



Three organisations -- Nagarbasi Sangathan, Nirapad Development Foundation and Pratyasha -- form a human chain at English Road in old Dhaka yesterday demanding steps to protect a park from land grabbers. PHOTO: STAR

Energy-saving appliances on the cards

PM tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to introduce Energy Star certified electric fans, refrigerators, televisions, ovens, motors and air-coolers to save power, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in parliament yesterday.

The premier, however, did not elaborate on the matter. These appliances will have Energy Star sticker on them as they would meet an approved standard of energy efficiency.

In response to lawmakers' queries, Hasina said her government has also decided to replace, in phases, conventional light bulbs used in city corporation and municipality roads with LED (light emitting diode) bulbs to save

power.

Hasina, also in charge of power ministry, said step was also taken to stop, in phases, production of incandescent bulbs and electric stoves. The government has also decided to update the building code to incorporate power-saving measures, Hasina said.

The premier also mentioned the government measures for introducing 20 lakh pre-paid electricity meters across the country and the distribution of 2.80 crore compact fluorescent bulbs in different areas to stop wastage of power.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Enamul Haq in response to lawmak-

ers' queries informed the House of the government's short-, medium- and long-term measures to generate more power and explore gas to meet the growing energy demands.

On import of power, he said it is expected that import of power from India will begin from 2012 and necessary measures were taken to construct power transmission line between Bheramara in Bangladesh and Berhampur in India.

In an effort to stop wastage of gas, the state minister said the government would soon begin introducing gas connections with pre-paid meters for domestic use under Titas' network.

Implement DAP to build green city

Speakers urge govt

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a discussion yesterday stressed the need to implement the proposed Detailed Area Plan (DAP) to ensure a planned and environment-friendly Dhaka city for the next generations.

They pointed out that if the government fails to implement the DAP properly, the capital will not be able to stand up to the pressures of unplanned urbanisation, which might result in it being eventually abandoned within a decade only, much like Japan's old capital Kyoto.

The 'Rights of Workers and Consumer Safety and Public Accountability in Bangladesh' Project of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), with support from Safety

and Rights, a human rights organisation, and the Australian High Commission in Dhaka organised the discussion titled 'Bangladesh National Building Code: Implementation and Way Forward' at the National Press Club in the city.

Chairman by eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain, the discussion was addressed by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, Rajuk Chairman Nurul Huda, Barrister Rabeya Bhuiyan, Rajuk director (Development) Sheikh Abdul Mannan, Chairman of the Department of Law and Justice at South East University M Assaduzzaman and BLAST Director General Mohsin Ali Khan.

Architect and planner Salma A Shafi presented the keynote paper at the dis-

cussion.

Rajuk Chairman Nurul Huda said there is no way, other than implementation of the DAP, to protect the city from unplanned urbanisation.

Pointing fingers at unruly real estate companies, he said a vested quarter has been trying to create hindrances to implementing the proposed DAP as well as carrying out other Rajuk activities.

Revealing the nature of Rajuk activities, he said the capital development agency has already demolished some 50 unplanned and vulnerable structures across the city.

"We are going to form a special team involving skilled engineers and planners to identify vulnerable structures in the city," Nurul Huda added.

Tougher law needed to protect Royal Bengal tigers

UNB, Dhaka

The world has witnessed the loss of more than 97,000 tigers over the last 100 years. Today, specialists say there are less than 3000 tigers in 14 countries.

If it took 100 years for 97,000 tigers to be extirpated, one may easily imagine how much, or rather how little time, it might take for the remaining 3000 to disappear. Thus the tiger population today is on the verge of extinction.

According to the Worldwide Fund for Nature, there are some 2,100 Royal Bengal tigers alive today, of which India alone has 1,411. Bangladesh Sundarbans is the home of the largest single unit of Royal Bengal tigers in the world with an estimated 300-500 tigers.

Bangladesh, therefore, has an opportunity to contribute significantly to the conservation of tigers and to benefit from their continued presence. However, tigers are threatened in Bangladesh due to direct loss, prey depletion, and habitat degradation.

