

DEMARCATION OF MARITIME BOUNDARY 'Settle disputes, create separate ministry to protect sea territory'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The new government should attach high priority to settling disputes over demarcation of maritime boundary with India and Myanmar to avert any aggression by external forces, said the experts on sea resources and academics yesterday.

They advocated for creating a separate ministry to protect the sea territory of Bangladesh and fully utilise the sea resources saying that the country's maritime territory, which is around two lakh square kilometers, has so far been remained unused for the disputes.

They made the observations at a press conference organised by the National Committee to Protect Bangladesh's Maritime Territories and Resources at the National Press Club in the capital.

"To settle the maritime dispute, the primary task of the government will be to conduct surveys on the sea claimable by Bangladesh as per the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)," said Commodore (ret'd) Khurshed Alam, member-secretary of the national committee.

He said Bangladesh may lose the control of its own maritime territories if it

fails to make primary claims on the basis of UNCLOS to the UN by 2011.

Bangladesh's Territorial Water & Maritime Zones Act of 1974 was not scientific, he said, adding, "This act should be amended in accordance with the UNCLOS."

Khurshed said the negotiations with Myanmar and India have not been effective since long and this caused conflicts with the two neighbouring countries.

In 1974, Bangladesh allowed six oil companies to explore gas and oil in the Bay, but India intercepted them. Again in 2005, Bangladesh declared 28 blocks in the Bay for oil and gas exploration, but India and Myanmar objected to it.

On the other hand, India and Myanmar have claimed that most of the 28 blocks belong to them and want to establish their claims in various ways.

India has already leased two disputed blocks to international oil companies.

Recently, Myanmar brought their ships in the disputed territory in the Bay creating tension between the two countries.

It is apprehended that Bangladesh will lose a large chunk of maritime territory and will not be able to claim any continental shelf if the claims made by

Myanmar and India on the delimitation of maritime boundary are accepted.

"Bangladesh should follow equity policy unlike India and Myanmar which are following equidistance policy in the delimitation of maritime boundary," said Khurshed in his keynote presentation.

Prof Anu Muhammad said neither the state nor the think tanks or the media have any comprehensive idea about the country's huge sea resources, resulting in the current situation.

"Delimitation of the maritime boundary is very important for our resources, waterways and after all our sovereignty," he said, adding that sea resources are much more than land resources of Bangladesh.

Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury said the issue of maritime boundary must be discussed at length in parliament so that all can become aware of it.

"Huge sea resources should not be allowed to be grabbed by others for our mistakes," he added.

Justice Golam Rabbani, engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah and Dr Akmal Hossain also spoke at the press conference chaired by engineer M Inamul Hoque.



Visitors throng the Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) in their thousands at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city yesterday, the first day of the weekend. The month-long fair began on January 1.



A child looks at drawings by physically and mentally-challenged children at an exhibition marking the fifth founding anniversary of the School for Gifted Children at Biam auditorium in the city yesterday.

Prisoner dies in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A convicted prisoner died of old-age complications at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) yesterday.

The prisoner, Addus Sattar, 73, of Napit Khali village in Pathartghata, fell sick in the Barisal Central Jail on Friday morning, jail and hospital sources said.

He was rushed to hospital where he died in the afternoon. His body would be handed over to his relatives after an autopsy, said jail authority.

Sattar had been sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment in an arms case, jail authorities said.

Change attitude towards children with disabilities

Speakers urge all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday called on all to change their attitude towards the mentally and physically-challenged children and work together to bring them to the mainstream society.

School for Gifted Children (SGC) organised the programme to mark its 5th anniversary at Biam auditorium in the city where a number of artworks drawn by the children were also exhibited.

Speaking as the chief guest, National Prof Dr MR Khan stressed the need to strengthen the special efforts of various organisations and training centres trying to

shape the lives of the children with disabilities.

"If all the initiatives are taken in a collective way, the government would also come forward effectively to help these children," he added.

Dr Khan called on the well-off class of the society to extend their helping hands so that the organisations can spread their initiatives of helping the handicapped and autistic children across the country.

He underlined the importance of becoming more preventive in these cases, rather than just trying to get relieved of the problems, saying, "In these cases, pre- and post-birth periods

should be handled carefully by the parents which might lessen the increasing births of autistic children."

Founder of Centre of the Paralysed (CRP) Valerie Taylor said, "Being more privileged, we have so many things to learn from these children, including how they are trying to learn and demonstrating the lessons what they have learned."

Lauding the initiative to enrol a total of six children to regular education institutions from SGC, she said, "As it is a huge task to take the responsibilities of these special children, all of us should take part in this noble and necessary purpose."

Head of Child Neurology department at BSMMU Prof Mizanur Rahman, CEO of HSBC Bangladesh Sanjay Prakash, British Standard School Vice Principal Badrun Nawazish and SGC Director Marufa Hossain also spoke at the programme.

Community clinic to be built in every village

Says Ruhul

BSS, Sathkira

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr AFM Ruhul Haque on Thursday said the government would take steps soon to build one community clinic in every village in the country.

The present government would also formulate a new health policy to reach health service to the doorsteps of poor, he said while talking to newsmen at the local circuit house.

