

US, EC sign MoU to protect Sundarbans environment

BSS, Dhaka

The United States government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the European Commission (EC) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) yesterday to continue joint activities in the natural resources and protected area management sector in Bangladesh.

USAID and the EC will work together to implement and monitor progress of the Sundarbans Environmental and Livelihood Security Project (SEALS), with 7.5 million euro from the EC, and the Integrated Protected Area Co-management Project (IPAC), with a USAID project grant of US\$15.5 million.

At a signing ceremony at the European Commission office, Ambassador Stefan Frowin, head of Delegation of the EC to Bangladesh and Denise Rollins, Mission Director of USAID Bangladesh, signed the MoU to facilitate work on collaborative natural resource and protected area management programmes in Bangladesh, particularly in the Sundarbans, in line with the government of Bangladesh's policy and programmes.

These five-year projects include the creation of various alternate income generation opportunities for people living in and around the Sundarbans and infrastructure rehabilitation in the cyclone Sidr-affected areas.

Other project activities include promoting conservation of the Sundarbans Reserve Forest, including the Sundarbans East, Sundarbans South, and Sundarbans West Wildlife Sanctuaries, and helping people living in these areas adapt to the impact of global climate change.

The US government has a long commitment to helping Bangladesh recover from disasters, escape from the unending cycle of poverty, and to strengthen its democracy, said a release. Through USAID, the US government's assistance to Bangladesh includes support for a return to democracy through free, fair and credible elections and more transparent and accountable governance, the release said.

US assistance to Bangladesh also helps to foster a better educated, healthier and more productive population, increase economic opportunities through equitable economic growth (including energy, private sector competitiveness and conservation), and enhance food security and improved disaster preparation and mitigation.

DU SM HALL 5 BCL activists hurt in intra-party clash

DU CORRESPONDENT

Five activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of Awami League (AL), were injured in a factional clash at Salimullah Muslim (SM) Hall of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday.

Of them, two activists Saikat and Shafin were critically injured and rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Later, Saikat was shifted to Orthopedic Hospital in the city.

Sources said Sumon and his group attacked Saikat and his men with iron rods, wood sticks and machete in front of the hall gate at around 7.00pm.

Sumon, an alleged fake student of the university, and his men brutally beat Saikat with machete.

They cut the veins of Saikat's leg and left hand with machete, sources added.

A conflict between Sumon, known as a supporter of BCL DU unit President Sohel Rana Tipu, and Saikat, a fellow of DU unit General Secretary Sajjad Saib Badsha, had been continuing over the hegemony of the hall compound.

Last week, fellows of Sumon and Saikat were engaged in a clash over the allocation of rooms among their supporters in the hall.

Four bombs also exploded after the clash.

Tension was prevailing on the hall compound as of filing this report at 9.30 last night.

ACC boss

FROM PAGE 1

Mahmudur Rahman may have resulted from complaints about anti-graft drives.

Rejecting the allegations, he said he would not file any defamation case at this moment but would fight if the matter goes to legal stage.

Hasan Mashhud denied Mahmudur's allegation of illegally legalising establishments at Defence Officers' Housing Society (DOHS) in Mohakhali, saying everything was done in accordance with the rules of cantonment.

"I want to state it plainly that the allegations brought against me are not true in any way. You can get information from Trust Bank Ltd on the matter that took place four years ago," he said at a press briefing at the ACC headquarters yesterday.

On Saturday, Mahmudur Rahman attempted to file a case against the ACC chief on charge of laundering Tk 20.29 crore from Trust Bank.

Ramna police refused to record the case, saying they are not the appropriate police station to do it while Motijheel police also refused Mahmudur Rahman, saying his complaint lacks Bangladesh Bank approval.

"Somebody might have complaints about our drives against corruption. And the allegation might have resulted out of it," he told reporters when asked why such an allegation was brought against him.

"The allegation is one-sided. Time has not come yet to look into the matter or think about it deeply," he said in reply to a question about the possibility of filing any defamation case.

Asked if the allegation will make his position as the ACC chief untenable, Hasan Mashhud said, "Not at all. The fight against graft is not supposed to end so easily. Anybody can bring allegation against anyone. If you do not refute the allegations, it might be taken for granted that they are true. But the chance should not be given... And definitely I will fight legally."

He also brushed aside any allegation regarding his influence over police for not recording the case.

"The bank incurred the loss at that time following mistakes of some bank officials in the foreign currency exchange sector," he said, adding that an investigation was conducted and two cases were filed in this connection.

Asked if any responsibility lies upon him for the loss, he said, "Trust Bank has to take the responsibility. You can check Bangladesh Bank rules and regulations to see what the responsibilities of a chairman or a managing director of a bank are."

The ACC chief, however, mentioned that if the matter of money laundering were taken before the commission, it would look into the allegations. "But it has to be confirmed earlier whether money laundering has taken place or not," he added.

"There is nothing to hide regarding this matter because a few newspapers carried reports on it at that time," he said.

Replying to a question on his role, as reported by a newspaper, in legalising illegal establishments at DOHS, Hasan Mashhud said, "The DOHS committee took a decision regarding the houses built in that area violating rules... It is better to have compensation to regularise an illegal matter rather than accepting it permanently." The cantonment has its official system to regularise such activities, he added.