To reverse the situation, the country needs a tougher law in the vein of what the Union Environment and Forests Ministry of India is now proposing.

In the amendment proposed to the Wildlife Protection Act of India, it is said

that any illegal hunting in tiger reserves or in the country could incur a jail term of not less than seven years and a fine up to Rupees 50 lakh (Tk 74 lakh).

Furthermore, poachers having a second run-in with the law could be faced much stiffer punishment, with a fine of up to Rupees 75 lakh (Tk 112 lakh).

According to the proposed amendment, offences relating to other animals listed as endangered or critical could incur a jail term of not less than five years with a minimum fine of Rupees 5 lakh (Tk 7.5 lakh). Repeat offenders will incur a jail term of not less than seven years, and they will be fined up to Rupees 25 lakh (Tk 37 lakh).

At present, the punishment that is mentioned in the Bangladesh Wildlife Act is a maximum of two years imprisonment with a maximum fine of Tk 2000. This needs to be revised urgently. It is understood that the government has recently initiated the revision process. Tiger conservationists expect the revised punishment to be in line with what is being proposed in India.

Dr Md Anwarul Islam, professor of Zoology at Dhaka University and the CEO of the Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh, is of the opinion that to save the tiger,

we need to save its prey population. In the Sundarbans, the spotted deer is the tiger's main prey but rampant poaching on the fringes of the Sundarbans is rapidly depleting the spotted deer population.

Deer (prey) poaching is much more harmful than tiger poaching for the existence of the tiger, he says, as the tigers are heavily dependent on the remaining spotted deer population in the Sundarbans.

So Bangladesh needs to have a tougher, more stringent law to protect the deer population in the Sundarbans as well. It may be mentioned here that today there is no natural population of spotted deer outside the Sundarbans.

According to Dr Islam, judges, magistrates and forest officials should be empowered to allow them to detain alleged poachers in the custody of the forest department for several days to facilitate investigations.

In building a successful tiger conservation effort, he strongly recommends institutional development based on policy, forest protection through law enforcement, education to raise awareness, and research and monitoring, as well as the need for collaboration between different stakeholders.

Shun politics of destruction

PM urges Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged opposition BNP and its Chairperson Khaleda Zia to shun "politics of destruction" and instead work for people's welfare and development.

The premier made the call yesterday morning when she visited Faruk and Suman, the two youths who received serious burn injuries on Saturday night when miscreants, reportedly identified as supporters of June 27 hartal, set fire to a vehicle carrying the two friends near Maghbazar rail crossing.

Of the two victims, 60 percent of Faruk's body was burnt while Suman received serious burn injuries on head, face and other parts of his body.

On her arrival beside the bed of Faruk at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH),

Faruk's mother burst into tears as she hugged the PM.

"What harm my son had done to the miscreants. Why did they set fire on my son?" she said.

Consoling her, the PM assured Faruk's mother of bearing all medical expenses of Faruk and Suman.

"Burning innocent people by enforcing hartal without any pro-people issue cannot bring anything good for the people and the nation," she was quoted as saying by PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

"I request the opposition party to shun politics of destruction and work for people. Come to the Parliament and do your duty that the people have reposed on you by giving votes for you," Hasina said.

The PM donated the cash money for Faruk and Suman at the hospital.

Faruk's mother narrated how Faruk

and his friend Suman were burnt by the hartal supporters.

Faruk and Suman, the two friends who are small businessmen, were to return home on Saturday night after buying some kitchen materials.

As the car carrying them stopped beside a shop near Maghbazar rail crossing, miscreants had sprayed petrol on their car and set it ablaze.

Hasina also visited several other patients, at the burn unit of the DMCH, who were seriously injured in recent Neemtoli fire incident.

She passed some time beside them and reassured them of bearing their all medical expenses.

