

Protection of rivers a must to face climate change

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said living in safe environment should be ensured as a fundamental right of people enshrined in the constitution.

Restoration of the lives of dying rivers, checking river pollution and maintaining their navigability is a must to ensure the right, they said, adding that ensuring protection of the rivers is a must to face the challenges of climate change.

"Living in a safe environment must be considered as a fundamental right of the people and should be incorporated in the constitution in addition to the existing fundamental rights. Every citizen of Bangladesh has the right to live in a safe and sustainable environment," said AL lawmaker Sabar Hossain Chowdhury as the chief guest.

The discussion was titled after the theme of this year's World Environment Day 'Your planet needs you! Unite to combat climate change'.

"Food safety and safety of our agriculture cannot be ensured unless we become able to ensure safety of water," said former secretary AHM Rezaul Kabir.

Sabar Hossain Chowdhury, also head of the parliamentary subcommittee on the environment ministry, said the present parliamentary committee comprises lawmakers from both ruling and opposition party so that the activities regarding environment continues even after government changes.

The discussion was jointly organised by climate change cell of the Department of Environment, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), WaterAid Bangladesh (WAB) and Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the afternoon.

"There are a number of laws to resist environment pollution but those must be implemented and effluent treatment

plant be ensured in all the factories and must be monitored by the government regularly," said Dr Atik Rahman.

Four papers were also presented at the discussion by the organisers. Dr Dwijen Mallik of BCAS presented a paper titled 'Impact of climate change on water resource and distribution of water', while Program Manager of climate change cell of DoE Abu M Kamal Uddin presented a paper on the title of the discussion.

The two other papers were submitted by WAB and Bapa.

The paper presented by WAB, quoting World Commission on Water, said around 400 crore people will be facing acute water crisis in the next 30 years as water use will increase by 50 percent by that time.

The paper also recommended making special budgetary allocation for ensuring supply of safe water and introducing technologies to reduce indiscriminate use of underground water and increasing

use of surface water.

"To get away from the crisis of climate change, it would be the first step for us to save our rivers, resist river pollution and maintain their navigability," the paper said.

The paper presented by the climate change cell recommended taking a special project in the areas like EPZ and Sundarbans and for different community people like fishermen and indigenous community people.

The paper BCAS presented recommended ensuring multipurpose and reuse of water, introducing technology to preserve rainwater and ensuring rights of poor and marginalised people in water.

Bapa in its paper said changes in the climate will cause severe flooding during the monsoon in Bangladesh and drying up of rivers in the dry season, causing degradation of water quality of the rivers.

Dr Khairul Islam of WAB also spoke.



Coalition for the Urban Poor takes out a procession marking the World Environment Day from Shahbagh in the city yesterday.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY OBSERVED Follow rules of setting up effluent treatment plants

Industries minister urges entrepreneurs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different government and non-government organisations yesterday observed the World Environment Day through different programmes.

This year the day was observed with the theme 'Your planet needs you' to inspire all for taking concrete steps to make the planet greener and cleaner.

Industries Minister Dilip Barua at a programme organised by Federation of Works' Association at Ramna Park urged the entrepreneurs to follow the rules of setting up effluent treatment plants strictly during setting up of new industries.

He also urged everyone to be

cautious in dumping wastes.

Coalition for the Urban Poor brought out a procession to observe the day from Shahbagh in the city.

Students Anti Smoking Committee held rallies at different points from Ashulia to Tongi to create awareness among the people to save the rivers, Dhaka, and the country. They also distributed leaflets to the people as part of the awareness programme.

The day was also observed in different districts, including Narail, Gaibandha, Mymensingh and Chapainawabganj.

Speakers at a discussion in Mymensingh urged to take concerted efforts to face the

environmental threats and maintaining ecological balance for the greater interest of the country.

To observe the day Narail district administration and various non-government organisations jointly brought out a colourful rally and organised a discussion at deputy commissioner's conference room.

In Gaibandha the day was observed through discussion, procession, painting and essay competition with a call for raising awareness about climate change and its ultimate threat to human existence.

A private organisation arranged a cleaning programme on Kuakata beach to observe the day.



Dhaka city unit of Khelaghar takes out a procession from Bangladesh Shishu Academy in the city on the occasion of its council yesterday.

