

MEETING WITH BROWN

Hasina seeks consensus on emission cut

UNB, Copenhagen

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged world leaders to reach an international agreement on cuts in greenhouse gas emissions and arranging adaptation fund to protect Bangladesh and other most vulnerable countries (MVCs) from the perils of global climate change.

She made the call from a bilateral meeting with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown at his Hotel Radisson suite on Tuesday evening.

"The world leaders are now here in Copenhagen. I hope they will reach a consensus over how to save the climate victims. Climate woes and responsibilities have to be shared and faced jointly and unitedly," Hasina said.

During the talks, both the prime ministers agreed that fund arrangement is a must for the MVCs to enable them to tackle the challenges stemming from the calamitous climate change, said the Bangladesh premier's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

The two leaders observed that the strategy and mechanism as to how the climate fund is to be disbursed and used also need to be devised

effectively and successfully for best use of the funds.

At the same time, Hasina said, it has to be ensured that development works in the countries are not impeded while getting down to tackling the climate change challenges.

She thanked the British premier for his initiatives to raise an adaptation fund for the countries--most vulnerable to the climate risks caused by global warming due to carbon emissions.

Hasina also conveyed her thanks to Gordon Brown and the US President Barack Obama for making telephone calls to her and giving her assurance of continued cooperation and assistance for Bangladesh.

In reply, the British PM, who arrived in Copenhagen Tuesday, two days ahead of his schedule, again assured Hasina of providing every possible assistance to Bangladesh in tackling the climate change risks.

Hasina told her British counterpart that despite resource constraints, Bangladesh government has taken various plans and programmes to save its people from the climate calamities.

She mentioned a massive project

chalked out to launch capital and maintenance dredging to bring back navigability in the country's silted up rivers for protecting the people from unexpected floods and tidal upsurge.

Besides, the government has taken up various measures for rehabilitation of the victims of the cyclonic storm Sidr and Aila, she said.

"But it will not be sufficient to face the terrible impacts of global warming on Bangladesh. Bangladesh needs international help," she added.

Hasina made it clear that Bangladesh and its people are not responsible for the climate change, but the fact is that they are the worst sufferer of the natural calamities.

The British PM highly praised the bold and courageous role of Hasina for protecting the climate victim people of the MVCs and other parts of the world.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque, State Minister for Forest and Environment Hasan Mahmud, Ambassador-at-large M Ziauddin were present.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina calls on British Prime Minister Gordon Brown in Copenhagen on the sidelines of climate change conference on Tuesday.

1,000 protesters arrested in Copenhagen

Danish authorities close registration for NGOs

PINAKI ROY, from Copenhagen

The Danish police arrested some 1,000 protesters from around Bella Centre, the climate change conference venue, in Copenhagen yesterday.

Following demonstrations by a number of NGOs and their workers, the authorities have closed the new registration for NGOs.

The NGO workers were not allowed to enter the conference venue.

"I hope they will be allowed tomorrow," said a police, who was intercepting the NGO workers nearby the centre.

Braving freezing cold outside, several thousand protesters were marching towards Bella Centre on the eve of the final session of the summit.

Danish policemen, who can be called inexperienced in terms of tackling such protests, detained more than 100 protesters on Tuesday evening while heads of the governments started to converge on Copenhagen for the crucial session.

The climate talks reached a deadlock over cuts in emissions of heat-trapping gases and long-term financial aid. The high-level segment of the conference

has already started.

For the first time, Danish police have been armed with water cannons to tackle the protesters, as speculations were rife that the protests might go violent.

"Now we are gathering at different points of the city. Then, we will gather in front of Bella Centre. Some of our co-protestors are registered who entered the centre, they will come out when we reach there," said a protestor, who is a member of the international coordination body of climate activists.

They, divided into different groups, including Blue Group, Tight Group and Green Group, were assembling near Sundry station and city centre.

The protesters, mostly NGO workers and climate activists from different countries, including Bangladesh, organised an 'alternative' climate conference called 'People's climate change summit' at Klimaforum at the heart of the Copenhagen city.

