

CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL WARMING

EC lauds PM's role

BSS, Dhaka

The visiting delegation of European Commission (EC) yesterday praised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's time-befitting proposals and recommendations in different international forums for tackling the challenges of global warming.

The appreciation came when visiting EC delegation led by Member of the European Parliament Nirj Deva paid a courtesy call on the PM at her office here.

The delegation said the positive and praiseworthy proposals and recommendations put forward by the Bangladesh premier in different international forums to tackle climate change challenges have brought herself and Bangladesh at the "forefront" of the international community.

They said the proactive role of Hasina in these forums also brightened the country's image across the world.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed newsmen after the meeting.

During the meeting, the PM reiterated her call for formation of an international committee under the UN supervision to oversee efforts of tackling the adverse impact of climate change and assisting and rehabilitating the victims.

About the international climate

change fund, Hasina said it has to be separated from other development funds for its effective and target-oriented utilisation.

Holding a detailed discussion on the upcoming Copenhagen climate change summit, she called for international support to increase capacity of the worst affected countries including Bangladesh to face the challenges of global warming.

The premier said a comprehensive measure has to be taken in a coordinated manner to face the possible global challenges, especially to save the poor countries, those who are going to be the most affected.

The PM said Copenhagen summit has to be considered as the beginning of a new journey against climate change for the international community rather than a final destination.

She sought support of the EC in Copenhagen for a new legal regime under UNFCCC Protocol to ensure social, cultural and economic rehabilitation of the climate migrants, and establishment of International Adaptation Centre in Bangladesh.

Hasina said Bangladesh, supposed to be one of the worst affected countries of global warming, is taking preparations of its own on how to face the natural disorder and its impact on the people.

The premier regretted that despite having a very negligible contribution to global warming, Bangladesh is now compelled to undertake a huge preparation involving its own money and wealth against the calamity.

In this context, she said her government has taken up a \$100 million climate change action plan along with the beginning of river dredging and setting up green belt along the coastal areas.

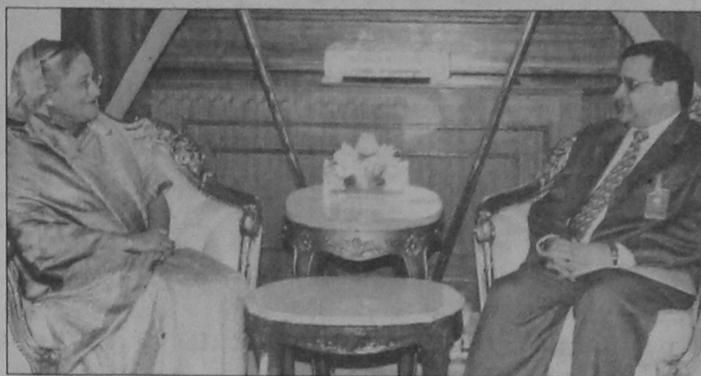
Hasina said her government also attached special priority to increase food production, diversify crops to make them friendly to the changing environment and set up more silos and godowns for food stock to face any situation.

Besides, the PM said other countries, those will be affected by the climate change later, have to take cautious preparations from now to face the probable challenges.

The EC delegation included Franziska Keller from Germany, Nocolo Rinaldi from Italy, Jean Lambert from UK and John Attard Montalto from Malta.

European Commission Ambassador in Dhaka Stefan Frowein accompanied the delegation.

PM's Principal Secretary MA Karim, Office Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman, and ambassador M Ziauddin were present.



Cirdap Director General Dr Durga P Padual calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday as part of the upcoming second ministerial meeting of the regional bloc to be held in January 2010.

Cirdap chief apprises PM of ministerial meeting

UNB, Dhaka

Dr Durga P Padual, director general of Center on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (Cirdap), yesterday apprised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of the upcoming second ministerial meeting of the regional bloc to be held in January 2010.

Rural development ministers and secretaries from 25 Cirdap and non-Cirdap countries and heads of delegates from 45 donor agencies are expected to participate in the meeting.

