



Recipients of dean's award of Faculty of Biological Sciences at Dhaka University pose for photograph with the guests at the award giving ceremony at TSC auditorium of the university yesterday.

## CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

# North must pay ecological debts to south

Rights leaders tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights leaders at a panel discussion on Monday said the countries in the south are the creditors and the north must have to pay the ecological debts, as they are mainly responsible for global climate change, says a press release.

The southern countries are suffering from the global climate change impacts and the northern countries should compensate them for the ecological degradation, they added.

They said this at the discussion on 'Climate justice towards CoP 15 Copenhagen, ecological debts: We are the creditors' jointly arranged by EquityBD, Jubilee South (Philippines), Media Foundation for Trade and Development, SUPRO, Voice and Unnayan Onneshan at the National Press Club in the city.

The rights leaders said they would organise a countrywide awareness and mobilisation programme up to December 2009 in line with the confer-

ence of parties (CoP) to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Director Dr Sarba Raj Khadka of LDC Watch, an international civil society organisation based in Nepal, mentioned that all the debts in the low-income countries accumulated as a part of neo-colonial exploitation. All these are illegitimate and these should be cancelled.

Lidy Nacpil, Jubilee South-APMDD, a regional network in the Philippines, referred the example of the Bolivian government which formally placed the demand of ecological debt to UNFCCC in its Bonn conference in June.

The similar proposals also have been submitted by Venezuela, Paraguay, Malaysia and Sri Lanka, she added.

She said the north has exploited the rights of all human beings who have equal shares to the global commons which include ozone layer, air and on natural resources. These global commons should be utilised in equitable

and sustainable way. The north has exploited those and also created negative consequences like present climate crisis.

Se called on all to build up political constituencies or transform this unjust global and local social system to a system based on equity and justice.

Presenting a keynote paper, Sayed Aminul Haque of EquityBD said during colonial period, its master Britain repatriated resources from the Indian subcontinent and increased their gross national product (GNP).

Mohiuddin Ahmed moderated the programme where Uma Chowdhury, Iqbal Ahmed, Ahmed Swapan, AHM Bazlur Rahman, Faruque Ahmed, Shamsud Doha, Dr Pias Karim, Rezaul Karim Chowdhury spoke on the historical aspects and contemporary movements on ecological debts in different countries, especially in the South American countries.

## 90 DU students receive dean's award

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Faculty of Biological Sciences of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday conferred Dean's Award on 90 students of different departments under the faculty for their outstanding academic performance, punctuality and morality.

The students, who obtained the best result in honours examinations in 2005 and 2006 without sitting for any improvement exams received a certificate and a crest each from the hand of Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique at a ceremony at Teacher-Student Centre auditorium, says a press release.

Congratulating the awardees Prof Arefin said alongside academic excellences students should achieve human qualities. He called upon awardees to work for the people of backward community in the society and work ethically in their professional lives.

Dean of the Faculty Prof Md Abul Bashir presided over the ceremony while Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Harunor-Rashid and Emeritus Prof Dr Kazi Md Jaker Hossain, among others, were present.

## Train rams microbus, two injured in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A train ramed a microbus, which in turn pushed a rickshaw standing close to it at city's Tejaon level crossing, leaving two persons injured yesterday.

The injured, Smrity Akhter, 35, and her daughter Tabassum, 10, a student of Tejaon Government High School, were on the rickshaw.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Mohammad Asaduzzaman of Tejaon Police Station said the back portion of the microbus was on the rail track when it was hit by Mymensingh-bound Balaka Express.

Gateman Jasim Uddin of Bangladesh Railway said many rickshaws crossed the level crossing through the open end of the road even after he pulled down the bar at around 11:40pm.

The microbus, though partially damaged, managed to flee. Locals rushed the injured to Al-Raji hospital at Farmgate.

Police said the injured, residents of Begunbari in the area, were later shifted to Pangu Hospital.

## 36,000 cases disposed of thru' LAAP

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 36,000 cases involving the destitute litigants have been disposed of so far through the government's Legal Aid Assistance Programme (LAAP) across the country.

It was told at a meeting of the national board of directors of the government's National Legal Services Organisation (NLSO) at the conference room of the law ministry yesterday evening.

Sources said the meeting was also informed that different district committees of the LAAP provided legal assistance to the litigants to dispose of 14,072 civil cases and 21,377 criminal cases till May 30 this year since January 1, 2001.