'Groom up youths with spirit of war of liberation'

DU CORRESPONDENT

With the slogan 'We want a pollution-free Dhaka, a happy and beautiful Bangladesh' the daylong council of Dhaka city unit of Khelaghar, an organisation that works for children, was held in the capital yesterday.

Presidium Chairperson of Khelaghar central committee Prof Panna Kaiser formally inaugurated the programme on Bangladesh Shishu Academy premises in the morning.

With the presence of hundreds of children, guardians and organisers, the academy premises wore a festive look.

Addressing the inaugural session as chief guest, State Minister for Housing and Public Works Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan said there is no alternative to grooming up young generation with the spirit of the liberation war.

He urged all concerned to remain alert so that the children are not misguided by the distorted history of the liberation war.

Theatre personality Ramendu Majumder and Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shyamal Dutta and journalist Mozammel Hossain Manju also spoke at the opening session.

They called upon all to work for establishing the rights of children.

In the afternoon, a colourful procession was brought out which was participated by several hundred children, guardians and organisers.

It was followed by a discussion and cultural function in the evening.

No govt should impose censorship on internet

Speakers say at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable on Thursday said no government should impose surveillance and censorship on internet and block any websites considering people's right to know and free flow of information.

Criticising all forms of surveillance and censorship on internet, they urged the government to protect right to privacy and freedom of expression with an end to all sorts of surveillance and censorship on internet.

With a call for a democratic access to information and data protection, Voice, an NGO, organised the roundtable on 'Access to information: Internet surveillance and censorship versus protection of people's rights' at the National Press Club in the city.

Taking part in the roundtable, Syed Margub Morshed, former chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, said it would be a futile exercise if anybody wants to block any website to censor or hide any information.

"Surveillance and censorship is fundamentally unethical and national security cannot be protected through imposing

surveillance and censorship," he added.

Criticising the government move on mobile re-registration, Ahmed Swapan Mahmud, executive director of Voice, in his keynote paper asked, "How can we be ensured that the information or data given to a prescribed form will not be leaked out or used for other purpose?"

He said the interception of email is on the rise and surveillance of mobile telephones has become a regular practice which should be stopped immediately for the sake of right to privacy.

Mahmud also criticised the government for blocking some social networking websites like YouTube on March 9, 2009 as the site hosted a recording of a meeting between the prime minister and military officers.

Akhtaruzzaman Manju, president of ISP Association, admitted that they were instructed to block some of the

websites and some contents were filtered.

Piash Karim, professor of Brac University, said, "Restriction on public information and internet access do not ensure security, but the government move in this regard can impede the democratic process of the society."

The speakers feared that details of individuals which were stored for preparing the National ID card and which were given for re-registration of mobile SIM's could be abused by the government or any other agencies to undermine democratic values.

Editor of the New Nation Mostafa Kamal Majumder and Executive Editor Faruk Wasif, former secretary of science and ICT ministry Karar Mahmudul Hasan, D.Net Executive Director Ananya Raihan and Jahangirnagar University Prof Manosh Chowdhury also spoke.

ALCWC meeting today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League (AL) will sit today to finalise its tasks to boost up party activities across the country.

Party leaders said there have been no organisational activities of the party since it assumed office in January this year.

The meeting of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC), which will be held at the party president's political office in Dhanmondi, might task some senior leaders to deal with the organisational problems to boost up party activities.

AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will chair the meeting which might also finalise tours of central leaders in different districts to boost up its organisational activities.

The issue of holding party council might also come to discussion, sources said.

The agendas of the meeting are observing the 60th founding anniversary of the party and organisational status, among others, according to the party leaders.

Sources said Hasina might instruct the party leaders to work for the cyclone victims and focus on the government's success across the country through political programmes.

'VESTED PROPERTY RETURN ACT-2001' Bill to amend some provisions likely

Says JS body chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

AKM Mozammel Haque, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on Ministry of Land, yesterday said a bill to amend some provisions of the 'Vested Property Return Act-2001' might be placed before the current budget session of parliament.

He was speaking at a seminar on implementation of the Vested Property Return Act-2001 at National Press Club in the city jointly organised by Association of Land Reform and Development (ALRD) and Nijera Kori.

