

'Landslide, waterlogging outcome of unplanned urbanisation'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recent landslide in Chittagong and waterlogging in Dhaka are the direct outcome of unplanned urbanisation and there should be a people's platform to save the city from these disasters, speakers at a press conference said yesterday.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said "There should be a 'People's Commission' comprising the urban specialists and other people that will blend indigenous knowledge with technical solution to ensure environment-friendly urbanisation".

The press conference was held at Bapa office demanding punish-

ment to those involved in waterlogging in the city and landslide in Chittagong.

The interest of the affluent quarter who have built magnificent palaces in the city by indiscriminately cutting hills, filling-up canals and rivers got the highest priority and no attention was given to create an environment-friendly urbanisation, Prof Muzaffer said, adding the bodies concerned should have maximum accountability.

He observed that the land grabbers, insincerity of the urban planners and misrule in the country deprive people of their rights.

Pointing out the loopholes in current laws concerning the issue, he laid emphasis on resolving the crisis through involvement of the

people.

Terming the disaster 'revenge of nature', Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed told the conference that nature is taking revenge for the indiscriminate extortion on her.

Insisting on immediate punishment of the culprits, he observed that the corruption and inefficiency of the concerned bodies are responsible for this devastation.

Bapa General Secretary Mohidul Haque Khan urged general people to launch a mass movement to compel the bodies concerned to implement people's demand.

Kazi Muhammad Sheesh, former chief engineer, also spoke on the occasion.

FAILURE IN SSC EXAM 2 commit suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two girls committed suicide while five others attempted to commit suicide for failing in the SSC examination in the city on Tuesday night.

The dead were identified as Joli Rahman alias Khuku Moni, 17 and Majeda Khatun, 17, while the injured were identified as Nasrin Akhter, 16, Rokeya Akhter, 17, Sayeda Khatun, 16, and Kulsum Akhter, 17 and Mohammad Jhunu, 17.

The injured were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where they underwent treatment.

Sources in the hospital said all the suicide and attempted-suicide incidents took place between 5:00pm and 11:00pm on Tuesday.

Khuku Moni, an examinee from Khaled Haider Memorial High School at West Rampura, committed suicide after hanging herself from the ceiling fan using a scarf.

Badda High School student Majeda Khatun died at around 9:00pm after she hung herself from the ceiling fan using a scarf.

Family members said both Moni and Khatun had failed this year's SSC examination which led them to commit suicide.

Nasrin Akhtar, an examinee from Goran Adarsha High School, tried to commit suicide by taking pesticide sometime in the evening on Tuesday.

Rokeya of Boro Maghbazar area fell sick after taking poison.

Sayedha Khatun, a candidate from East Jurain Adarsho High School, Kulsum Akhtar from Maghbazar Shahnuri High School and Mohammad Jhunu of Badda took sleeping pills to commit suicide but somehow survived.

Two robbers beaten to death in Keraniganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two robbers were killed and one critically injured in a mob beating when locals caught them red-handed while fleeing the spot after committing robbery at Dakkhin Keraniganj in the city early hours of yesterday.

One of the robbers was identified as Jalal, 35 while the other was an unidentified 32-year-old man. The injured was identified as Mozammel. He was taken to the Pongu Hospital.

Locals said a gang of 15/20 masked robbers wearing half pants entered the house of one Kuwait expatriate Akkas Ali after breaking the back door of the house in Paina Nayagan area.

The robbers, who were holding sharp weapons in their hands, tied up Akkas, his wife Atar Banu and his daughter Ritü, 9. They broke the closet and looted valuables worth Tk 3 lakhs that included Tk 25000 in cash, 8 tolas gold, two mobile phones and some other valuable items.

When the robbers were running off with the booties, the family members and the neighbours started to scream, which woke up the villagers who surrounded the robbers.

Three robbers jumped into the pond while the rest managed to escape the scene.

The mob brought the three robbers out of the pond and severely beat them up. The villagers cut off Mozammel's left wrist while the others died on the

spot.

Police was able to rescue Mozammel from the mob who identified Jalal and told police that he lives in Jurain Bazar area.

ACC files case against 2 N'ganj BRTA staffs

A CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against two officials of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) of Narayanganj zone on charges of embezzlement and receiving bribes.

Benazir Ahmed, deputy director of ACC Narayanganj office, filed the case with Fatullah Police Station against Qazi Mahbubur Rahman, former inspector of motor vehicle at BRTA Narayanganj office, and office secretary Gangamoyee Dutta.

Mahbubur Rahman was accused of embezzling Tk 2 crore from registration and driving licence fees while Gangamoyee Dutta was charged with taking a bribe of Tk 3.15 lakh.

