

Aware people of preventing lightning losses

Say speakers
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the need to create awareness on ways to avoid the loss of hundreds of lives and property each year due to incidents of lightning.

The seminar, "Lightning: Reasons and Prevention", was organised by Centre for Development Dialogue (CDD) in the capital's Bangladesh Institute of Journalism and Electronic Media auditorium.

CDD Chairperson Mirza Tarequl Quader said the majority of the loss of lives occur in rural areas.

"But it is very regrettable that the government is yet to declare lightning as a disaster and take necessary steps to aware people in minimising losses," he said.

Muhammad Habib Tariqul, a researcher of CDD, urged people to switch off electronic devices, including televisions, telephones and refrigerators, during lightning and thunderstorms to avoid losses.

He also urged people to avoid taking shelter under big trees or by electricity poles during such times.

The speakers demanded formation of a separate cell comprising experts under the ministries of food and disaster management and science and technology to effectively tackle losses.

State Minister for Science and Technology Engineer Yeafesh Osman addressed the programme as the chief guest. CDD Secretary General Dr SM Morshed also spoke at the programme.



The capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue gets waterlogged even if it rains briefly. The photo was taken last night.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMAN

No polls under political govt: BNP

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

BNP standing committee member Barrister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said the party would never accept and support any election under a political government in the country.

Speaking at a seminar on "Background of Caretaker Government System: Present Reality" in the port city, he insisted on reinstatement of non-party caretaker government system.

Abdullah Al Noman, a vice chairman of the party, said, "We will not allow any caretaker government since he had not showed any neu-

trality in his professional activities in the past".

Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, another vice chairman, advised, "It's high time for the present government to set up a non-controversial caretaker government".

Referring to the "disappearance" of Sylhet BNP leader Ilias Ali, Moudud warned that BNP would go for tougher programme if Ilias was not returned safely to his family and the party.

Addressing the meeting at BGMEA building, BNP vice chairman Morshed Khan termed the vision 2021 of the present govern-

ment a blue print for staying in the power of the country.

In his speech, senior BNP leader Mir Mohammed Nasir Uddin said the 15th amendment to the constitution was a road map to one party government system.

The seminar was organised by Chittagong University Jatiyatabadi Shikkhak Samity. Prof Dr ANM Munir Ahmed Chowdhury, president of the association, presented the keynote paper.

BNP leader Aslam Chowdhury and CUJSS members ASM Fazlul Haque, Dr Yahya Akhter and Dr Hasan Mohammed were present, among others, on the occasion.

CLIMATE TRUST FUND Forest officer confesses 'irregularity', not graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Godagari Upazila Forest Officer M Mozammel Haque yesterday confessed that he distributed 32,258 free saplings for afforestation under Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund without the local lawmaker's recommendation.

He arrived at the monthly development coordination meeting of Godagari Upazila Parishad and, with hands clasped, asked to be forgiven and promised not to indulge in such irregularities ever again, said the upazila Vice Chairman Zahidul Islam.

However, lawmaker Omar Faruk Chowdhury, at the monthly meeting on February 19, alleged that Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD) officials distributed only 21,742 seedlings out of 54,000 allocated for him.

The officials had gone to him ahead of the meeting to get the related documents, showing all the seedlings distributed, signed, Faruk told The Daily Star.

Under the "Seedling Raising for Massive Afforestation throughout the country to face adverse effect of climate change" project, an MP can distribute any amount between 40,000 and 54,000 seedlings.

But before that can be done, BFD, according to government rules, must have the local lawmaker's recommendation for distribution of any seedling.

Mozammel justified his actions in a letter he placed at the meeting, saying that "they were understaffed and hence could not attain the lawmaker's recommendation on time."

"If the 32,258 saplings were not distributed within the rainy season, it would have hampered the government's activities," he added.

He also promised to return the 32,258 saplings within six months if given the chance.

However, the meeting decided that his explanation was "not satisfactory", said Dr Julia Moyeen, upazila nirbahi officer and the meeting's member secretary.