Law Minister Shafiq Ahmed, who presided over the meeting, said the range of the assistance programme would be enhanced phase by phase.

He directed the concerned officials to expedite the campaign to promote the LAAP activities.

The minister said the government wants that the poor litigants are not deprived of the fair justice due to their financial crisis.

## GROWING AIR POLLUTION IN DHAKA CITY

# Old, junk vehicles causing environmental hazards

BSS, Dhaka

Thick black smoke emitted by nearly 1.5 lakh old and junk vehicles is causing serious environmental hazards for Dhaka.

Nearly 50 percent of vehicles plying the roads in the capital do not have fitness certificates, a senior official of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) told BSS.

The owners of unfit vehicles manage to receive certificates from BRTA with the connivance of a section of dishonest officials, sources said.

With the population growing in the city, motorised vehicles are also on the rise. It is estimated that about 100 used or new vehicles hit the road every day where road space covers only about six percent of city area.

At present, more than 3.2 lakh motor vehicles ply the roads in Dhaka city. Besides, overloaded, poorly maintained and very old trucks and mini-buses are also plying the city streets emitting black smoke and gases.

About 90 percent of these vehicles are faulty and emit smoke far exceeding the prescribed limit. Diesel vehicles emit black smoke, which contain unburned fine carbon particles.

Diesel-run vehicles account for more than 80 percent of the air pollution in Dhaka as most of them fail to comply with the approved emission standard, said a recently published survey report.

Air pollution levels in Dhaka are considerably higher than the limit mentioned in the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines for residential areas.

According to a study of WHO, blood lead level above 10 g/dl (microgram per deciliter) is considered to be a case of lead poison.

However, the lead level in the country's urban children was 5.8 to 21.6 g/dl, and the urban slum children's lead level ranged from 9.6 to 38.9 g/dl -- three times more than the acceptable level.

According to a World Bank report, Air pollution kills 15,000 Bangladeshis each year.

The report says the country could save between US \$ 200 million and 800 million a year -- about 0.7 to 3.0 percent of its gross national product -- if air pollution in its four major cities can be reduced.

The report adds that 6.5 million people in these cities suffer from diseases each year. And the major disease is not diarrhoea, as is the popular perception, but acute respiratory infections caused mainly by polluted air. Automobile and industrial emissions, bad civic practices and poor government services are some of the major factors causing air pollution.

Greater exposure to particulates has been linked to premature deaths from respiratory and cardio-vascular illnesses, and higher rates of sickness, especially bronchitis and other chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, as well as respira-

tory tract infections.

Other physical impacts of air pollution include damages to crops and ecosystems, degraded visibility, soiling of buildings, and damage to water quality through deposition of lead and other pollutants.

These effects on the ecosystem impair people's livelihood as well as health.

A large number of pedestrians, drivers, passengers, traffic policemen, street vendors and other groups undoubtedly suffer from significant health damage as a result of exposure to emissions from a large variety of motorised vehicles.

Experts attributed the air pollution mainly to vehicular emission. Thousands of vehicles ply the city streets without fitness certificates turning the metropolis into a virtual gas chamber.

"When particulate matters fall on earth or wetlands, they get absorbed quickly. But when these matters fall on concrete, vehicular movements make them airborne and the respiratory system of every individual, particularly children and women, bears the brunt," Prof Shahnaz Huq Hussain, dean of the Faculty of Earth and Environmental Science of Dhaka University noted.

It was reported recently that Dhaka again became the worst air polluted city in the world. Mexico City and Mumbai used to be the two most air polluted cities followed by Dhaka. But Dhaka is back again on the number one position.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Institute of Marine Technology hold a 'self-immolation' programme at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday demanding steps to turn their two-year trade course into diploma in shipbuilding and make it HSC equivalent.

## PROTYASHA ASHRAYAN INHABITANTS

# Unemployment, hunger force them into begging again

BSS, Dhaka

Unemployment, negligence and hunger forced the ill-fated inhabitants of an exceptional cluster village in Gazipur into their old profession of begging again throwing them into a life of uncertainties and darkness.

Official sources said some 300 members of 70 families took shelter at Prottyasha Ashrayan Project at Bandabari under Kaliakoir upazila in 2000 with a big dream, but their dream was shattered due to negligence and non-cooperation of the past four-party alliance government.

They have been passing their days in inhuman conditions since 2001, the year when the past BNP-led alliance came to power. Since then, they are being deprived of all kinds of assistance, including food, healthcare and education, and the situation forced them into begging on the streets of the capital.

