



Outgoing British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury calls on Awami League acting President Zillur Rahman, left, and Adviser to BNP chairperson Brig Gen (Retd) Hannan Shah, right, at their respective offices in the city yesterday.

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Lawachhara From
PHOTO: STAR

DU students stage a demonstration in front of the Aparajeyo Bangla yesterday protesting Chevron's seismic survey at Lawachhara Reserve Forest.

DU students protest seismic survey

DU CORRESPONDENT

A group of students at Dhaka University (DU) yesterday staged demonstration on the campus demanding halt to the ongoing 3D seismic survey by US oil company Chevron Bangladesh at Lawachhara Reserve Forest in Moulvibazar.

With black flags in hands, students of DU unit of 'Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Chhatra Sangram Parishad' formed a human chain at the foot of Aparajeyo Bangla at 11:30am and held a rally to press their demand.

Student leaders at the rally said biodiversity of the rare forest is being destroyed gradually and wildlife is in danger following frequent explosion due to the 3D seismic survey by Chevron.

Local people are passing days in panic as the explosions jolted the area violently that damaged many structures including their living homes, they added.

They apprehended that wildlife will decline drastically within a short period if the explosions continue in the forest.

They said they would go for tough programme if the government does not take effective steps to halt the survey immediately.

Founding president of the organisation Advocate Abed Reza and DU unit President Ansul Haque Jasim spoke at the rally.

Pak NDU team in city

A 16-member delegation of National Defence University (NDU) of Pakistan arrived in Dhaka yesterday in a five-day goodwill visit, says an ISPR press release.

During the visit they will call on president, chief of naval staff, chief of air staff, principal staff officer of Armed Forces Division, defence secretary and chief of general staff of Bangladesh Army.

They will also visit National Defence College and Defence Services Command and Staff College as well as different bases of Bangladesh Air Force.

SEISMIC SURVEY AT LAWACHHARA RESERVE FOREST

No significant negative impact on biodiversity

Claims Chevron chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chevron Bangladesh yesterday claimed that its three-dimensional seismic survey has no significant negative impact on the rich biodiversity of Lawachhara reserve forest and rejected its involvement in the recent bush fire.

The claim was made by Steve Wilson, president of Chevron Bangladesh, at a press conference organised by Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) in the capital.

He hoped that the preliminary survey will be completed by the end of this month without causing any significant negative impact on

the forest.

"We are conducting the survey in 15 square kilometer area and only 14-16 percent of the total forest is being surveyed for gas exploration," Wilson said, adding, "We will continue the survey in the forest area."

Chevron has conducted such high-tech 3D seismic survey in different parts of the world rich in biodiversity," he said while giving a power point presentation on the survey.

He promised that if gas is found in the forest area, Chevron will not dig any well there, and extract the gas applying other method.

Wilson said due to special

nature of the forest, Chevron was very cautious about the surveying of the area and conducted a two-day training programme for its workers so that they could work very cautiously in the forest.

He also said for getting a clear picture of gas reserve in the area, it is not possible to exclude the forest from the survey.

A total of 1200 small holes have been drilled so far and another 9000 holes will be made in the forest area for the survey, he added.

About the fire on April 26, Wilson said the workers were not allowed to bring any food or firebox with them in the forest, so the cause of fire is not still clear.

The spokesman meanwhile confirmed that the outflow of workers is continuing unabated.

During the first four months of the current year, nearly 300,000 persons have been cleared for foreign employment, he said. "This is another record."

The tourists and other local individuals also visit the area frequently and we think that the fire could originate from a cigarette butt thrown by any individuals while visiting the forest," he added.

Abut the fire Petrobangla Chairman Jamal Ahmed, who was also present at the press conference, said small fire in the forest at the end of the summer is a common phenomenon due to dry and crispy leaves in the forest.

There was also a similar fire in the forest on the following day, he added.

"It was reported in the media that few houses cracked due to explosion, but there is no relation between explosion and the cracks. It is very normal for mud-made wall to develop crack in dry season," said the Petrobangla chief.



PHOTO: STAR

Petrobangla Chairman Jalal Ahmed speaks at a press conference on 'Chevron's 3D seismic survey' at his office in the city yesterday. On his left is Chevron Bangladesh President Steve Wilson.

Political stability a must for socio-economic development

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said the country needs political stability and exercise of healthy democracy for its socio-economic development.

They also said reforms are needed not only in politics or political parties, but also in the government administration.

The discussion titled "Bangladesh Towards Realistic Change: Challenges and Hopes" was organised by Advanced Bangladesh Centre for Development (ABCD) at the National Press Club.

Speaking as chief guest, former adviser and Editor of the Independent Mahabubul Alam said: "Political stability is needed for the country, otherwise there will be no development."

He said, "Reforms are needed in the administration as well as in the education system of the country. It should not be limited to politics only. We need positive change towards development."

The former adviser urged the government to strengthen its local governments for achieving sustainable development.

Former vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Dr

Jashimuddin Ahmed said: "Long-term plans are needed for the country's change towards development. Short-term plans would be viable for the country which I have seen in the last 37 years."

Associate professor of Comilla University Mohammad Shahidul Islam presented a keynote paper in the meeting.

Chairman of Buddhist Department at Dhaka University Prof Shukomol Barua and Editor of the New Nation Mostafa Kamal Mazumder also spoke at the programme with former professor of Chittagong University Ahmed Parvez in the chair.

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