Formation of climate change cells at ministries underway

CS Karim tells workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

PHOTO: STAR

Adviser CS Karim Speaks at a workshop at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Raja Devasish Roy and UNDP Climate Change Adviser Maria Netto and on his left is AHM Rezaul Kabir.

Agriculture and Water Resources Adviser CS Karim at a workshop yesterday said the cells for climate change impacts are being formed at different ministries to bring this major issue into the mainstream.

He underlined the importance of new technologies to face the climate change impacts, saying: "I think no countries could avoid them from the suffering of climate change. We have to be very careful while addressing our problems."

The adviser said this at the two-day workshop on 'Climate change policy making and negotiation' organised by environment and forest ministry at the National Press Club in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, CS Karim said solar energy can be used in household areas, but power energy will have to be centrally developed for industries.

Three ministries -- environment and forest, agriculture and water resources -- have already formed the cells for climate change impacts, while the three other ministries -- food and disaster management, local government and health -- will form the cells very soon.

Special Assistant to Chief Adviser Raja Devasish Roy said the government has formed a multi-donor trust fund to mobilise £75 million from the world community to support the country's efforts to mitigate and adapt to the climate change impacts.

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Country Director Dr Ainun Nishat said climate change will increase temperature, decrease availability of fresh water, contribute to the rise in sea level, glacial melting in the Himalayas, increased frequency and intensity of extreme events, and shifting of cropping zones in South Asia affecting agriculture and food sector, economy, societies as well as environment.

Environment and Forest Secretary AHM Rezaul Kabir said, "We need external assistance. We are trying to mobilise funds from our own resources."

He expressed hope that international community will extend wholehearted support in the implementation of Bangladesh Climate Change Action Plan.

Financial assistance, technological cooperation and technology transfer will assist people to adapt to the new environment responsible for climate change, said Dr Asaduzzaman of BIDS.

Dr Atiq Rahman, Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, Mortuza Ahmed, Mustain Billah and Shireen Kamal Sayeed also took part in the programme.

PHOTO: STAR

(From right) Dutch Ambassador Bea M ten Tusscher, Italian Ambassador Itala Occhi and Swedish Ambassador Britt F Hagstrom call on Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina at Sudha Sadan in the city yesterday.

DDCH comes to standstill following student strike

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

All activities at Dhaka Dental College and Hospital (DDCH) have come to a standstill following student strike over an arrest warrant issued by a Dhaka Court against seven students in connection with a murder incident two years ago.

In protest against the arrest warrant, around 500 students have been on strike since November 5.

As a result, patients coming to seek treatment at the hospital in Mirpur-14 from different parts of the capital and its outskirts are going back without any treatment.

Even the students coming to collect admission forms are also returning with a heavy heart.

"As I knew that the admission forms would be sold here from November 1 to 20, I came here today (Tuesday) to collect form. But the authorities said they have stopped selling forms in the face of strong agitation of students," said Mohammad Shourav, an admission seeker.

"The authorities have however told me that as soon as the strike will be over, they would start selling forms," he added.

Like Shourav, many admission seekers were seen going back with despair due to failure to collect forms from the public dental college.

Like the admission seekers, some 200 patients on an average every day are forced to go back without getting any treatment at the DDCH as the outdoor service of the hospital has been halted.

A day labourer Lal Mia, 40, came from Gazipur following infection in his teeth as the local dentist referred him to the DDCH saying that it might be cancerous if not treated immediately.

"It would be very expensive if I go to a private clinic or hospital. What can I do now?" he asked helplessly.

While talking to The Daily Star, DDCH Principal Prof Muhammad Zakir Hossain said classes have been halted since November 5 following the strike.

However, some examinations took place on Tuesday and some patients were also treated in the hospital, he claimed.

He hoped that the situation will be normal within a very short time and the authorities are also trying to resolve the issue.

The students on strike, however, said they would continue their agitation until the case is withdrawn.

They said two years back, a thief was killed by the mob at their dormitory at Sobhanbagh under Mohammadpur Police Station.

The students chased the thief as he stole their belongings from the dormitory but he was lynched by the mob, they added.

The police filed a case against some 35/40 resident students of the hostel in 2006 and the Detective Branch filed a charge sheet with the court two months ago.

Recently a Dhaka Court issued an arrest warrant against seven students.

Terming the case 'false', the students said they were not involved in the incident and the college teachers, officers and employees also have expressed their solidarity with the demand of the students.

