

DU to observe Anti-repression Black Day every year

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) will observe 'Anti-repression Black Day' on August 23 every year commemorating the repression on its teachers and students by the law enforcement agencies in connection with the campus violence last year.

Prof Hasem Khan, a senate member, formally made the proposal on Thursday, the last day of a two-day annual senate meeting at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Building. The proposal was accepted unanimously in the session.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said, "A series of programmes will be arranged on the day to commemorate the incident of repression on the university teachers and students."

"We will try to find out the reasons behind the incident and the ways to avoid any recurrence of such incidents through such programmes and discussions on the issue," he added.

On August 20 last year, a violent student protest broke out on DU campus following a brawl between an army man and a student during a soccer match on the university playground.

The protest later spread to other educational institutions in the city and elsewhere across the country, continuing for three days, resulting in an imposition of a curfew and shutting down of all educational institutions in all major cities.

Four DU teachers and eight students were detained for five months following the violence.

LAWACHHARA FOREST IUCN likely to submit post-survey report in July

UNB, Dhaka

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a union of governments and NGOs working on environmental issues, is likely to submit its Lawachhara forest post-survey report to the Ministry of Forest and Environment next month.

According to sources, the IUCN conducted the independent survey in the Lawachhara forest following a 3-dimensional (3D) survey by Chevron, a US-based oil company. The main objective of the IUCN survey was to find out whether the 3D survey, conducted by Chevron from January to the first week of June for hydrocarbon exploration, caused any damage to the national forest. The IUCN worked alongside Chevron to monitor the seismic survey and advised it to maintain environmental guidelines.

IUCN officials said they have conducted their own survey from the second week of June just after conclusion of Chevron's 3D survey. "We're now preparing our report on the basis of the post-survey findings," said a senior IUCN official.

He said it appears that Chevron's seismic survey has not caused any major damage to the flora and fauna of the forest. "Even there is no evidence that any bird or animal has fled the forest being disturbed by the blasts carried out during the seismic survey."

After the seismic survey, some local environmental groups alleged that many birds and animals fled the Lawachhara forest.



Party supporters receive Awami League President Sheikh Hasina on her arrival at Toronto airport in Canada on Thursday.

Take part in local govt elections

UPR urges political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Unity for Political Reforms (UPR) yesterday called upon all political parties to take part in the polls of city corporations and upazila parishads before the national election.

Local government polls will be a test case for the present government for holding a credible national election, they said, adding, it will make the parliament election acceptable and strengthen the local government bodies.

Speaking at a press conference at the National Press Club in the capital, UPR Coordinator Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury said the democratic governments over the last two decades were indifferent to holding the upazila parishad elections.

"Strong local government leaders are very important to prevent the entrance of business people into politics," he added.

"What is the guarantee that the political governments will hold the upazila election, as they did not do

it in the past," he posed a question, adding that the Awami League (AL) leaders at a meeting on Thursday spoke in favour of taking part in city corporation elections.

It is hoped that both the AL and the BNP will take part in the local government elections as these are urgently needed to strengthen democracy and stop the presence of any unwanted force in politics, said Zafarullah.

Local government elections will also strengthen the assertions of the Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed that the national election will be held by the year-end.

Another UPR leader ASM Abdur Rab said, "We are demanding that all upazila polls should be held before the national election."

"To decentralise power and reach the state facilities to the doorstep of people, local government, especially the upazila parishad elections are essential," he said, adding that as the voters' registration will be completed by August, there will be no problem for holding the local government

elections before the national polls.

Asked for comments on the major political parties' perception that the local government polls will be held under the blueprint of the present government, Abdur Rab said there is no scope for rigging the polls this time, as the voters' identity cards and transparent ballot boxes will be used.

In a written speech, UPR Member-Secretary MA Gofran said, "We propose for establishing national consensus on holding upazila polls without hampering the national election, forming metropolitan governments in mega cities and implementing the High Court order of disclosing eight information about the candidates in the case of local government elections too."

There is no alternative to empower people through local governments and to continue democracy and constitutional politics, he added.

UPR leader Shahidullah Faraazi was also present at the press conference.

Call to demolish illegal structures along Suvadda Canal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Save the Environment Movement yesterday demanded the authorities demolish the illegal structures along the Suvadda Canal to save it from pollution and encroachment, says a press release.

They also demanded reconstruction of the bridge over the canal and removal of wastes from the area.

The demands came at a discussion held on the bridge. A victory programme and a boat rally were also organised to celebrate the re-excitation of the canal.

Following its re-excitation, the canal is getting back its earlier look, the release added.

The boat rally started from Alam Market in Keraniganj and ended at Rajendrapur Bazar.

The organisers urged the locals not to dump any wastes in the canal.

Eminent columnist Syed Abul Maksud, Save Environment Movement Chairman Abu Naser Khan, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Keraniganj Upazila Aminul Islam and Manjur Morshed Apu, president of Committee to Protect Suvadda Canal, also spoke.

Low over Bay likely to intensify

UNB, Dhaka

The low over north-west Bay and adjoining area still persists and it is likely to intensify.

Under its influence, steep pressure gradient persists over north Bay. Squally weather may affect maritime ports and adjoining coastal area, said a special bulletin of Met Office.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal number three.

All fishing boats and trawlers over north Bay and deep sea have been advised to keep close to the coast and proceed with caution until further notice.



Members of Save the Environment Movement bring out a colourful boat procession on Suvadda Khal (canal), lifeline of Keraniganj upazila, yesterday. The canal that dried up completely more than three years ago was partly re-excavated by the authorities recently.



Six Bangladeshi youths, who climbed the Singu Chuli peak of the Himalayan range recently, pose for photograph with the guests at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury, Prof Anisuzzaman and Enam Ul Haque were also present.

6 Bangladeshis climb Singu Chuli peak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six Bangladeshi youths including a girl conquered the Singu Chuli peak (21238 feet) of the Himalayan range recently.

This is the highest ever success for the mountaineers of Bangladesh.

Speaking at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday, the mountaineers, who are the members of Bangla Mountaineering and Trekking Club (BMTTC), said they want to climb the Everest, the highest mountain peak of the world.

The climbing of Singu Chuli is considered a technically demanding task and the hardest expedition ever undertaken by any Bangladeshi team, said Enam Ul Haque, the founder of BMTTC and an expeditor to Antarctica and North Pole.

The mountaineering team left Dhaka for Nepal on May 20 and started the expedition from Pokhara on May 25 and climbed the peak on June 4 at 10:45 am, said Khaled who showed the video of their adventure.

The BMTTC members have already climbed seven Himalayan peaks and one in France.

The Himalayan peaks are Fray Peak, Chulu West, Mera Peak, Yohiorn, BC Roy and Kabru Dom while Mount Blank is located in France.

Nishat Mazumdar, the lone female member of Singu Chuli expedition, was the leader of the team that comprised Sajal Khaled, MA Muhit, Nur Mohammad, Walid Asraf and Riaz Ahmed.

Nishat said their club is now taking preparation to climb Cho Oyu, a 27000 feet high Himalayan peak, next year.

Speaking as special guest at the press conference, Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury said it is a matter of pride for the nation.

"We hope, one day this team will raise the national flag on the peak of Mount Everest," said Prof Anisuzzaman.

The Singu Chuli expedition was sponsored jointly by GMG airlines and Swiss Bakery.

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