Lawmaker Faruk, present at the meeting, asked for punitive action to be taken against Mozammel as per government rules. "We will now write to the high ups of Bangladesh Forest Department to take necessary steps in this regard," she said.

Faruk asked the government officials present at the meeting to remain careful while utilising the government's limited funds and ensure proper development of the neglected Barind region.



Poribesh Bachao Andolon forms a human chain before Faculty of Fine Arts at Dhaka University yesterday on the occasion of Earth Day to be observed today.

PHOTO: STAR

'Cases against missing Ilias mysterious'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

BNP Vice-Chairman Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury Bir Bikram said filing of two cases against the 'missing' BNP Sylhet Division Organising Secretary Ilias Ali was mysterious.

The cases were lodged with Biswanath Police Station under Ilias's constituency in the district just in hours after he went missing in the capital.

"The government may produce him at any time in those cases, we are afraid," he added.

Mobin was addressing a view exchange meeting with journalists at Malancha Community Centre at Kumarpara in the city yesterday.

With the number of missing and killing incidents went up recently like the post '72 regime, people were in great trouble. Although neither the Rakkhi Bahini nor BAKSAL existed now, the nation was experiencing the same unusual situation across the country, he said.

Marking the missing of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activist Iftekhar Ahmed Dinar since April 3, he said such incidents were on the rise but the government had remained indifferent to the issue, adding that it was clear that the government was involved in those.

Mobin further said the government had failed to unearth the mystery of Saudi embassy official killing. Similarly, investigation of the journalist couple Sagor-Runi killing remained in 'mystery' due to unknown reasons.

Road crashes kill 2

METRO DESK

Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Chittagong and Dinajpur yesterday.

Staff Correspondent from Chittagong reports: Motorcyclist Amlan Barua Saju, 30, son of Tusher Kanti Barua, of Chandanaish upazila, was critically injured as a human hauler rammed his motorbike in Jubilee Road area in the port city yesterday afternoon.

He was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where he succumbed to his injuries at around 3:45pm.

In Dinajpur, elderly cyclist Md Abdur Rahman, of Dibnagarh village in Birganj upazila, was killed instantly when a private car hit his bicycle on Dhaka-Panchagarh highway at Gorerhat in the upazila yesterday morning.

Following the accident, local people blocked the highway disrupting road communications in Panchagarh and Thakurgaon with other districts for more than six hours. They also demanded a speed breaker on the spot.

RCC introduces modern machine to clean streets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) introduced machine based system yesterday shaving off the 140-year-old system to clean the city streets with brooms.

The city mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton opened the system by running the new Road Sweeping Vehicle at Shaheb Bazar Zero point in the afternoon.

RCC Chief Engineer Ashrafal Haque said the LGED buying the vehicle at a cost of Tk 1 crore under the ADB funded project of Secondary Towns Integrated Flood Protection (Phase -2) had donated it to RCC following a government directive.

It was learnt that machine would sweep garbage from 10 to 15 kilometres of the main city streets per hour and it was capable of storing two tonnes of garbage inside it using 1700 litres of water.

The machine would cost the corporation Tk 25 for cleaning one kilometre of the roads, said Haque hoping the expenditure would be much lower than manual cleaning.

RCC conservancy officer (monitoring) Mostaque Hossain informed that RCC was currently spending Tk 40 lakh per month for paying 1,159 labourers for sweeping the city streets.

He said the manual sweepers would not be deducted right now as the machine would be ineffective at different thoroughfares with smaller width.

Liton said Rajshahi entered the modern era through introducing the mechanised cleaning system.

He said the then British rulers 140 years ago had hired workers of Hela caste from India for cleaning the city that was named as Rampur Boalia.

Many of the caste were still doing the same job in generations. Their days were not ending and we would rehabilitate them if the mechanised system would continue.

He mentioned that RCC in July 2009 had introduced night time city cleaning system that achieved appreciation in home and abroad.



Abrar Ilias speaks at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday organised by Bangladesh Motor Chalak Dal in protest against disappearance of his father BNP leader Ilias Ali and his driver Md Ansar. Right, Ansar's wife Mukta Begum bursts into tears.

PHOTO: STAR

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