Officer in-charge of Fatullah Police Station said they accepted the case and the ACC will investigate it.

APPEAL HEARING ON RANGS BUILDING Judge feels 'embarrassed'

UNB, Dhaka

The appeal hearing on the dispute over demolition of the much-talked-about Rangs multistoried building in the city could not take place yesterday as one of the judges of the Supreme Court bench felt 'embarrassed'.

Amirul Kabir Chowdhury, one of the judges of the apex court, felt embarrassed following an objection raised by the counsel for Rangs Group.

Barrister Rafique-ul Huq, the counsel for the business house, submitted that it is a longstanding convention that "a judge does not sit in a bench after his farewell".

On June 7, the Supreme Court Bar Association arranged a farewell reception for Justice Chowdhury in advance because his retirement takes effect during the court's annual vacation. Justice Chowdhury retires on June 23.

As the hearing stalled, Justice M Fazlul Karim, who heads the five-member bench, sent the matter to the chief justice for order.

Now the chief justice will reconstitute a bench for hearing of the appeal filed by the government, court sources said.

When the court resumed yesterday, Barrister Huq said that the preliminary objections submitted earlier relating to the legal dispute over the appeal hearing during the enforcement of state of emergency has to be disposed of first before the hearing of the government appeal.

"Some fundamental rights have been suspended under the state of emergency. And in the government appeal the enforcement of fundamental rights of the Rangs Group is involved. So, the case cannot be heard when the state of emergency is in force," he contended.

Attorney General Fida K M Kamal stood for the government.

LANDSLIDE VICTIMS CRY FOR HELP



1. Army personnel and fire fighters continue rescue operation at the Lebu Bagan hill in Chittagong for the third consecutive day, 2. A woman mourns the death of her near and dear ones, 3. People take shelter on rooftop of a tinshed house as rain water submerges their houses at Dobarpur, and 4. The victims of landslides take their lunch at a shelter managed by the army personnel.

MATERNITY ALLOWANCES

Ensure regular allocation in budget

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the government to take steps to ensure regular allocation for maternity allowance in the national budget.

"Though maternity allowance is introduced in the budget for 2007-2008 fiscal year as a pilot project, we must work together to get it in the budget as a regular sector. And then it will help save the state of mother and child in the society and contribute alleviating poverty," said Wahida Banu, chairperson of Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum.

"Though large amount of money is being spent under different projects in the name of alleviating poverty, we do not notice actual development practically. The development is only possible through comprehensive efforts," she added.

Journalists Association for Human Rights and Welfare (JAHHR) and Peace and Rights Development of Society (PRDS) jointly organised the discussion titled "Social empowerment and social security: Maternity allowance" at the conference room of Dhaka Reporters

Unity in the city yesterday.

"As population is increasing alarmingly, we could encourage families of taking less child through implementing such type of pilot projects and ensuring regular maternity allowance," M Hafizuddin Khan, former adviser to the caretaker government.

The speakers also hailed the caretaker government for including a pilot project in the "Maternity Allowance for the Poor Lactating Mothers" allocating Tk 17 crore. A total of 45 thousands mothers having two children in 3,000 unions will be provided with Tk 300 under the project.

Secretary General of Development Organisation of the Rural Poor (DORP) AHM Noman, Dr Umme Salma Abdullah and News Editor of the News Today Saiful Alam Ratan attended the function while former additional secretary Abdul Halim presided over the session.

The speakers hoped that the project would reduce maternal and infant mortality rate, ensure safe motherhood and would also resist early marriage.

DORP was the first to have initiated 'maternity allowance' in

2005 as a pilot project for safe motherhood and provided Tk 200 to 40 poor mothers in six divisions of the country.

Chemical supplier shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified criminals shot dead a chemical supplier at Dhanmondi in the city last night.

The victim was identified as Sumon Khandaker, 26, a chemical supplier to tanneries at Hazaribagh and a resident of Sanatgarh at Zigatola.

Witnesses said the assailants sprayed bullets on Sumon on Mitali Road in Zigatola while he was returning home at 9:30pm. He was shot in his head and chest. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

"He might have been killed over business disputes," said Sarwar Khandaker, younger brother of Sumon.

Info centres to be set up at DC offices

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Information centres will be set up at the offices of the deputy commissioners (DCs) in all the districts in phases to help the people seeking various services from the administrative staffs.

The first information centre will be set up in Narayanganj on an experimental basis, speakers at a view exchange meeting at the Narayanganj DC office said yesterday.

