WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY Healthy environment is a fundamental right

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AST 5th June was the World. Environment Day. Every nation observes it because the future of whole human kind is in danger because of environmental degradation.

In 2006, former Vice President Albert Gore in his book "An Inconvenient Truth" does a great job presenting the various forms of overwhelming evidence for global warming and mankind's link to it, but he doesn't do it in a political or spiteful way.

He shows global temperature world's species. and atmospheric carbon patterns, highest emission of carbon dioxide over the previous 600,000 years. The story of the book has been made a film that dispels doubt about global warming.

Even more importantly, it goes to show why we should care that global warming is occurring. He argues if global warming continues at its current rate, the earth's coastlines will be flooded displacing tens of millions of people, it will increase the strength and frequency of hurricanes and tornadoes and it will irrevocably kill off many of our animals and plants. Therefore these natural flora and fauna are to be protected for sustainability for future generations.

Causes of environmental degradation

The causes of environmental degradation are largely attributed

- · Growth of Population
- Overuse of natural resources Use of fuel-based energy
- · Poverty · Affluent style of life and consum-

ensm Human beings are responsible for the degradation of environment. Human activities after the Industrial Revolution (1750 onwards) have concentrated to rapid industrialization ignoring the protection of natural environment. Economic growth was the

prime drive of industrialization. There is a direct nexus between industrialization and toxic emissions (greenhouse gases). In essence what is good for industrialization is generally bad for environment unless precautions are taken to remove the environmental hazards or degradations.

Sustainable development means that natural resources may be used in such a way as to "meet today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs." What we need is to

blend economic growth with environmental sustainability.

It has been reported that 20 trees offset some of the pollution of a car driven for an hour. Modern life style for wealthy people is to have cars and modern gadgets that emit greenhouse gases.

A report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a U.N. network of more than 2,000 scientists said an increase in temperature of 3.6 degrees Celsius could subject up to 2 billion people to water shortages by 2050, and threaten extinction for 20 percent to 30 percent of the

The threat to global environand that our last 20 years saw the ment was first highlighted in the 1972 Stockholm Conference on Human Environment where right to healthy environment was recognised as one of the fundamental rights to a person.

The theme of environment was considered in the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil and after ten years, in 2002 at the Johannesburg Earth Summit II. Non-binding actions were adopted by the conferences. The US and oil rich-countries opposed binding obligations on the states at the conferences.

The most important treaty on environment was the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. It came into effect in February 2005 and ends on 2012. Under the Protocol there are binding caps on emission of greenhouse gases. Under the Protocol, European nations would reduce greenhouse gases by 8% per cent and Japan by 6% per cent below 1990 levels.

Australia's new government under Prime Minister Kevin Rudd ratified the Kyoto Protocol at the beginning of this year. However, the US, the biggest polluter on earth, is not a party to Protocol and that is why the effect of the Protocol has been negligible.

The Europeans take seriously environmental degradation and Germany has proposed to reduce 50% of the greenhouse gases by 2050. Italy, France, Britain and Japan support Germany's pro-

The Bush administration has realized that it could no longer ignore environmental degradation. President Bush reportedly stated to the media that the US and would set a long-term global goal for reducing greenhouse gases in consultation with major greenhouse gas-producing nations.

The President's proposal reflects the difficulties his administration is facing in grappling cli-



our rights

mate change as the scientific consensus has continued to build in favour of action to control the buildup of heat-trapping gases.

As a follow up, a conference was held in Bali in last December. The purpose of the Bali conference was to negotiate a long term policy response to climate change beyond 2012 when the first phase of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol expires. The second period of the Kyoto Protocol starts on 2013 where developing countries (such as China, India, South Korea and Brazil) are exempted from any cut in emissions.

Against the background, developed countries are eager to make a compact with developing countries for emissions-cut in a new global treaty where China, Brazil, South Korea and India agree to cut emissions in future.

A meeting of the Kyoto parties in Austria in August ,2007 recommended emission cuts for rich nations of 25 to 40 per cent by 2020 and green groups are keen for a similar figure to be mentioned in

the future global agreement.

How to reverse the environmental degradation? It will be a slow process but there

must be a beginning in earnest. One of the issues that may be taken into account is the use of renewable source of energy, such as wind power, solar power, tidal wave and geo-thermal. It has been suggested that 15% per cent of energy should come from renewable resources by

been utilized in Europe. New Zealand has started to depend on geo-thermal energy. In Japan major housing companies have introduced a new type of dwelling with silicon roof tiles that generate enough electricity to meet most of a family's needs.

