

GLOBAL RECESSION, CLIMATE CHANGE, COUNTERTERRORISM

Govt-opposition partnership a must in parliament

Say European envoys

UNB, Dhaka

European envoys yesterday expressed cautious optimism in appraising the performance of the new government, stressing the need for government-opposition partnership in parliament to deal with important issues like impacts of the global recession, climate change and counterterrorism.

Nine European Ambassadors and High Commissioners came up with their observations on varied issues, starting from economic meltdown to climate change, trial of war criminals to ruling party-opposition relations and counterterrorism to extrajudicial killing at a press conference held at Hotel Sheraton in the city marking the Europe Day on May 9.

Delegation of European Commission Ambassador Dr Stefan Frowein, who chaired the briefing session, said it is important in parliamentary democracy that government and opposition work together for betterment of the country.

He noted that the present opposition has got more than 30 percent of popular votes in the last general election though it has less number of seats in parliament because of the election system.

Frowein, who has closely watched the uncanny political developments in Bangladesh since the pre-1/11 change-over, said the government needs to give necessary space to the opposition as he made a disquieting observation that the current situation suggests that more difficulties are ahead.

Swedish Ambassador Britt Falkman Hagstrom, who is the current chair of the EU in Bangladesh, said they like to see lively debate in the parliament and solutions to the problems. "Too much confrontational politics is not a solution," the envoy said.

Dutch Ambassador Bea Ten Tusscher referred to parliamentary practice in the Netherlands and said a consensus has to be emerged from government-opposition dialogues on issues of national interest like the impact of climate change, which has posed a threat to Bangladesh.

On the performance of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's four-month-old government most of the Ambassadors observed that it is too early to comment on that. But they said so far, so good.

On this point Swiss Ambassador Britt Hagstrom, Danish Ambassador Einar H Jensen, German

Ambassador Frank Meyke and acting British High

Commissioner Duncan Norman made almost a similar observation -- that four months is a very short time for a long period of this government elected for five years.

They said parliament is functioning, lot of debates taking place on government decisions and agenda and people are coming up with their reactions at different lively debates, which are encouraging and "good signal".

Asked if the economic recession will harm the government's ambitious targets, Ambassador Frowein said indications so far show that Bangladesh has not yet been threatened by the fallout but cautioned that the next fiscal year may be difficult for Bangladesh. And, like other countries, it may be difficult to implement the high agenda of the government.

He, however, assured that the EU would stand beside Bangladesh in its difficult period and help overcome the future crisis to be caused by the recession. He said at the G-20 meeting in London EU countries strongly insisted that the developing and LDC countries must be taken into account and more aid should go to the worst-hit develop-

ing countries.

On the question of trial of war criminals, one of the high-stake agenda of the new government, Ambassador Frowein said the EU supports the government move to bring the 1971 war criminals to justice as it is one of the ruling party's election pledges. However, he said the trial must follow the international standards.

About the human rights situation and crossfire, the Ambassadors said

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at a recent meeting in Geneva committed zero tolerance to the extrajudicial killing. "But, if it happens, we will be worried", the European envoys said and suggested that the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

On EU help to Bangladesh on climate change, the diplomats observed that Bangladesh needs help from the developed nations to enhance her adaptation and mitigation capability. They said Bangladesh has good strategy of action and adaptation plan on climate change and the country needs to raise its voice at the upcoming Copenhagen conference on climate change to have a better deal.

French Ambassador Charley Causeret, Italian Ambassador Itala Occhi and Spanish Ambassador Aurturo Perez Martinez, Honorary Consuls Golam Faruk Ahmed of Belgium, Mahbubur Rahman of Czech Republic, Anwarul Huq of Greece, Tanvirul Islam of Austria, Reza Ali of Slovak Republic, Shahab Sattar of Cyprus, Syed Mahbubul Huq of Malta and Azam J Chowdhury of Hungary were present.

Earlier, Ambassador Britt Hagstrom said European countries have been hard hit by the recession and for Bangladesh the effect would most likely not be fully known until the year end.

She said the EU is a committed trade and development partner of Bangladesh as EU imports from Bangladesh amounted to 5 billion Euros last year, and development-cooperation disbursement amounted to 440 million Euros (Tk 4030 crore) as grants.



Justice Golam Rabbani speaks at a roundtable at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left is Dr Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman and on right is Shirin Sultana. (Story on Page 3)

World Red Crescent Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day will be observed today with a call to bring about positive changes in life and promote respect for human values.

This year's slogan of the day is "Our world, your move". President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued separate messages on the occasion.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BRCS) has taken up elaborate programmes to mark the day.

The day's programmes will begin with hoisting of national and Red Crescent flags at the national headquarters of Red Crescent Society at 7:00am.

It will be followed by a colourful procession. Members, officials, employees and volunteers of the Red Crescent Society will join the procession to be led by Food and Disaster Management Minister Md Abdur Razzak.

The Society will also arrange voluntary blood donation, discussion, fund and member collection drive, prize distribution and a cultural function.

