

Build capacity to adopt climate change adaptation strategy

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday underscored the need to build capacity to adopt a sustainable climate change adaptation strategy.

Ministry of Defence and Bangladesh Meteorological Department organised the seminar on 'Capacity building on climate change and adaptation in Bangladesh' at the Saarc Meteorological Research Centre in the city.

The seminar was organised under the auspices of Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) and Asia Water Cycle Initiative (AWCI).

study to help formulate a sustainable adaptation strategy. Prof Dr Toshio Koike said the earth observation system has been built on the basis of a 10-year implementation plan.

2 Gato directors released on bail

UNB, Dhaka

Two directors of Gato -- Galib Ahmed and Tanvir Ahmed -- were released on bail from Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

2 lakh tonnes of urea to be imported

UNB, Dhaka

The government will import 200,000 metric tons of urea fertiliser ahead of the Aman cultivation season.

of granular urea fertiliser imported through the same port at a cost of Tk 325.46 crore (at \$933.20-\$944.20 per ton).

Lord Avebury visits Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Chittagong Hill Tract Commission (CHTC) has begun its visit to Khagrachhari to see human rights situation and participatory development in the area.

LOCAL GOVT POLLS UNDER EMERGENCY

Elections peaceful, fair

Says Brotee report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brotee, an election observer group, yesterday said the city corporation and municipality elections were held in a peaceful and fair manner.



Former adviser M Hafizuddin Khan addresses a programme organised to disseminate observation report at Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium in the city yesterday.

The overall electoral environment, management and procedural mechanisms have improved, but not the political human resources, said Sharmeen Murshid, chief executive officer of Brotee, which observed the August 4 polls in eight municipalities and four city corporations.

while casting votes, but due to lack of adequate publicity, they carried ID cards and the polling officers tried to tally the numbers of ID cards and voters list. This created unexpected complication in many places," she added.

of the 198 candidates in Barisal, education of 69 was under the secondary level.

Asked if Brotee recommends next parliamentary elections under the state of emergency, Murshid said, "We don't want the national polls under an emergency, but necessary environment must be created to ensure free and fair polls without any violence. The commitment of political parties is very important in this regard."

It added.

Twelve of 46 mayoral candidates in four city corporations kept secret some of the information required in the affidavits, while the statements of 40 candidates were also incomplete, it added.

In 2002, the rate of casting vote in three city corporation polls was 47 percent, while it was 79 percent in the present elections, she added.

Murshid said they received specific allegations from Sreepur, Sylhet and Khulna that polling officers faced troubles in finding out voters' names from the list that caused delay in casting votes.

Taking part in the discussion on the report, Prof Abul Barakat of Dhaka University said he thinks the candidates had spent more than the amount mentioned in Brotee's report.

The report was prepared on the basis of monitoring by its around 400 observers who talked to voters, poll authorities, common people, journalists, candidates and the local administration.

To hold fair polls in the absence of emergency and establish a good political culture, he said political parties, vibrant citizens forums, cultural organisations and students have to play an active role.

Participation of religious minorities, indigenous people and women was notable, said Murshid, adding that no report of pressure or torture was reported.

Awami League leader Col (retd) Faruk Khan said the local government polls proved that the attempt to de-politicise was wrong and those who propagated against politicians should learn a lesson.

Unlike previous polls, there was no incident of vote rigging or grabbing of centres except one or two incidents, said Brotee, adding, the terrorist activities have also reduced drastically.

Former adviser to a caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan presided over the programme.

While in 2002 city corporation polls, a total of 74 people were injured and 2 others killed, but this time only 13 were injured and 1 killed, it added.

Deputy Inspector General of Prisons (DIG Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddique told The Daily Star, "The former MP, who was elected from Choudhagram constituency, was arrested on March 7 last year and freed from the jail at around 7:30pm."

Brotee said law and order situation was also good during the local government polls, but at times law enforcers' operation appeared to be excessive in Barisal where Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members charged baton on common people without any provocation.

The joint forces had arrested the Jamaat leader on charges of several cases, including extortion, looting and grabbing.

Voters at a centre alleged that the presiding officer did not allow them to cast votes even after two to three hours of waiting as there were discrepancies between the numbers of their identity cards and the registration numbers in the voter list, it added.

Witnesses said soon after the Jamaat leader was released, several hundred party activists and leaders received him from the jail gate. Later, Taher went to his Shyamoli residence.

As the voters protested the incident, Rab beat them irrespective of old and women, said the report, adding, even two of Brotee observers were not spared by Rab although they showed their identity cards.

Police arrested a suspected activist of banned Islamist outfit Jamaatul-Mujaheddin, Bangladesh (JMB) at Palashbari in the district yesterday.