Prof Dr Shefayet Ullah, director of Medical Education at DG Health Office, visited the college on Sunday and talked to the students for resolving the stalemate.

Meanwhile, the agitating students yesterday formed a human chain along the road stretching from college campus to Mirpur-10 to press home their demands.

One murdered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A shop employee was stabbed to death by unidentified criminals at Abul Hasnat Road under Kotwali Police Station in the city on Tuesday night.

The victim was identified as Dulal Miah, 20, an employee of Dhaka Broiler House at Abul Hasnat Road.

Police said after he was stabbed at his throat at about 11:00pm, he ran into the house of one Mahbubul Alam where he died upon the stairs.

The body was recovered and sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue.

Police, however, could not ascertain the cause behind the murder.

PHOTO: STAR

The Bengal Tours Ltd Managing Director Matiur Rahman and owner of I Viaggi di Maurizio Levi Levi Maurizio sign a memorandum of understanding on behalf their respective organisations at a city hotel last night. (Story on Page 2)

DETENTION OF ABBAS, BABAR

HC rule on govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued rules upon the government to show cause as to why the orders of detention against former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas and former state minister for home affairs Lutfozzaman Babar "should not be declared illegal". Upon separate writ petitions filed by Abbas and Babar, two division benches of the HC passed the orders.

One HC bench gave the government eight days to explain detention of Abbas while another granted 10 days for explanation in Babar's case. The bench comprising Justice Tariq ul Hakim and Justice Farah Mahbub issued a rule following a petition filed by Abbas challenging the validity of the detention order. Meanwhile, an HC division bench comprising Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui, following a petition filed by Babar challenging his detention order, also issued an identical rule upon the government. On October 30, the government held back Abbas in prison by issuing a one-month detention order against him just before his release from jail on bail in all the cases. The government on October 26 issued a 30-day detention order, when he was about to be set free on bail from Dhaka Central Jail.

Arrested from his Gulshan residence with illegal firearms on May 28 last year amid a crackdown on the politicians, Babar was sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment in an arms case.

On October 16, the High Court, upon pending appeal against verdict of the lower court, granted Babar interim bail for six months on health grounds.

BRIBERY CHARGE

BGSL staff caught red-handed

CU CORRESPONDENT

The officials of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chittagong caught a Bakhrabad Gas Systems Limited (BGSL) official red-handed while taking bribes from a contractor in the port city yesterday noon.

They also picked up a colleague of the corrupt official for possessing a 1000-taka note which was used to trap the bribe recipient.

The BGSL officials were identified as assistant managers Syed Salah Uddin Ahmed and Nurul Islam. They both were working for the company's sales division in Agrabad area.

Sources said Salah Uddin demanded Tk 13,000 as bribes for signing 28 files of gas connections from BGSL contractor Aurangajeb Babul around one and a half months' ago.

The contractor paid an advance of Tk 7,000 and promised to pay the rest after the gas connections are given. But as the BGSL official neither signed the files nor gave the gas connections, Babul informed the ACC officials of the matter.

The ACC officials sent Babul to pay the rest of the bribes in ten 500-taka notes and one 1000-taka note after keeping records of them at around 12:00pm.

They were on the scene immediately after Salah Uddin took the bribes and caught him red-handed, sources added.

ACC Chittagong Director Major Julfiker Ali Majumder said, "We were waiting at the company office for around one hour and a half and following the movement of its officials. We caught Salah Uddin and Nurul Islam immediately after they had taken the bribes."

"We found Tk 5,000 and Tk 1,000 in the pockets of Salah Uddin and Nurul Islam respectively. Nurul Islam claimed to have taken the 1000-taka note in exchange. We (ACC) are investigating the matter," he added.

Sources said the ACC caught a manager and an assistant engineer of the same office red-handed on the same charges around six months ago.

PHOTO: STAR

Artiste Tamanna Rahman and her troupe perform a dance at the inaugural ceremony of the 2nd Indigenous Drama Festival at Shilpakala Academy in the city yesterday.

Poverty compels Parveen to take her life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family of three often has to go days without food because of extreme poverty. They managed to collect some food last Saturday the day Parveen, the 20-year-old member of the family, committed suicide by setting herself on fire at their house at Lalbagh in the city.

