

US, China offer

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With the talks in disarray Friday, many delegates had been looking toward China and the US the world's two largest carbon polluters to deepen their pledges to cut emissions to salvage a deal in Copenhagen.

"We are ready to get this done today but there has to be movement on all sides to recognise that is better for us to act rather than talk," Obama said, insisting on a transparent way to monitor each nation's pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Wen told delegates that China's voluntary targets of reducing its carbon intensity by 40 to 45 percent will require "tremendous efforts."

"We will honour our word with real action," Wen said.

China has been criticised at the two-week summit for not offering stronger carbon emissions targets and for resisting international monitoring of its actions. After the impromptu high-level meeting, French President Nicolas Sarkozy said progress in the climate talks was being held back by China.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said Friday that the Copenhagen climate summit may fall short and called for talks in 2010 to complete a deal.

"The outcome may well fall short of our expectations," Singh said on the final scheduled day of the 194-nation negotiations in the Danish capital.

Singh called for "subsequent negotiations towards building a truly global and genuinely collaborative response to climate change being concluded during the year 2010."

"To settle for something that could be seen as diminished expectations and diminished implementations would be in our view a very wrong message to emerge from this conference," he said.

Singh stood by a key demand of emerging economies -- that the Kyoto Protocol, whose obligations to cut carbon emissions blamed for global warming expire at the end of 2012, remain legally in force as a treaty.

The Kyoto Protocol made no demands of developing countries, leading the United States -- the largest industrial power -- to shun it.

"It would go against international public opinion if we succumb in its replacement by a new and weaker set of commitments," Singh said.

"Each one of us gathered here today acknowledges that those most affected by climate change are the least responsible for it," Singh said.

An early draft of the climate agreement, obtained by The Associated Press, called for rich countries to mobilise \$30 billion over the next three years to help poor countries cope with the effects of global warming, scaling up to \$100 billion a year by 2020.

But it called for continued negotiations on targets for emission cuts, with a deadline of a climate conference in Mexico City in December next year.

The lack of progress meant Obama changed the word "agreement" from his prepared speech to negotiators to "framework I just outlined."

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon told climate negotiators that "the finishing line is in sight,"

reminding them that "the world is watching."

And Brazilian president Luiz Lula da Silva told the joint session of negotiators how frustrated he was that the job was left to heads of state after talks ran into the wee hours Friday.

"I am not sure if such an angel or wise man will come down to this plenary and put in our minds the intelligence that we lacked," Lula said. "I believe in God. I believe in miracles."

To move the talks forward, Lula said Brazil, a developing country, would give money to help other developing countries cope with the costs of global warming.

Obama spokesman Robert Gibbs said the US president met with world leaders Friday from wealthy nations like Australia, the United Kingdom, France and Germany and developing countries like Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Colombia.

China and Russia, both seen as key participants in climate change discussions, also were at the meeting with Obama.

Delegates earlier were blaming both the US and China for the lack of a political agreement that more than 110 world leaders were supposed to sign within hours.

The conference has been plagued by growing distrust between rich and poor nations. Both sides blamed the other for failing to take ambitious actions to tackle climate change. At one point, African delegates staged a partial boycott of the talks.

World leaders handed off a three-page draft text about 3 am time to their ministers and they continued to work on it through the night. But by 5 am, negotiators from Mexico and the G-77 plus China said they were nowhere near agreement on the final document.

China and the US had sought to give the negotiations a boost on Thursday with an announcement and a concession.

Hillary said Washington would press the world to come up with a climate aid fund amounting to \$100 billion a year by 2020, a move that was quickly followed by an offer from China to open its reporting on actions to reduce carbon emissions to international review.

That issue -- money to help poor nations cope with climate change and shift to clean energy -- seemed to be where negotiators at the 193-nation conference could claim most success.

Pollution cuts and the best way to monitor those actions remained unresolved. And negotiators also didn't come to an agreement on an important procedural issue -- just what legal form a future deal would take.

Earlier Prime Ministers of India and China -- Dr Manmohan Singh and Wen Jiabao -- met early this morning in the Directors Room of the Radisson Blu Hotel here.

Sources privy to the half-an-hour long meeting said that both leaders broadly discussed the progress of their bilateral ties and how best to take it forward. Premier Wen Jiabao recalled his last meeting with Dr Singh in Thailand, and remarked in an opening statement that there was need to take strategic ties to a higher level.