The discussion and cultural event will be held at the Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College auditorium at 4:00pm, with Health Minister Dr AFM Ruhul Haq in the chair.

At a press conference held at the National Press Club yesterday on the occasion, Chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Prof Dr MS Akbar MP urged the people to assist the Society in carrying out its humanitarian activities.

Secretary General M Shafiqul Alam and Head of Delegation of International Federation of Red Crescent (IFRC) Pepe Salmela were present at the press conference.

Garment workers block road for payment of arrear wages

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agitating garment workers from two garment factories blocked Panthapath Link Road in front of BGMEA office demanding payment of their arrear wages.

About 300 workers of Mark Up Design and Fashion Trust Limited put barricade on the road from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm to realise their arrears of last three months, said Mizanur Rahman, an accountant of the factories.

Pranab Chowdhury, owner of the two small-sized factories at the city's Pallabi area, shut down the production units on April 29 following losses due to reduced orders from local and international buyers, Rahman said.

The workers said they staged a demonstration in front of BGMEA office in the morning demanding payment of arrears, but no one came from the association with an assurance to help realise the arrear wages.

"Since the BGMEA did not respond to their demand, the agitating workers took to the street and put barricade on the road for one hour," Rahman said.

Traffic on the roads and main thoroughfares--Karwan Bazar, Panthapath and Maghbazar--came to a halt following the agitation.

At about 4:30 pm police brought the situation under control. BGMEA President Abdus Salam Mursheedy told The Daily Star that the owner paid 50 percent salary of March and the remaining arrears would be paid soon as the owners gave a commitment to the association.

Four killed in road accidents

METRO DESK

Four people were killed in separate road accidents in the city and Jhalakati yesterday.

Staff correspondent reports: Two people were killed and one was injured as a rickshaw was crushed under the wheels of a passenger bus at Shyampur in the city yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Gulzar Hossain, 32, driver of the rickshaw and Jahangir Hossain, a passerby.

Passenger of the rickshaw Abul Hossain was admitted to DMCH in critical condition.

Police seized the bus and arrested helper of the bus.

Our correspondent in Barisal reports: Two people, including a child, were killed in separate road accidents in Jhalakati yesterday.

The dead were identified as Sayem, 5, son of Zakir Hossain of Jhalakati town and Sujon Gazi, 55.

Police sources said Sayem died on the spot as a pickup van crushed him under its wheels near Gaab Khan Bridge area.

In another incident, Sujon Gazi was killed on the spot as a bus hit him on Barisal-

Patuakhali road under Nalchhity upazila.

Police seized the bus with the help of local people.

RMG workers observe work stoppage in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

The workers of Hamid Fashion Limited at Fatullah in Narayanganj yesterday observed work stoppage demanding wage hike and stoppage of torture by the owners.

They also put barricade on Dhaka-Narayanganj highway for about half an hour.

The workers of the factor owned by Nasrul Hamid Bipu, an Awami League lawmaker, began their work stoppage at 10:00am. They also held a rally at Aliganj Ground.

Officer-in-Charge of Fatullah Police Station Jibon Kanti Sarker said on information police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. He said attempts are on to solve the problem through negotiation.



European envoys at a press conference at Hotel Sheraton in the city yesterday marking the Europe Day on May 9. From left are Itala Occhi, Einar H Jensen, Duncan Norman, Britt Hagstrom, Stefan Frowein, Aurturo Perez Martinez, Frank Meyke, Bea Ten Tusscher and Charley Causeret.

HOUSE ATTACK CASE

Shamim Osman gets bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Former Awami League lawmaker AKM Shamim Osman was granted bail yesterday in a case filed on charges of attacking and ransacking the house of Capt (ret'd) Kismat Hashem, an acquitted accused in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Murder Case.

The house of Kismat at Don Chamber area in Narayanganj was attacked and ransacked after the news of his acquittal from Bangabandhu murder case spread on December 14, 2000.

Shawkat Hashem, younger brother of Kismat and Jubo Dal leader, filed a case against 82 people including Shamim in this connection on December 31, 2001.

Shamim surrendered before the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Bazur Rahman and appealed for bail in the case.

The court granted him the bail. Shamim is accused in nine cases and has so far got bail in two cases.

He has been convicted for seven years and four years in two cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

30 houses burnt in arson attack in Chandpur

UNB, Chandpur

About 30 houses of landless people were burnt in an arson attack carried out by mercenaries of land owners (jotdars) at New Char under Haimchar upazila in Chandpur yesterday, which also left at least 20 people injured, including women and children.

The attackers also looted cattle and paddy of the poor people amid the reign of terror at about 9:00am.

"Panicked by the raid, all male inhabitants of the 8-sqkm char, which surfaced in the Meghna river, fled the area fearing further attacks," says a spot account of the marauding.

The attack was carried out in a sequel to conflict over paddy harvest and land possession between jotdars and landless people.

Such incidents, often bloody fighting, over possession of char or khas lands take place more often than not in different parts of the country.

Police Superintendent Krishna Pada Roy said after the attack police were deployed in the area, 8 km west of the upazila headquarters, to maintain law and order.