"Having no alternative, we were compelled to return to our old profession and we are now begging 15 days of a month in the capital for our survival and spending the rest 15 days at the village," the inhabitants said while narrating their miseries to the news agency.

The sources said once the inhabitants, who came from Nilphamari, Kurigram and Gaibandha districts of greater Rangpur, were full-time beggars, and at least one of the family members was leprosy patient -- either losing a hand or a leg.

"We begged throughout the day in the capital streets amid scorching hit or heavy showers and spent the night in Kamalapur Railway Station and Pangu Hospital areas under the open sky till January 27, 2000," said Matuor Rahman, president of the project.

Considering their sufferings as well as disabilities, the previous Awami League government, especially Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, came forward to

rehabilitate them and had taken steps to launch the Prottyasha Ashrayan Project in which they were rehabilitated later.

He said most of the tin-shed houses of the project became unlivable as roofs, doors, windows as well as toilets were destroyed due to lack of maintenance and repair.

Matuor also said they are facing drinking water problem throughout the year as six to seven tubewells out of nine remain unserviceable. The only pond of the area became unusable due to lack of adequate water, he said, adding that the condition of the lone community centre is also very bad.

He said the past AL government had provided VGF and VGD cards to all of the families which ensured their food security, but after coming to power, the BNP-led alliance government stopped it.

They raised their problems to the concerned authorities several times in the last seven years, but their efforts went futile as nobody bothered to solve those, he added.

Land Assistant Officer of the

area Masudul Alam Bhuiyan told the agency that the issue was raised several times at the monthly meeting of the upazila administration in the last seven years, but no concrete steps were taken.

Like Matuor, many inhabitants demanded the government arrange employment opportunity for at least one member of each of the families of the Ashrayan project, saying that, "We want work not alms, we want to live with honour."

When contacted, local parliament member and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Land Ministry AKM Mohammad Haque told BSS that the present government is very much aware of problems of the inhabitants of the project as the past AL government had initiated the project.

"The problems of the Ashrayan project will be solved very soon as the government is going to take necessary steps to this end," he said.



PHOTO: BSS

The ill-fated inhabitants of Prottyasha Ashrayan Project, a cluster village, at Bandabari under Kaliakoir upazila in Gazipur.



AFD Director (operation and plan) Brig Gen Kazi Abidus Samad and CDMP Chief Technical Adviser Yan Stanford Rector sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) at Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

## PR course begins Aug 6

METRO DESK

Bangladesh Institute of Journalism and Electronic Media (BIJEM) arranges a two-week training course on modern techniques of public relations and communications from August 6, says a press release.

Public relations experts, leading journalist both from print and electronic media, university teachers, advertisement and ICT experts will conduct the course.

The course is open for PR professionals and people keen to build career in public relations.

The last date of submitting nomination/application is August 6. Interested candidates are requested to contact the institute office at 257/8 Elephant Road, Katabon Dhal, Dhaka.

## AFD signs MoU with CDMP of EU

UNB, Dhaka

Armed Forces Division (AFD) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) of the European Union yesterday to build up a strong military corps under the Disaster Management Bureau to face disaster during crisis moment.

AFD Director (operation and plan) Brig Gen Kazi Abidus Samad and CDMP Chief Technical Adviser Yan Stanford Rector signed the MoU at a function at Dhaka Cantonment.

Under the MoU, CDMP will operate different workshops and week-long training courses

at Defence Services Command and Staff College at Mirpur Cantonment and Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation and Training at Rajendrapur Cantonment under the supervision of AFD.

On completion of the training programme, the military officials will gather overall idea over human resource development, necessary tools and kits, relations between development and total disaster alongside identification and reduction of the risks and response on emergency basis.

"It is expected that UNDP, the Department for International Development of the UK and CDMP will arrange this kind of training facility in future too," says an ISPR release.

## Free eye camp opens in B'baria

METRO DESK

Australian High Commissioner Dr Justin Lee and Advocate Lutful Hai MP jointly opened a five-day free eye camp in Brahmanbaria on Monday, says a press release.

Vision 2020 Brahmanbaria District Committee with the support of The Fred Hollows Foundation and the Australian community in Bangladesh jointly arranged the camp.

The eye camp will provide free screening for local people with visual impairment.

Dr Lee at the programme reiterated his government's commitment in health sector of Bangladesh.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Australian High Commissioner Dr Justin Lee speaks at view sharing meeting on the eve of free eye camp in Brahmanbaria on Monday.