

Chevron supports schools to improve quality of edn

Three schools near Bibiyana gas field area in Nabiganj, Sylhet, are now set to recruit three additional teachers each to improve the standard of education after receiving a donation from Chevron Bangladesh, says a press release.

Chevron Bangladesh President Steve Wilson handed over three cheques each amounting to Tk 1,80,000 to the headmasters -- Pradip Ranjan Das of Nadampur High School, Shaesta Mian Jaigirdar of Dhigalbak High School and Billal Hossain Chowdhury of Gholduba MC High School -- on July 2.

The funds will go towards payment of one year's retainer for the teachers recruited to improve the standard of math and English teaching. In addition to this, the schools will also receive Tk 20,000 each for educational materials in the current year.

During the cheque handover ceremony, the headmasters and chairmen of the managing committees were present along with other social leaders. Chevron Bangladesh's Director of External Affairs Naser Ahmed and acting chairman of Inatganj union of Habiganj district Aftab Ali were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, Steve Wilson said the company's future social development efforts will prioritise education. "Education is the area I am most interested in, as it ensures sustainable development."

Earlier, Chevron Bangladesh had also sponsored the construction of a school building and provided school furniture to a school next to the Bibiyana project.

Hasib made envoy to Uzbekistan

UNB, Dhaka

Mohammed Hasib Aziz, currently serving as director general in the foreign ministry, has been appointed Bangladesh ambassador to Uzbekistan, said an official announcement yesterday.



Headmasters of three schools in Sylhet who received cheques for improving the quality of education pose with Chevron Bangladesh President Steve Wilson and other officials at the cheque handover ceremony recently.

Live Earth gigs send eco-warning

BBC, Online

The Live Earth concerts have drawn to a close, with the curtain going down in New Jersey in the US, after a finale performance from The Police.

Rock stars around the world performed to hundreds of thousands of music fans to highlight climate change.

Concerts were also held in Washington, Rio de Janeiro, Johannesburg, London, Hamburg, Tokyo, Shanghai and Sydney.

The event was organised by former US Vice-President Al Gore, as part of his campaign to try to "heal the planet".

Mr Gore addressed the crowd at the end of the New Jersey event, urging the audience to act to save the planet: "Thank you for coming to Live Earth. Put all this energy in your heart and help us solve the climate crisis."

He also appeared at a smaller event at the National Museum of the

American Indian in Washington, giving a speech which was relayed to the concerts around the world, calling on the developed world to reduce carbon emissions by 90%.

But critics have said it was hypocritical for performers who fly around the world on tours to push the message of cutting down on carbon emissions.

George Marshall of the Climate Outreach Information Network told the BBC: "Having the richest people in the world saying, 'Hey! We all need to cut back a bit!' is, let's face it, absurd."

Madonna brought London's Live Earth concert to a close, playing a song she had written for the event.

After performing Hey You accompanied by children in school uniform, the singer swore at the audience and told them: "If you want to save the planet let me see you jump."

Speaking from Wembley, Snow Patrol lead singer Gary Lightbody told BBC Radio 1: "We're here to learn how to make our tours cleaner. We already offset our travel on our touring, but our shows themselves are quite far behind."

"We're not the Red Hot Chili Peppers, who've been offsetting for years - and more power to them."

Reformed group Genesis, featuring Phil Collins, were among the first acts to perform at London's Wembley Stadium.

The Beastie Boys, James Blunt, The Foo Fighters and Spinal Tap also played.

Duran Duran opened their set with the perfect song for the occasion, Planet Earth.

"Everyone who did not arrive on a private jet put your hands in the air," said lead singer Simon Le Bon, who also raised his hand.

German concert-goers were treated to performances by Snoop Dogg, Enrique Iglesias and Yusuf Islam, while UB40 and Joss Stone were performing in Johannesburg.

The Sydney event began with a

traditional aboriginal welcome before Australian politician and former Midnight Oil frontman Peter Garrett made an appearance, saying it was up to citizens of developed nations to push for action to reduce pollution.

"Your voice matters, make it heard," he said.

Reformed New Zealand group Crowded House were joined by many of the other Sydney performers at the end of their set, for a rendition of the 1991 hit Weather with You.

The Tokyo event was opened by the band Genki Rockets at the Makuhari Messe hall, east of the Japanese capital.

