

DELIMITATION OF MARITIME BOUNDARIES

Permanent solution with India, Myanmar stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Speakers at a seminar here yesterday emphasised the need for bilateral negotiations for a maritime agreement for permanent solution to delimitation problems of the maritime boundaries of Bangladesh with India and Myanmar.

"Since the sea areas of Bangladesh are rich in hydrocarbon and mineral deposits, maritime zones should clearly be established for protection, conservation and rational exploitation of marine resources to accelerate the country's economic development," they said.

The speakers at the seminar also observed that provisional measures such as joint development agreements and judicial means of settlement could also serve as the solution to the maritime boundary delimitation problems.

Law Faculty of Chittagong University (CU) organised the seminar titled 'the problems of delimitation of Bangladesh maritime boundaries with India and Myanmar' at Social Science Faculty auditorium with Law Faculty Dean Prof Mohammad Zakir Hossain in the chair.

CU Vice Chancellor Prof Abu Yusuf was

present as the chief guest at the seminar organised under a project financed by the University Grants Commission.

Project Coordinator and Bangladesh Law Commission Member Prof M Shah Alam, Joint Coordinator and Law Department Chairman Dr Abdullah Al Faruk and Research Associate Commander Yadul Islam prepared a keynote paper following a research they conducted under the project.

CU Prof Emeritus Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam, Additional Secretary to Foreign Ministry Commodore M Khurshid Alam, Bangladesh Navy Commodore Commanding, Chittagong MM Rajib, Marine Fisheries Academy Commandant ATGM Sarkar, Hydrographic and Oceanographic Centre Director Commander MNG Muktadir, CU Institute of Marine Sciences and Fisheries Director Dr Mohammad Rashed-Un-Nabi spoke the seminar.

Dr Abdullah and Yadul in their keynote paper said Bay of Bengal has huge living and non-living resources.

India and Myanmar discovered 100 trillion cubic feet (TCF) and seven TCF gas respectively inside their respective water territories, while Bangladesh could

not conduct exploration due to demarcation problems, they observed.

The total sea area of Bangladesh would be 2,07,000 square kilometres which is 1.4 times greater than its total land area, if the maritime boundaries are delimited under the Sea Convention law, they said, adding that exploration of oil and gas is essential for ensuring the country's economic security as well as its overall development.

India and Myanmar have already filed their claims to the United Nations and Bangladesh has to file the claim by August 27, 2011 and a high-powered committee is working on it.

India and Myanmar want delimitation of maritime boundaries on the basis of equidistance principles but Bangladesh seeks to delimit on the basis of equitable principles. The equidistance principles would result in significant encroachment of sea area of Bangladesh, they said.

They further said that Bangladesh needs to modify 1974 act in order to make it consistent with the Convention of the Law of the Sea 1982 that provides legal framework and principles of maritime delimitation. All the three neighbouring countries have ratified the convention.



(From left) M Azizur Rahman, Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, Dr Sadeka Halim, Manjurul Hsan Bulbul and Zakir Hossain hold copies of a book titled 'Our Rights Our Information' at its launching ceremony at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Govt to update Standing Orders on Disaster

Persons with disabilities to get special attention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is planning to update the Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD) giving special attention to the issues of persons with disabilities.

Food and Disaster Management Minister Muhammad Abdur Razzaque said this at a discussion yesterday.

The minister said the persons with disabilities have equal rights to all the services provided by the government, but because of their physical vulnerability their rights are often ignored.

Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) organised the discussion on 'Disaster and persons with disability' at the LGED auditorium in the city.

Speakers at the meeting said persons with disabilities are the most vulnerable group during calamities, but they are left out of the disaster management policies. Even the domestic animals get more attention than the persons with disabilities.

Ten percent of the total population in

Bangladesh have disabilities, said the speakers.

During disasters the elderly persons and the pregnant also suffer immensely, they added.

The early warning system and shelter homes are not appropriately designed for their needs. Persons with disabilities cannot move to the shelter homes and they do not have access to relief or rehabilitation programmes after disasters, they also said.

Md Manirul Islam, a person with disability from Amtali, Barguna shared his misery during the cyclone Aila.

