

Tarique made powerful senior vice-chairman

Council empowers Khaleda to pick all other leaders; standing committee expanded, amended charter okayed

SHAKHAWAT LITON and RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The BNP national council yesterday elected Tarique Rahman senior vice-chairman in a move apparently designed to smooth his path to the party helm.

It also empowered re-elected Chairperson Khaleda Zia to pick the other office-bearers and members for the national executive and standing committees, ignoring the party charter that stipulates election to the posts.

Election of Tarique, Khaleda's elder

son, came soon after the council approved a proposal for introducing a senior vice-chairman's post in the executive committee.

The proposal, now part of the BNP constitution, says the senior vice-chairman will lead the party in the absence of the chairperson. He will also be a member of the standing committee.

Placed by Joint Secretary General Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, the proposal was passed amid huge clapping from the councillors, Faridpur BNP President Shahzada Miah told reporters at the

Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

He was coming out of the closed-door session in the evening.

Earlier, seven councillors including lawmakers Fazlul Haque Milon and Abul Khair Bhuiyan in their speech demanded that Tarique be given an important position.

It is a must to keep the organisation united, they said.

The council also approved raising the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

PHOTOS ON PAGE 5



PHOTO: STAR

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia addresses the inaugural session of the party's fifth national council at the city's Bangabandhu International Convention Centre yesterday.

AL wishes BNP all the best

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League (AL) yesterday hoped that democracy in Bangladesh will be stronger through reorganisation of BNP under the leadership of its Chairperson Khaleda Zia making its national council successful.

"We, on behalf of Awami League wish all the success of this council and we also hope that BNP will be reformed and stronger by holding the council," Asim Kumar Ukil, deputy publicity secretary of the ruling party, said in his address at the inaugural session of the BNP council.

Thousands of BNP councillors and delegates welcomed

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



A video speech of Tarique Rahman is being played at yesterday's BNP council.

Tarique now soul searching

His recorded statement played at council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tarique Rahman yesterday said he has yet to decide about his direct participation in BNP's activities, as he is now soul searching and trying to monitor the country's present situation from abroad.

"My future decision will depend on my health condition and the overall situation in the country," said Tarique as the party's senior joint secretary general in a pre-recorded video speech that was played at the opening ceremony of the fifth national council of BNP. Later in the evening he was elected the senior vice-chairman of the party by the council. He also said his mind remains in his homeland.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

BNP chief lays out 19-pt programme for future

Warns govt against anti-people policies, asks it to implement polls manifesto; massive participation marks council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her party's fifth national council yesterday unveiled 19-point programme that includes strengthening the country's democratic institutions and curbing corruption, criminal activities and injustice.

Addressing the party's grassroots level leaders, Khaleda, who was re-

ected the party chairperson unopposed, urged party men to implement the programmes by shunning the paths of injustice, wrongdoings, greed and corruption.

"We have come out of disasters with new dreams to build Bangladesh and make people happy. We will together implement the dreams. The party will have to be made capable of materialising those dreams," the BNP chief said,

describing the adverse situation her party faced during the last caretaker government's rule.

The BNP, which conceded a massive debacle in the December 29 parliamentary election mainly because of misrule and unbridled corruption during its 2001-2006 tenure, came up with the future programmes to rejuvenate the party and its grassroots level.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3

ADAPTATION FUND LDCs not happy with progress

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Least Developed Countries (LDCs) yesterday said they are not happy with the way climate-change adaptation fund is being raised and demanded mandatory contribution from developed countries, which are the major polluters.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer in a daily press briefing yesterday said, "Adaptation fund move went well. Everybody is happy about this."

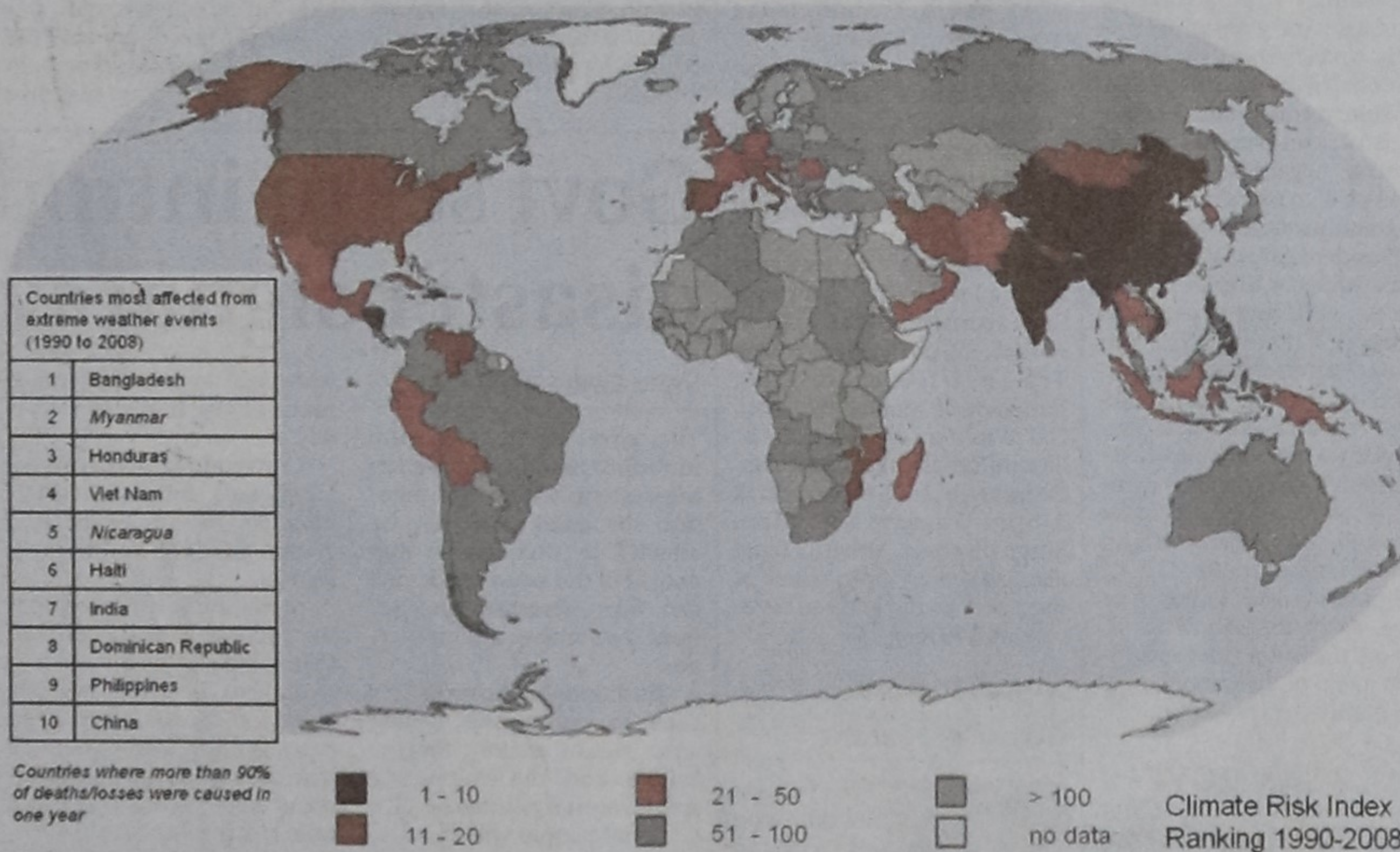
In a press conference following Yvo de Boer's conference, LDC delegates differed with Yvo de Boer's opinion.

The LDCs press conference was chaired by Bruno Sekoli, chief of Lesotho delegates. Chair of LDCs Ainun Nishat from Bangladesh and Uday Sharma, secretary for the environment and forest

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Global Climate Risk Index 2010 (covering 1990-2008)

Source: Germanwatch and Munich Re NatCatSERVICE®



Bangladesh worst climate-hit

Global Climate Risk Index shows around 8,241 killed annually in last decade

PINAKI ROY from Copenhagen

Natural disasters have caused the greatest loss of life in Bangladesh over the last decade than in any other country of the world, according to the Global Climate Risk Index (CRI), 2010 published yesterday in Copenhagen.

An average of 8,241 people died each year in 244 instances of extreme weather conditions in Bangladesh with cost of damage \$2,189 million a year and loss of GDP 1.81 percent.

In 2008, there were 654 natural disasters worldwide, causing around 93,700 deaths and cost of damage \$123 billion.

The NGO Germanwatch presented the CRI findings during the second day of the United Nations Climate Change Summit, 2009 in Denmark.

Germanwatch's index estimates that throughout the world, 6 lakh people have died in 11,000 cases of natural disasters over the past 10 years.

The estimated global financial cost of natural disasters is \$1.7 trillion.

After Bangladesh, Myanmar and Honduras were the nations most affected by natural disasters over the last decade.