Meanwhile, the Danish police were raiding different places of the city to look for the protesters, the climate activists said.

They raided a bicycle workshop

being used by demonstrators to make bicycles to be used for working as alternatives to fossil fuel culture in yesterday's demonstrations.

A total of 36 people were arrested at Klimaforum while they were protesting against the seizure of vegetable oil by police. They were planning to use the oil for their zero-carbon vehicles.

Meanwhile, many of the delegates could not register and enter the conference centre, as the capacity of Bella Centre is only 15,000 while over 40,000 people have applied for registration.

For the last two days, many of the delegates, mainly NGO workers, were kept waiting outside the centre in zero degree freezing cold.

Many of them will join the demonstrations against the COP15 process today alongside Climate Justice Action.

Earlier, Kamille Hjuler of Climate Justice Action in a statement said: "There is less and less hope in the COP15 process, and more and more willingness to trample over people's civil liberties in order to stop the mass civil disobedience that will take place at the summit on Wednesday."

'Hasina's visit to India to see breakthrough in bilateral ties'

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Ahead of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India next month, eminent personalities yesterday hoped for a 'breakthrough' in relations between Bangladesh and India.

They also suggested that the ties between the two countries could be a model for bilateral relationship in South Asia.

The views came at a discussion marking the Victory Day at the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi, where the speakers, including journalists, parliamentarians, diplomats and war veterans, recalled the contribution of the freedom fighters.

Former Indian minister and MP Mani Shankar Aiyer expressed the hope that

Indo-Bangla relations would see a 'breakthrough' with the upcoming visit of Hasina.

Former BBC correspondent Mark Tully hoped that a 'new door' of friendship between India and Bangladesh would open with the visit of Hasina. The relationship should be brought to a new height that would set an example of friendship in the South Asia, he added.

Veteran journalist Kuldeep Nayar recalled his meetings with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Dhaka and other ministers.

Referring to the brutalities of the Pakistani occupation forces during the Liberation War in 1971, he said, "These were beyond imagination."

Some war veterans, who took part in the discussion, recalled their experiences

during the liberation war and said that they could not have reached Dhaka without the help of freedom fighters and the common people.

High Commissioner Tariq A Karim said the 16th December has a special significance for Bangladesh, because it was a "victory of the people who wanted to establish a democratic and secular country".

Before the discussion, messages of President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina were read out.

Earlier, the high commissioner hoisted the national flag of Bangladesh at the chancery.

A feature film based on the liberation war was screened at the High Commission's auditorium in the evening.

Tribute paid to martyred liberation war heroes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-cultural and political organisations celebrated the Victory Day yesterday in a befitting manner, paying tribute to the three million martyrs who made supreme sacrifice for the nation.

Awami League (AL) leaders led by Presidium Member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury paid tributes at the National Memorial at Savar as party chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was away to Copenhagen for climate change talks.

The leaders and supporters of the party also placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi.

Later, a victory procession was brought out from Suhrawardy Udyan in the city at around 3:00pm. AL Presidium Member Motia Chowdhury inaugurated the procession.

Thousands of leaders, activists and supporters carrying banners, placards and festoons joined the procession that ended at Dhanmondi 32 Road after parading different city streets.

BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia placed wreaths at National Memorial at Savar on behalf of her party.

She also placed wreaths at the grave of late president Ziaur Rahman and offered Fateha.

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and Workers Party of Bangladesh leaders also placed wreaths at the National Mausoleum.

The National Memorial at Savar was the main celebration site where thousands of people from all walks of life paid their tributes to the gallant sons and daughters of the soil who made supreme sacrifices in the liberation war in 1971 for a modern and democratic state.

They reiterated the demand for beginning the trial of the war criminals immediately.

President Zillur Rahman inaugurated the Victory Day rally and parade of children and juveniles at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in the capital where he handed over the Dhaka Deputy Commissioner's Victory Day Award 2009 to the winners.