"My entire family left without me when the water was rising as they had no way of carrying me. Somehow I climbed up to the roof and saved my life," he said.

"I also did not receive my share of the food relief as I could not stand in the queue like others," he added.

The speakers also pointed out that the condition of the women with disabilities is even more appalling. Incidents of rape

and sexual harassment of these women are common during calamities.

Mosammat Halima, another handicapped person from Barguna, said, "With the help of my sister I managed to reach the shelter home in my area only to be neglected in a corner. The normal people are not sensitive to our needs. Going to the toilet was the most awkward problem I had to face."

Chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Prof Sirajul Akbar MP said it is a must to prepare a social map of the persons with disabilities. Without appropriate statistics it will not be possible to address their needs.

Mahbub Ara Begum Gini MP, Md Monowar Hossain Chowdhury MP, Khandaker Jahurul Alam, president of National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled, Mohammad Shahnewaz Quraishi, programme officer, CBM, AHM Noman Khan, executive director of CDD, and Nazmul Bari, Directive of CDD, also spoke.



Girls with disabilities are being readied prior to a programme for them at Shawkat Osman Auditorium on the Public Library premises in the city yesterday. Protibandhi Forum organised the event to mark the Child Rights Week-2009.

Govt programmes ease life in greater Rangpur

BSS, Rangpur

The poorer people in the poverty-prone greater Rangpur have been facing the current seasonal lean period of munga (near famine situation) very successfully following various effective steps of the government this year.

The day and farm labourers as well as all other distressed people are now leading almost a normal life this year without any bite of seasonal munga that repeated every year in the past during the months of Aswin and Kartik, officials said.

Launching of the Employment Generation Programme for the Ultra-Poor from October 15 by the government would further ease the situation and over four lakh distressed people, including farm and day labourers, would earn Tk 100 per day as wages.

The second round VGF (vulnerable group feeding) rice would be allocated soon to distribute among the distressed people and those have-nots in Rangpur and other poverty-prone districts, District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DRRO) of Rangpur Mokhesur Rahman told the news agency.

Other steps include various effective ongoing programmes, huge harvests of short duration BRRI Dhan 33, BU Dhan 1 and BINA Dhan 7 at over 55,680 hectares of land at this peak munga season, VGF and VGD programmes, test relief (TR) and various allowances.

The concerned public representatives, political leaders and officials yesterday told the news agency that there is no incident of any starvation by anyone and anywhere in all five districts of greater Rangpur till today as the poorer section of people are leading their normal

life.

They hoped that there would be no munga in these poverty and natural calamity-prone northern districts until the end of this lean period and the people of the area would get complete rid of the century-old curse of munga very soon as targeted by the government.

Under the programme, a total of 69,766 distressed people, including women and the farm and day labourers, would earn Tk 100 as wages for their daily development activities in Rangpur alone.

The programme would be launched simultaneously in Kurigram, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari districts in greater Rangpur like other parts of the country from the same date, the government officials told BSS.

The upcoming employment generation programmes would assist the poor during this lean period when the distressed people, including the river-eroded hapless ones, would earn Tk 100 as wages per day to fight the seasonal munga this year.

Public representatives, deputy commissioners, UNOs and government officials would formally launch the programme at various places at all unions of all upazilas in these districts on October 15 like elsewhere in the country.

The programme would help the targeted people, especially in the poverty-prone char areas, to overcome this lean period and also help them in earning their livelihoods in all unions of Rangpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari and Gaibandha districts.

Under the programme, development activities like repairing of bridges, culverts, roads, water bodies, ponds, canals, institutions and other infrastructures, earth filling,

cleaning of weeds, preparing thousands of compost fertiliser heaps using water hyacinths and other works would be conducted, officials said.

Like in the other adjoining districts, the government completed distribution of 3,942 tonnes of rice among 1,97,100 distressed families under its VGF programme, 347.48 tonnes rice among mandaps and distressed freedom fighters last month in Rangpur.

The next allocation of more VGF rice is now being awaited by the administration for each of these five districts in greater Rangpur, the DRRO said.

The situation started further easing following huge harvest of the short duration BRRI Dhan-33 and other such

paddies, cultivated in over 55,680 hectares land in greater Rangpur from last week, now continues in full swing, under the government initiatives.

