

# Declare flood-hit haors as disaster zones

Says Khaleda  
UNB, Dhaka



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday demanded that the government declare the flood-hit haor areas as disaster zones for the next six months and take emergency steps to ensure the welfare of the victims.

In a statement, she also alleged that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina failed to realise the severity of the situation the haor people are going through.

Khaleda urged the government to provide the victims with food assistance till new harvest time and rehabilitate them, compensate the affected farmers, provide them with interest-free and long-term loans, waive their interest of agriculture loan, and suspend the installment collection of all types of loan.

Khaleda also urged the government not to do politics over the sufferings of the flood victims. She also demanded immediate implementation of haor development plans checking corruption, irregularities, coordination problem and bureaucratic tangle.

"Instead of carrying out relief activities it has become more important for the ruling party to dismiss media reports that said fish and aquatic animals in the haor areas died following the mixture of uranium materials from the neighbouring country," the BNP chief said.

The BNP chief also urged all, irrespective of their parties and opinions, to stand beside the disaster-hit haor people.

# PEOPLE DRINK FROM THIS



The Sayedabad water treatment plant purifies water from this canal and supplies to Dhaka city residents for drinking and other household works. But the Water Sewerage Authority cares little about this huge surface water source. While hyacinths covered its surface, Wasa itself has left a dredging machine in the middle for the last five months. All the authorities have done to protect this important canal is raising a warning board that says disposal of human waste and contamination of the water body in any form is a punishable offence. This is the case when hundreds of people are using a bamboo bridge daily over the canal. The boundary pillars are also broken, making it easy for people to dump waste. The photos were taken three days ago.

PHOTO: AnISUR RaHMAN

# BTRC to measure mobile phone tower radiation

Staff C O rrespondent

The telecom regulator will buy two devices to measure the level of radiation emitted by base transceiver stations (BTSs), or mobile phone towers, on public health and environment, according to a BTRC official.

Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) took the decision in line with a recent High Court directive that asked the telecom regulator to take preventive measures if any harmful radiation is found.

As of June 30, 2016, there were 69,009 BTSs in operation across the country.

The two devices and two cars for their transportation around the country will cost around Tk 3.4 crore -- Tk 1.5 crore for the devices, Tk 1 crore for the vehicles, and the Tk 0.9 crore for paying the customs tax.

In its order, the HC also asked BTRC to formulate guidelines on the use of towers by mobile phone companies, and the commission has already taken initiatives in this regard.

According to BTRC officials, international organisations including World Health Organization, International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection, and International Telecommunication Union have taken measures keeping in mind the negative impacts of radiation from these towers.

In 2012, the Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh filed a petition with the HC over radiation from these towers.

Following the court order, an expert committee formed by the health ministry prepared a report after examining radiation from some towers in Dhaka city. According to the report, the radiation emitted by a tower was found harmful for health.

# Waterlogging most severe in Khulna, Jessore, Satkhira

Shrinks arable land, says Sparrso study

Staff C O rrespondent

The waterlogging problem has gradually intensified in three south-western districts over the last four decades, significantly reducing arable land, according to a government study.

In 1973, around 6,279 hectares (ha) of land in Khulna, Jessore, and Satkhira was waterlogged, and the amount rose to 47,143ha in 2016, said the research report prepared by the Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization (Sparrso).

In Bhutari Beel area of Khulna alone, the amount of land used for cultivating Aman and Boro rice was reduced to 709ha in 2015 from 4,853ha in 1989, while the financial loss rose to Tk 42.23 crore in 2011 from Tk 4.33 crore in 2001.

The research was conducted in the districts from 2008 to 2016 through analysing satellite images of the region

between 1972 and 2016. Sparrso yesterday unveiled the findings, presented by lead researcher AZM Zahedul Islam, a chief scientist of the organisation, at a seminar at its office in the capital.

According to the report, silting in nearby rivers, like the Chitra and the Madhumati, and canals, which reduced the water flow, was one of the major reasons of waterlogging.

According to the report, silting in nearby rivers, like the Chitra and the Madhumati, and canals, which reduced the water flow, was one of the major reasons of waterlogging. Global warming as well as sea level rise causes an excessive silt flow, it said.

The other reasons include unplanned sluice-gates and bridges across rivers and canals, it said.

