

US, poor nations won't pledge binding cuts in Bali: UN

AFP, Nusa Dua

A UN conference trying to lay the groundwork for a new climate change pact is unlikely to win any binding pledge by the United States to cut greenhouse gas emissions, its head said yesterday.

Developing nations are also likely to refuse to commit to mandatory targets on cutting emissions blamed for global warming, said Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the UN Convention on Climate Change.

He insisted talks had started "very enthusiastically" on Indonesia's resort island of Bali. At the same time, speaking to AFP, he acknowledged the deep divides within the international community on how to tackle the problem of the world heating up, notably on whether countries should set binding targets.

"I think all the delegations have understood the urgency, but I also think that none of the delegations have forgotten their national interest," he said on the sidelines of the meeting.

Delegates from nearly 190 nations are gathered for the December 3-14 summit, which is tasked with laying the groundwork for a new treaty to tackle global warming beyond 2012, when the Kyoto Protocol's first phase expires.

Much attention has been focused on the extent of the reductions rich and developing countries need to make in greenhouse gases -- which trap heat and cause climate change -- to prevent a climate catastrophe.

A meeting of Kyoto parties in Austria in August recommended emissions cuts for rich nations of 25 to 40 percent by 2020, and green groups are keen for a similar figure to be mentioned in the final text of this UNFCCC conference.

But the United States, the only rich nation not party to Kyoto, has made it clear it will not commit to any such figures during this meeting, while Canada has said targets should include growing economies like India and China.

De Boer said he thought the administration of US President George Bush may be willing to pledge to reduce emissions at home, but not on the world stage.

"So the US is in favour of nationally binding targets, but not internationally binding targets," he said.

Likewise, he said developing countries would also be unwilling to make any such pledges.

"I think that there is no developing country that is willing to sign up to binding targets," he added. "I think they are all willing to limit the growth of their emissions to the extent economically possible."

Despite differences of opinion on the key issue of cuts, de Boer said he believed "most countries do want to walk away from Bali with an agreement that negotiations should be launched."

China meanwhile won plaudits

Library

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cyclonic storm that lashed the upazila on the night of November 15.

The army will open another library next week at the same village.

Commander of the local army camp Lt Col Sayeed Siddiqui told the news agency that the students are being provided with all kinds of study materials so that they could properly prepare themselves for the examination.

Twin bombings

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The US military in return for confronting al-Qaeda militants who attack civilians.

On Tuesday, the leader of an al-Qaeda-linked group warned in an Internet audio message of renewed attacks in Iraq and announced the formation of a new brigade.

Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, leader of the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq, said a new brigade called Al-Siddiq Brigades had been formed to fight every "apostate and traitor," the SITE said.

Baghdadi warned of a bombing campaign that will continue until January 29, 2008.

"This attack involves bombings aimed at the 'apostates' and members of the Awakening Councils," it added. The term apostates is usually used to refer to Iraqi security forces.

The US military dismisses Baghdad as a "fictional character". The whole notion behind this character is to try to put an Iraq face to an al-Qaeda organisation. It is essentially a virtual organisation," Major General Kevin Bergner claimed at a news conference this week.

US military officials claim that al-Qaeda fighters have been migrating to northern areas of Iraq after being chased out of safe havens in Baghdad and other volatile regions.

Tidal surge

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sank deep in the bay, the two of us had promised to each other that we would be together no matter what," Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star at Maron Char next to the Sundarbans. "But as my younger brother was not physically as strong as I, the waves washed him away. I tried to catch him but failed. Including me there were 26 fishermen on the boat, but I don't know what happened to them," he headed.

Nazrul had floated in the bay for three days before a fishing boat rescued him and dropped him at Maron Char a week ago, where he told the harrowing story to The Daily Star.

"In that dreadful night I saw enormous waves and a heavy storm in the bay that I had never seen before in my 12-year fishing career. When my brother got washed away I tried my best to maintain my grip on a 20 feet bamboo pole to stay alive. I can't remember anything else... When I woke up I saw the morning light appearing on the horizon and the bay was calm."