Talking to BSS, Ostomir Char Union Chairman Sohrab Hossain and Prof Abul Kashem of Ramna Model Union in poverty-prone Chilmari upazila of Kurigram said there is no bite of munga this year due to the various government programmes.

Nurul Amin Sarker, editor of the weekly Janpran of Chilmari upazila town, said the distressed, river-eroded and poorer section people of the upazila are living better without any munga bite for the first time this year as munga starts disappearing.

Call to change site for Padma Bridge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Deshpremik Jonaganer Mancha, a citizens' platform, yesterday demanded that the selected Mawa-Jaira site for the Padma Bridge be cancelled and Dohar-Char Bhadransan site be selected for the bridge instead.

They also said construction of two bridges at Mawa-Jaira point and at Paturia-Daulatdia point, as proposed by the previous BNP government, would not be economically viable.

Besides, the banks of Padma river at Mawa-Jaira point are badly affected by erosion, they said at a press conference at Gono Sangskriti Mancha at Shahbagh in the

city.

"We propose that Padma Bridge be built at Dohar-Char Bhadransan point. A bridge at this point will save \$1200-1500 million as there will be no need to construct a second bridge and it will cover all traffic from south and south-western Bangladesh," said Engineer M Enamul Haque, president of the organisation.

He also said the Dohar-Char Bhadransan point has hard soil bank and has bank protection work at Hajiganj in Char Bhadransan.

Other leaders of the organisation Abdul Wahid Majumder, Golam Khandaker Elias, Golam Kibria Dipu, Shahrier Murad and Shahidul Islam Palash also spoke.

Rajshahi Board set to enter digital era

BSS, Rajshahi

The Rajshahi Education Board is going to enter a digital era through making the registration process online.

Chairman of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Rajshahi Prof Depakendra Nath Das told BSS yesterday that a total of 15 colleges would be brought under the online registration process only for the next HSC examination on a pilot basis.

He, however, said the total registration process for SSC and HSC examinations would be brought under the online system following year.

The 15 colleges that will be brought under the online registration process this year are New Government Degree College, Government City College and Rajshahi Cadet College in Rajshahi, Naogaon Government College in Naogaon, Chapainawabganj Government College and Adina Government College in Chapainawabganj, Rani Bhabani Government Women's College and Kadirabad Cantonment College in Natore, Pabna Cadet College and Pabna Government Women's College in Pabna, Rashida Zoha Government Women's College in Sirajganj, Bogra Cantonment Public School and College and Government SR Women's College in Bogra and Joypurhat Girls' Cadet College and Joypurhat Government Women's College in Joypurhat.

Prof Das said the computer operators and computer teachers of the targeted colleges will be given a daylong training at the board office on October 14 to make them competent for the online registration process.



University of Liberal Arts (ULAB) Vice Chancellor Prof Rafiqul Islam addresses the students at the ULAB Freshers Orientation Fall 2009 on its campus in the city recently. Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Imran Rahman, Vice President of the Board of Governors Dr Kazi Anis Ahmed, Dr Mohit UI Alam, Dr Jude Genilo, Dr Mohammad Shorif Uddin, Dr AHM Asadul Huq and Registrar Khaled Khan were also present on the occasion.

Japan assures support for capital dredging of rivers

UNB, Dhaka

Japan would provide all sorts of assistance for capital dredging of rivers in Bangladesh as the government has planned a mega-scheme for clearing huge deposits of silts from the rivers.

The assurance came when Japanese Ambassador Tamotsu Shinotsuka called on Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen at his

office yesterday.

During the meeting, the minister and the envoy discussed various issues, including use of the experiences of the two countries in management of water resource with the technical help of engineers.

Ramesh told the envoy about the capital dredging of rivers in Bangladesh, a great plan for river training, and sought Japanese cooperation in implementation of the plan.

Tamotsu Shinotsuka lauded the plan and assured Ramesh of Japanese assistance in this regard.

Mentioning the negative impacts of climate change on Bangladesh, the minister also sought cooperation "in tackling climate change".

The Japanese envoy also expressed his government's keenness in establishing cyclone centres in coastal areas of Bangladesh.

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