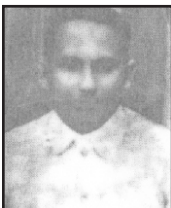
BIAM Director General Dr Md Abdul Hamid, joint secretary (police) at the home ministry Dr Muhammad Sadik and DC of Narayanganj Faizul Kabir spoke at the meeting.

The speakers said a huge number of people with various problems come to the DC office each day but do not know who is the right person to approach. As a result, they fall victim to frauds.

The information centre being set up with the assistance from the British government will provide information to the people visiting the DC office so that they do not face any harassment, they added.

Efficient and enthusiastic persons will be recruited in the information centre to ensure proper services for the people, said Faizul Kabir.

Death anniversary



Today is the 13th death anniversary of Amanat Ali Mallick, former headmaster of Sengram High School at Pangsha upazila in Rajbari and father of former CEC Abu Hena, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and Qurankhwani will be held at his village home at Pangsha in Rajbari district.

Q M Zaman



Today is the eighth death anniversary of film director and cameraman Q M Zaman, says a press release.

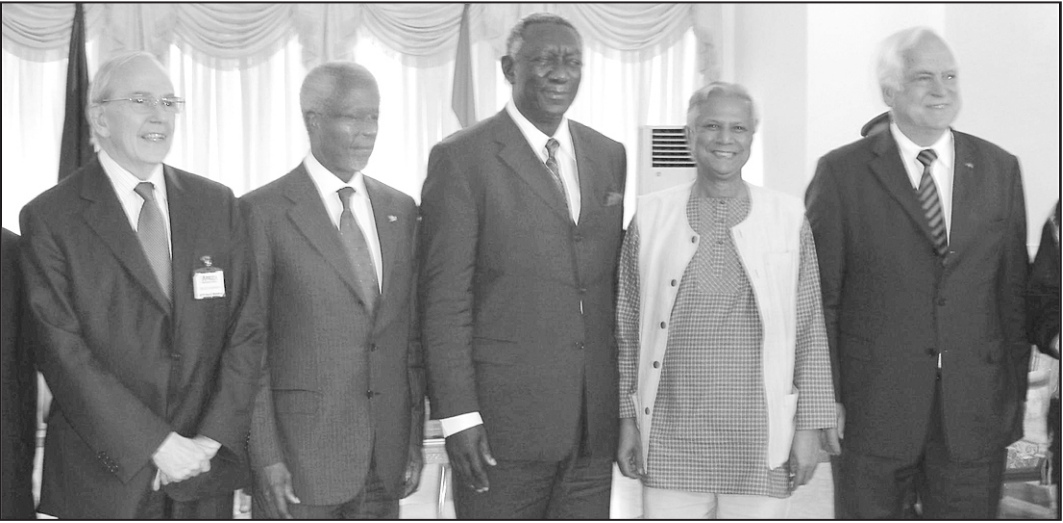
On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his ancestral home at 'Shaheb Bari' in Hajiganj after Asr prayers.

Sultana Begum



Today is the second death anniversary of Sultana Begum, wife of Shaheed Captain (Retd F Light Lieutenant) Sikander Ally.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani, milad and doa mahfils will be held at her Mohammadpur residence in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow.



Members of the Africa Progress Panel pose with Ghana's President John Kufuor at the Presidential Palace in Accra on Monday. From left are former IMF managing director Michel Camdessus, former UN secretary general Kofi Annan, John Kufuor, Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and founder of Transparency International Peter Eigen. Prof Yunus visited Accra to attend the launch of the Africa Progress Panel, an independent body set up to ensure that the G8 powers meet their promises to increase aid to Africa.

Kamol elected Dhaka YMCA president



Kamol Gomes, a lecturer and social activist, has been elected president of Dhaka YMCA for the year 2006-2007, says a press release.

On May 4, Dhaka YMCA had its 40th Annual Business Meeting (ABM) at Botomli Home Girls' High School auditorium in the city with the former president Marcel A Gomes in the chair. In the meeting Daniel Nirmol D' Costa, Denis S Ojha, Anthony Gomes and Joachim Gomes were elected as the Board of Directors of Dhaka YMCA for next three years. The meeting also reviewed the progress of the ongoing academic and humanitarian projects of the association.

Later, in the joint meeting of the Board of Directors held on June 10, Kamol Gomes has been elected as the president, Maria Gomes and Barnabus Binode Biswas as vice president and Denis S Ojha as treasurer unanimously while Tarsiscius Palma continues as the general secretary of the association.

Kamol is working as a lecturer of Notre Dame College.