During his call on the PM at the Prime Minister's Office, Dr Padual apprised her of various matters relating to the logistic and infrastructural development of the Cirdap.

Hasina assured Dr Padual of all necessary assistance and cooperation in holding the meeting professionally.

Secretary to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Mollah Waheeduzzaman, Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad, Ambassador Ziauddin and Rural Development and Cooperatives Division Secretary Samar Chandra Paul were present at the meeting.

PM calls on president

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made a courtesy call on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban yesterday and apprised him of the outcome of her visits to Sweden and Qatar.

The prime minister told the president that at the climate conference in Stockholm she raised the issue of adverse impacts of the global climate change on food production and ecology in Bangladesh and other least developed countries.

Hasina said she urged the world leaders to set up Adaptation Fund to protect Bangladesh and other LDCs from the perils of global warming that causes the climate change.

About her meeting with Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani in Doha, Hasina told Zillur that she sought assistance from the Gulf state for construction of the Padma Bridge, dredging rivers and other fields of economic development.

She also requested the Qatari monarch to ensure "enhanced facilities" for Bangladeshi workers over there and recruit more workers from Bangladesh.

The president praised the PM for her "successful" visit to Sweden and Qatar and hoped that Bangladesh would turn into a "hunger- and poverty-free nation" under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina.

'Revive diminishing city water bodies'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop urged the authorities concerned to take effective measures to revive diminishing water bodies of the city to save it from ecological disaster.

They also stressed the need to preserve the existing water bodies in and around the city for a sustainable city.

The Department of Architecture of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) organised the workshop on 'Integrating the urban water bodies in Dhaka's fabric: An imperative issue of sustainable city' at BUET on Saturday.

A group of 4th year stu-

dents of the department and some thesis students of Katholieke Universiteit Leuven of Belgium presented a research paper at the workshop inaugurated by BUET Vice Chancellor Prof AMM Saifullah.

Presenting the research paper, the students showed that the water bodies are diminishing day by day, which is most alarming for the city dwellers because it will cause ecological disaster in near future.

They viewed that implementation of existing laws and proper planning are urgently needed to save the city.

Prof Nazrul Islam, chairman of the University Grants Commission,

Emaduddin Ahmed, executive director of Institute of Water Modelling, Prof Nurul Islam Nazem of Centre for Urban Studies, and Prof Mujibur Rahman attended the workshop presided over by Prof Shaheda Rahman, head of the architecture department.

Dr Farida Nilufar coordinated the workshop.

The workshop was aimed at accumulating information and constructing the scenario regarding water bodies in Dhaka, creating scope of interaction with stakeholders and experts to share the knowledge and experiences, identifying the ways to achieve the goals of sustainable cities.

Obituary

METRO DESK



Nargis Ahmed, wife of former superintendent of police late Alauddin Ahmed, died on Saturday morning at Lab Aid Hospital in the city at the age of 80, says a press release.

After she had suffered a massive brain haemorrhage, Nargis was admitted to Sikdar Medical College Hospital in Gulshan and was later shifted to Lab Aid Hospital.

She was laid to rest at Jurain graveyard in the afternoon after her namaz-e-janaza at Gulshan Azad Mosque.

She left behind two sons, two daughters, grandchildren and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

Her Qulhwani will be held on Tuesday after Asr prayers at her Gulshan residence.

Prof Moksedur Rahman
BSS, Dhaka

Prof Moksedur Rahman, an educationist, passed away due to old age complications at his Mirpur residence in the city on Saturday at the age of 70.

Moksedur Rahman left behind his wife, four sons and three daughters to mourn his death.

He was a teacher of Dhaka Government Laboratory School, Barisal Residential College, Comilla Teachers Training College and Feni Teachers Training College.

Rahman, father-in-law of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) General Secretary Omar Faruq, was also a teacher of Ahsania Mission Teachers Training College.

He was buried at Mirpur Martyred Graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at Mirpur-1 Ahmednagar Jame Mosque after Asr prayers on Saturday.

His Qulhwani will be held at 175 Ahmednagar, Mirpur, after Asr prayers on Friday, family sources said.

Dr Md Nurul Islam
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Md Nurul Islam, joint-chief agriculturist of Planning Commission and member of the central committee of Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh, passed away yesterday.

In a statement, Md Wasuzzaman and AFM Bahauddin Nasim, president and secretary general of the institution, expressed deep shock at the death of Nurul Islam. They also prayed for salvation of his departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members, says a press release.

Mir Fokrul Kaiyum
METRO DESK



Mir Fokrul Kaiyum, former director of Bangladesh Meteorological Department, passed away on Saturday at the age of 69, says a press release.

He was buried at Azimpur graveyard.

His qulhwani will be held at his residence (House No. 63, Road No. 19, Sector 11, Uttara) in the city after Asr prayers on November 6.

Relatives, friends and colleges are requested to attend the programme and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

MAKING RIVER WATER DRINKABLE

Industrial units must tackle pollution: Experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Industrial units in and around Dhaka must undertake measures for conservation of the environment in an effort to protect the rivers around the city as a source of drinking water, experts said at a workshop yesterday.

The LGRD Ministry and The World Bank Dhaka office jointly organised the two-day workshop on 'Innovative strategies and partnerships for tackling industrial pollution' for a proposed project titled 'Dhaka Integrated Environment and Water Resources Management'.

Water treatment plants are not capable of purifying wastewater the rivers of Dhaka are now plagued with, said Taqsem A Khan, managing director of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa).

"The river water can be made drinkable if it is free from untreated toxic effluents," Khan said talking to The Daily Star after the workshop.

Dhaka Wasa extracts from underground 87 percent of 1.95 crore litres of water a day that it supplies to the city dwellers, he said.

"The aim of the project is to free the rivers from pollutants in order to shift heavy dependence on the groundwater to surface water, as over-extraction of groundwater is ecologically dangerous," said Khan.

The project aims at building two to three common effluent treatment plants at selected industrial clusters to demonstrate clean production practices.

Industrial wastes are responsible for 60 percent of the surface water pollution in and around Dhaka city, he said, adding that the number has now crossed 10,000.

The project is expected to be launched by April next.

Monzur Hossain, secretary to the local government division, Mark Green, vice-president of Wal-Mart, and Faruque Hassan, vice-president of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association, also spoke at the workshop.

Dr. Catherine Tovey, project team leader of World Bank, said Dhaka's aquifer system should be saved, as the underground water table is falling fast, she said.

Khawja M Minnatullah, World Bank senior specialist on environment and water, said that the project aims at determining the roles of the stakeholders in conserving water resources in the process of industrial production and motivating towards better production practices.

A World Bank report in 2007 found that there are 7000 small and large industrial units in and around Dhaka city, he said, adding that the number has now crossed 10,000.

The project is expected to be launched by April next.

Monzur Hossain, secretary to the local government division, Mark Green, vice-president of Wal-Mart, and Faruque Hassan, vice-president of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association, also spoke at the workshop.

REGIONAL SCOUT Bangladesh to organise 24th confce

METRO DESK

Bangladesh Scouts won the bid to organise the 24th Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Conference to be held in Dhaka in 2012, says a press release.

Bangladesh Scouts beat Thailand and Indonesia in an open voting contest held in Kuala Lumpur on October 31.

A 34-member team of Bangladesh Scouts, led by Chief National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts and Power Secretary Md Abul Kalam Azad, attended the 23rd Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Conference held in Kuala Lumpur from October 27-31.

20 fall sick as gas cylinders leak in dyeing factory

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Some 20 workers fell sick after inhaling poisonous gas as some gas cylinders leaked at Metro Dyeing Factory at Shibubari Market in Fatullah yesterday.

They were admitted to Narayanganj 200-bed Hospital and different clinics. The condition of some of them was reported to be critical.