Japanese singer Ayaka urged people to do what they could. "We can start helping by doing something small," she said.

"I started to carry my own ecobag so I don't have to use plastic grocery bags, and use my own chopsticks instead of disposable ones."

In New Jersey, actor Leonardo DiCaprio was among the celebrities introducing the acts.

"Our actions from this day forward will help determine just what sort of future we pass on to our children and to their children," he told the crowd at the Giants Stadium.

Hilsa export

FROM PAGE 16 and fisheries ministries are reviewing the government ban on hilsa export to India.

Indian media reports during the past two days have said India may suspend exporting rice following Bangladesh's decision to ban hilsa export.

Meanwhile, Foreign Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury said Bangladesh could reduce its dependency on foreign aid, achieve double-digit economic growth and cut poverty by half earlier than 2015, if global markets were opened up for Bangladeshi exports, especially readymade garments.

"If we could maintain the current pace of development, political stability and international assistance, then our dependence on foreign aid will also come down," he added.

At a foreign ministry press briefing upon his return from the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) foreign ministers' meeting in Geneva, Iftekhar said Bangladesh has a comparative advantage in producing readymade garments and the more affluent countries should encourage it.

He stressed the need for the World Trade Organisation and similar groups to push for comparative advantage of developing countries to turn into a competitive advantage in the global market.

"We made it clear that if Bangladesh is not given preferential market access, many of our garment workers, mostly women, will lose their jobs," he said, adding, "I also stressed the need for reducing exploitation by middlemen and ensuring fair price for our farmers. This is critically important if we are to reduce poverty in the rural economy."

Iftekhar said he asked WTO Director General Pascal Lamy to support the provision of free-market access for Bangladeshi RMG to big markets like Europe and North America and Lamy assured Bangladesh of his support.

Dhaka asks the international community to take a tougher stance on global warming as it is expected to disproportionately harm Bangladesh, Iftekhar said.

"I raised the concerns for climate change and how it can potentially derail our poverty-reduction efforts. I urged the international community to take our concerns seriously and mobilise resources to reduce the impact of global warming."

The foreign adviser led the Bangladesh delegation at the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review in Geneva, where he presented a 110-page report showcasing Bangladesh's achievements in development efforts.

Red Mosque

FROM PAGE 16 became aware of the militants' presence after a man killed on the first day of the siege was identified as Maqsood Ahmed, a member of Jaish-e-Mohammad, an outlawed radical Muslim organisation which has been linked to al-Qaeda.

Ahmed was wanted in connection with an assassination attempt against Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in the northern Pakistani town of Attock in 2004.

Abdul Rashid Ghazi has denied the presence of any banned extremist groups. He says those inside are students of his religious school and he is in charge.

Earlier, Mr ul-Haq said up to 250 militants - including foreign radicals - were leading the fighting. 'SURRENDER OR DIE'

Lt Col Haroon Islam, who died on Sunday, was in charge of an operation to blow holes in the mosque compound walls to enable civilians to escape.

Water and power to the mosque have been cut off and food is said to be getting scarce.

Our correspondent says he has heard intermittent gunfire in the area and the boom of heavy weapons.

An increased military presence on the streets, combined with the refusal to let a delegation of Islamic figures through to the mosque, suggests that the government is now closing the door to negotiation, our correspondent adds.

Nepal king

FROM PAGE 16 ceremonies marking the occasion.

King Gyanendra took the throne in 2001 after a palace massacre, when the then crown prince is reported to have killed his parents, most members of the royal family and himself.

In 2005 he sacked the government and took absolute power, but last year was forced to hand power back to political parties after a wave of pro-democracy street protests.

The republican Youth Communist League has accused the king and his supporters of exploiting the celebrations to try to become politically active again.

Many foreign dignitaries, including those from India, the US and the EU, will not attend the birthday receptions.

UNPOPULAR

The king's birthday marks a personal milestone for Nepal's ruling Shah dynasty - never before in the 240-year history of the royal family has a reigning monarch lived to the age of 60.

But many of Nepal's new political leaders, including the former Maoist rebels, now want the monarchy abolished.



PHOTO: STAR

National Press Club organises a fruit festival for its members and their families on the club premises in the city yesterday.

