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CA for Saarc pressure on rich nations to cut emissions

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday called for putting collective pressure by Saarc on the developed nations for making a unilateral and unconditional commitment to reduce their greenhouse gas emission levels to save the vulnerable regions of the world from the perils of climate change.

"The world cannot, perhaps, go back to the pre-industrial age of carbon emission but it can surely contain a further surge in global warming. We can at least freeze the emission of greenhouse gases at an acceptable level. But this will require urgent collective actions. And it'll require the large industrialised economies—the historical polluters—to cut back their emissions," he said.

Inaugurating the daylong Saarc

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Saarc nations vow to fight climate fallout

Declare to work together for capacity building

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ministers from eight Saarc countries yesterday declared they will work together to build regional capacity for mitigating the impacts of climate change, and consult each other before international negotiations.

In the Dhaka declaration that came after a ministerial level meeting yesterday, they also observed that climate change is substantively the result of greenhouse gas emissions by the developed countries for over two centuries.

It now poses a direct threat to sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the developing nations that have little or no

responsibility for the current process of climate change.

Earlier, during daylong discussions, the ministers reached a consensus on an action plan for the South Asian nations.

Acknowledging that every member state has the right to food, energy and water security, they agreed to meet before taking national positions in any international negotiations on environment.

Yesterday's Saarc ministerial meeting on climate change followed a two-day experts' meeting.

Held at a city hotel, it was opened by Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed and presided over by Raja Debashish Roy, special assistant to CA for forest and envi-

ronment ministry.

Later in the evening, Raja Debashish announced the declaration at a press briefing.

The Saarc action plan approved by the ministers was based on seven thematic areas to make sure those were consistent with the national action plans.

It includes capacity building for Clean Development Mechanism projects, exchange of information on disaster preparedness and extreme events, exchange of meteorological data, capacity building and exchange of information on climate change impacts including sea level rise, glacial melting and threats to biodiversity, mutual consultation in international

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Upazila polls in end-Aug or Oct: CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said the upazila polls will be held either at the end of August or early October, and that there is no scope for going beyond that time.

He said the Election Commission (EC) has already requested the chief adviser to start reshuffling the administration at various levels as part of the polls preparations.

He was speaking at a discussion at the city's Cirdap auditorium. Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Shujan) organised the roundtable titled "The candidates we want to see in local government elections".

The CEC said, "We are fully prepared to hold upazila elections. As Ramadan begins in September, the polls will be held either in late August or early October. There is no scope to go beyond that since we

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Grassroots leaders gear up for polls

File nomination for city corporation elections amid festivity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid a festive mood, local-level leaders of major political parties filed applications seeking candidacy in the August 4 polls to four city corporations and nine municipalities on the last day of nomination paper submission yesterday.

A total of 68 mayor aspirants, 933 councillor aspirants and 202 women for reserved seats submitted their nomination papers peacefully for the four city corporation polls with AL and BNP having more than one candidate from their camps running for mayoral posts.

Even though the AL formally decided to take part in the polls,

BNP is yet to acquiesce.

The AL-led 14-party coalition would finalise its nominees by July 12, a day before the last date of withdrawing nomination.

Sources said if BNP finally boycotts the polls, many of its leaders would withdraw from running while some would take part in the elections as independent candidates.

Meanwhile, Khulna city unit of BNP announced that they would boycott polls to Khulna City Corporation (KCC).

In Khulna, 15 people submitted nomination papers for the mayoral post, 281 for the 31 posts of councillors, and 47 women for the 10 reserved seats.

In Rajshahi, 18 people, including a female candidate, submitted nomination papers for the mayoral post, 242 people for 30 posts of councillors, and 64 women for the 10 reserved seats.

In Sylhet, 21 people submitted nomination papers for the mayoral post so far, 223 for the 27 posts of councillors, and 49 women for the nine reserved seats.

In Barisal, 14 people submitted nomination papers for the mayoral post, 187 for the 30 posts of councillors, and 42 women for the 10 reserved seats.

KHULNA
Despite the boycott call of Khulna city unit of BNP and warning of

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Rain cripples city life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Spells of torrential rain throughout the country played havoc especially with city life yesterday, submerging many streets and causing daylong gridlock in a virtual collapse of the capital's traffic system.

According to the Met Office, Dhaka received 53 mm of rain in the 12 hours till 6:00 pm yesterday while the highest rainfall during the period was recorded at 109 mm in Kutubdia.

According to the bulletin of flood forecasting and warning centre, significant rainfall was recorded during the last 24 hours ending at 6:00 am yesterday. All the rivers were flowing below their respective danger levels except the Tista at Dalia, which is flowing at danger level in the morning, the bulletin said.

The ceaseless deluge that began in the morning turned much of the capital into a swamp, disrupting normal life and commuters and trade were the worst affected as traffic came to a virtual standstill in many places in the city.

A number of major thoroughfares as well as lanes and by-lanes

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The photo shows the road near Shantinagar intersection gone under rainwater yesterday like many streets in the capital due to heavy rain and poor storm-water drainage system.