Dr Singh concurred and said that both countries needed to meet more often and exchange views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

Climate accord

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declaration, but by 5:00am the negotiators from Mexico, the G-77 and China said they were nowhere near agreement on the final document.

The signing ceremony was supposed to be held at 9:00pm Bangladesh time yesterday but it was delayed. The lack of a deal caused leaders to sit in informal talks, delaying the opening of the regular session.

Briefing the Bangladesh press about the development of the talks, State Minister for Environment and Forest Hasan Mahmud said a text was finalised on Thursday night but parties did not agree on that.

At least 20 world leaders including Hasina and US President Barack Obama met at a breakfast meeting where Obama said if the nations cannot reach an agreement, most vulnerable countries like Bangladesh will suffer enormously.

Sheikh Hasina demanded including the migration issue of "climate refugees" in the text. She also said Bangladesh and other least developed countries are ready to reduce carbon emission, although it is not mandatory for them, if they get technological and financial help from the developed nations.

"None differed with the prime minister's demand," Hasan Mahmud told Bangladesh reporters.

Asked what Bangladesh's position about the political agreement is, the minister said Bangladesh wants something positive but nothing was settled yet.

Influential leaders of the world including Obama, the Chinese prime minister, the Indian prime minister and the Brazilian president delivered speeches at a session conducted by Danish Prime Minister and COP President Anders Fogh Rasmussen at Bella Centre.

However, none of them announced anything concrete to save the world.

There must be financing that helps the developing nations, particularly the least developed and most vulnerable, adapt to climate change, Obama said in his speech.

Indian PM Manmohan Singh said it will be difficult to reach an agreement once the leaders go back home from Copenhagen because of a lack of political support.

He said, "Equitable burden sharing should underlie any effective global climate understanding," which means rights of emission, on a per-capita basis.

Meanwhile, a paper of the UNFCCC documents was leaked yesterday, which says current emission reduction pledges by the developed nations and some emerging economies leave the world on track to global warming by at best 3 degrees Celsius and probably more.

Different bodies including the WWF condemned this.

In his speech at the opening session, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change chair RK Pachauri said if global warming cannot be limited within a 1.5 degrees Celsius increase, vulnerable countries like Bangladesh may be submerged partially displacing millions of people.

Mass graves

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Colony, Downyard Colony under Lalmonirhat municipality of Lalmonirhat sadar upazila, Swarnamoti Railway Bridge, Station Para under Aditmari upazila, Dalogram, Tusvandar, Votmari, Kakina under Kaliganj upazila, and Barokhata, Dawabari, Daliya under Hatibandha upazila in the district.

Freedom fighters of the district said a large number of people were detained and shot to death by the Pakistan occupation forces at Velabari village and Durgapur village under Aditmari upazila while the victims were trying to flee their motherland for fear of life.

Once Aditmari Upazila Parishad initiated to build monuments in those places in memory of the dead in the liberation war but the government has not so far come forward to implement the plan of the parishad.

Apart from people buried in the mass graves about 350 others, including women and children, were killed at a public execution at Barokhata village under Hatibandha upazila of the district in 1971 as they were heading for neighbouring country India to take shelter.

District Commander of Freedom Fighter Parishad in Lalmonirhat Yusuf Ali urged the government to take steps so that memories of the fallen heroes of the liberation war are not lost through neglect.

2 arrested

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with Khilkhet Police Station Thursday night in this connection.

The seized equipment include four media converters, two dealing switches, two ethernet switches, one 24-port Quintum, one E-1 server with three DGM cards and 24 tellular phones, police said.

Rab-1 officials said the culprits had been running this business illegally in the city's Nikunja and Gulshan areas for a long time incurring daily losses of Tk 12 lakh to the government while the company was earning Tk 6 lakh a day.

Pak ministers

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Naveed said, also denying reports of an arrest warrant issued for Malik.

NAB officials said earlier the body had instructed the interior ministry to put the names of 253 people on the "exit control list" restricting travel.

"They include politicians, bureaucrats, ex-military officers and some diplomats... Arrest warrants issued against some are also revived and properties of accused frozen again," said NAB's media officer Naveed Sattar.

Defence Minister Ahmed Mukhtar told local television late Thursday he had been due to go on an official three-day visit to China but that his name had been put on the list restricting travel.