"Greener" cars are being out. thought of as the chief villain in global warming is the emission of carbon dioxide. That means reducing consumption of oil and gas in running vehicles and in production process.

being experimented. It is reported that electric cars accelerate swiftly and can drive at highway high speeds but they need re-charging. Many suggest more practical appears to be the so-called hybrid cars that have both a batterydriven motor and a gasoline engine- with the ability to switch back and forth between the two power systems. Solar-powered cars are being

All-electric powered cars are

experimented as well. Another approach is to power cars with fuel cells, which combine hydrogen with oxygen to form water vapour and electricity.

Research may be carried out to develop new sources of power. The need of designing a new kind of global economy without depending on fossil fuel (oil and gas) seems to be one of the answers to protect natural environment. David Suzuki, a Canadian environmentalist, believes that rich nations that pollute much of the natural environment have not spent money on alternative energy anywhere near the funds which go into space exploration. It is estimated that NASA alone has spent US\$100 billion as of 2000.

Bangladesh and environment

Bangladesh will be victim of degradation of environment. If the sea rises due to global climate change many parts of coastal area will be under water, displacing about 33 million people.

Furthermore, salinity will gradually intrude into surface and ground water supplies. Urban air pollution and ground water contamination with arsenic, improper disposal of industrial, medical and household wastes have added environmental hazardous in the country.

Poverty leads to unsanitary practices that pollute environment. There is no urbanization plan in towns and cities, slums are growing in around outskirts of These sources of energy have cities. Forests are denuded and currently it stands only 9% per cent of the total territory. Floods are source of soil erosion

and as a result rivers in Bangladesh are silted. During winter season, water is less in rivers, some of them are dry. It is reported about 80 rivers are dead and about 100 are dying It has been reported that 18

species of birds and animals have been extinct in Bangladesh. Human settlements have taken away habitats of animals that have led to extinction of flora and fauna.

The people in the country are not sitting idle. Several NGOs have led a vigorous campaign in the country to arrest environmental degradation and an awareness campaign of environmental hazards among public has started for some time by NGOs. Many workshops on environment are being held in the country. Media has taken an active interest in providing warning to environmental degradation and its adverse consequences.

To respond to public sentiments, in recent years governments have adopted certain concrete steps, such as setting up of Environmental Courts and the 1995 Act was amended to ban production, marketing and distribution of polythene bags.

Wetland Act 2000 has been enacted to ensure that these waterlands (haor and baor) remain. If they remain as they are, some people think they are useless. They forget wetland ecosystem has a strong link with human life such as securing human livelihood through maintenance of protein, water and energy, preventing sedimentation as well as wind

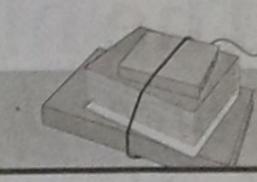
Conclusion

On this day, informed people, NGOs and government may highlight awareness among people the need to protect natural environment, otherwise the nation will confront many unforeseen adverse situations in future. Bangladesh and other low-lying countries may make combined efforts through international forum and the UN to embark on a programme on sustainable development.

Saving the environment is a big job. World Environment Day is an important reminder of the need to ensure a sustainable future of our next generations. It is about providing people, protecting our environment. Sustainability is an integrated approach to meet economic goals without destroying or polluting environment. The slogans are "think globally, act locally" and "recycle, reduce and reuse".

The writer is Former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.

lexicon



Diversity of citizenship - The condition when the party on one side of a lawsuit is a citizen of one state and the other party is a citizen of another state; such cases are under the jurisdiction of federal courts.

Diversion - The process of removing some minor criminal, traffic, or juvenile cases from the full judicial process, on the condition that the accused undergo some sort of rehabilitation or make restitution for damages.

Docket - An abstract or listing of all pleadings filed in a case; the book containing such entries; trial docket is a list of or calendar of cases to be tried in a certain term.

Docket control - A system for keeping track of deadlines and court dates for both litigation and non-litigation matters.

Domicile - The place where a person has his permanent home to which he intends to return.

Double jeopardy - Putting a person on trial more than once for the same crime. It is forbidden by the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Due process of law - The right of all persons to receive the guarantees and safeguards of the law and the judicial process. It includes such constitutional requirements as adequate notice, assistance of counsel, and the rights to remain silent, to a speedy and public trial, to an impartial jury, and to confront and secure witnesses.

prosecution must prove beyond a reasonable doubt in order to obtain a conviction: (1) that a crime has actually occurred, (2) that the accused intended the crime to happen, and (3) a timely relationship between the first two factors.

Elements of a crime - Specific factors that define a crime which the

Embezzlement - The fraudulent appropriation by a person to his own use or benefit or property or money entrusted to him by another.