"After floating for three days I lost almost all my strength as there was nothing to eat or drink except sea water. I was thinking I might also die like my brother. I was waiting for death to come. That's all in the bay before I was picked up by a fishing boat. The fishermen on the boat loosened my grip on the bamboo pole, brought me back to mysenses, and gave me food."

"When I was dropped at the char, I saw there was nothing left except only two or three fishermen. There was no food there. I used to sleep inside a damaged boat. One day a helicopter dropped some relief materials that saved my life. I could have died from hunger if I would not get the food relief. Later an old man gave me 50 taka, some clothes and food," said Nazrul.

This correspondent took the young man to Mongla where Upazila Nirbahi Officer Syed Mehedy Hasan gave Nazrul Tk 700 to return home. Last night grief stricken Nazrul started his journey towards his village from Dhaka wondering what he will tell his aging mother and his sister.

All 10 extremists

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investigation into the case. Accordingly, case docket of the murder was sent back to Khulna Sadar Police Station on April 19 the same year. Later, the case was transferred to DB for further investigation.

The accused in the supplementary charge sheet are Sumon, Bulbul, Akram, Ali Akbar, Sattar, Babul, Omar Faruque, Mithul, Shawkat Hossain, BDR Altaf, Mahfuz, Sarwar and Hye Islam.

Of them, three were killed in the incidents of "crossfire", three are still at large and the rest are in jail.

Greek cops

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The kidnappers took him to Athens and threatened to kill him unless he paid a 200,000, a sum he had apparently taken from some of their relatives to bring them to Greece.

Police caught up with them on Tuesday at the Bangladesh consulate in the port of Piraeus, where they had taken the businessman to finalise the sale of his property in Bangladesh for getting the ransom.

Dhaka offers

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"regional cooperation should be intensified to meet the aspirations of our peoples."

The adviser supported the nomination of a Saarc village in each member state where the "best practices" of the forum would be implemented.

He also proposed that each year one day be designated as "Saarc Day of Good Governance."

The foreign adviser thanked the Saarc members who expressed solidarity with the government and people of Bangladesh in the wake of the disastrous cyclone Sidr.

He said, "Bangladesh will recover and the tragedy will be behind us. But as we move along the path of development, we will always warmly recall the support you all gave us at the time of our need."

Before the commencement of the meeting, a two-minute silence was observed in memory of those who lost their lives in cyclone Sidr.

It was decided in an earlier informal meeting that Sri Lanka would host the Saarc summit in 2008 to be followed by the Maldives in 2009.

The Saarc ministers are due to call on Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, also the current chairman of Saarc, today (Saturday).

18 ancient

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could not yet determine the age of the two brick structures but one of them is "very old".

The width of the brick built walls is similar to that of the main structures of the monastic cells and temple at Bhasu Bihar, she added.

Bhasu Bihar is an important archaeological site in South Asia. According to documents, Chinese pilgrim Huiel T-sang saw more than 700 monks at the Bihar when he visited the place during 639-645AD.



Indigenous women perform at the harvest festival, Dhaka Wangala, held at Batamali Homes Girls' High School in Tejaon in the capital yesterday

WTO should focus

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WTO Law" written by Dr Sharif Bhuiyan, an advocate of the Bangladesh Supreme Court, was published by Cambridge University Press, while the ceremony was organised by the South Asian Institute of Advanced Legal and Human Rights Studies, and the Institute of Governance Studies of Brac University.

Quoting from the book the chief justice said the judicial organs of WTO have done a commendable job by declaring many protectionist measures illegal in response to cases filed by the developing countries against the developed countries.

"Unless the imbalances in the substantive rules that exist are adjusted, developing countries cannot be fully integrated into the multilateral trading system," Ruhul Amin said quoting from the book again.

Current rules and processes of globalisation has negative impacts on poor countries and on the people of those countries, Ruhul Amin said reading from the

book adding, "While the markets have impacts on poor countries and on their people, the markets also have been working to generate phenomenal increases in global wealth and international trade, while global disparity and disparity within countries have also been increasing phenomenally."

Eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain chaired the publication ceremony where former adviser to a caretaker government Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, and Centre for Policy Dialogue Executive Director Prof Mostafizur Rahman spoke as special guests.

Prof Wahiduddin emphasised on formation of a high-powered and permanent negotiation team for gaining maximum trade benefits for Bangladesh from WTO member countries.

Prof Mostafizur Rahman said the book will contribute significantly to the efforts of improving negotiation skills and for understanding the legal terms of negotiations.

No move yet to set

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Later, the government decided to form SMP on October 9 in 2006. Following the decision, SMP was launched formally on 26 October the same year with Kotwali and Dakshin Surma Police Stations.

Although four other police stations were supposed to be established in Jalalabad, Shahporan, Moglabazar and airport areas at the earliest possible time, necessary work for setting up those is yet to begin.

Kotwali Police are struggling in maintaining law and order as they have to cover a huge area. Besides, the SMP faces an acute manpower shortage as one third of the posts remain vacant since its inception.

At the beginning, the then small rest house in the city's Naiorpur area was made the temporary office of the SMP Commissioner. Two deputy commissioners work at separate rented houses in the city.

The policemen have been accommodated at the Range Reserve Force (RRF) police line while the officials are yet to get proper housing facility.

Steps have not been taken to construct buildings for SMP. But the reason behind the delay still remains unclear, a police official told The Daily Star.

Sources said although four deputy police commissioners were supposed to be working for SMP, two had been posted. One of them went abroad to serve in a UN mission.

30,000 fishermen

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places 10 to 22km away by boat. Carrying different kinds of water containers, they were standing in long queues.

Dublar Char fishermen led by Major (ret'd) Ziauddin Ahmed and his brother Kamaluddin Ahmed looks after the pond. They had taken steps to clean the pond and make its water drinkable.

A number of fishermen from Sholar Char came to take water from this pond for around 5,000 fishermen at the char, about 30km away. It takes around two hours to come to Meher Alir Char and another two hours to go back.

Maron Char with about 5,000 fishermen living there is about 10km from Meher Alir Char, Majher Kellar Char with about 4,000 fishermen is 4km away while Manik Khalir Char where around 1,000 fishermen now live is 12km away. There are about 4,000 fishermen at Narikelbari Char which is 22km away, and around 2,000 at Office Kellar Char, 8km away from Meher Alir Char.

And they have to depend on water from this pond.

A number of fishermen said they have got relief materials but they are not getting drinking water. Ziauddin said, "There is hardly any food crisis at these islands but crisis of drinking water has turned

Although two posts of additional deputy police commissioner had been sanctioned, only one has been working on deputation at the police headquarters for three weeks.

Eight assistant police commissioners are working here against 27 sanctioned posts. One of them left the country to serve in a UN mission while four others are receiving training.

Haji flights

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Civil Aviation Authority of Saudi Arabia," said a Biman official.

Biman so far carried 29,065 non-ballottee pilgrims out of a total of 46,160 Bangladeshi pilgrims this year.

Biman, earlier received 85 slots from the Saudi Civil Aviation Authority to carry hajj pilgrims but it had to cancel 13 hajj flights as the pilgrims failed to turn in timely.

Biman Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) MA Momen earlier told The Daily Star that the cancelled flights could have taken a total of 5,000 pilgrims to Jeddah.

Earlier, around 2,000 non-ballottee hajj pilgrims were feared to be missing this year's pilgrimage due to insufficient number of slots for Biman in Jeddah.

The last hajj flight will leave for Jeddah on December 14 while Hajj is expected to be on December 19.

JMB bomber

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mother-in-law also lives with them. "We have become helpless after Haider's death as he was the only earning member of the family," she said.

Replying to a question she said, "I do not want any help from the government as it failed to punish the perpetrators. It is really painful to say that the then state minister for home did not even visit my house after the tragedy," Shahanaaz said.

