

Establish nat'l board on climate change

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday called on the government to establish a 'National Board on Climate Change' to prepare climate-resilient development plans.

They also urged the government not to take loans from the developed countries to combat climate change. Rather, Bangladesh should receive compensatory grants, they added.

The Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL) organised the press conference in the

city ahead of the Bangladesh-UK climate change conference where the government will present a development strategy paper.

Bangladesh is expecting to get multi-donor climate change funds at the conference. But the country should receive the funds as grants not as loan, said Dr Ahsan Uddin, executive director of the Centre for Global Change.

He also urged the government to raise the issue of climate refugees at the conference.

Ziaul Haq Mukta, executive director of CSRL, said the National Board on Climate

Change should be comprised of experts from government and non-government sectors and it should be attached to the Prime Minister's office.

The board should also facilitate the allocation of funds to all stakeholders, he added.

CSRL member AMM Badrul Hasan chaired the session while Farida Yasmin of BLAST, Rokeya Rafiq Baby, executive director of Karmajibi Nari, and Monjur Ahmed were present at the press conference held at the National Press Club.

RMG workers demand Eid bonus, dues by Ramadan 25

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Labour leaders yesterday demanded payment of Eid bonus and salaries and other dues by 25th of Ramadan and urged the garment owners to stop night shift duty of workers during this holy month.

They called on the concerned authorities to meet their four-point demand within the timeframe.

Labour leaders said this at a press conference organised by National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF) at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium yesterday with its President Shahida Sirkar in the chair.

General Secretary of the federation Amirul Huq Amin presented a keynote paper at the programme.

The leaders said they will hand over memoranda to the chief inspector of mills factories and the labour director of concerned department on September 12 to ensure their payments, including Eid bonus.

RMG sector alone earns 76 percent of total foreign remittance of the country but interests of the workers in the sector have been ignored so far, they added.

NGWF Secretary Amirul Huq Amin said, "Most of the workers in the sector are women and hailed from remote villages. About 25 lakh women workers toil in around 45000 RMG factories all the year round, but most of the factories do not pay them any Eid bonus. Some pay half month's salary and some pay quarter month's salary as Eid bonus instead of a full month's salary bonus."

Garments workers are not granted any leave as per labour law to visit their family members and dear ones in the villages and even they do not get spare amount to spend on the purpose, he added.

The speakers said most of the workers cannot even prepare a pretty dish on Eid day which is very ironic to them being the part of the largest foreign currency earner in the country.

The four-point demand includes payment of Eid bonus and other bills within 25th of Ramadan, after allowance of Tk 25 per day, stopping night shift duty during Ramadan and full or half payment of the salary of September before Eid.

Vice President Nurul Naher, Joint Secretary Arifa Akhter and Publicity Secretary Mohammad Anwar Parvez addressed the press conference.



Barogram Unnayan Sangstha forms a human chain on Rampura Bridge in the city yesterday demanding steps to curb pollution of rivers Narai, Debdholai and Balu.

Work towards socio-economic development

Ansar VDP DG urges officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ansar and Village Defense Party (VDP) Director General Maj Gen Abdul Hafiz urged the high officials of the body to work efficiently and tenaciously for the socio-economic development and to improve law and order situation across the country.

He said this at the concluding ceremony of a two-day conference of range commanders, district adjutants and battalion commanders at Ansar VDP Academy in Gazipur on Monday.

He discussed with the officials about overall developments of the force and seeks their opinion in this regard.

He also assured the officials to solve the problems they are facing. Directors of the force, commandant academy, respective range commanders, district adjutants and battalion commanders were present at the conference.

Install water treatment plants at Rampura

Locals demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People from 36 villages of eastern Dhaka yesterday demanded the government install water treatment plant at Rampura pump station to save them from water pollution.

Around 600 people held a rally and formed a human chain at Rampura Bridge protesting the pumping of polluted water at Narai, Debdholai and Balu rivers.

Participants at the rally said that around 30 lakh people in 36 villages, including Nasirabad, Shekherjaiga, Bigdia, Nagdarpur, Gouranagar, Daserkandi, Baburjaiga, Idarkandi, Balurpar, Layanhati, Trimohini, Dakkhingao and Uttar Manikdoo have become the most polluted areas due to pumping untreated water through Rampura pump station.