Eminent Domain - The power of the government to take private property for public use through condemnation.

En Banc - All the judges of a court sitting together. Appellate courts can consist of a dozen or more judges, but often they hear cases in panels of three judges. If a case is heard or reheard by the full court, it is heard en banc.

Encyclopedia - A book or series of books arranged alphabetically by topics containing information on areas of law, including citations to support the information.

Enjoin - To order a person to perform, or to abstain and desist from

Entity - A person or legally recognized organization.

performing a specified act or course of conduct. See injunction.

Entrapment - The act of inducing a person to commit a crime so that a criminal charge will be brought against him.

Entry - A statement of conclusion reached by the court and placed in the court record.

Environment - The conditions, influences, or forces which affect the desirability and value of property, as well as the effect on people's

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - A federal agency created to permit coordinated and environment effective governmental action to preserve the quality of the environment.

Equal Protection of the Law - The guarantee in the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that all persons be treated equally by

Equitable action - An action which may be brought for the purpose of restraining the threatened infliction of wrongs or injuries, and the prevention of threatened illegal action.

Source: Jurist International.

FOR YOUR information



Give earth a chance

Message of General Assembly President Han Seung-Soo



Over the last decade, much progress has been made in implementing? The Daily Star, June 04, 2008. Agenda 21. However, much more remains to be done for achieving sustainable development at the global level. Despite an increased level of knowledge about the state of the planet and a multitude of environmental treaties and agreements, we still remain environmentally vulnerable.

Massive poverty in the developing countries constitutes one of the most important causes of environmental degradation. As long as hundreds of millions of people remain poor, sustainable development will be an unachievable ideal. Eradication of poverty will lead to better environmental protection and sustainable development. Therefore, the various development targets in the United Nations Millennium Declaration should be vigorously pursued by the whole international community.

The theme of this year's World Environment Day is "Give Earth a Chance", an urgent summons to each and every one of us to contribute to the healing of our ailing planet. To Give Earth a Chance, the World Summit in Johannesburg must summon up the political will to implement the promises of Rio by reaching an agreement to take concrete actions with reasonable timetables.

On this World Environment Day, let us carefully consider the actions which each of us has to take and then address ourselves to our common task of preserving the earth with a firm and sober resolution. I strongly believe that, by doing so, we will be able to bequeath a clean and green earth to future generations - one of the highest goals to which humanity can aspire.

Source: UNEP.

Govt eyes consensus on constitution review The government is trying to build a political consensus

to form a "constitutional review commission" but will leave its recommendations to be implemented by the elected government, said Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday. - The Daily Star, June 05, 2008.

Arrest figure crosses 10,000 The joint forces arrested 1,729 persons including 97 in

the capital in the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, in the ongoing nationwide special anti-crime drive that had begun on May 28. - The Daily Star, June 04,

Attorney department formed to move cases for state

The caretaker government has set up a new institution named Government Attorney Department for dealing with cases in courts and performing other duties on behalf of the state. - The Daily Star, June 04, 2008.

Lack of bonding between parents, children leads to violations child rights

Poverty prevents children from enjoying their rights, but their rights are violated most when there is lack of bonding between parents and children, Prof Muzaffer Ahmed said at a view exchange meeting yesterday. -

Hasina calls for halt to mass arrests

Detained former premier Sheikh Hasina yesterday put out a call to the government to immediately stop the ongoing 'mass arrests', and to work for making the ongoing politico-electoral dialogues and announced elections successful instead. -The Daily Star, June 03,

Falu gets 5yrs for gobbling up relief

A special court yesterday handed down five years' rigorous imprisonment on Mosaddek Ali Falu, detained former BNP lawmaker and political secretary to former premier Khaleda Zia, for misappropriating relief materials. Judge Tanzina Ismail of the Special Court-6, set up on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises, also fined Falu Tk 5.35 lakh. He will have to serve one more year behind bars if he failed to pay the fine. The Daily Star, June03, 2008.

Khaleda hits out at govt In her first appearance at the court since her arrest,

former premier Khaleda Zia yesterday demanded withdrawal the state of emergency by June and general elections by October this year. - The Daily Star, June 02,

Hasina's graft case trial to continue

The High Court (HC) yesterday rejected a writ petition filed by detained former premier Sheikh Hasina challenging the legality of continuing the trial proceedings of the barge-mounted power plant graft case against her. - The Daily Star, June 02, 2008.