In Myanmar, the average annual death toll is 4,522 and the cost of damage \$707 million.

Other vulnerable countries include Vietnam, Nicaragua,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Bangladesh to demand 15pc of adaptation fund: Hasan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will demand at least 15 percent of the global climate change adaptation fund -- proportionate to its population -- at the Copenhagen summit.

State Minister for Environment and Forests Hasan Mahmud said this yesterday explaining Bangladesh's stand at the summit.

He was speaking at a press conference titled 'Climate Change: Copenhagen Conference and Bangladesh's Response' at the Press Information Department in the capital.

The minister said Bangladesh will also urge the developed countries to give the proposed 1.5 percent of their GDP to generate a fund of \$450 to \$600 billion per year

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Blasts kill 49 in Lahore market

Suicide attack kills 9 near Multan ISI office

AFP, Multan

Suicide attackers launched a gun and bomb assault near an office of Pakistan's main spy agency in an eastern city yesterday, with nine people dead in the third bloody militant strike in 24 hours.

The commando-style attack in the prime minister's hometown of Multan came after 49 people were killed when two bombs devastated a market in Lahore, engulfing shops in flames and burying people under the rubble.

Attacks blamed on Islamist fighters have surged this year as Pakistani troops battle the Taliban in the rugged tribal regions near the Afghan border, under fierce US pressure to do more to destroy extremist strongholds.

Strikes against military targets have increased, underscoring weaknesses at the heart of the nuclear-armed nation's most powerful establishment.

Two attackers fired on soldiers as they drove a pick-up truck packed with explosives past security check posts, trying to approach the

Multan offices of spy agency the Inter Services Intelligence, officials said.

When challenged, they detonated the car bomb, killing five civilians, two soldiers and themselves and blowing a massive crater in the road.

"It was a suicide attack. There were two attackers who were stopped at the check post, but they tried to flee and security personnel fired at them," senior police official Arif Ikram told reporters.

"The attackers returned fire and also launched two rockets, and later exploded their vehicle."

Multan's top administrative official Sayed Mohammad Ali Gardezi said that one military building was badly damaged in the blast, adding, "They did not succeed to hit the target."

Emergency services officials had previously put the death toll at 12 people, but Ikram said final investigations showed nine dead and 47 injured.

On Monday night, two bombs planted 30

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Enamul fires hosts into semifinals

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh progressed to the semifinals of the Bangabandhu SAFF Championships as they beat Sri Lanka 2-1, courtesy of a brace from their in-form striker Enamul Haque, in a thoroughly entertaining encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh emerge champions of group B with seven points in three outings while Sri Lanka finish second with six in their three. Bangladesh will face one of Maldives or India depending on the result of their game today.

This win is a revenge of sorts for Bangladesh as they had lost their previous two encounters against Sri Lanka, the last one coming in the 2008 SAFF Championship in Colombo where they were beaten 1-0 in the last group match to bow out of the tournament.

This time though, Bangladesh needed only a draw in this match to advance, however they played for a win as they went for broke right from the beginning.

The 2003 champions made two changes to their starting eleven from bringing in Zahed Parvez and Atiqur Rahman in a bid to strengthen the midfield that struggled both physically and

SEE PAGE 7 COL 7

A chair lesson from Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a rare gesture, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday left her ornate seat of honour to sit in a less decorative chair next to colleagues and other distinguished guests at the inaugural session of the SME Financing Fair 2009.

It was seen as an example of showing respect to other esteemed guests. Hasina was invited to be the chief guest and open the two-day fair, co-organised by Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry and SME Foundation at Sonargaon Hotel.

Entering the ballroom, Hasina took her designated seat, but after a while, she noticed that everybody else was sitting in normal chairs. She instantly asked her bodyguard to re-arrange her seat.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Set up industries outside Dhaka, get low-interest loan PM asks entrepreneurs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government would disburse bank loan to the entrepreneurs at low interest rate if they set up their industries at district and upazila level to reduce the burden on Dhaka city.

She asked the entrepreneurs to take their investment out of Dhaka so that it helps power decentralisation.

"I will ask the finance minister and Bangladesh Bank governor to provide special facilities to those who invest at district and upazila level," Hasina said this at the inauguration of the two-day long SME Financing Fair 2009 at Sonargaon Hotel as the chief guest.

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry and SME (Small and Medium Enterprise) Foundation jointly organised the fair where a total of 26 banking and other financial institutions participated to showcase their different financial products and programmes.

Hasina asked both the public and private banks to disburse

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