They also said that wastes of Banani, Gulshan, Madartek, Bashabo, Badda, Mugdappara, Elephant road, Karwan Bazar, Maghbazar, Kalabagan, Kathalbag, Rampura, Kamalapur and Tejgaon industrial areas are draining water into Narai, Debdholai and Balu rivers polluting the 36 villages.

Dr Badiul Alam Majumder, country director of The Hunger Project, said every citizen has the right to live in

a pollution-free environment but the government has failed to provide pollution free environment and water.

Suruj Mian, president of Borogram Unnayan Sangstha, said 15 years ago they used to bath in the water of Narai and Debdholai canals but today the water is so polluted that they can't even touch it.

He suggested installing treatment plants at the Rampura pump station for safeguarding 30 lakh people of the locality from pollution.

'Withdraw ban on truck, covered van movement in daytime'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Truck-Covered Van Malik Samity demanded withdrawal of restrictions on movement of trucks and covered vans in daytime in city roads.

The president and general secretary of the organisation made the demand in a press release yesterday.

They said without adequate flyovers or underpasses and planned city roads, traffic jam could not be solved by imposing restriction on movement of vehicles in daytime.

Followers of specific ideology main victims of extrajudicial killings: NGK

DU CORRESPONDENT

Neeti Gobeshona Kendra (NGK), a non-governmental research centre, yesterday expressed its satisfaction over the formation of a new human rights commission, says a press release.

The spate of extrajudicial killings is on the rise in the country even during the tenure of the caretaker government, it said, adding that the followers of a specific political ideology are the main victims of such killings.

"Law enforcement agencies are killing leaders and activists of a specific political ideology in crossfire attaching the labels of 'terrorists' to them," the statement added.

It would be difficult on part of the country right now to play its role as a member in Human Rights Council, the top rights watchdog of the United Nations, due to the ongoing political oppression here.

The journey of the newly formed human right commission would be hampered if it has to depend on the executive body of the government.

The centre expressed hope that the commission would be run based on 'Paris Principle' model.

UK iterates support for free, fair polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British High Commissioner Stephen Evans reiterated his support for government and Election Commission efforts to hold a free and fair general election in December.

Speaking after a meeting with Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury at the foreign ministry yesterday, Evans said he called on Iftekhar to discuss the upcoming UN General Assembly (UNGA) and his visit to Britain later this month.

The British envoy said the elections briefly came up in their discussions, during which they reiterated their support for the government.

Evans told reporters they discussed global issues, such as climate change, security and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), that might come up in the upcoming UNGA in New York. The UNGA will be attended by Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and British Foreign Secretary David Miliband.

He also said that he is due to return to Britain later this month, when he will meet British-Bangladesh Community members in London, Birmingham and Manchester, along with a host of other cities.

In a press statement, Iftekhar

said, "The UK will raise the level of its development cooperation to Bangladesh soon, and this will have further positive impact on our excellent existing relations."

Tac continues hearing of clemency seekers

UNB, Dhaka

The Truth and Accountability Commission (Tac) continued its hearings on the pleas of clemency seekers as it held hearing on four more cases on the second day.

According to sources, the three-member commission, headed by Justice Habibur Rahman Khan, heard two cases involving two engineers of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority and their wives.

Tac would not disclose their names and other details citing confidentiality.

On the opening day of hearings on Monday, Tac heard the pleas of seven persons involving in four cases.

The commission is scheduled to hear the cases of six persons, including officials from Chittagong Port Authority and forest department today.



National Garments Workers Federation leader Amirul Huq speaks at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium yesterday.

CA takes iftar with orphans, Ulemas

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed took his iftar with Ulemas and orphans yesterday.

The chief adviser hosted the iftar in honour of Ulema (Islamic thinkers) and orphans at the Chief Adviser Bhaban at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

He exchanged pleasantries with the guests. A munajat was offered before the iftar.

Advisers and special assistants to the chief adviser also attended the iftar.



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