

GLOBAL WARMING

Build up partnership to face challenges

Environmentalists urge South Asian nations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

South Asian nations should build up partnership to conduct comprehensive studies on the impacts of global warming in this region and find out sustainable solutions to the problem which is likely to hit mostly the poor people, said the environmentalists at a roundtable yesterday.

They said more flash floods in the downstream during rainy season due to climate change and scarcity of water during dry season is a phenomenon that will threaten food production in the region.

The roundtable titled 'Melting glaciers and rising seas: Is space for regional cooperation shrinking?' was organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) at WVA auditorium in the capital.

"Even if we get money as compensation from the developed countries, it will not benefit the poor of this region," said Bapa President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad who chaired the roundtable.

"We are yet to find out any alternative that will serve the interest of the poor," he said, urging leaders of this region to frame a strategy to face the impacts of global warming.

He said the regional leaders have to sit together and plan for establishing research institutes for information base which could help the nations of the region to face the challenges of climate change.

"Impacts of global warming are different in different countries. So, the strategy that will be applicable for Bangladesh may not be so for India. But still we should raise our voices together," said the Bapa chief.

Prof Jahruddin Choudhury of the Institute of Water Resources and Flood Management at Buet said frequency of flash floods in the

Brahmaputra basin is likely to increase in the future having multiple negative impacts on crop production in large parts of the country.

"If we look at data, smaller floods are more hazardous today than that of larger floods of previous time," he said, emphasising more cooperation among the academics and the governments of this region to reduce knowledge gap and resolve the problems.

Referring to the threats of climate change, Prof Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University said this is a global problem with serious implications in this region, but unfortunately there is no regional approach or institutions to face the menace regionally.

Referring to water disputes between Bangladesh and India, Bangladesh Water Partnership President Quamrul Islam Siddique said India, which is a leader of this region, has to understand the implications of climate change and should act accordingly.

Ecology Foundation Executive

Director Sudhirender Sharma of India said each person in South Asia produces only one tonne carbon, while each in the developed countries produces 20 tonnes carbon annually.

"This proves how the developed countries are responsible for climate change. Why should be the victims of other countries?" he posed a question.

Columnist Rakesh Bhat of India said climate change is not a new phenomenon, rather it had been there since long, and people also changed their lifestyles according to the changes.

"But the problem now is that we became deaf. We did not listen or respond to the call of nature. Therefore, we are in trouble today," he said.

Bapa Vice-president ASM Shahjahan, Prof Firoze Ahmed of Buet, The New Nation Editor Mostafa Kamal Majumder, Water Watch Digest Editor Gopal Krishna of India and Bapa General Secretary Dr Abdul Matin also spoke.



PHOTO: STAR

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaks at a roundtable at WVA auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right is Sudhirender Sharma and on his left are ASM Shahjahan and Dr Abdul Matin.

Hasina returns to US July 15 for follow-up treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina will return to the US on July 15 for follow-up treatment of her ear and eye.

After undergoing medical treatment in the US, Hasina went to Canada to see her daughter Saima Wazed Patul, and then she left Toronto for London on Saturday night, according to a report of US-based news agency American News Agency (ANA).

From London, Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana will go to Finland on July 10 to negotiate the marriage of Rizwan Mujib Siddiqui, son of Rehana, with the bride's parents, said Abdus Sobhan Golap who is accompanying the former prime minister.

'Take steps to prevent sexual harassment of female students'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday urged the teachers to revive their image by taking steps to prevent sexual harassment of female students on the campus.

They also strongly condemned sexual abuses by a section of university teachers who are considered as the architect of the nation.

The press conference was organised by Samajik Protirodh Committee at the National Press Club in the capital.

The committee is a coordinating body of 47 non-government organisations, which has been working for establishing human rights for women since 2002.

The sexual abuse on women has risen to such extent that the female students of the universities, the highest institutions for learning, are not free from such heinous crime, said Ayesha Khanam.

It is a matter of great concern that the teachers, who are next to parents for taking care of students, are playing the role of abuser, said Dr Mahmudul Islam.