WEATHER TODAY

Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at most places over Chittagong, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and at many places over Rajshahi division in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy rainfalls are also expected at places over the country during the period, Met office said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Under the influence of active monsoon, heavy to very heavy rainfall is also likely at places over Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 3:00pm today.

Highest temperature 32.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Ishwardi and lowest 23.3 degree Celsius at Khulna.

The sun sets in the capital at 6.47pm today and rises at 5:11am 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	32.0	25.7	92	72
Chittagong	30.4	23.9	76	82
Rajshahi	32.5	25.6	96	83
Khulna	29.0	23.3	98	83
Barisal	31.0	25.0	96	76
Sylhet	27.8	26.1	89	91
Cox's Bazar	32.0	24.6	88	80

Robbers kill security guard in Gazipur

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A gang of criminals killed a security guard of a vocational training centre and looted valuables worth about Tk 3 lakh at Gazipur Sadar on Tuesday night.

Joydevpur police recovered the body of Md Kutub Uddin, 35, from a classroom of Gazipur Technical School and College yesterday. His hands and legs were tied and the injury marks in his neck and head suggest that the attackers hit him with sharp weapons and tried to strangle him, police said.

The attackers also vandalised nine rooms and looted computer, microscope, several equipments and Tk 30,000, said Principal Md Kamruzzaman.

The body was sent to Gazipur Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Kutub Uddin, father of three children, hailed from Dhulauri in Santhia, Pabna.

CTG LANDSLIDE TIB, FNB shocked

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday expressed deep shock at the casualties and damage in the landslide at Chittagong that left at least 106 people dead, says a press release.

They prayed for salvation of the departed souls and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved families. They also prayed for early recovery of the injured.

They called on all the affluent people of the society to come forward to help rehabilitate the victims side by side government efforts.

Meanwhile, Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) also expressed deep shock at the huge loss of lives in a separate statement.

Most of these unfortunate victims and the wounded are very poor who had taken shelter in the temporary huts built by the sides of the hills.

Excessive rain is not the only reason behind such incidents. Indiscriminate hill cutting by a few powerful greedy self-seekers are no less responsible for such tragic incidents and the poor pay with their lives, the release added.

NGO Federation urged the government to take effective measures to stop hill cutting immediately and demanded stern action against persons responsible.

Obituary

Shamsun Nahar Chowdhury, an eminent women activist and a member of Sachetan Nagorik Committee (conscious citizens' committee) of Kurigram, passed away due to cancer at her residence at Kurigram yesterday at the age of 52, says a press release.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) condoled the death of Shamsun Nahar.

Executive director of TIB in a condolence message said TIB has lost an active partner of the anti-corruption movement at her death.

DHAKA TODAY

Conference

The First National Health Rights Conference will begin. Venue: Biam Foundation. Time: 8:30am.

Art exhibition

The National Children's Task Force (NCTF) organises a two-day art exhibition on 'Involvement of children in hazardous political activities' beginning from today. Venue: Shishu Academy. Time: 10:00am to 7:00pm.

Memorial meeting

Dhaka Union of Journalists and Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists will jointly organise a memorial meeting to pay tribute to noted journalist Zahuril Haq. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.

Reception

Rotary Club of Dhaka Fort will accord a reception to the blood donors on the occasion of the World Voluntary Blood Donors Day '07. Venue: Officers' Club, Baily Road. Time: 3:30pm.

Launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of the showroom of World of Titan will be held. Venue: Seminar Hall, Bashundhara City (7th floor). Time: 10:15am.

Blood Donors Day

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will hold a discussion on the occasion of the World Voluntary Blood Donors Day. Venue: Osmani Memorial Hall. Time: 9:00am.

Seminar

Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha (BNPS) organises a seminar titled 'Efficiency in utilising the national budget allocation for women and children affairs ministry'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.

Rajshahi Utsab 2007

Rajshahi Zila Samity, Dhaka organises a three-day Rajshahi Utsab 2007 beginning from today. Venue: Shishu Academy premises. Time: 10:00am.

Workshop

Unnayan Onneshan organises a workshop titled 'Enabling small-scale producers' participation in new and dynamic markets in Bangladesh'. Venue: Brac Centre Inn. Time: 9:30am.

Memorial meeting

Bigganchetona Parishad organises a memorial meeting to pay tribute to its chief patron Safat Ahmed Chowdhury. Venue: Seminar room, Public Library. Time: 4:30pm.

Saptadinga discussion

Saptadinga will hold a discussion on its economic and political empowerment of self-employed women (EPSEW) project. Venue: Agriculture Extension Directorate. Time: 10:00am.

Seminar on