"It was in connection with a corruption case. But there is no corruption case against me -- it is only an enquiry which is pending against me for the past 12 years. I will strongly defend myself in the court," he said.

The NAB later put out a statement denying Mukhtar was on the list, but it did not explain why he was not allowed to leave.

The amnesty -- called the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) -- was passed in October 2007 by then-president Pervez Musharraf, who was under pressure to hold elections and end years of military rule.

It quashed charges against a number of politicians including Zardari and his wife and ex-prime minister Benazir Bhutto -- who was assassinated two months later -- to allow them to stand for office.

Zardari's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) went on to win elections in 2008, restoring civilian rule, but his relations with the powerful military are strained and his public approval rating at rock-bottom.

Zardari is immune from prosecution while in office, but his eligibility for the presidency could be challenged as graft cases were pending against him when the NRO was adopted, raising questions about his suitability for the post.

Rampant extortion

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have to pay tolls from almost all the bus counters but the counters at Fulbaria, Mirpur, Farmgate, Azimur, Mohammadpur, Khilgaon have to count more than those of other areas.

They said the companies have to pay around Tk 300 for each bus per day at Fulbaria.

Officials of a good number of bus companies said their employees very often fall victims to so-called unions and associations on the roads.

Citing a recent example they said three youths in the name of ruling party men boarded a bus from the Science Lab counter and severely beat up the helper of the bus as he asked for tickets.

Officials of the company said they talked to Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haque and the DSPS authorities to exempt the bus companies from Tk 70 fixed by DSPS as service charge for each bus per day.

They said the DMP commissioner agreed in principle with their proposal but he has not issued any letter so far in this regard even after repeated requests from their end.

Contacted, DMP Commissioner Shahidul told The Daily Star that no bus

Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, Husain Haqqani, voiced hope the amnesty ruling would not destabilise the country, which is under US pressure to do more to fight Islamist militants on the border with Afghanistan.

"I hope everybody will play their constitutional role and (the) country will not go down the road of coups that has been disastrous for our country in the past," Haqqani, himself implicated by Wednesday's ruling, told CNN.

Pakistan is ranked the 40th most corrupt country out of 180 monitored by global watchdog Transparency International, and many governments have fallen or been ousted by the military over accusations of graft.

Political analyst Talat Masood said the government must act swiftly to restore confidence by forcing out implicated ministers.

"If it is prolonged it's likely to affect governance, it is likely to affect the overall security situation, but if the transition is quick, these ill-effects could be reduced," he told AFP.

Bus afire

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"Khairul was on his way to Siddheswari Girls' College to attend an examination for a job at the Directorate of Land Survey," said Ashrafuzzaman, a cousin of the deceased.

The pedestrians and locals caught the driver and torched the vehicle getting its passengers out of it.

Police rushed to the spot and rescued the driver, who was knocked unconscious, while two units of fire fighters doused the flame.

Transport movement on Begun Rokeya Sarani remained suspended for about 20 minutes.

Police and locals said there is a footbridge adjacent to the place of accident but the pedestrians hardly use it resulting in frequent accidents.

Kafrul police said a case was filed in this connection and the driver was arrested.

company is a victim to extortion and transport sector is free from extortion now.

Earlier in the first half of July a 19-member committee headed by DMP joint commissioner (traffic) was formed with the representatives from police, transport owners and transport workers' leaders to check extortion in the transport sector but to no avail.

One held

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Natore and Bogra Public Works Department office, said Magura police.

He also disclosed names of a few of his accomplices and the gang leader, police said.

Police also seized a mobile phone from his possession. The mobile belonged to the guard who was stabbed to death by the gang during robbery in Bogra PWD office.

On information, a team of detective branch (DB) of police in Magura raided a house in Sajari village of Magura and arrested Shimul. He had been living there as a tenant for last couple of months, police said.

"After extracting information from Shimul, we are now trying to nab the gang leader Babu," Superintendent of Police in Magura Mohammad Shahriar said.

Stop harassment

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Bangladeshi expatriates.

"I firmly believe the expatriate workers will work as an auxiliary force to implement the dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to build a Bangladesh free from hunger and poverty."

The present government is firmly committed to build up skilled manpower through proper development of human resources, he said.

"Foreign labour market plays an important role in creating employment for our increasing population and also helps to combat the negative impact of climate change."