Quoting the reports of torture against women published in 14 national newspapers from January to June this year, the Protirodh Committee showed number of killing was topping the chart among the 22 types of crime against women.

A total of 402 killings occurred among 1687 incidents of violence while the number of rape was 190 taking the second position in the crime list.

Dhaka University as an independent body, it could take necessary steps to prevent such occurrences to ensure a secure environment for female students, said Executive Director of Steps Towards Development Ranjan Karmakar.

The committee placed a seven-point demand at the press conference to resist violence against female students.

Former adviser to the caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan said crores of taka were spent to stop river erosion in Jamuna, but the fact is that erosion could not be stopped.

"Many people became rich over night who were engaged in river training but erosion was not stopped," he lamented.

Dr Abdur Rahman, president of the committee, presented the keynote paper while Sarwat Jahana, senior specialist of the River Engineering Division, presented a power-point presentation on the erosion of Jamuna.

The meeting was also addressed by economist Dr Atiur Rahman, Mokhles uz Zaman, former official of Water Development Board, Liaqot Ali, executive engineer of Bangladesh Bridge Authority, and Enamul Haq of Sparso (Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation).

The canteens of the university are hard hit by the spiralling prices of essentials. As a result, prices of meal at canteens are increasing day by day and the quality of food is also declining," Md Rashedul Islam, joint convener of Chhatra Odhikar, said in a statement yesterday.

House tutors of the halls also pay no attention to the canteens and the quality of foods, he added.

The students will take out a protest procession and hold a rally on the campus at 11:30am to press for their demands.

The other demand are reducing prices of food items and ensuring quality of foods.

Weather Today UNB, Dhaka Rain likely. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

DHAKA TODAY BIDS workshop Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organises a workshop to disseminate the preliminary findings of the study 'Gender analysis for improving mobility in Dhaka city'.

Dialogue Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association and UNFPA jointly organise a policy dialogue on 'Reproductive rights, health and gender situation of garment workers'.

Workshop Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit organises a two-day workshop to disseminate the study findings on 'Recruitment industry in South Asia'.



PHOTO: STAR

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists gather on a road in Sangsad Bhaban area in the city yesterday when BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was brought to a special court in connection with Niko graft case.

Error-free textbooks next year

Says education adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All students in primary and secondary levels will get fresh and well-bound textbooks free from all kinds of errors next year, Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said yesterday.

"We have formed an advisory committee to correct the mistakes in primary and secondary level textbooks," he said and hoped that the textbooks to be published in 2009 will be error-free and well bound, have beautiful graphic designs and be printed on quality paper.

The National Curriculum and Textbooks Board (NCTB) with the help of experts has already corrected the mistakes in 64 textbooks of secondary levels while the Bangla textbook for class one has been rewritten, the adviser said.

The textbooks will be free from mistakes gradually, he added.

"We are also going to introduce

Creative Question (CQ) Pattern from class six to eleven in phases," he said.

Education Secretary M Momtazul Islam, NCTB Chairman Dr M Nasir Uddin and other officials of the education ministry, education boards and Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education were also present at the press briefing.

Light tremor felt

BSS, Dhaka

A light earthquake measuring 4.5 on the Richter scale occurred yesterday morning.

The tremor, which hit at 08 hours 50 minutes and 40.83 seconds (BST), had its epicentre near Ukhrul of Manipur, India, about 484km northeast from Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) Seismic Centre at Agargaon in the city, a Met office release said.

Withdraw ban on trade union activities

Labour leaders ask govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of different labour rights organisations yesterday urged the government to withdraw the restriction on trade union activities completely.

Trade union rights is important for the industries to be flourished properly, the leaders of Bangladesh Sanjika Sramik Federation (BSSF) said, adding that the workers of different industries had to undertake tremendous pain as the government imposed restriction on trade union following the state of emergency for which they were not responsible at all.

However, they hailed Labour and Employment Adviser Anwarul Iqbal's comment that the state of emergency would be eased on a limited scale to allow the trade unions carry out the activities for holding the overdue elections to the CBA (collective bargaining agents) bodies.