"My daughter took her life failing to bear the pangs of hunger. We had some food on Thursday noon before we could manage some food on Saturday," said a grieving Rasheda Begum.

Parveen Akhter Sohagi, who also had been suffering from respiratory problems, set fire to herself after pouring kerosene over her body in their only room in the afternoon when she was alone there.

Acute financial hardship has made the lives of Parveen and her parents utterly miserable.

Continuous pressure from moneylenders, starvation for days together and failure to afford medicines for her sick parents compelled Parveen to take her life, said her relatives and neighbours.

"We hardly saw them cooking food in their house. All the three have been suffering from respiratory problems. And they did not have any stable source of income," said Laili Begum, a next door neighbour.

Parveen's father Ahmedullah Faruq, who worked at a plastic factory, has been suffering from various diseases and has been almost bedridden for the last one month. Her mother, who is also suffering from various diseases, is unable to do any work for a living.

"My daughter often complained to me that she can no longer endure such extreme poverty as moneylenders continue to pressure him to pay back money. But I failed to protect her," said Faruq, with tears rolling down his face.

"When I screamed with my chest pain, Parveen cried as she could not manage to buy medicine for me," he said.

Perveen's family owes money to most neighbours and relatives and they had none to turn to for money. They also owe money to groceries in local markets, said Perveen's neighbours.

Besides, Perveen's parents still owe Tk 20,000 to local micro-credit providing organisations. Pressure from the organisations to pay back the loans made their life miserable, the neighbours said.

Amena Begum, the owner of the house, said Parveen's family did not pay last four months' house rent amounting to Tk 5,000.

'Include issue of women empowerment in election manifesto'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday urged the political parties to include the issue of women empowerment in their election manifesto.

Nari Oikya Mancha organised the press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) auditorium in the city.

While presenting the keynote paper on behalf of the organisation, Nasreen Awal Mintu, president of Women Entrepreneurs' Association of Bangladesh, placed a 14-point recommendation before the political parties.

The recommendations include implementation of National Women Development Policy in a more amended form, modifying the national education policy according to gender sensitivity, stern actions against sexual harassments, ensuring the security of women and six-month maternity leave.

They also demanded ensuring active participation of women in politics by nominating more women candidates, formulating laws to eliminate violence against women and their implementation, ensuring equal participation of women in FBCCI and Better Business Forum and establishing women-friendly money lending organisations and banks to encourage women entrepreneurs.

The speakers also stressed the need for recruiting women officials in different ministries and departments, forming women trade bodies, introducing equal wage for men and women and considering domestic labor as part of the national revenue.

Nasima Ferdous, former ambassador, Mahmuda Chowdhury, former ambassador and president of Grassroots Women's Entrepreneurs, Advocate Jubeda Parvin, Banani Biswas, Anita Das Gupta, Chittagong Women Chamber of Commerce and Industries President Monwara Hakim Ali, Mustari Begum, acting president of Jago Nari Foundation, Dina Ahmed, executive director of Banani Banashree Mahila Samity, Abul Hossain, president of Sammilita Sramik Federation, and Nahar Farid Khan, executive director of Maa Foundation, were also present at the programme.

NATIONALISATION OF JOB

Non-govt pry teachers' ultimatum to govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Non-government Primary Teachers Association yesterday reiterated its demand for the nationalisation of their job by November 30.

At a press conference at its office in the city, the association leaders called for immediate correction of the circulated gazette notification with no change in post and salary of the headmaster.

They also demanded clear announcement on the rejection of the decision to put primary education under the Brac authority.

The speakers alleged that the government is avoiding its constitutional responsibilities for primary education by bringing it under non-government sector.

They urged the political parties to include their demands in their election manifestos.

Although previous governments had committed and included the teachers' demand for nationalisation of their job in their election manifestos, none of them materialise the demands after election, they added.

"If the government does not fulfill their demands within the given period, the teachers might abstain from their duties during the parliament and upazila elections," said association President Mohammad Shamsul Alam while reading out the keynote paper.

Association General Secretary Mrigendra Mohan Saha, Organising Secretary Mohammad Saiful Islam, Senior Vice-president Shahidul Islam Khan, Joint General Secretary Jahangir Alam, Office Secretary MA Mannan, Belayet Hossain, Rejaul Karim, Bazlur Rahman, Abinash Sarkar, Rexona Begum, Abu Taleb Chowdhury and Khorshedul Alam also addressed the press conference.