Zillur said the government is working tirelessly to ensure the welfare of the expatriates and taking steps to sign new agreements with various countries in this regard.

"Bangladeshis working overseas have been playing an important role in the country's socioeconomic development and the remittances sent by the expatriates have created a new record in the country's foreign exchange reserve."

Speaking on the occasion, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said that so far this year the

expatriate Bangladeshis sent remittances of some \$ 10 billion. This should be used properly in productive investment, he added.

Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain mentioned that some 70 lakh Bangladeshi immigrants are now working abroad and sending remittances to the country.

"Despite the economic recession, some five lakh Bangladeshis will be going abroad by end of this year," he said.

Post and Telecommunications Minister Razi Uddin Ahmed Razu was also present at the function.

Ex-JP lawmaker

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took Tk500 per month from each teacher as toll for Masud Memorial.

The principal filed the case after some cadres of Sakhawati caused disturbances in the college on Thursday, police said.

Sakhawati was produced before a Jessor court yesterday afternoon. The court sent him to jail, added police.

Earlier on June 21, Sakhawati Hossain was arrested on charge of war crimes.

Key climate

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2016 in light of the convention's ultimate objective. This review will include consideration to strengthen the long-term goal to limit the increase in global average temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

But Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change chair RK Pachauri said if the world cannot keep the ceiling of temperature rise within 1.5 degrees and the peaking year of that rise within 2015, parts of Bangladesh and many other small islands will suffer enormously.

The second draft of the Copenhagen Accord, which was leaked out late Thursday night, had a huge gap between the demands of the least developed countries and the achievements.

Later, two more documents were leaked.

In the third draft, the clause of turning the political documents into legally binding ones within 2010 or before COP-16 was excluded.

It said the parties were going to agree that the increase in global temperature "ought not to exceed 2 degrees".

In the fourth document, they said they would recognise the scientific view of keeping the temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius.

It, however, does not say the parties will keep the temperature rise below that ceiling.

The parties were discussing the fifth text as of 2:00am Bangladesh time.

Without mentioning any timeframe, the document that was being prepared by the heads of participating states, said the countries should reduce the ceiling of their peak temperature as soon as possible.

It does not propose any international scrutiny for developing countries.

The documents to be declared after the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change are possibly a political accord, not "legally binding" ones, but the status was yet to be confirmed.

The text, drafted early yesterday by a select group of 28 leaders including UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, proposes extending negotiations for another year until the next scheduled UN meeting on climate change in Mexico City in December 2010.

The paper has texts on the aggregated reduction of greenhouse gas but the parties were yet to insert figures of targets up to 2020.

The Daily Star yesterday morning got a copy of the second draft of the documents, which says a fund of \$30 billion for adaptation is going to be created for up to 2012 and a fund of \$100 billion after 2020.

However, the text did not mention anything on how the funds will be created and the share of public money in the fund.

Dr Saleemul Haq, chief of the climate change cell,

International Institute of Environment and Development, who is observing COP 15 very closely, said this draft is totally "inadequate" for Bangladesh.

Asked if Bangladesh is going to sign a document like this, State Minister for Environment and Forests Hasan Mahmud said, "We want something positive."

Mohammed Nashid, president of the Maldives, told the media that he would not sign a document that approves the ceiling of increased global temperature above 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Buriganga

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rickshaws, buses, auto-rickshaws and others, Katashur Road leading to the Flood Protection Embankment and towards the bridge always remains blocked.

Lawmaker of Mohammadpur area and State Minister for Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives Jahangir Kabir Nanok said he had visited the area several times and thought that the bridge would be "meaningless" without the connecting roads.

"The Minister for Communications Syed Abul Hossain has personally directed the Dhaka City Corporation to immediately build the approach road. We are pursuing the matter very seriously," Nanok said.

Lawmaker of Keraniganj and State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Md Quamrul Islam told The Daily Star that he was aware of the problem of narrow roads connecting the bridge.

"We are working with relevant authorities to start building the approach roads within a very short time," he said.

Meanwhile, R&H officials unveiled plans to build a 1.61-km-long connecting road on the Keraniganj side at a cost of Tk50 crore.

"We shall connect the road with Taranagar and also rebuild four bridges under the scheme," said an R&H engineer.

Info Commission

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The commission has been facing serious difficulties, and failed to run its primary activities properly for not having a permanent office, the required manpower, and other logistics.

The government recently issued a gazette notification framing rules which are necessary for proper implementation of the RTI Act that came into effect on July 1 this year to ensure public access to information. But the gazette cannot be used for some serious errors in it.

In the gazette, parts of the rules were inserted in the regulations section while some regulations were mistakenly printed in the rules section. The government has to issue a fresh notification, correcting the errors. All these are delaying implementation of the act.

On the other hand, setting up of information delivery units with officers in every government office to provide citizens with their required information are going on at a slow pace.

The chief information commissioner said about 1,000 units have already been formed while the need across the country is for 6,000. Since the idea is new in Bangladesh, it will take a little more time to implement the act, he observed.

"We will notify citizens through different media outlets including television channels and newspapers when our information units and information officers will be ready to provide services," Azizur Rahman said.

The Awami League government was supposed to provide the commission with a 77-member staff for smooth functioning by now. But the manpower could not be appointed due to the commission not having a permanent

office, said Azizur adding that they will start recruiting manpower a month after the commission moves into the Department of Archaeology building.

Asked about the commission's functioning in absence of a permanent office, the required manpower, and other logistics, he said, "We are slow but steady."

The chief information commissioner said absence of manpower and logistics has also been hampering their public awareness raising campaign about RTI across the country. "But we are not sitting idle. We have so far visited 20 districts to give people an idea about the RTI Act and its benefits."

They are meeting government officials, teachers, bar association members, and representatives of NGOs, the media, local governments, and development agencies. "We tell people why it is important to get information and from where to get that... We are also telling them if access to information is ensured, it will increase accountability in different institutions and help establish good governance," Azizur said.

He said members of the commission will travel all through the country, and for that logistical abilities are very much necessary.

Two other information commissioners are retired secretary Mohammad Abu Taher, and Prof Sadeka Halim of the sociology department of Dhaka University.

According to the RTI Act, every citizen now has the right to information he or she needs, and in case of being denied, one may file complaints with the commission against its officials.

Pak mosque

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beside the blast site.

"We have received three more dead bodies taking the death toll to 11. There are 29 injured people with us, some of them in a critical condition," said Doctor Wakeel Mohammad Khan, head of the main hospital in Lower Dir.

More than 2,700 people have been killed in attacks in Pakistan since July 2007, with the past three months seeing a surge in dramatic attacks.

On December 4, suicide bombers stormed a mosque frequented by army officers in Pakistan's garrison city of Rawalpindi during Friday prayers leaving 40 people dead in an onslaught of gunfire, grenades and explosions.

Lower Dir borders the Swat valley, which slipped out of government control in July 2007 after radical cleric Maulana Fazlullah mounted a violent campaign to enforce Islamic Sharia law.

The army launched an offensive in April and says at least 2,150 militants have been killed in Swat and neighbouring Buner and Lower Dir districts, but sporadic attacks continue to plague the mountain region.

Pakistan's military has expanded operations into much of the northwest Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) bordering Afghanistan, a region branded the most dangerous place on Earth by Washington.

In Fata's North Waziristan district Friday, the third US drone missile strike in two days left seven militants dead, security officials said.

The strike hit a village in the Dattakhel region close to North Waziristan's main town

Miranshah -- the same north-western area where two strikes hours apart on Thursday killed at least 14 militants and destroyed their hideouts.

"The US drone fired four missiles hitting a house, a compound and some makeshift buildings. At least seven militants were killed and five were injured," a security official in the northwest capital Peshawar told AFP.

"It looks like some key Taliban or al-Qaeda figures are hiding in this area and that's why the drones are targeting this area again and again."

An intelligence official in Miranshah confirmed the death toll. Officials refused to be named because of the sensitivity of the US strikes, which have inflamed anti-American sentiment.

North Waziristan is rife with Taliban militants, al-Qaeda fighters and members of the Haqqani network, a powerful group known for staging attacks on foreign troops in Afghanistan.

The area has seen a rise in US strikes since President Barack Obama took office and put the country on the frontline of the war on al-Qaeda.

North Waziristan neighbours South Waziristan, where Pakistan has been focusing its most ambitious offensive yet against homegrown Taliban militants, sending about 30,000 troops into the region on October 17.

But Washington and London are pressuring Pakistan to do more to capture al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and prevent militants crossing the border and targeting foreign troops in Afghanistan.

Advani