He, however, suspected that the day's arson attack might have taken place due to longstanding dispute between the jotdars and landless people over the reaping of crops and possession of landed property in New Char.

Meanwhile, soon after the arson attack, most of the male members of the affected families left their homes and took shelter in safe and distant places.

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report.

Migratory bird fair begins at DU today

DU CORRESPONDENT

With a view to highlighting the interdependence of the migratory birds, a two-day migratory bird fair will begin on Dhaka University (DU) campus today.

Environment and Forests Secretary Dr Mihir Kanti Majumder is expected to inaugurate the fair, organised to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day.

Photographs and paintings on 110 migratory birds will also be put on display at the fair.

Besides, drawing and speech competitions on bird for children, quizzes for all and

a cultural session will be held.

Dr S Narendra Prasad will deliver a lecture titled 'Geospatial Tolls and Avian Habitats' on the occasion while DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique will distribute prizes among the winners.

Dhaka University Tourists' Society, Bangladesh Bird Club, Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh, Zoology department of Dhaka University, Bangladesh Bird Preservation Society, Bangladesh Wildlife Society, Bangladesh Scouts and the Forest Department will jointly organise the fair while Eastern Housing Ltd will sponsor the fair.

JP enforces hartal in Bhandaria for Manju's release

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Jatiya Party (Manju) enforced a daylong hartal in Bhandaria upazila town in Pirojpur yesterday demanding immediate release of party chief Anwar Hossain Manju.

Road communication between Barisal-Pirojpur and Khulna-Pirojpur road came to a halt due to the strike.

Police said during the strike JP activists vandalised the office of Upazila Nirbahi Officer, upazila social welfare office and upazila accountant office. They also brought out a procession to press home their demand.

Local JP leaders, including Mahibul Hossain Main, Golam Sarwar Jamaddar, and Siddiqueur Rahman Tulu claimed that they observed the programme peacefully.

A Dhaka court on Wednesday sent Manju, also former communications minister, to jail after his surrendered to the court.

Militant threat to women lawyers protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) in a statement strongly protested the incident of threatening the women lawyers for leaving their profession, says a press release.

BMP said an unidentified militant organisation in a letter to Dhaka Ainjibi Samity warned the female lawyers to quit their occupation and not to move outside unveiled.

The leaders of the organisation condemned the incident and demanded a proper investigation into the incident and punishment to those who are responsible for the threats.

They urged the government and the concerned authorities to take necessary steps to ensure proper security of women and their independent movement and thus establish human rights.

Photo exhibition, concert in Bogra May 20

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A weeklong photo exhibition, concert and film screening will begin in Bogra on May 20 as part of the programme 'Jibonar Joygan 2009'.

This was disclosed at a press conference at Red Chillies Hotel in Bogra town yesterday.

Rafi Hossain, editor-in-charge, Star Insight, a fortnightly publication of The Daily Star, Md Shafiqul Islam, and Pulok Debnath, risk officer of Standard Chartered Bank, Bogra Branch, were present at the press conference. The Daily Star and Standard Chartered Bank jointly organised the event.



Rafi Hossain, left, editor-in-charge, Star Insight, a fortnightly publication of The Daily Star, speaks at a press conference at Red Chillies Hotel in Bogra town yesterday. Md Shafiqul Islam and Pulok Debnath, risk officer of Standard Chartered Bank, Bogra Branch, are also seen in the picture.



Agitating garment workers from two factories block Panthapath Link Road in front of BGMEA office demanding payment of their arrear wages.

রেডি ফ্ল্যাট ও দোকান

● গুলশান ০১৯১৪৪৯৬৬৬ ●

● পাহুপথ ০১৯১৪৪৯৬৬৬ ●

● আজিমপুর ০১৯১৪৪৯৬৬৬ ●

● পলকমল কারনেশন ০১৯১৪৪৯৬৬৬ ●

বিল্ডিং ফর ফিউচার লিঃ

১৫৯ বার্লিং রোড, পলকমল, (৩৪ ও ৪৪ বলা), ৯৬ ও ৯৭/১, পাহুপথ, ঢাকা-১২১৫

উত্তরা আর.এ.কে. টাওয়ার-এ কিছু সংখ্যক দোকান ও পলকমল (বাড়ী নং-২৪/এ, সড়ক নং-০৪, সেটর নং-০০) ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয় হইবে।

দোকান ও ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়

দোকান সাইজ : ৩০০ বর্গফুট ৪৬৬ বর্গফুট	ফ্ল্যাট সাইজ : ২১৬৬ বর্গফুট ২১৭৪ বর্গফুট
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পলকমল প্রোপার্টিজ (প্রঃ) লিঃ

১/৫ আর.এ.কে. টাওয়ার (১২তলা), অসিমউদ্দিন এডিনিটি, সোহর-০৩, উত্তরা, ঢাকা।
ফোন : ৮৯১৬৬২৪, ৮৯০২৭৪৬, ৮৯১১৮৩০ মোবাইল : ০১৯১৪-০১২০২, ০১৯৩০-০৬২৭১০