The report recommended improving the drainage system, building of barrages in rivers, if necessary, to increase the water flow, and forming a national expert committee to monitor waterlogging.

Speaking at the seminar, Dr Shamsul Alam, professor of geography and environment at Rajshahi University, said if not checked, waterlogging might wreck havoc in the affected areas.

The three districts face the most severe waterlogging in the country, and last year, Keshabpur, Dumuria, Abhaynagar, Monirampur, Tala, Satkhira Sadar, Kalaroa, Terokhada and Jessore Sadar upazilas suffered the most, said the study.

Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, principal secretary of the Prime Minister's Office, was also present.

# Manna calls for 'alternative force'

Saying AL, BNP failed to meet people's aspirations

Staff C O rrespondent



Nagorik Oikya convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna yesterday called for forming an "alternative force", saying the country's two major political parties have failed to fulfill people's aspirations.

"The Awami League and BNP have put the country in a great crisis. This is high time we start an alternative force to save the country, forgetting all our differences," he told the council of Nagorik Oikya Dhaka City (North) at a city restaurant.

"The country and its people are not safe in the hands of the Awami League and BNP. They ruled for most the last 46 years, but

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# 1988 CTg MASSacre

# Then police commissioner instructed cops to shoot

Testify two prosecution witnesses before court

Staff C O rrespondent, Ctg

During Ershad regime in 1988, then Chittagong police commissioner Mirza Rakibul Huda instructed police to open fire on a procession of the then Awami League-led alliance in the port city, testified two prosecution witnesses before a Chittagong court yesterday.

Chittagong Divisional Special Judge Mir Ruhul Amin recorded the testimonies of Ashok Biswas and Abu Sayeed, said public prosecutor Mejbah Uddin Chowdhury.

Ashok's brother, Swapan Biswas, was killed while Sayeed, the then lecturer of Katirhat Mohila Degree College, was injured during the incident, according to their testimonies.

Ashok said Swapan, a student of City College, went to Laldighir Par area to attend the AL rally of Sheikh Hasina.

"At about 2:00pm, I heard that many people were killed and wounded in

police firing in the area. The following day, we found Swapan's bullet-hit body at Chittagong Medical College Hospital," said Ashok.

After an autopsy, the body was cremated at the city's Abhoy Mitra crematorium under the supervision of police, he said.

Abu Sayeed, mentioning him as an active member of the then alliance, said his left arm was broken as police attacked the procession.

The court fixed June 3 for the next hearing, said the PP.

On January 24, in 1988, police opened fire on the procession with a truck carrying the then AL President Sheikh Hasina in Old Bangladesh Bank area, killing 24 persons. It was heading to Laldighi Maidan where a rally was supposed to be staged. After end of Ershad era, on March 5, 1992, a case was filed with a Chittagong court and police submitted the charge sheet against 47 persons in 1998.

In 1999, CID submitted a supplementary charge sheet in the case accusing eight persons, including Mirza Rakibul Huda and Inspector Gobinda Chandra Mondal.

# Climate Change Adaptation Include children's issue in national action plan

Workshop told

Staff C O rrespondent

Terming children most vulnerable to climate change, discussants at a programme yesterday underscored the need for inclusion of children's issues in the national strategic action plan for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR).

They made the remarks while addressing a workshop styled

"Bridging the policy gaps in child-centered adaptation and DRR" in the capital's The Daily Star Centre. Unicef Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) jointly organised the programme.

Speaking at the programme, Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP, president of Inter-Parliamentary Union, said "Children are more vulnerable to climate change than adults. Children



Speakers at the workshop.

PHOTO: STAR

# Keep promise as made

TIB human chain urges developed nations to give compensation to carbon emission affected countries

Staff C O rrespondent

Protesting USA's recent controversial initiatives on climate funding issues, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday called upon the developed nations to keep their promises to give compensation to the countries affected by carbon emission.

"They are retracting from the promises of giving compensation to the least developed countries, which are victims of climate change. And the US initiative will put the affected countries in jeopardy," said TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman.

He said this at a human chain organised by TIB in front of Jatiya Press Club marking Peoples Climate March 2017. Tens of thousands of demonstrators assembled in the march in Washington on Saturday.

At the Paris Climate Accord in 2015, the USA made commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 26-28 percent by 2025. But

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Participants at a human chain titled "Ensure transparency, accountability and integrity in climate funds and projects", organised by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) before the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR