

Deal with Tipai issue properly to protect national interest

Panellists tell BBC Sanglap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Speakers at a BBC Sanglap (dialogue) in Sylhet city yesterday said the Tipaimukh issue should be dealt properly to safeguard the national interest.

The issue should be raised with high importance with the Indian authorities, they said, adding that it should be raised at international forums if necessary.

Former adviser Sultana Kamal, Sylhet Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, city BNP Convener Dr Shahriar Hossain Chowdhury and educationist Dr Kabir Hossain Chowdhury were the panel discussants at BBC Bangladesh Sanglap at the Luckatoora Golf on the outskirts of the city.

The speakers said the much-talked-

about Tipai project in the Indian state of Manipur would cause a havoc-like situation in greater Sylhet region and its adjoining areas.

Strong protests must be raised against Tipaimukh dam, they said, adding that India should rethink on the Tipai issue for the greater interest of the region.

They further said that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would have to discuss the issue with the Indian authorities during her official visit to the neighbouring country this month.

Replies to questions, the panellists said upazila parishes need to be made more pragmatic as well as practical to ensure people's participation in the process of taking decisions locally.

Making lawmakers advisers to the

chairmen would not accrue much benefit to upazila parishes, rather it would create more complexities, they asserted.

They said the upazila chairmen and vice chairmen who were elected 10 months ago need to be fully empowered at the earliest.

The discussants at the dialogue expressed deep concern over the two latest launch capsizes which took a heavy toll of lives in Bhola and Kishoreganj districts.

Strict enforcement of the existing laws could reduce such waterway accidents, they asserted.

The staff and others responsible for the launch accidents must be given punishment through proper investigations, the panellists said.



Workers are busy sprucing up the premises of Rayer Bazar Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial in the city yesterday ahead of the Martyred Intellectuals Day to be observed on December 14.

PHOTO: STAR



Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding incorporation of social justice and green job issues into the new climate agreement at the upcoming Copenhagen conference.

Leadership quality of youths vital for development

Say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leadership quality of youths needs to be sharpened to develop the country fast, said speakers at the launching ceremony of a month-long youth leadership programme at the city yesterday.

They called on the youths to pay back their motherland by doing good deeds for it where they were brought up.

"Our society has a dearth of leadership which needs to be present at every sphere for development," said Manzoor Hasan, director of Institute of Governance Studies of Brac University.

"Our common notion is that leadership should prevail at the top echelon, but the fact is that it requires to have at every level of a society which wants to progress," he said at the function as the guest of honour.

Bangladesh Youth Leadership Centre (BYLC) organised the programme

where a total of 42 students from general, English and madrasa backgrounds participated.

Foreign Secretary Mohamed Mijarul Quayes spoke as chief guest at the function titled 'Building bridges through leadership training' at Biam auditorium.

The secretary said there were two kinds of people in society: one group of people build wall round them and isolate themselves while the other group makes bridge to communicate with people.

"Leaders are those who bridge network and relate themselves with the dreams of others," he added.

Giving much emphasis on a dream, Mijarul said: "It is very important for youths to have big dreams and implement them after relating with their motherland."

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), said: "Sometimes it seems to us that

the young generation doesn't care the betterment of the society much, but this initiative by youths will help eliminate this notion."

"We want a society which has love for all, ability to appreciate and is based on justice," she added.

Shaheen Anam hoped that the month-long training would give the participants the ideas and training of inclusiveness, tolerance and justice.

She said the youths of the present generation were lucky as they were born in a liberated country, an endowment that the youths in many parts of the world such as Palestine don't have.

Sharing her experience that she left her UN job abroad in 1990 and came back to the country to do something for it, the MJF chief called on the youths to do something for their motherland.

BYLC Chairman Ejaj Ahmad also spoke at the function.

Muggers attack UNDP staff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of four muggers attacked a UNDP employee and snatched money and cellphone sets from him at Banani in the city on Friday night, leaving him critically injured.

The victim, Rubaiyat Ahmed, 33, an IT expert at the United Nations Development Project (UNDP), Dhaka office, is now undergoing treatment at the United Hospital.

Police said the muggers in a

private car intercepted Rubaiyat when he was travelling in a rickshaw at Road #25, Block #A, Banani at around 10:30pm.

Officer-in-charge (OC) Kamal Uddin of Gulshan Police Station said the motive behind the attack is not clear, as unknown criminals also attacked Rubaiya's Banani residence yesterday morning.

A snatching case was filed in this connection yesterday evening with Gulshan police station.

Mamata to discuss issue of immigration clearance time with Hasina

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Indian Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday said she would take up with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is scheduled to visit India later this month, the issue of reducing the time for immigration clearance on both sides of the border between India and Bangladesh.

The issue of inordinate delay at land customs on both sides of the border will be taken up during the visit of Hasina, Mamata said, adding that she had already talked to Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee about it.

Her statement came in the wake of complaints by passengers of Kolkata-Dhaka train about the excessive delay in immigration clearance.

Mamata was speaking at a function organised for laying the foundation of a new railway track to Bongaon, which is close to India-Bangladesh border.

The 11.5-km track, she said, would cost Rs 57.16 crore and the project is expected to be completed in about two years.

Mamata is scheduled to call on Hasina during the latter's stay in Delhi.

Discussion on Ataur Rahman Khan tomorrow

METRO DESK

A discussion will be held on the eventful life and contribution of Ataur Rahman Khan, former chief minister of East Pakistan and ex-prime minister of the Bangladesh at national graveyard near the Sangsab Bhaban at 9:00am tomorrow on the occasion of his 18th death anniversary, says a press release.

A doa mahfil will also be offered seeking the eternal salvation of the departed soul.

Suhrawardy's anniversary of death observed

DU CORRESPONDENT

The 46th death anniversary of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, one of the greatest leaders in the undivided India, was observed in the country yesterday through different programmes.

The programmes included placing wreaths at the mazar of Suhrawardy and discussion.

Suhrawardy dedicated his life to ensure welfare of the people by establishing democracy above all.

Awami League (AL) leaders paid homage to Suhrawardy by placing wreaths at his mazar in the city at 8:30am. They also observed one-minute silence and offered fateha at his grave. AL leaders Abdul Latif Siddique, Obaidul Kader and AFM Bahauddin Nasim attended the programme.

Leaders of different organisations, including Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote, Jatiya Ganotantrik League and Shaheed Suhrawardy Jatiya Smriti Parishad also organised separate discussions marking his death anniversary.

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'Formulate master plan to resolve water crisis'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called for formulating a master plan for water supply to ease water crisis across the country.

They also urged the government to utilise more surface water than groundwater and take immediate steps to make Buriganga and Shitalakhy rivers free from pollution in order to use water of these rivers for supply to the city dwellers.

Nagorik Sanghati in association with Actionaid organised the discussion on Right

to Water and Water Business' at Comrade Moni Singh-Farhad Smriti Trust Bhaban in the city.

The speakers said any move to privatise water supply system as per the prescription of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) would be disastrous, and urged all to resist such commercialisation of water supply.

Lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon said water management plan should involve the entire country, not only the Dhaka city.

Lower and lower middle

class people are the worst victims of water crisis, he said.

Managing Director of Dhaka Wasa Taksim A Khan said they are planning to use surface water for 80 percent of water supply to the city dwellers within next ten years.

Speakers at the discussion also said that the government is losing a huge amount of revenue as the owners of the newly constructed buildings are using illegal water connections.

Nagorik Sanghati President Prof ASM Atiqur Rahman presided over the discussion.

Call to amend Upazila Act

DU CORRESPONDENT

A group of chairmen and vice-chairmen of Upazila Parishads (UZ) yesterday put forward a 10-point demand to the government, including cancellation of some sections in the Upazila Parishad Act 2009.

They placed the points from a meeting at Engineer's Institute auditorium in the city.

They said the sections barring their smooth functioning for the development in upazila level.

They also asked the government to meet the demands by December 26. If their demands go unheeded, they will announce fresh programmes by holding a

council of all chairmen, they said.

The demands include cancellation of all circulars issued from different ministries selecting Upazila Nirbahi Officer as the president to various committees, cancelling sections 19, 20, 22 and 25 in the Upazila Parishad Act 2009 and executing section 23, forming local government commission to free the local government from the grip of local lawmakers, authorising Upazila Parishad chairmen to write down secret documents under the upazila to resist terrorism and corruption, specifying responsibilities of chairmen at the parish and immediate execution of the court verdict.

The chairmen alleged that due to unwillingness of a section of bureaucrats and local lawmakers, they are not fully able to perform their responsibilities to the local people.

Ataur Rahman Ata, Mohibur Rahman, Ziaul Haq Sarker and Abzal Hossain Khan, among the chairmen, spoke at the meeting.

Safe waterway demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Social rights activists at a token protest rally yesterday demanded safe waterway for the country's poor people who are the worst sufferers.

Referring to the launch accidents in the last 10 years, they said the authorities have not taken any tangible measure despite the loss of hundreds of lives in such accidents.

Save the Environment Movement (SEM) and Safe Waterway Implementation Movement organised the rally in front of the National Press Club at 11:00am.

SEM Chairman Abu Nasir Khan said millions of taka are spent in road sector along with ambitious projects in the city while the waterways have the least amount of allocation.

Member Secretary of Safe Waterway Implementation Movement Amirul Rasul said though different governments pledged to work for the development of waterways, nothing has been done so far.

The speakers placed a 10-point demand at the rally, including announcement of major launch accidents as national disaster, proper investigation and actions against people responsible for the accidents and compensations to the victims and their families.

Leaders of different organisations, including

Tk 3 crore foreign currencies seized at ZIA: One held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials seized foreign currencies worth about Tk 3 crore and arrested an outgoing passenger at Zia International Airport in the city yesterday.

The arrestee, Abuds Sattar, son of late Osman Gani of East Tejuri Bazar, was scheduled to fly to Dubai in the morning.

But the customs officials challenged him on suspicion because he came to Dhaka from Dubai on Friday night and was leaving for Dubai.

The customs officials brought back the luggage and searched it again to find currencies of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Canada, Australia and the UK in the luggage.

again several hours later, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Amimul Ehsan of customs said.

Sattar came to the airport at about 8:30am and his luggage was sent to a prison area after necessary checking.

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