Udichi activist Sudipta Pal was also the lone earning member of her family. After her death her parents Sushil Pal, 65, and Aruna Pal, 55, along with their sick brother have become helpless. They have to make do in a rented house without any help from the government. Aruna is suffering from a serious disease but she cannot afford to buy medicines.

The Daily Star visited the homes of Rani Begum, Joinal, Raisuddin, Yadav Das and Jahanara, who were killed in the attack, and talked to their family members. All of them told similar tales.

After the blast, police filed two cases with Netrakona Police Station accusing Siddiqui Islam Bangla Bhai, his wife Fahima Khatun, Ataur Rahman Sunny, Asaduzzaman Ponir, Kausar Ahmed and Sanullah. Police sources said the two cases are now under trial in Special Tribunal Court in Dhaka.

Absconding JMB

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Khanpur village when Nazrul was visiting his parents.

Dinajpur administration officials announced Tk 25,000 reward for the informant.

They sent Nazrul to Dinajpur jail in the afternoon. He is likely to be produced before a court Sunday, according to sources.

Dinajpur police submitted the charge sheet of the August 17, 2005 serial blast case on September 18, 2005 accusing eight members of JMB. Six of the accused were arrested earlier and are in Dinajpur jail now. They are Abu Raihan alias Raihan, Md Abdul Moteen, Abdur Rashid Bin Mukur, Md Aminul Islam, Tazammel Haque and Raju Ahmed.

Another suspect Afzal Hossain, 30, went into hiding after the countrywide bombings.

A noble move

FROM PAGE 1
time of hardship, he said, citing the example of 12-year-old Tahmina whose parents were preparing for her marriage.

"I thought this was a golden opportunity to gather the children and do something that will have a long-lasting effect on their lives besides helping them recover from the trauma," he said. "My idea was to keep these children involved in education."

He contacted a few friends and shared his idea with them, seeking their help. In a short time, Shibli got some funds to start the programme.

He employed some workers of Working for Better Life as instructors and used the infrastructure of the NGO for accommodating the children.

And indeed, "Mamar Bari" has brought relief to many families.

"We are now busy in rebuilding our houses. And it is very relieving for me to have my son's food secured for a day," said Shahinor Begum, mother of 12-year-old Ibrahim who attends the programme.

However, as essentials are hardly available in the local markets, Shibli finds it hard to procure food for the programme.

"We have to go to far away places to buy eggs, vegetables and fish. We need the supply to continue for at least three more months for the programme," he said.

The good news is that Shibli is going to extend the programme ahead of Eid-ul-Azha. "We are going for three meals a day and also extending the education programme," he said, adding that ActionAid has agreed to assist the programme.

The number of students is also increasing from today as around 150 more children are going to attend the programme, Shibli said.

Balu to be widened

FROM PAGE 1
On the other hand, the environmentalists reason that dredging for only 120 feet would not help much in effective and sufficient drainage of floodwaters.

"If the government can acquire land for roads and highways then why can't it do the same in this case?" questioned Abu Naser Khan, executive director of Paribesh Bachao Andolon. "They must follow strictly the taskforce's recommendations," he headed.

Water and urban experts said Balu plays a crucial role in the city's drainage system since it is the lone channel to carry liquid waste out of Bangla Motors, Farmgate, Mohakhali, Gulshan, Tejaon, Baridhara, Rampura, Malibagh, and Basabo areas through Begunbari, Beraid and Manda canals.

Besides, a significant portion of floodwaters from adjoining Gazipur, Tangail and Mymensingh districts drains through Balu to Shitalakha, they added.

Professor Muzaffer Ahmad, chairman of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon and one of the members of the taskforce, said, "The spirit of our recommendations was to return the river's land to the river. The CS record is the original document of the river," he said.

"Once the river is dredged it would not be possible to reclaim the land grabbed. So the government should take necessary steps now," he observed.