Health Minister AFM Ruhul Huq, lawmaker Mustafa Jalal Mohiuddin, IG of Police Nur Mohammad and DMCH Burn Unit Chairman Dr Samanta Lal Sen, among others, were present.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visits the injured at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. PHOTO: PID

CHOWDHURY ALAM Govt playing 'mysterious' role: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition BNP yesterday alleged the government is playing a "mysterious" role over "disappearance" of its leader and Dhaka City Corporation councillor Chowdhury Alam.

The party leaders apprehend the "missing" BNP leader might be a victim of "secret killing".

"The government's silence is unacceptable. They [government] cannot simply avoid its responsibility for a missing ward commissioner," BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said while addressing a press briefing at the party's central office in Naya Paltan.

It is the responsibility of the government and law-enforcement agencies to investigate when any ordinary citizen goes missing, but unfortunately the government remained "unconcerned and silent" over Alam's disappearance, he added.

Delwar said the home minister did not meet a BNP delegation on Tuesday, which gives an indication that the home minister is aware of Alam's whereabouts.

He urged the government to take immediate steps to find out the missing BNP leader without further delay as he went missing five days ago.

Earlier on Tuesday, DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka alleged members of Rapid Action Battalion held Alam by halting his car in Farmgate around 9:00pm on June 25, two days before the hartal.

But police say the law enforcement agencies did not arrest Alam.



People of Gazipur stage a demonstration in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday protesting repression on them by the land grabbers. PHOTO: STAR

CONTINENTAL SHELF OF BAY OF BENGAL

UK experts in Dhaka to help submit claim to UN

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A team of four British experts arrived in Dhaka yesterday to assist Bangladesh in submitting to the United Nations its claims over the continental shelf of the Bay of Bengal by July next year.

The UN set the deadline for Bangladesh for submitting its claims to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) at the UN Headquarters in New York.

The experts, hired by Bangladesh, called on Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at her office and discussed various aspects of the documents to be prepared for submission to the UN.

The team members are Joshua A Brien and Paul Hibberd, legal advisers of Maritime Boundaries of Commonwealth Secretariat, and

Lindsay Parson and Alan Evans of UNCLOS Group of National Oceanographic Centre, Southampton University, England.

They also began a process of consultation with the officials of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Wing, headed by Additional Foreign Secretary Rear Admiral (Retd) Khurshid Alam, at the foreign ministry.

The international legal experts are examining the seismic survey, done by Bangladesh on the Bay of Bengal, as well as other preparations. They are also providing technical and legal support to the officials preparing the documents, said a source.

Bangladesh is now working on data processing. The foreign experts are expected to finish their task by December, the source said.

WEATHER

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Chittagong, Barisal, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi and Khulna divisions in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places over Chittagong and Barisal divisions, Met Office said.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country. The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:15am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 33.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Dhaka and lowest 23.6 degrees Celsius at Madaripur.

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	33.6	24.6	81	68
Chittagong	30.8	25.8	79	82
Rajshahi	31.8	25.0	89	78
Khulna	33.3	24.6	95	74
Barisal	32.5	24.3	83	69
Sylhet	32.2	25.0	96	80
Cox's Bazar	32.5	26.0	83	79

DRIVE AGAINST POLYBAGS

2 factories sealed off in Tongi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court of the Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday sealed off two polythene bag manufacturing factories and also seized 1,200 kg polythene shopping bags during a drive in Tongi, Gazipur yesterday.

The two factories are Shathi enterprise at Sonali Tobacco Road and Khalil Packaging at Taltala Road.

The mobile court led by executive magistrate of Gazipur Md Nazmul Hasan also realised Tk 90,000 in fines and filed six cases against 20 owners and employees of six commercial establishments, including the two factories, on charges

of producing and using polythene bags.

The four other commercial establishments are Al Amin Sweets and Bakery, Al Amin Sweets and Bakery store, Bikrampur Hotel and Restaurant, and Rahim Store in Station Road area.

Director (enforcement) of DoE Mohammad Munir Chowdhury and acting Director of Dhaka divisional office Sukumar Biswas were present during the drive.

The government imposed a ban on manufacturing, marketing and use of polythene bags in Dhaka city on January 1, 2002, followed by a nationwide ban on April 8 in the same year.