The government imposed restrictions on trade union activities after the declaration of the state of emergency on January 11 last year.

Leaders of Sramik Karmachari

Oikya Parishad (SKOP) also said that restriction on trade union activities should be withdrawn completely for the growth of the industries, to increase production, ensure the rights of the workers and to maintain a peaceful environment inside the industries.

But the partial withdrawal of the restriction on trade union activities would not ensure the basic rights to the workers, the SKOP leaders said.

Presided over by Abdur Matin Sarkar, the discussion at the SKOP office was also attended by Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar, Mohammad Nurul Islam, Abdur Kader Howladar and Mesbahuddin Ahmed.

Meanwhile, President of Samajtantrik Sramik Front Abdullah Sarkar and General Secretary Rajekuzzaman in a joint statement said that it is not possible to create a democratic environment at the industrial institutions except ensuring the trade union rights.

It also demanded the government withdraw the restriction on trade union activities completely.

Confusion over enrolment capacity in colleges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Confusion over the enrolment capacity of colleges in the country reigns as the education ministry and other research institutes gave different figures of the capacity.

The issue of enrolment capacity came to a head after a record number of students passed SSC examinations this year. As a result, many of them may not get admitted to the colleges of their choice because of shortage of seats.

According to the education ministry, around 16 lakh seats are available in colleges while Bangladesh Bureau of Education and Information and Statistics (Banbeis) and other research bodies said less than six lakh students can enrol in colleges, although around 7.26 lakh students became successful this year.

The ministry gave the figure at a press conference yesterday.

However, Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said a meeting with the officials of the education ministry, Banbeis, education boards and other organisations concerned will be held within next few days to remove the confusion.

All the data on enrolment capacity in colleges will be scrutinised in the meeting, he added.

He also said that every successful SSC candidates will enrol in colleges but many students having GPA 5 may not get admitted in colleges of their first choice as seats in renowned colleges is limited.

The adviser also said that the ministry has requested the 'Class-A' colleges to introduce double shifts or increase seats if they have sufficient facilities.

"We just held a meeting with the principals of renowned colleges. At the meeting, we requested them to increase seats or introduce double shifts if they can. We are ready to provide all facilities to this end," Zillur told reporters.

He, however, said the ministry would not create any pressure on colleges to introduce double shifts.

The education adviser pointed out that there are a total of 3,192 general colleges, 2,842 madrasas and 1,453 vocational colleges in the country.

Among the successful SSC candidates, a total of 52,500 secured GPA-5 and around 1.90 lakh students got GPA-4 or above.

Khaleda's new formula

FROM PAGE 1

is not even-handed in the way it treats the political parties. If it were neutral it would not have been treating BNP differently.

Earlier, Judge Khandaker Kamal Uz-zaman of Special Court-9 deferred the hearing on charge framing in the case till July 16.

The BNP chief was produced before the special court set up on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises at 10:08am.

She told the reporters that her party wants to cooperate with the government, but it must resolve to hold the long-stalled general election as soon as possible.

"Handing over power to an elected government after a free and fair election should be the main objective of the caretaker administration."

BNP is always in favour of election, but that will have to be free and fair and involving participation of all parties, she added.

Expressing apprehension over trial at special courts, she said, "The way trials are taking place suggests it's not possible to get justice here."

Criticising the government for failing to keep the prices of essentials within people's reach, she said four crore people have become poor and the middle-income group too would slip below the poverty line soon.

"The BDR-run fair price shops and OMS programmes have been closed. People are starving and committing suicide out of anger and frustration. Even the middle class families are crowding mazars (shrines) for food. Only Allah knows what's going to happen in Ramadan," she went on.

"Only an elected government can bail the nation out of this difficult situation."

Referring to the delay in arranging overseas treatment for her detained sons, she accused the government of

double standards. "My sons are critically ill. Despite suggestions from the medical board, the government is not sending them abroad while it's sending others," she alleged.

Replying to a query, she said, "We have no objection to increasing the salaries of government employees, but what about others?"