Asked if it was right to legalise illegal establishments for compensation and if there should be different laws in a country for different quarters, he said, "I do not think our rule should be maintained everywhere. Authorities concerned can take decision in this regard."



Awami League presidium member Motia Chowdhury speaks at a meeting of Chittagong north unit of the party at Muslim Hall in the port city yesterday.

Cops identify 19 DU students

FROM PAGE 16

He also said police would conduct investigation their own way. After the incident, the DU authorities filed a case with Shahbagh Police Station against 150-160 people. The authorities also formed a four-member probe committee to identify the people responsible and expelled two DU students on charge of vandalising the VC Office.

Meanwhile, Madrasa Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakhan Committee at a rally on DU campus yesterday threatened to paralyse all universities including the DU if the new admission conditions in seven departments are not cancelled by November 1.

After the incident, madrasa students under the banners of Madrasa Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakhan Committee and Bangladesh Madrasa Chhatra Andolon Parishad at several rallies

demanded cancellation of the new admission conditions introduced by university's seven departments that made madrasa students ineligible for admission to those departments.

When asked why they are not arresting them, OC Rezaul said, "We cannot arrest any student at the university without permission of the university authorities and the police high-ups."

"High police officials are discussing the issue with the university authorities. We shall go for action after receiving directives from our high-ups", Rezaul said adding that the process of arresting the students involved in the vandalism is underway.

However, DU Proctor Prof AK Feroz Ahmed told reporters that they do not know anything about the police naming 19 DU students as involved in the vandalism.

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Human chain protests removal

FROM PAGE 16

Eminent writer and columnist Syed Abul Maksud, academician Prof Ajoy Roy, politician Ajoy Roy, human rights activist Hamida Hossain, former MP Col (ret) Shawkat Ali and representatives of left leaning parties and student bodies also took part.

"We are fighting against the evil force that is trying to destroy our culture and heritage... we cannot let it happen, we cannot let them destroy the thousand-year-old heritage of the nation," said Prof Murshid.

Maksud said, "The removal of the sculptures was not an isolated incident, rather it was part of a long-term conspiracy of the communal evil force, who use religion to achieve political gains, against our culture and achievements."

"They (the communal evil force) are deliberately trying to destroy the composite culture of the Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians in the country and their motive is to make the country a theocratic and fundamentalist state," he said.

He said they will continue with their movement and will declare programmes within two to three days.

A number of academicians,

students of Dhaka University and activists of cultural organisations under the banner of Bhashkarja Rakhya Andolan, a movement to protect sculptures, will march towards the Airport intersection on October 30. They, during a press conference yesterday, demand installation of better-quality statues at the intersection roundabout that reflect the Liberation War and the folk culture of the country.

Bhashkarja Rakhya Andolan also demands trial of war criminals, modernisation of the madrasa curriculum and a ban on religion-based politics.

Five sculptures of Bauls were installed at the roundabout but removed on October 15 following pressure from an Islamist group.

Eminent educationist Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury at the press conference said those people are not fanatics, they are using religion in political interest.

"Religion trade is a business that does not require capital, people of the country are pious and the evil forces are trying to capitalise their sentiment to gain their political interest by distorting religion," he said.

General Secretary of Dhaka University Teachers Association (Duta) Prof Anwar Hossain said the

removal of the sculptures was not a stray incident; vandalism of DU Vice-Chancellor's Office by madrasa students, open movement of 'fugitive' Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and his taking part in the government dialogue were the audacities of anti-liberation war forces.

He accused the two large political parties of the country of not being clear in their stance regarding the incident.

Sammilito Sangskritik Jote General Secretary Golam Kuddus at the conference said they would hold a convention on October 8 and bring in cultural activists from across the country.

Dhaka University Prof MMAKash, Prof Saiful Islam, Hafizur Rahman Karzon, Group Theatre Federation Secretary General Jhuna Chowdhury, Sculptor Rassha, Bangladesh Chhatra League Dhaka University unit President Sohel Rana Tipu, Bangladesh Chhatra Union General Secretary Manabendra Dev were also present at the press conference.

Cultural activists of Dinaipur yesterday protested the removal of Baul sculpture at Airport intersection by forming one-kilometre-long human chain in and around Dinaipur Government College.

Punishment to killers of FF Sajjad demanded

RU CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred freedom fighters submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner of Rajshahi yesterday demanding immediate arrest and punishment to the killers of freedom fighter Sajjad Hossain.

Identified cadres of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Shibir beat the freedom fighter to death when he was distributing zakat and fitra money among the poor on October 5.

He fell victim to the wrath of Jamaat-Shibir cadres for not donating the money to an institution run by them.

Freedom fighters of different units of Muktijoddha Sangsad and Muktijoddha Mancho gathered in front of the DC office and submitted the memorandum to Shefaul Karim.

The freedom fighters said the Sajjad's killing is not a sudden incident, it was a pre-planned one, adding that the investigation officer (IO) of the case showed his mysterious behaviour as he mentioned in his post mortem report that Sajjad was killed for another reason.