"Rivers of Bangladesh", a checklist of rivers of the country published in 2005 by the Water Development Board, says the Balu river starts from Pubal Gazipur and joins the Shitalakha river at Demra. Here too, the original width is mentioned as 100 metres.

Over the years, the river has become narrow and shallow warranting an immediate dredging between Tongi and Demra to maintain its navigability and drainage functions.

Sources said the BIWTA has floated a tender for the dredging work but it has yet to get any response. So the schedule for submitting tenders, which was December 1 initially, has been extended.

The dredging has been planned to be completed within 2010 in second phase of the circular waterway, added the sources.

"We hope the work will begin within the current fiscal year. The authorities have plans to engage Water Development Board in this project," said the BIWTA secretary.

The then government formed the taskforce in 2002. Shipping minister was the head while members included land minister, housing and public works minister, mayor of the Dhaka city corporation, Professor Muzaffer Ahmad, Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed, Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury, founder editor of New Age late Enayeturrahman Khan, water expert Professor Ainun Nishat, The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam, and former secretary Engineer Qamrul Islam Siddiqui.

Termining Mahbubur Rahman's allegations "false and baseless", party's acting Office Secretary Rizvi Ahmed, who is close to Delwar Hossain, told The Daily Star, "this is not a matter of ego but of ideology and ethics."

"Why they [pro-Saifur faction] are now feeling the need for unity after forming an illegal committee just a month ago," he questioned adding that Khaleda Zia is the symbol of party unity and people still support her.

Meanwhile, party leaders claimed that detained party chairperson Khaleda Zia received a proposal from the Saifur-led faction to bring changes in leadership but she rejected it saying if necessary, she would take decision after getting released.

They said Delwar-led leaders would not sit for dialogue with their rivals in the party without Khaleda's consent although Delwar is under pressure to accept the unity proposal. The leaders said they would accept any decision of the chairperson.

Pro-Khaleda leaders yesterday held an informal meeting and discussed the latest political situation.

BNP Joint Secretary General Goyeswar Chandra Ray, former lawmaker Mohammad Shahjahan and Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rumi, among others, were present.

Rizvi Ahmed said they only discussed the relief distribution operation in the cyclone-battered area at the meeting.

Saifur Rahman gave Delwar a proposal for unity under the leadership of detained BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia on December 1.

In response to the proposal, Delwar asked Saifur to accept the orders for expulsion of Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Ashraf Hossain and cancel the decisions of the meeting "called in the name of the party standing committee" on October 29.

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US starts planning

FROM PAGE 1
time when every minute counts and lives are at stake. As Commander of US Pacific Command Admiral Keating said when he visited several days ago, the US military came to get the job done.

The 'angels' from the sea returned to Bangladesh and worked side by side with their uniformed and civilians counterparts to deliver vitally needed food, water, and medical assistance.

Pasi said: "When I stood on the deck of the USS Kearsarge a few days ago, I was so proud to see troops of both countries board our helicopters and fly off together to distribute those life-sustaining supplies to remote villages. What we have achieved over the past two weeks working together has been remarkable."

She said that since Cyclone Sidr devastated the southern part of Bangladesh, over US\$ 19.5 million dollars of emergency assistance has been provided by USAID.

Speaking at the farewell reception, Brig Gen Bailey said the traumatic experience caused by the cyclone has bound the US and the Bangladesh army into a long-term friendship and partnership.

He said the US Navy ship "Tarawa" will remain on the coast until December 9-10 before sailing for its headquarters in Japan.

Principal Staff Officer at the AFD Lt Gen Masud Uddin Chowdhury thanked the US marines for helping the emergency relief operation, saying that the US navy would come into help if specially needed.

The US, he said, has assured long-term cooperation in rebuilding the life in the cyclone-hit areas. Later, Gen Masud presented crests of the Armed Forces to US marine officers.

Meanwhile, a US embassy release said Brig Gen Ronald Bailey and the soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines involved in 'Opera-

tain its navigability and drainage functions.

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Saifur's unity

FROM PAGE 1
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