The sick workers included Humayun Kabir, 24, Jasim, 31, Habib, 26, Julhas, 30, Billal Hossain, 25, Shafiqul, 24, Alauddin, 23, Imam, 35,

Farhad, 26, Masud, 26, Ujjal, 25, Wahid, 22, Mannan, 27, Mehedi, 30, Hasan, 28 and Saju, 26.

They said about 50 workers were working in the factory at the time of the accident. Gas started coming out as some cylinders kept by the boiler room of the factory leaked at around 6:30am. As a result, most workers lost consciousness. They were rushed to 200-bed Narayanganj Hospital.

Doctors said the workers fell sick due to gas poisoning.

Jamiruddin files writ against JS probe body's decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court, challenging the legality of the parliamentary probe committee's decision to recover "misappropriated" money from him through the Anti-Corruption Commission.

The High Court bench of Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Mamnoon Rahman fixed November 16 as the date for hearing the petition.

The parliamentary body last month decided to recover the money from former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, his deputy Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui, and former chief whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain through legal action, as they allegedly misappropriated the money through medical bills, additional fuel allowances, and other expenses during the tenure of the last parliament.

According to a parliamentary probe committee, the total amount of money is around Tk 2.50 crore.

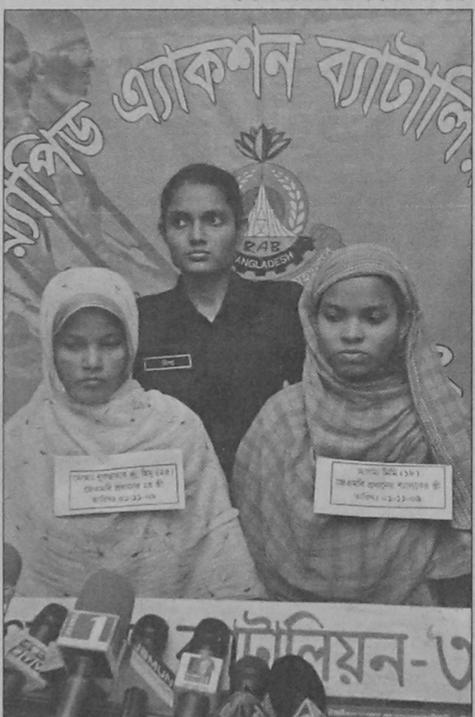


PHOTO: STAR

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Nurunnahar Himu, second wife of present JMB chief Maulana Saidur Rahman, and Asma Mimi, wife of JMB leader and Himu's brother Muktasim Billah Rubel, from Mayakanon at Sabujbagh in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)



Night temperature may fall

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country having chances of light rain or thunder-showers at one or two places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Tangail and Mymensingh in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Night temperature may fall slightly over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:19pm today and rises at 7:06am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 33.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Srimongal and Comilla and lowest 17.5 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.0	21.8	61	64
Chittagong	32.5	21.8	72	74
Rajshahi	30.0	20.2	81	88
Khulna	32.4	21.4	72	75
Barisal	32.0	20.6	75	88
Sylhet	31.8	21.1	66	75
Cox's Bazar	33.0	22.2	72	75

DHAKA TODAY

Symposium

Bangladesh Pediatric Association, Dhaka Shishu Hospital, ICDDR,B, and Save the Children jointly organise a symposium on burden of pneumonia in Bangladesh. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar

Sandhani National Eye Donation Society organises a seminar on 'Blood and eye donation movement in Bangladesh and Sandhani'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Roundtable

Daffodil International University organises a roundtable on 'Food safety for Bangladesh'. Venue: Biam Foundation auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Discussion

Bangla Academy organises a discussion to mark the 80th birth anniversary poet Shamsur Rahman. Venue: Bangla Academy seminar room. Time: 4:00pm.

Knitwear exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of the 5th Bangladesh Knitwear Exhibition 2009 will be held. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 10:00am.