They urged the DC to immediately remove the IO from the case and re-investigate the report. They threatened to go for a tougher movement if the killers of Sajjad go unpunished.

Later, the freedom fighters held a protest rally at central Shaheed Minar in Rajshahi court area and demanded punishment to the killers and trial of war criminals under a speedy trial tribunal.

The fundamentalist forces are making a fresh blueprint to kill freedom fighters and progressive-minded people in the country, speakers said.

Rajshahi district unit of Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangsad Commander Nazrul Islam Khoka, City unit Commander Shafiqur Rahman Raja, Muktijoddha Oikya Parishad Divisional Coordinator Saidur Rahman, Muktijoddha Mancho Convener Abdul Matin and Muktijoddha Rajshahi Research Centre President Mahtab Uddin addressed the rally.

Freedom fighter Mahtab Uddin told newsmen that the DC assured them to taking necessary steps in this regard.

Chinese women delegation due next month

BSS, Dhaka

A five-member Chinese women delegation from All China Women's Federation will pay a goodwill visit to Bangladesh from November 19 to 23 at the invitation of Bangladesh-China People's Friendship Association.

During their visit, the delegation will meet the leaders of the women organisations and visit different places of Bangladesh, a press release said yesterday.

'Make Dhaka modern, livable'

Business leaders support Abdul Awal Mintoo as mayoral candidate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Business community of Dhaka city at a view exchange meeting yesterday proposed the name of former president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Abdul Awal Mintoo as the mayoral candidate for Dhaka City Corporation.

Addressing the meeting on 'What kind of Dhaka we want' organised by the local businessmen at Biam auditorium in the city, the business leaders urged their community to be united to elect their candidate in order to make the city livable, planned and modern.

Mintoo said he has been visiting 460 mohallas of Dhaka city, out of 690 ones in the last 10 years and found the places unlivable, adding that, "I will work to make the city

modern and livable." FBCCI President Anisul Haq said the people of Dhaka city will be around 40 million, but the city since the beginning has been growing in an unplanned way but it did not get a leader so far who had a prudence to make the city in a planned way.

"We want a leader who has a new and innovative vision and has a plan to make the city modern," he added.

Expressing his support for Mintoo, Anis said he has 100 percent support personally for Mintoo as a candidate of Dhaka mayor, not as the president of FBCCI.

He called on the business community to keep the politicians away from the race of mayoral election and also urged the two major political parties not to give nominations to any politicians.

The business leaders placed a 30-point demand to the government including ensuring pure drinking water and sewerage system, clean Dhaka, clean drains, manhole with lids, sufficient public toilets, field in every school, sufficient flyovers and underground railways to ease gridlock, modern communication system and traffic management to reduce the traffic congestion.

The meeting was presided over by Abdus Salam of Bangladesh Paint Design and Chemical Merchant Association.

Director of FBCCI Anwar Hossain, former director FBCCI Enayet Hossain Chowdhury, former directors ASM Kamal Uddin and Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury and Bangladesh Dokan Malik Samity Chairman Amir Hossain Khan also addressed the meeting.

Ex-AL lawmaker Shafiullah passes away

UNB, Chandpur

M Shafiullah, former Awami League lawmaker and freedom fighter, passed away at his Koralia residence in the town on Saturday night at the age of 68.

Shafiulla, president of District Awami League, was elected member of parliament from Chandpur-5 (Faridganj) constituency.

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

The first namaz-e-janaza for Shafiulla was held in the town and second one in Faridganj upazila Sadar.

He was buried with state honour at his family graveyard in Barapaika village in Faridganj upazila after third janaza at his native village yesterday morning.

AL presidium member Abdur Razzaque attended the janaza.

Death anniversary METRO DESK



Today is the 1st death anniversary of Hafizuddin Khan, founder president of Shariatpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa and milad mahfil will be held at his Wari residence in the city after Asr prayers on Friday.



BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain addresses a meeting of the four-party alliance at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

'Future of green is not so black'

AFP, Paris

The deepening economic crisis may appear to be the perfect storm for environmentalism, but many in and around the green movement contend the opposite, seeing in it a time of opportunity.

The conventional view is this: willingness to protect the environment is wedded to prosperity.

When times get tough, people tighten their belts - so their eagerness to switch to renewable energy, buy a more fuel-efficient

car or promote forest conservation melts faster than organic ice cream in the Sahara.

Environmentalists and observers of green issues are not deaf to this argument. Indeed, many fear backtracking on a colossal scale at the upcoming UN talks on global warming, unfolding in Poznan, Poland, in December.

But these voices also say that conventional wisdom is flawed in many ways, sometimes unexpectedly so.

WEATHER TODAY Moderate rain likely UNB, Dhaka. Table with 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 Seminar: A seminar will be held on 'Natural gas in Bangladesh: Demand and supply spectrum'. View exchange meeting: Steps Towards Development organises a view exchange meeting on equal rights of women in politics. Talk: Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) organises a talk on 'The Commonwealth: Current priorities, future directions'. Lecture: Nobel laureates Prof Richard R Ernst will deliver a lecture on 'My pathway into science and beyond'.