



Different environmental and professional groups stage a token hunger strike in front of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the city yesterday demanding steps to save Sangsad complex from the possible damage due to realignment of metro rail route.

PHOTO: STAR

## METRO RAIL REALIGNMENT 'Save JS complex'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Undermining the sanctity and aesthetic value of the Sangsad Bhaban complex by the realignment of proposed metro rail route to save the abandoned Tejgaon airport is unacceptable, said noted professionals and civil society leaders at a hunger strike yesterday.

The token hunger strike was jointly organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) and Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) at the south plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

It was organised to save the Sangsad complex, Ispahani Islamia Eye Hospital and Anwara Park from the possible damage due to the realignment of metro rail route.

As metro rail is a vital transport facility for the people, the government's move to take it into the Sangsad complex is unfortunate, said Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, vice-president of Bapa.

"Sangsad Bhaban is the symbol of the country's sovereignty and democracy and the architecture of it is extraordinary," he said adding, "Spoiling it to save an abandoned airport is unacceptable."

The 400-acre Tejgaon airport in the heart of the city must be turned into a civic centre, otherwise it would bring a colossal disaster to public life if there is any war, he said.

It is also unethical to maintain a military strategic installation in the dense human settlement, said Said Mubasshar Hussein, president of IAB.

The government is going ahead with the realignment of metro rail along the Sangsad complex, a listed heritage site, bypassing Nagar Unnyan Committee that controls development within 250 metres of such a site in the city, he added.

Bangladesh Air Force objected to Bijoy Sarani section of the elevated metro rail on the plea that it would hinder air operation at Tejgaon airfield and pressed for its diversion along Sangsad Avenue through Khamarbari.

Technical experts said the realignment would encroach significantly upon the Sangsad complex, a world-famous architectural marvel by Louis I Kahn.

Shahdeen Malik, a noted lawyer, who took part in the demonstration, said a democratic government would have addressed the public concern over the Sangsad complex. But unfortunately, the government has not done so, he added.

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, president of Bapa, Wakilur Rahman, director of Dhaka Art Centre, Golam Rahman, president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, Mahmudul Haq Manna of Nagarik Committee, architects Rabiul Hussein and Abu Sayeed M Ahmed also spoke.

## Int'l Migrants Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Migrants Day will be observed here today with a call to protect the rights of several million Bangladeshi migrant workers.

This year's slogan will be "Safe migration, economic development".

Government and non-government organisations working with migrant workers have chalked out elaborate programmes marking the day.

The Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment has organised a two-day programme at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on the occasion. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be present at the inaugural ceremony as the chief guest.

The function includes rally, discussion, job fair, seminar, debate competition and cultural programme.

Hasina will inaugurate the Probsa Kalyan Bhaban at city's Eskaton and talk with migrant workers working in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) through video conferencing.

Zafar Ahmed Khan, secretary of the expatriate welfare ministry, said around 7.8 million Bangladeshis are working in different countries across the globe. Of them, over 5.5 lakh workers had gone abroad this year while 3.9 lakh last year.

# Kyoto protocol, Bali plan buried thru' Durban confce

Speakers tell press conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday said the most vulnerable countries should not rely on rich and rising economic nations for negotiation and discussion over the climate change issues as they are largely concerned over their own interests.

The conference titled 'Durban Reality: What Next' organised by some

green organisations was held at the Jatiya Press Club in the city, said a press release.

They said the Kyoto protocol and Bali action plan were buried through the Durban conference.

Rich and rising economic countries has gained their interests through omitting 'legal binding, 'historical responsibility' and 'common but differentiated responsibility' at the con-

ference, they added.

Leaders of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples' Network on Climate Change and Bio-diversity, Climate Change Development Forum, Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihood, Equity and Justice Working Group Bangladesh and Network on Climate Change Bangladesh addressed the event.

## Biogas Week begins

BSS, Dhaka

The weeklong programme on the promotion of biogas and manure began yesterday with a nationwide campaign to raise awareness about the benefits of manure as fertilisers and its co-benefits, said a press release.

The Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL) has chalked out an extensive programme to celebrate the event titled 'Biogas Week 2011' in the city and some other parts of the country.

Rallies, cultural shows and discussions will mark the week, which is expected to have an impact on reshaping mindset towards efficient use of conventional energy at domestic levels.

IDCOL and National Domestic Biogas and Manure Programme (NDBMP) will hold a press conference today at the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) to highlight the significance of the week.



Management Net in association with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society organises a voluntary blood donation programme at Suhrawardy Udyan gate in the city on December 16 on the occasion of Victory Day.

PHOTO: COURTESY



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

People cross the river Karnaphuli by boats in Chittagong amid dense fog and chilling cold in the morning yesterday.

## 2nd Int'l Congress of Bengal Studies begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-day long Second International Congress of Bengal Studies 2011 will begin today with a view to promoting Bangla language, literature and Bangladeshi culture at international level.

The congress, has jointly been organised by Dhaka University (DU) and Bangla Academy, will begin at 10:00am at DU Senate Building. Other sessions of the programme will be held at MBA auditorium of the university and at Bangla Academy.

Prof Rafique Ullah, convener of the programme, briefed on the programme at a press conference at old senate building in the university yesterday.

He said over 200 participants from 20 countries including the USA, the UK, China, Japan, India, and Pakistan will present keynote papers on various aspects of Bangla literature, culture, arts, environment, history, education and anthropology.

"The congress will help us share the common field of experience on various aspects of Bengal Studies with the international communities and it will also play an important role to enrich our knowledge", said DU Vice-Chancellor and the President of the congress committee Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique.

Prior to this, Delhi University of India organised the first international congress in 2010.

Professor Emeritus Tosiou Narke of Tokyo University and Prof Amitava Chakraborty of Delhi University, the president and the general secretary of the International Congress of Bengal Studies respectively, and Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman also spoke at the press conference.

## Recast EC thru' talks BNP urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday demanded that the government appoint election commissioners after discussing with the opposition parties.

The main opposition in parliament also alleged that the government is carrying out secret killings in a bid to eliminate the opposition.

"Before constituting a new election commission, the government must discuss with the opposition parties. It has to be formed on the basis of consensus," BNP's acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told a discussion in the city.

Doctors Association of Bangladesh organised the meeting at the Jatiya Press Club to mark the Victory Day.

Fakhrul said holding the next polls under a caretaker government is the most important matter to the party. "BNP will not join the polls otherwise."

The current Election Commission expires in February next year.

Blasting the government for the recent incidents of secret killing and disappearance, he alleged that the government has 'chosen' the path of 'secret murder' to stop people's movement against its wrongdoings.

"During the 1972 to '75 period, the then government had used Rakkhi Bahini to kill opposition party leaders secretly. And now people are being killed secretly after they are captured," the BNP spokesman said.

He alleged that people who are involved in secret killings are identifying themselves as members of elite force Rab and other law enforcing agencies.

Fakhrul also said incidents of secret killing are increasing to such a level that people are frightened to come out of their homes. "But, our home minister has claimed that incidents of secret killing are happening to save the war criminals."

"What a shame! People's dead bodies are being found here and there in the country while the minister does not know anything about this," the BNP leader added.

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