievements of the caretaker government under the leadership of Dr Ahmed and said Bangladesh is an important area of

cooperation for Japan.

About Japanese assistance to the Election Commission, the Japanese envoy said the Chief Election Commissioner has informally sought assistance from the Japan government for the development of electoral process and said he would try to extend support when the proposal comes officially.

Appreciating Bangladesh's role in the just-concluded Saarc Summit, the envoy said Japan is grateful to Bangladesh for its support in incorporating Japan as a Saarc observer.

The chief adviser said Japan's participation in the 14th Saarc summit in New Delhi as an observer has cast a positive impact on the region and opened up the opportunity for cooperation and benefit for each other.

He said the Japanese foreign minister's attendance and speech at the Summit were highly appreciated.



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz speaks at the inaugural session of a conference on 'Regional stability and cooperation: The role of Bangladesh and Pakistan' at Radisson Hotel in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are Pakistani High Commissioner Alamgir Babar, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Sakhawat Hossain and Chief Editor of Probe magazine Irtiza Nasim Ali.

CONFCE ON REGIONAL STABILITY AND COOPERATION 'Pak parliament should adopt resolution regretting atrocities during '71'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a conference yesterday called for resolving the thorny issues between Bangladesh and Pakistan from the past to reduce bitterness between the two countries and forge greater relations.

Academics and diplomats made this observation at the inaugural ceremony of a two-day conference on 'Regional stability and cooperation: The role of Bangladesh and Pakistan' organised by the Probe magazine at Radisson Hotel in the city.

On the sidelines of the conference, Election Commissioner and security analyst Brig Gen (retd) Sakhawat Hossain told reporters that Pakistan parliament should adopt a resolution regretting the atrocities during the War of Liberation in 1971.

"The Pakistan parliament may pass a resolution expressing regrets. The Pakistan president has expressed regrets in the past, but it would be a much better encouragement to the young generation for the people's representatives to speak out," he said.

Speaking as the chief guest, Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz said the past issues relating to the Liberation War of 1971 and the stranded Pakistanis

need to be addressed to "dispel the mistrust that may even prevail today."

"They need to overcome the mindset of yesteryears. This, I am afraid, cannot be done by shelving the past," he said, adding that a critical assessment of the past is required to sincerely cement the bonds between the peoples of the two countries.

Prof Faiz also identified seven areas of cooperation between the two countries such as trade, human resources development, employment generation, energy, tourism, food security and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc).

Brig Gen (retd) Sakhawat Hossain called for greater cooperation on issues such as religious militancy.

Referring to the Saarc, he said the organisation is redundant without a 'conflict-resolution' mechanism whereby problem areas can be ironed out and a platform for discussions can be established.

Speaking as the special guest, Pakistani High Commissioner Alamgir Babar said the young generations have led the relationship between the two countries to a new direction.

He also said that the relationship is improving, given that they have

re-established high-level bilateral mechanisms at the foreign secretary level.

Babar also said that the two governments have also agreed to increase bilateral trade to at least \$1 billion and that they have initiated a process to start a working group to bolster trade ties.

Chief Editor of Probe magazine Irtiza Nasim Ali and Editor Ayesha Kabir also spoke.

Truck drivers' assoc leader held in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion nabbed president of Sayedabad Unit of Bangladesh Truck Drivers' Union from Mirhazaribagh area at Jatrabari in the city yesterday.

Rab sources said, Rab-10 members in a raid at Mirhazaribagh area arrested Md Habibur Rahman alias Habu, 35, an accused of several cases, including illegal arms, murder and extortion.

Rab sources said they will hand Habu over to the police station so that legal steps can be taken against him.

British aid for edn, ICT sectors sought

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury has sought British assistance for the education sector, particularly for developing the proficiency of Bangladeshi students in English language and ICT.

He also sought assistance for tackling the adverse impacts of climate change, reform activities and capacity building of Bangladesh's banking sector.

The adviser made the request when he met British Chief Treasury (Finance) Secretary Rt Hon Stephen Timms, MP at the Treasury Office in London on Tuesday, according to a message received here yesterday.

He said there could be greater cooperation between the Central Banks of Bangladesh and Britain as well as the two governments in the areas of anti-money laundering and financing of terrorism to facilitate Bangladesh's adherence to a number of international instruments like the UN Anti-Corruption and Counter-terrorism Conventions.

The foreign affairs adviser sought special support of the British government to help preserve the traditional British-Bangladeshi catering industry in the UK.

He also sought British assistance for setting up a world class Catering Institute in Bangladesh with a view to developing semiskilled and skilled manpower for the very popular British-Bangladeshi owned South Asian curry industry in the UK.

Recognising the contributions of the British-Bangladeshi community to the economy and multiculturalism of Britain, Stephen Timms reaffirmed his commitment to support the community and towards the setting up of a catering training institute.

Timms lauded the various institutional reforms undertaken by the caretaker government for holding credible elections in Bangladesh and also the government's commitment to creating sustainable democratic institutions.

The foreign affairs adviser termed Timms as 'a long-time friend of Bangladesh' who visited Bangladesh twice last year.

BDR asks govt to reduce duty on staple food to stabilise price

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), now carrying out 'Operation Dal-Bhat-2007', has asked the government to reduce the duty on staple food in order to stabilise the upward trends of the price of essentials.

BDR also recommended that the government transfer the management and monitoring of fertiliser to BDR or joint forces for ensuring proper management of fertiliser.

The border security forces of the country also vowed to take actions against those who are involved in increasing oil prices artificially.

"The price of oil is going out of control," Col Abdul Halim, chief co-ordinator of Trade and Commerce Monitoring Cell (TCMC) said yesterday at a press briefing at the BDR headquarters.

About the present upward trends of rice, oil and pulse price, he said "There is no reason for increase."

About the role of BDR to control the prices of essentials, Col Halim said, "The present caretaker government has given us the duty to control the upward trends of prices of essentials."

"We are acting as catalyst in this regard," he added.

The TCMC in their recommendation also asked the government to form monitoring committee comprising high officials of concerned ministries to look after the price of essentials and to take measures in this regard.

This committee will monitor the supply of foods all over the country.

Maj Taufiq Mahmud of TCMC among others was present in the press briefing.

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Lightning kills two girls in Magura

UNB, Magura

Two young girls died and four others were injured when a lightning struck them at Mirzapur village in Sadar upazila Wednesday afternoon.

Marjina, 13, and Aduri Begum, 11, struck by thunderbolt died soon after taken to Magura Sadar Hospital in the evening.

Family sources said the two girls went out to pick up mangoes during the storm when thunderbolt struck them at about 5:00pm. They were rushed to the hospital.

Four other young girls --- Tahmina, Shefali, Sandha and Shahana --- injured by lightning in the same village were admitted to the hospital.