

Work of SEA to be expedited

Says PM's energy adviser about conservation of the Sundarbans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Prime Minister's Energy Adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury yesterday assured that Bangladesh will complete the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the conservation of Bangladesh's south west region, including the Sundarbans, in two and a half years.

Addressing a press conference about the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee, he said the Bangladesh government will take any measures that would be recommended by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report after completion.

The 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) was held in Azerbaijan's Baku from June 30 till yesterday. A sixteen-member government delegation, led by the energy adviser, joined the session.

"We have pledged to do three things," Tawfiq said at the press

conference at the Prime Minister's Office.

"We will complete the work of National Oil Spill Chemical and Contingency Plan. We will invite a Reactive Monitoring Mission from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the WHC... We will expedite the work of the SEA. We have already completed the tendering process of the work and evaluation is now ongoing," he said.

At the session, the Unesco had postponed the decision of including the Sundarbans in the list of "World Heritage in Danger" until next year.

In the agenda set by the WHC in June for its 43rd session, the topic of whether the Sundarbans should be listed as a World Heritage in Danger was included.

The WHC requested the Bangladesh government to submit all updated documents of the initiatives

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the inauguration ceremony of "Dhaka Meeting of the Global Commission on Adaptation" at Hotel InterContinental Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Saimon on 3-day fresh remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Saimun, one of those accused in the sensational Rifat Sharif murder case, has once again been placed on remand.

A Barguna court yesterday granted police three days to grill the 22-year-old.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Sirajul Islam Gazi passed the order after police produced him before the court seeking a five-day remand.

This is the third time Saimun will be facing a police remand.

Earlier, police interrogated him for five days and three days, said

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Environment under threat

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She recalled that in 2015 in Paris all had been successful in creating a solid ground for a meaningful cooperation in combating climate change impacts. "Like many others, we firmly believe that climate change is a global challenge and we have to resort to global solutions.

"The Paris Agreement is the most pragmatic and effective global deal towards this global solution. In the final report of High Level Political Forum on Water, which was formed at the initiative of Ban Ki-moon, we wrote 'Every drop counts'. The world community is trying to implement this."

Hasina mentioned that climate change poses the greatest threat to the present and future generations. Evidence suggests that Bangladesh has

already 6 million climate migrants, a number that could more than double by 2050.

"Changes in temperature, increased frequency and severity of floods, droughts, heat waves, cyclones and storm surges, sea-level rise and salinity intrusion are affecting a vast tract of land in Bangladesh."

These changes are seriously affecting agriculture, crops, livestock and fisheries, and threatening the food security of Bangladesh, she added.

The PM said Bangladesh is pursuing a low carbon development path with increasing emphasis on renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy conservation.

She mentioned that Bangladesh has been working relentlessly to overcome its vulnerabilities and

create adaptation measures for people. "We've designed a project titled Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 for combating climate change."

She said Bangladesh, being one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, is also at the forefront of learning how to tackle the adverse impacts of climate change.

"Due to the present government's various timely and effective measures, the impact of natural calamities has come down significantly."

The PM said the government has taken initiatives to increase tree coverage from 22 percent to 24 percent in the next five years.

Besides, she said, Bangladesh has been engaged in creating resilient forests in offshore areas to protect forest-dependent communities

and habitats of important forest biodiversity. "Our scientists and farmers invented stress-tolerant rice cultivation technologies which produced good results."

Marshall Islands President Hilda Heine, World Bank CEO and Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA) co-chair Kristalina Georgieva, the current chair of the GCA and former UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Environment, Forests and Climate Change Minister Shahab Uddin also spoke at the programme.

The GCA is guided by 32 commissioners and 19 convening countries, representing all regions of the globe, and co-managed by the Global Centre on Adaptation and World Resources Institute.

Brave Kiwis

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the crease with India reeling on 92 for six in the 31st over with Dhoni playing slowly and the match all but lost. He hit a 59-ball 77 in the partnership that lasted 17.2 overs and nearly pulled off a miracle.

Earlier, in ideal swing-bowling conditions, captain Williamson's gamble to go all out for wickets was rewarded by two bowlers who executed that plan to the letter with highly accurate and incisive spells. Henry drew first blood in the second over by having Sharma -- who scored five centuries in eight league games -- caught by the keeper with an edged away-swing.

Boult worked Kohli over with a sequence of two outswingers and two inswingers, with the right-hander playing across the line and being trapped in front by the second inswinger. Lokesh Rahul repeated Sharma's error -- poking without conviction at an away-swing -- to leave India on a woeful five for three in the fourth over. Dinesh Karthik and Rishabh Pant fought hard to survive with Boult constantly keeping the batsmen guessing and playing late. Neesham then completed the Powerplay dominance by snaffling a superb catch at point millimetres off the ground diving to his left when Karthik checked a drive to another outswinger from Henry and got a thick outside edge in the 10th over.

Left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner did his part by bowling a tight line and Pant, realising the need for some quick runs, attempted a maximum but was instead caught off a slog sweep at deep midwicket in the 23rd over. The pressure also told on Hardik Pandya, whose wild slog in the 31st over off the same bowler was caught by Williamson in the ring, leaving India in a seemingly hopeless position. Jadeja's innings followed, as did a late Dhoni fightback in what could be the legendary wicketkeeper-batsman's last ODI, but the early ground ceded to the brave Kiwis proved too much to recover.