Mozammel said the government would also take necessary steps with a view to returning the vested properties to the real owners and their descendants by 2009.

He sought cooperation from all for establishing equal rights of all as per the constitution.

Speaking as the chief guest Dhaka University Vice Chancellor AAM Siddique said the present democratic government will complete all the procedures to return the vested properties to the real owners and their families.

Human rights activists and noted personalities at the seminar demanded proper implementation of the 'Vested Property Return Act-2001'

provisions amendments to some provisions of the act.

Prof Abul Barakat quoting his study said members of the Hindu community lost around 26 lakh acres of land in addition to other moveable and immovable properties approximate worth Tk 3,50,412 crore during last four decades (1965-2006) due to the 'Enemy Property Act-1965' and its post independence version 'Vested Property Act-1974'.

He said about 2 lakh households and 60 lakh people of the Hindu community have been directly and severely affected and about 53 percent of the families displaced due to the acts. He said 74 percent incidents of the land grabbing of minority community occurred before the War of Liberation in 1971.

Terming the acts a law against human rights, justice, democracy, spirit of the country's constitution and a clear violation of fundamental rights of the people, he said the people want return of the so-called vested property to real owners and their families.

ALRD Executive Director Samsul Huda, Chairperson Khushi Kabir, human right activists Barrister Sara Hossain, Advocate Subrata Chowdhury and journalist Syed Abul Maksud also spoke at the seminar.



Basabo Kendra executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Tofazal Hossain and Dr Mohammad Nurul Amin have been elected president and general secretary of Basabo Unmukta Sharircharcha Kendra at Basabo in the city at an election on May 29 at Basabo Community Centre, says a press release.

AKM Kamal Uddin, ANM Golam Jilani and Engr Abdur Rahman were elected vice presidents while Sayeed Akter Mawla Sohel was elected joint secretary and Prof Khalilur Rahman organising secretary.

WEATHER TODAY logo with sun and cloud icons.

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at many places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls may occur at places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions, Met office said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:44pm today and rises at 5:10am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 36.3 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 22.4 degrees Celsius at Sandwip.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

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

Workshop

Shamunuy with support from Katalyst organises a workshop on licensing issues in Bangladesh organic fertiliser market. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 9:30am.

Book launching

The launching ceremony of the reference book 'Liver A Complete Book on Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Diseases' will be held. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 4:00pm.

Painting exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of a painting exhibition will be held. Venue: Gallery Chittrak. Time: 5:00pm.

Seminar

A seminar on climate change marking the World Environment Day 2009 will be held. Venue: Osmani Memorial Auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

Workshop

Directorate of Public Library organises a workshop on public library laws. Venue: Directorate of Public Library conference room. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar

Vision 2021 Forum organises a seminar on charter for change and present administration. Venue: Tropicana Tower, 45 Topkhana Road. Time: 10:30am.

METRO DESK

BARCIK, a non-governmental organisation, organised a dialogue titled 'Climate change: The security of agriculture and farmers' at the National Press Club in the city on Thursday, says a press release.

Chairman of parliamentary standing committee on food and disaster management ministry Md Sayedul Houque attended the programme as chief guest while Dr Atiq Rahman, executive director of BCAS, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, executive director of BELA, and Dr Ajoy Das Gupta, assistant representative of FAO Bangladesh, attended the programme as special guests.

Kamruzzaman Sagor, coordinator (support services) of BARCIK, presented a paper based on the adaptation process and experiences of the farmers across the country relating to climate change.

After the presentation, farmers from various ecological zones shared their experiences and problems related to climate change.

They also mentioned some indigenous tools in adapting to changes.

'Assist farmers to cope with climate change'

farmers, the chief guest thanked them for their initiatives to adjust with climate change.

He said the economy of the country is very much dependent on agriculture.

"We, therefore, should take initiative to ensure an enabling situation and environment for them so that they can produce crops and grains without any problems," he added.

The farmers and fishermen are the real patriots, Sayedul said, adding that they have taken a lot of troubles to produce food for the entire population but they never protested and resorted to any movement to fulfill their needs and demands.

Dr Atiq Rahman said the farmers are the real heroes of the country. "If they stop producing foods, the country will face immense crisis.