The awardees are Dr Sanjida Khatun (culture), Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique (education), Abed Khan (journalism), Prof Dr Muhammad Jafar Iqbal (science and information technology), M Abdul Mubarak (public administration) and Sakib Al Hasan (sports).

DU celebrates Victory Day

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) students yesterday celebrated the Victory Day in such a fashion on the campus which could not be seen in the last seven years.

Thousands of students tied the national flag on their heads or hands, or wearing dresses combining the colours of the flag -- green and red. They celebrated the day amid much enthusiasm.

The celebration started with setting off firecrackers at the foot of Raju memorial sculpture at TSC intersection around 12:05am. The students also released a number of balloons that drew attention of people.

Paying rich tributes to freedom fighters, who fought for the noble cause of independence in 1971, the students celebrated the day by preparing a large national flag with clay and beating drums on the TSC premises.

Different socio-cultural organisations jointly organised the programmes with the participation of members from different student bodies.

The demand for trying war criminals reverberated on the campus at the programmes. Students hurled darts on cartoons of war criminals with utmost hatred. They demanded that the trial of war criminals be started soon.

The daylong celebration ended in the evening amid lighting torches. Students also brought out a torch procession that marched several campus streets.

DU Film Society screened a documentary on the liberation war titled 'Saptasena' at TSC in the evening.

"I haven't seen such celebration on the Victory Day on the campus in the last seven years," said Tarek, a master's student of Salimullah Muslim Hall.

"It was awesome. Especially firecrackers and paper balloons," said Babu, a master's student of Bangla department. To mark the day, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, an alliance of cultural organisations, organised a colourful cultural event at Swaparjita Swadhinata Chattr in the afternoon.

The teachers and students led by Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique placed wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar in the morning.



PHOTO: STAR

President Zillur Rahman hands over Dhaka Deputy Commissioner's Victory Day Award 2009 to Prof Dr Muhammad Jafar Iqbal at a Victory Day programme at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in the capital yesterday.

China, Poland sign military cooperation deal

AFP, Warsaw

Nato member Poland yesterday signed a landmark military cooperation deal with China, the Polish defence ministry said.

Polish Defence Minister Bogdan Klich inked the "historic" accord in Beijing with his Chinese opposite number, Liang Guanglie, the ministry said in a statement.

Under the deal, the two nations pledge to cooperate in areas such as military training, medical services and research, as well as environmental protection.

In addition, Chinese and Polish commanders are to meet for talks, observers

from either sides will attend the other's military exercises, and the two countries' forces will cooperate in peacekeeping and aid missions.

The ministry underlined that the Chinese-Polish deal did not involve any arms deals, and would thus respect an embargo on the sale of weapons and military equipment to China.

The European Union, which Poland joined in 2004, has a long-standing ban on such exports.

Poland broke from the crumbling Soviet bloc in 1989 and entered NATO 10 years later.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Haji Mahitullah Bepari, adviser of Jasim Uddin Institute, a children's educational institute, passed away at Satarkul Hospitals in the city on Monday at the age of 54, says a press release.

Mahitullah, son of Haji Md Rangu Mian Bepari of Satarkul Borobari at Badda in the city, left behind his wife, two sons, one daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was laid to rest at Satarkul graveyard at Badda after a namaz-e-janaza at Satarkul Dakkhin Pukurpar Jame Mosque.

His Quikhwani will be held at Satarkul Dakkhin Pukurpar Jame Mosque after Juma prayers tomorrow.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 4th death anniversary of Abdur Rahman Khaki, former chairman of Fukra Union under Kashiani Thana in Gopalganj district, says a press release.

He authored the book 'Hindu Dhormer Utpatti O Bikash'.

On this occasion, Qurankhwani and doa mahfil will be held at Fukra Khakipara Jame Mosque to pray for salvation of the departed soul.



PHOTO: STAR

Voluntary workers of The December Initiative carry out a cleanliness drive on the Gulshan Avenue in the city yesterday as part of awareness campaign. (Story on Page 3)