West backs trial, int'l norms

FROM PAGE 1

supportive of the government's intention to hold the trials. "We accept that the culture of impunity that exists now in Bangladesh started with the crimes committed in 1971 and the lack of accountability following them. The country will not come to rest until these issues are settled," said one diplomat.

"We accept that the trials are important to deal with an unfinished chapter of Bangladesh and the culture of impunity," another stated. However the diplomats made a clear distinction between support for trials in principle and support for the trial process. All the diplomats spoken to emphasised that the trials must be held 'in the right way' and that 'international norms must be adhered to'. And they were concerned that the recent amendments by the government to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 are not significant.

Three months ago, following a consultation process involving Bangladesh Law Commission, the government passed legislation amending the 1973 Act. These amendments will allow individuals to be prosecuted for war crime offences whether or not they were part of an 'auxiliary force', prohibit military judges from sitting on the tribunals, and permit the government to appeal to the Supreme Court against any acquittal.

In addition, the amended Act also has a new provision requiring the tribunal to be 'independent in the service of its judicial function', and to 'ensure a fair trial'.

It is however the absence of

any further detail about what rights will be provided to defendants, and how fairness will be ensured that has concerned the diplomats.

"The government had an opportunity to update the legislation, but failed to do so," one senior diplomat told The Daily Star. "Much more could have been done. There is significant concern amongst the international community about what kinds of trial will take place," he added.

Another diplomat said rules of evidence in the 1973 Act are so lax at present that it might well be possible under the current law to convict people simply on the basis of press clippings and materials available on the internet. The amended law still fails to state the level of evidential proof required for a conviction.

The Daily Star also confirmed that the United Nations has concerns, and urged the government to bring some further amendments to the 1973 Act, to ensure that it conforms to minimum international standards.

These diplomats' concerns help explain why no foreign government has yet agreed to give the Bangladesh government any substantive help or assistance for holding the trials.

The UN Headquarter also told The Daily Star that the UN will not give assistance for the trials, but agreed to give assistance to help the government make an informed decision on the issue. The UN said it is currently in discussion with the Bangladesh authorities on the subject. It has not yet sent any expert to assist the Bangladesh govern-

ment. In voicing their concerns privately, the diplomats reflected the views expressed by the international human rights organisation Human Rights Watch, in a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The letter stated that the amendments will not 'bring Bangladesh law into line with international trial standards nor ensure due process', and that 'significant improvements' to the 1973 Act are required.

Human Rights Watch said while the 1973 Act 'may have been largely based on international standards at the time of its drafting, international criminal law has evolved significantly since'. The letter advised the prime minister that if the Bangladesh government wanted to reflect international norms, it should amend the law in line with the due process requirements set out in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to which the Bangladesh government is in fact a signatory.

This will require the government, for example, to ensure that the offences in the Act match the internationally recognised definitions of war crimes and crimes against humanity, setting up a defence office, specifying the grounds for an individual to claim criminal responsibility, and provide improved rights to the accused, in particular the right of access to a lawyer once he or she is considered a suspect.

Shahriar Kabir, president of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmla Committee, also known as Forum for Secular

Bangladesh, told The Daily Star that he also supports 'minimum international standards and transparency'. He said, "If Human Rights Watch or other international experts consider the existing law to be inadequate, the government should certainly look into what changes to the Act are necessary." He, however, was of the view that the current legislation is 'adequate'.

Shafiq Ahmed, the law minister, told The Daily Star that it was difficult for him to comment, as the diplomats had not set out their specific concerns to him. "If they have specific proposals for amendments, they should tell me," he said. The government agreed to at least one of the UN suggestions that army judges should not be able to sit on the tribunal, he added.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 8th death anniversary of Kazi Asaduzzaman (Sana Kazi), former chairman of Madhupur upazila in Tangail and the brother-in-law of Rafiqul Islam Ratan, chief reporter of the Daily Jangor.

On the occasion, a doa and milad mahfil will be held at his village home in Tangail, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the programme.