So the government should prioritise and implement their demands so that they can adapt to climate change," he added.

PM inaugurates Vitamin A Plus Campaign

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally inaugurated the Vitamin A plus Campaign, June 2009 at her official residence Jamuna yesterday.

She inaugurated the campaign feeding several kids the Vitamin A capsule and deworming tablet.

Health Minister Dr AFM Ruhul Haque and Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr Syed Mudasser Ali were present on the occasion.

During the campaign today, some two crore children of 1-5 years and 1.9 crore children of 2-5 years will be fed Vitamin A capsule and deworming tablet each from the 120,000 permanent and 20,000 mobile centres.

Speaking on the occasion, the PM urged the parents to feed their children Vitamin A capsule and deworming tablet for building healthy lives for them.

"A healthy child can have a sound mind and brain. Without healthy children, a nation cannot be developed and prosperous," she said.

Hasina said that the previous Awami League government had taken the project to set up 18,000 community health clinics and several thousand such clinics were also constructed.

But she deplored that the last BNP Jamaat government had stopped all activities of the community health clinics for which rate of maternal and child mortality increased.

She said the present government would take steps to set up the community health clinics again to reach quality health facility to the doorsteps of the poor.

Call for change

FROM PAGE 5 especially acid victims.

Popular anchor Hanif Sanket said, "We have to change the habit of blaming someone else for our own faults."

He said it is possible to bring changes in the society if every single person discharges his or her duties sincerely.

Lawmaker and popular folk singer Mamtaz urged everyone to plant three saplings each for the sake of the environment and tackling natural disaster.

Noted singer and musician Bappa Majumder said he would take the responsibilities of a freedom fighter with disabilities.

Singers Shakila Zafar, Kanak Chapa, Fahmida Nabi, Asif Akbar, SI Tutul and Dinat Jahan rendered the theme song of the campaign and pledged to work for promoting the country's culture and heritage.

Noted actor and lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor recited poems while noted media personality Afzal Hossain, model Nobel, singers Samina Chowdhury, Kumar Bishwajit and Mahmuduzzaman Babu and anchor Abdun Nur Tushar also pledged to bring positive changes in the society.

Editor and Publisher of the Prothom Alo Matiur Rahman said the aim of the campaign was to let people write their pledges on 280 banners but 1700 banners have already been filled up.

The campaign will continue till June 16 and an exhibition of the banners will be held at Cox's Bazar on June 19, he said.

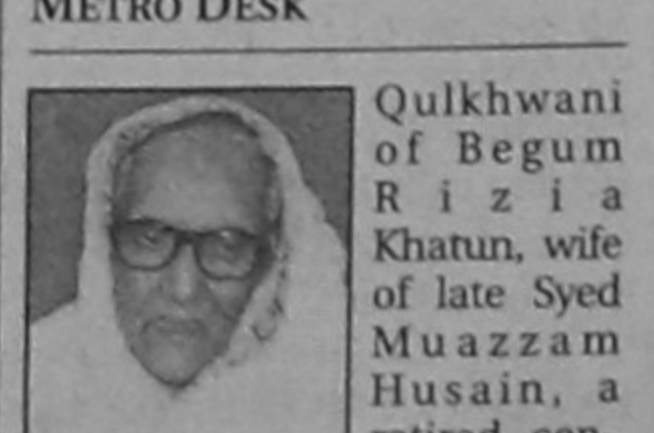
The aim of the campaign is to build a democratic, progressive and secular country, he said.

Seeking cooperation of all, he urged everyone to move forward to bring a positive change in the family and the society as well.

Deputy Editor of the Prothom Alo Anisul Hoque moderated the programme while folk singer Kuddus Boyati and singers Kumar Bishwajit and Mahmuduzzaman Babu rendered songs.

Qulkhwani

METRO DESK



Qulkhwani of Begum Rizika Khatun, wife of late Syed Muazzam Husain, a retired central deputy secretary, will be held at her residence at House No 122, Road No 9A, Dhanmondi Residential Area in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

She passed away on May 30 at her residence at the age of 89.

She was buried at her family graveyard at Jalalchar Mia Bari under Nawabganj Police Station in Dhaka district.