Ruhul Haque said steps would also be taken to establish a specialised hospital in every divisional city along with increasing the number of beds at district level hospitals.

He said the report published in a section of press about the commitment of Awami League to feed rice at Tk 10 per kg is 'absolutely false'.

"It's mere propaganda of the opposition party," the health minister said, adding that steps would be taken to reduce the prices of essentials, including rice, the staple food of the countrymen.

He said khas land would also be disbursed among the poor.

The health minister also said the government would take a decision on building the Padma Bridge within the tenure of the present government.

Two held with 485 Phensidyl bottles

UNB, Keraniganj

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested two people with 485 bottles of Phensidyl syrup from Ghatarchar village under Keraniganj Model Thana.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-10, raided Ghatarchar area, a drug selling spot, at about 12:00 noon and caught China, 32, and Yunus, 25, along with the banned syrup.

Supply fertiliser at low price for bumper Boro yield

Experts urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a roundtable yesterday said the new government should immediately supply fertilisers at low price by providing subsidies so that farmers can produce bumper Boro paddy in the next season.

They also suggested forming a citizens' committee in every region to find out irregularities in the distribution of fertilisers as well as ways to stop them.

The prices of rice and other essentials cannot be reduced without decreasing the production costs. For this reason, the government will have to ensure sufficient power supply for irrigation, they added.

Bangabandhu Diploma Agriculturists Association organised the roundtable on 'Promises and responsibilities of the new government to control essentials' prices' at the National Press Club in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, noted economist Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said it is the great challenge for the new government to ensure reasonable prices of commodities in the kitchen market.

"It is very difficult to eliminate syndicates who are responsible for skyrocketing

prices of commodities. The government should form a farmers' committee and set up commodity exchange market in every region," he added.

He thanked the government for discussing the rising prices of essentials at its first cabinet meeting and is taking a decision to reduce diesel price.

Chairman Dr Shamannay Channur Dr Atiur Rahman suggested that the new government should give its priority on ensuring the availability of fertilisers in the market.

He also suggested forming a special committee at the Prime Minister's Office who will come out with necessary measures through conducting researches and consulting farmers, agriculture officers, agriculturists and experts.

Prof SM Imamul Haq of Dhaka University said consumer rights law, and essential commodity law will have to be implemented to ensure the prices stable in the market.

Coordination among agriculture, food, land, commerce and environment ministries is very needed to keeping essentials price under common people's ability, he added.

Former adviser to a caretaker government Dhiraj Kumar Nath suggested reor-

ganising the state-owned Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) for reaching low-price essentials to the poor.

Agriculturist Dr MA Nasir, Bangabandhu Diploma Agriculturists Association President Zahir Uddin Mabu and Organising Secretary M Abul Kalam Azad also took part in the programme.

Lindau meeting of Nobel laureates in June

METRO DESK

The annual meeting of Nobel laureates with the young scientists from across the world will be held at Lindau in Germany from June 28 to July 3, says a press release.

This year's meeting is dedicated to chemistry.

Students and young teachers, scientists and researchers who are interested in joining the event are requested to apply online through the website -- www.lindau-bangladesh.org -- by January 31.



Children of Fulkuri Asar form a human chain in front of the High Court yesterday protesting Israeli air strikes on Gaza.

Four killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people were killed and another was shot in separate incidents in the city's Kotwali, Rampura and Jatrabari areas in the last two days.

In Kotwali, a gang of three muggers shot shopkeepers Nihar Ranjan, 45, and his brother Bishwajit, 25, and looted around Tk 20,000 from their stationary shop at Rajar Dewri at around midnight on Thursday.

They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where Bishwajit died at about 3:00am.

Injured Nihar said he could not ascertain the cause behind the attack.

Kotwali police said they were trying to arrest the killers. Meanwhile in Jatrabari, another gang of muggers stabbed iron-grill trader Ruhul Amin to death at Shahid

Faruq Sarani at about 4:00am.

Ruhul Amin's uncle Shah Alam said Ruhul, a trader in Sylhet, was attacked by the muggers when he was going to Sakeshabad from Jatrabari in a rickshaw.

The muggers also took away Tk 30,000 and a cellphone from his possession, he said.

Jatrabari police said they had arrested three of the muggers with the help of local people.

In the city's Rampura area, an alleged criminal was shot dead by unknown criminals at about 8:30pm last night.

The victim, Faridul Islam, 30, died on the spot, the police said.

Meanwhile, Abul Hashem died after he was severely beaten up by his brother and family members at Rajabari in Turag area at about 10:30pm on Thursday.

The Daily Star Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

Linking Young Minds Together

The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views. Star Campus is an endeavour to bring into the center stage the visionary aspects of our college and university students, alongside their lifestyle, cultural trends, and their multidimensional talents. Star Campus is a magazine broadly based on campus life! It contains articles, academic news, achievements, travelogues, interviews, book reviews, quiz, milestones, academic tips, profiles of educational institutes, cultural and extra-curricular activities in campus, jokes, cartoons, photographs and much more. This is a magazine of the Students. By the Students and For the Students. Star Campus helps link young minds together.



we are at
Orchard Point
Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi, Road-7
Phone: 9881388, 8849672

DD dressy dale
www.dressydale.com