The tendency of selling or buying votes, with the exception of a few incidents at the slums of Barisal and Sylhet, was reduced to a great extent, but it received information that each mayoral candidate of Rajshahi City Corporation spent Tk 12 to 20 lakh exceeding their highest ceiling of Tk 5 lakh, while each councillor spent Tk 5 lakh exceeding their highest ceiling of Tk 50,000, said Brotee.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of police led by Sub-Inspector (SI) Hannan raided an electric shop and arrested Kazzal.

"As per the Election Commission announcement, voters were not supposed to use national ID cards

Kazzal, a student of Bogra Polytechnic Institute, will be sent to Tangail, said Nikhil Chandra Mondol, officer in-charge of Palashbari Police Station.



CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim inaugurate the 9th National Congress of the party at Mahanagar Natya Mancha in the city yesterday.

Compel govt to fight corruption

Speakers say at CPB congress

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday called on the countrymen to forge unity to compel the caretaker government to stick to its stance of combating corruption by trying the corrupt people as the government is now retreating from its early stance and trying to implement the 'manage two formula'.

The speakers said the government retreating from its earlier stance has formed the truth commission in a bid to release corrupt politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen.

Marxist Communist Party (CPM), representative Sayed Mazhar Haider of Communist Party of Pakistan, representative Luxshman Di Silva of Communist Party of Sri Lanka, North Korean Ambassador Mun Sang Mo and official Zhang Zhizhong of Chinese embassy.

They said this at the inaugural session of the 9th National Congress of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) in the city.

CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim demanded introduction of rationing system amid the ongoing price hike, lifting restrictions on trade unions, withdrawal of emergency rules and handing over power to an elected government through a free, fair and credible election.

Presided over by CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan, the congress was addressed by General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, representative of Communist Party of India Manzu Majumdar, National Secretary of All India Forward Block Barun Majumdar, representative Shyamal Chakraborty of Indian

With playing the national anthem and hoisting the national and party flags, the three-day congress was inaugurated at Mahanagar Natya Mancha.

The functioning of the congress began observing one-minute silence for those killed in the democratic movements of the country, accidents and natural disasters.

Communist parties of different countries across the world have sent messages on the occasion of the national congress of CPB.

At about 7.00pm, the Commission also met with tribal leaders who alleged that the local Bangalee settlers wanted to grab their lands, orchards and properties under the shelter of the administration.

They said they are always in fear of bloodshed in the area.

Similar allegations were also raised by the civil society leaders of Bangalee people.

They said the tribal people are grabbing the land that the government provided to 384 families at Karallachhari in 1981-82 financial year.

They were gathered in cluster village in the name of security but the indigenous people are now grabbing their lands and orchards.

The Bangalee leaders said the indigenous people are also making propaganda against the government and the army.

Later the Commission met with Khagrachhari Hill District Council Chairman Monindra Lal Tripura and CHT Affairs Taskforce Chairman Samiron Dewan at their offices.

Lord Avebury is expected to meet high-ups of the caretaker government, including chief adviser, army chief, civil society representatives and political leaders.

Other members of the Commission are Sultana Kamal, co-chair of CHTC, Sara Hossain, Swapan Adnan, Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Tom Eskildsen and Chris Erni.

KUWAITI NEWSPAPER REPORT

Bangladeshi workers forced to pay health insurance fees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi workers of some cleaning companies in Kuwait, have alleged that they are being compelled to pay their health insurance fees, which is a violation of job contract.

few days to ensure that the cleaning companies comply with Kuwait's minimum wage rule.

Meanwhile, Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury on Wednesday night had a telephonic conversation with Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah on Bangladeshi workers issues, said a foreign ministry release yesterday.

The workers made the complaints to an official of Bangladesh embassy in the Gulf country, according to a report published in the Arab Times, a Kuwaiti newspaper, yesterday.

The official reiterated that Kuwaiti authorities have assured the embassy of not deporting any innocent workers.

Earlier on Wednesday, Chowdhury in a letter requested Kuwait's Interior Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Khalid Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to conduct an investigation into the workers' strikes, and said that many workers were being mercilessly deported to Bangladesh empty-handed for the fault of a few.

The workers also complained that supervisors of some cleaning companies falsely implicated several innocent workers in violent demonstrations and had them arrested and that they are now fearing more arrests, the official quoted the workers as saying.

With the latest arrival of six workers yesterday, Kuwait deported 824 workers on charges of participating or instigating strikes over pay hike and other demands.

The press release said Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister assured the foreign adviser that peace-loving and hardworking Bangladeshi workers will not suffer because of faults of a few.