Govt, AL fail to reach consensus

Sit again soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) and the government have failed to reach a consensus about a number of issues including lifting of the state of emergency before polls and unconditional release of Sheikh Hasina and agreed to sit again to discuss the issues.

At its much-awaited dialogue with the caretaker government yesterday the AL emphasised that no election can be free, fair and acceptable under the state of emergency.

The government, on the other hand, said it would consider relaxing a few more provisions of the Emergency Powers Rule ahead of the elections.

Stressing the need for holding more dialogues, both sides were convinced that all issues could be resolved through discussions in order to hold a neutral election with the participation of all political parties.

"We believe dialogue is an ongoing

process. Today's [Thursday] dialogue is not the last one. We still have many things to discuss," AL acting General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam said at a joint press briefing after the dialogue.

"One of the main issues we raised before them [the AL representatives] at the dialogue is bringing qualitative changes in politics. But we did not have sufficient time to discuss it," said Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman, the government's spokesman at the dialogue.

He said three issues—unwanted influence of politics on the economy, post-election stability and institutional and constitutional reforms—are important for bringing qualitative changes in politics.

"We will sit with the Awami League again at a suitable time shortly to discuss these particular matters," Zillur said.

A nine-member AL delegation headed by its acting President Zillur Rahman participated in the dialogue that began at 11:00am at

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Pay Commission in a month to review salaries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is likely to constitute a pay commission in a month to review and recommend a revised salary structure for the employees of the government and the autonomous bodies.

"We're now thinking about the composition, considering names of people who can be there in the commission," Finance Adviser AB Mirza-Azizul Islam told reporters at the Secretariat while talking on the status of the move.

During his June 9 budget speech, the adviser proposed constitution of a pay commission at the beginning of 2008-2009 fiscal year.

Pointing out that people of the fixed-income group are facing hardship due to high inflation arising from the abnormal price hike of essentials on both domestic and international markets in recent times, he then said the existing salary structure of the low-paid government employees is not consistent with the cost of living.

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Public hearing on electricity tariff July 20

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (Berc) yesterday decided to hold a public hearing on July 20 at its office about increasing the bulk electricity tariff—which will not affect the general power consumers.

During an open meeting yesterday, headed by Chairman of Berc Golam Rahman, Berc discussed an application submitted by the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) to increase the bulk electricity tariff by 41 percent and retail tariff by 39.5 percent.

The Berc felt that through a

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12 die in landslides, wall collapse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 10 people died in rain-induced landslides and wall collapse while two drowned in rainwater at Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

Torrential rain continued during the week in Teknaf triggering the landslides, sources claimed.

Landslides killed nine people, mostly children and eight of them belonging to two families, at Teknaf upazila headquarters in Cox's Bazar early yesterday. Another child died in Ukhia upazila when a wall collapsed on her, sources in the food and disaster management

ministry said.

Four siblings were killed when a large chunk of a hill slid on to their house at the valley in Dumperang of Teknaf Sadar around 3:00am.

The dead were identified as Khorsheda Begum, 14, Morshed Alam, 10, Noor Kalima, and one and a half years old Ramija Begum.

Their father Noor Alam, 40, is a rickshaw puller and was not home while their mother Rashida Begum, 35, narrowly escaped injury.

The locals thronged the spot where the parents were frequently fainting after losing their children at once.

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Khaleda, Tarique sued for embezzling Tk 2cr

Money drawn for non-existent Zia Orphanage Trust

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed another case against former premier Khaleda Zia, her elder son Tarique Rahman and five others for embezzling over Tk 2.10 crore by forming an eye-wash establishment named Zia Orphanage Trust.

According to the case, then prime minister Khaleda Zia and the other accused through unlawful practices embezzled over Tk 2.10 crore by establishing an organisation



named Zia Orphanage Trust that exists only on paper.

The five other accused in the case are former BNP lawmaker Kazi Salimul Haque, Syed Ahmed alias Sayeed Ahmed, Gias Uddin

Ahmed, Sharfuddin Ahmed and Mominur Rahman, a son of Khaleda's sister.

Harunur Rashid, a deputy assistant director of the ACC, filed the case with Ramna Police Station under sections 409/109 of the Penal Code, section 5(2) of the Corruption Prevention Act of 1947 and section 15 of the Emergency Power Rules 2007.

The complainant alleged that on June 9 in 1991, a grant in the amount of \$1,255,000, equivalent

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Close shave for Biman's DC-10

6 wheels burst as it lands at ZIA; all on board unhurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Passengers and crew of a Biman DC10-30 aircraft went unhurt as the plane's six wheels burst while landing at Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday.

The aircraft (flight BG 022) with 109 passengers and cabin crew on board was coming from Muscat via Chittagong on its way to Dhaka, Biman sources said.

Soon after the incident, emer-

gency workers evacuated the passengers from the plane. The authorities also suspended aircraft landing and takeoff for about three hours.

At least three aircraft heading for Dhaka had to hover in the sky for 10-15 minutes as they did not get permission to land, airport authorities said. Several domestic and international flights from ZIA were also delayed.

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"Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

—John F. Kennedy

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