3,000 appeals filed with **Election Commission** Near about 3,000 appeals have been filed with the

Election Commission (EC) till yesterday, the last day for the filing of appeals against re-demarcation of 51 parliamentary constituencies. This is by far the largest number of such appeals filed by leaders of various political parties following the EC's move to redemarcate 133 constituencies before the next parliamentary elections. The latest re-demarcation plan of the EC was unveiled on April 29 this year amid growing opposition from major political parties that maintain that the move will create obstacles to holding the upcoming ninth parliamentary polls by the yearend, as announced in the electoral roadmap. - The Daily Star, June 02, 2008.

New CJ takes oath

Justice MM Ruhul Amin yesterday took oath as the 16th chief justice of Bangladesh. President Iajuddin Ahmed administered the oath at Darbar Hall of Bangabhaban at around 10:30am yesterday. The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) members did not accord felicitation to him, protesting some recent judgments by the apex court. Earlier, the SCBA did not give farewell to his predecessor justice Md Ruhul Amin on his last day in office on May 29 for the same reason. - The Daily Star, June 02, 2008.

Public servants, judicial commission (amend) ordinance approved

The council of advisers yesterday approved the Public Servants (Dismissal on Conviction) (Amendment) Ordinance 2008. In the new ordinance, which took effect from yesterday, the duration of imprisonment has been extended to over one year while the amount for penalty over Tk 10,000 for the dismissal of a public

servant from services. - The Daily Star, June 02, 2008.

Deputy attorney general resigns Deputy Attorney General Md Anwarul Azim Khair, who was appointed by the previous BNP-led four-party-

alliance government, resigned from his post yesterday. -The Daily Star, June02, 2008 Jails desperate for doctors

As doctors are unwilling to work in jails, the

Directorate of Prisons proposed the government to allow appointment of all doctors in jails on deputation basis and with special facilities. The existing laws allow jail authorities to appoint 50 percent doctors directly while the rest are appointed through deputation from the health ministry. The Directorate of Prisons also proposed the government to change some regulations regarding doctors' appointments in jails. Meanwhile, the Directorate of Health initiated treatment of sick prisoners once a week. Doctors from medical college hospitals would treat the prisoners. Where there is no medical college hospital, the district civil surgeon would form a team for the purpose. - The Daily Star, June 01, 2008.

Over 100 countries agree to ban cluster bombs

A landmark international convention banning cluster munitions was formally adopted by some 111 countries here Friday, in a move supporters hope will stigmatize the lethal weapons as much as landmines. The treaty requires the destruction of stockpiled munitions within eight years -- though it leaves the door open for future, more precise generations of cluster bombs that pose less harm to civilians. The convention is due to be signed in Oslo on December 2-3. States then have to ratify the pact. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon hailed it as "a new international standard that will enhance the protection of civilians, strengthen human rights and improve prospects for development." - The Daily Star, May 31, 2008.

World No Tobacco Day

World No Tobacco Day will be observed in the country today as elsewhere in the world focusing on stopping tobacco use especially among the youths. With a view

to raising mass awareness about harmful effects of tobacco, different organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes including rallies, seminars and discussions to mark the World No Tobacco Day 2008 with the theme 'Tobacco Free Youth' among them Manash, Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance, Pratyasha, Bangladesh Cancer Society, Institution of fine & arts of Dhaka University, were there. - The Daily Star, May 31, 2008.

Charge sheet against Huji cadres Abu Zandal Gharami

A Satkhira court yesterday framed charges against Zandal and Gharami, operatives of banned Islamist outfit Harkatul Jihad al Islami (Huji), for possession of 44 grenades. - The Daily Star, May 30, 2008.

Law ministry to sponsor TAC

The government yesterday decided in principle that the Law Ministry would sponsor the Truth and Accountability Commission. The commission is poised to start soon the exoneration proceedings for those who would voluntarily unveil their illegally amassed wealth. The public works ministry would provide logistic support and manpower would be recruited by the establishment ministry in the formation process of the truth commission. ACC Director General (admin) Col Hanif Igbal said that, the commission will not perform under any institution like the court or ministry, but the law ministry will sponsorit. - The Daily Star, May 30, 2008.

Hearing for framing charges against Khaleda, Koko June 4

The hearing on charge framing in the Gatco graft case against detained former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, her younger son Arafat Rahman Koko and 22 others will begin on June 4. - The Daily Star, May 30, 2008.

6 Bangladeshis acquitted of murder charge

Oman on Wednesday declared that its primary court had acquitted Mohammed Momin Miah and five other Bangladeshis held in that country on charges of mur-

der.-The Daily Star, June 06, 2008. Ex-addl police super sued

for murder. Former additional police super of Khulna Mofazzel Hossain and nine others have been sued for murder. .-The Daily Star, June 06,2008.

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