The allegations surfaced as Kuwait set a minimum wage of Kuwaiti Dinar 40 without any deduction for foreign workers doing menial jobs on August 4 following a series of strikes by Bangladeshi workers. The Kuwaiti government also warned that companies which

fail to honour the new minimum wage rules will be prosecuted.

Dr Mohammad Sabah, also Kuwait's foreign minister, said he would invite the foreign adviser for a visit to Kuwait in a convenient time.

In their complaint, the workers of a company said that about eight of their colleagues were arrested after their company informed the authorities that they were involved in the labour unrest, the embassy official said.

It was learned that Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury is likely to visit Kuwait soon, even it may be sometime this month, the release said.

"The workers say their arrested colleagues have nothing to do with the incidents and as such they should be freed. They also said that some workers were picked up from their workplace," he added.

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WEATHER TODAY

Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy rainfalls are also likely at places during the period, Met Office said, predicting slightly rise day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 34.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 23.8 degrees Celsius at Sandwip.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:37pm today and rises at 5:31am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 5 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

DHAKA TODAY

Book launching: Academic Press and Publishers Library (APPL) and Dhaka Language Club (DLC) will organise the launching ceremony of the books 'Power politics in the Asia-Pacific: The case of Chinese modernisation' and 'Selected papers on security and leadership' by Lt Gen Mohd Aminul Karim.

Literary evening: Somy Prakashan organises its fortnightly literary evening in participation of writers and readers. Venue: The Cafe C Square, Plaza AR, Dhanmondi. Time: 5:00pm.

Founding anniversary: Dania Library celebrates stepping into its 20th year. Venue: Tizart Tower auditorium, Dania. Time: 10:00am.

Award giving ceremony: The award giving ceremony of Inter Services Kirat and Azan Competition 2008 will be held. Venue: Sailors' Colony Mosque. Time: 11:45am.

Crack Platoon: The recorded interviews of the members of the Crack Platoon, a famous guerrilla team during the liberation war in 1971, will be handed over to Liberation War Museum. Venue: Museum auditorium. Time: 5:00pm.

Seminar: The weekly Oporadh Bichitra organises a seminar titled 'Where is Bangladesh's democracy going?' Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Discussion: Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) will hold a discussion on the financial condition of the indigenous community to

MISAPPROPRIATION CASE ACC to submit final report against Tariqul, 2 others today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Assistant Director of Jessore Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) office Wazed Ali Gazi will submit the final report of a misappropriation case against ex-minister Tariqul Islam and two others any time today to the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Mostafizur Rahman.

The chief judicial magistrate will officially receive the final report and later send it to the District and Sessions Judge Court today, said a source of Jessore Kotwali Police Station.

The joint forces raided the house of Ansar Ali Lashkar in Ghop area under Jessore Kotwali Police Station on March 3 last year and recovered 16 pieces of corrugated iron (CI) sheets meant for distribution among the destitute.

The CI sheets were given by the former minister in September 2006 to BNP activist Abdur Rashid Mona. Mona later sold them in black market instead of distributing the sheets among the destitute in Ghop area.

Project Implementation Officer of Jessore Sadar upazila Md Nazrul Islam lodged a first information report (FIR) on the same night as complainant with Jessore Kotwali Police Station naming Tariqul Islam, Abdur Rashid Mona and Ansar Ali as the accused.

ACC Investigation Officer Wazed Ali Gazi is going to submit the final report with permission from his Dhaka head office as no evidence could be obtained in support of the case during the investigation.

One of the three accused Abdur Rashid Mona died during the investigation of the case.



Farida Hasan passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Former BNP lawmaker Begum Farida Hasan passed away due to various complications at Apollo Hospitals in the city yesterday at the age of 78.

Farida, also a former adviser to the BNP Chairperson, was a lawmaker from a reserved seat in Dhaka district in 1991-96.

She is survived by her one son and one daughter. She was the wife of Saiful Hasan, a martyred intellectual in Sylhet.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Sangsad Bhaban complex at 11:00am today. She will be buried at her grandfather's home at Korotia in Tangail.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain condoned the death and said the country has lost an honest and dedicated leader at her death.

He conveyed his sympathy to members of the bereaved family.

M Saleem Ullah: M Saleem Ullah, a Supreme Court lawyer, died of cancer at Birdem Hospital in the city on August 3 at the age of 57.

He left behind his parents, wife, a son and a daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was buried at Shaheed Buddhijibi Graveyard at Mirpur.

A doa mahfil will be held today after Asar prayer at 673, West Ibrahimpur, Dhaka (near Kafur Police Station).

Death anniversary: Today is the 22nd death anniversary of Prof Motiz Ullah Kabir, the first pro-vice chancellor of Dhaka University, says

a press release.

His family members have requested his relatives, friends and admirers to pray for the salvation of his departed soul.