Asked whether any action would be taken against those participating in the August 4 local elections, she replied, "Time will say."

About BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury's reported remarks that the current crisis could be solved if Khaleda and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina agree to meet and hold talks, she said, "I had talked to everyone in the past

for the wellbeing of the country and democracy."

She condemned misbehaviour with journalists covering special court proceedings on June 30.

DAY'S PROCEEDINGS After the court sat at 10:12am, the defence submitted a lawyers' certificate seeking adjournment of the proceedings.

They said since they have filed a writ petition challenging the validity of the case, proceedings should be adjourned till the High Court issues an order on the petition.

The prosecution lawyers opposed the arguments and said senior lawyers from the defence on the previous day had said they would not file any adjournment petition and let the hearing begin.

In reply, the defence said they were seeking adjournment on genuine grounds.

The state lawyers said at least the allegations mentioned in the first information report (FIR) should be read out. Then as one of them moved to open the case, the defence raised objection in chorus.

At that stage, former law minister and co-accused Moudud Ahmed prayed for adjournment till July 16 so they could return to this court after having the writ petition disposed of at the HC.

After hearing both the sides, the court fixed July 16 for the next date for hearing.

Eight other accused including former state minister AKM Mosharraf Hossain were produced before the court yesterday.

On December 9 last year, the Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case with Tejjagaon Police Station against Khaleda and 10 others for abusing power in awarding a gas exploration and extraction deal to Canadian company Niko.

Obituary

CU CORRESPONDENT

ABM Yusuf, former vice-president of Social Investment Bank and general manager of Mostafa Group of Industries, passed away due to liver cirrhosis at Square Hospital in Dhaka yesterday at the age of 52.

He will be buried at his family graveyard at Chunnati village under Lohagara upazila in Chittagong today.

Mofizur Rahman

BSS, Dhaka

Mohammad Mofizur Rahman, former joint secretary to the government, passed away due to cardiac problems at a city facility at Uttara in the city on Sunday at the age of 75.

He left behind his wife, two sons, two daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at Sector 4 graveyard at Uttara in the city after namaz-e-janaza on Sunday night.

He was an expert on economic and trade policy issues and worked for years in the commerce ministry and in Moscow as the commercial councillor.

SMA Gafur

METRO DESK



SMA Gafur, former labour officer, passed away due to old age complications at his residence in the city yesterday at the age of 75, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three sons and one daughter to mourn his death.

He was buried at Mohammadpur graveyard after Zohr prayers yesterday.

His qulkhani will be held on 11 July after Asr prayers at his residence (27/1 Tajmahal Road, Block-C, Mohammadpur) in the city.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the fifteenth death anniversary of AZ Syed Ahmed Chowdhury, a politician and social worker of Feni, says a press release.

He passed away on this day in 1993 at Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital in the city at the age of 79.

He left behind his wife, four daughters and three sons. His contribution to the field of sports, education and culture in Feni is held in high esteem.

He was a life member of Feni Sports Association.

Abdur Rashid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the seventh death anniversary of Magistrate Abdur Rashid, a retired revenue deputy collector, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and a doa mahfil will be held at his residence at 59 Forest Office Road in Moulibazar and his village home at Borokapon at Rajnagar upazila.

Qulkhwani

METRO DESK



Qulkhwani of Begum Lutfun Nahar, a language movement veteran, will be held after Maghrib prayers today, says a press release.

Lutfun Nahar, wife of late AHM Kamaluddin, former chairman and managing director of Bangladesh Shilpa Bank, passed away at Birdem Hospital on July 4. She was the past chairman of Inner Wheel District 328.

She left behind one son, two daughters and grandchildren to mourn her death.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the qulkhwani and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Razia Begum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Qulkhwani of Razia Begum, wife of late advocate Wajed Ali, will be held at her residence at Hasnabad Apartment at 189 Bara Maghbazar Wireless Gate in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Razia, mother of martyred freedom fighter Rezaul Karim Manik (Bir Proter), breathed her last on Saturday due to a cardiac arrest at the age of 78.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the milad and pray for salvation of her departed soul.