Mother faints

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centre allegedly by students loyal to the principal after he was arrested and subsequently suspended following Nusrat's allegation of sexual harassment.

After fighting for her life for five days, Nusrat died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) on April 10.

Police Bureau of Investigation carried out the investigation and pressed charges against 16, including the principal.

Bangladesh the best

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the world. "Bangladesh is thus the best teacher to learn from about adaptation."

Bangladesh is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

Citing reports, Ban Ki-moon said some 17 percent area of Bangladesh would go under water by 2050 if sea levels rise by just one metre.

He said they would like to establish an adaptation centre in Dhaka to speed up the action on adaptation.

"Communities all over the world need help. There are many countries who are just as vulnerable as Bangladesh, but do not have the ability to build resilience on their own."

He also cited Bangladesh's long-term plan for the resilience of the delta, Delta Plan 2100, with the help of the Netherlands. "We need to share this adaptation practices. We can urgently and cost-effectively find ways to support communities affected by climate change. We can help them survive and thrive. Adaptation is a smart investment."

Ban Ki-moon said the climate change is approaching much faster than one may think of and there is no time to lose.

He said the GCA would publish its flagship report which would be action-oriented.

He mentioned about a cyclone in the 1970s that killed half a million people. "Now you've effective adaptation system. You can save property and human lives. This is adaptation in action."

"This is why we're here to learn from you and send message far and wide from Dhaka."

The former Korean diplomat said there were only 12 fatalities during Cyclone Fani in Bangladesh. "Thanks to the more accurate weather forecasting, community-based early warning system and cyclone centres -- 1.6 million people were moved to safety."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the event. Marshall Islands President Hilda Heine, World Bank CEO and Global Commission on Adaptation co-chair Kristalina Georgieva, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Shahab Uddin also spoke.

The Dhaka Meeting will prepare a set of recommendations on climate change adaptation for the UN.

In 2009, Bangladesh became the first country in the world to create national adaptation programme of action in this regard.

MEETING WITH HASINA

Ban Ki-moon yesterday proposed setting up a global centre for adaptation in Bangladesh for the South and South-East Asia.

with Marshall Islands President Hilda Heine, met the PM on the sidelines of a two-day Dhaka meeting, reports UNB.

Briefing reporters after the joint meeting, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim said Ban Ki-moon and Hilda lauded the disaster management of Bangladesh.

The former UN chief said Bangladesh would be among the countries worst affected by climate change.

In reply, Hasina said Bangladesh makes little contribution to carbon emission which is responsible for climate change.

Ban Ki-moon and Hilda praised the initiative and leadership of the PM to face the adverse impacts of climate change.

"You [Hasina] are one of the few global leaders on climate change. I count on your continued commitment," Ban Ki-moon was quoted as saying.

He said he had many memories in Bangladesh as he visited the country several times.

Hasina said Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had built multi-purpose cyclone centres after the country's independence.

She said Bangabandhu also built a green belt in Cox's Bazar to reduce the damages of natural disasters. Some 45,000 volunteers were trained up to handle disasters at that time.

'CRISIS MIGHT BE UNBEARABLE'

Meanwhile, Ban Ki-moon yesterday expressed fear that the Rohingya issue would eventually turn out to be an unbearable crisis for Bangladesh, reports BSS.

"It is not possible for Bangladesh to host such a large number of Rohingyas for a long time," he told journalists while visiting a Rohingya camp in Kutupalong. The Marshall Islands president and the World Bank CEO accompanied Ban Ki-moon.

The former South Korean diplomat said Rohingyas appeared as a huge "burden" for a country like Bangladesh.

He said Myanmar played a much lesser role in repatriating Rohingyas than what was expected. "The Myanmar government should do much more so that Rohingyas can return to their homeland without fear and persecution."

Ban Ki-moon sought a harmonious solution to the Rohingya crisis through dignified return of the Myanmar nationals.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Shahab Uddin accompanied the foreign dignitaries.

The former UN chief arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday to attend the meeting on climate change adaptation.

Sinha, 10 others sued by ACC

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statement, Shahjahan and Niranjan opened two current accounts with Farmers Bank's Gulshan Branch on November 6, 2016.

The next day, each of them applied for loan of Tk 2 crore.

The two used the same residential address -- House 51, Road 12, Sector 10, Uttara Residential area -- in their bank documents, including loan applications. The ACC, during investigation, found that the house is owned by Sinha, the statement said.

Shahjahan and Ranjit are known to be well acquainted with ex-CJ Sinha, it said.

The two account holders mortgaged 32 acres of land, owned by Santri Roy, in Savar against the loan applications, the statement said, adding, "Without any scrutiny, any analysis of records and with disregard to banking rules, the then manager of Gulshan branch of the bank Zia Uddin Ahmed, operation manager Lutful Haque and credit in-charge Shafiuddin Askary prepared a loan proposal within hours."

Later, Ziauddin himself went to the bank's head office in this regard. Credit Committee officer Swapan prepared and signed an office note and took it to the head of credit Gazi Salahuddin who also signed the paper without any scrutiny.

They then took the loan proposal to the then managing director AKM Shamim.

"As per the credit rules of the bank, managing directors are not authorised to sanction any loan. However, he [Shamim] approved the loan proposal," reads the statement.

A day after the loan money arrived in the two accounts, two pay orders, each worth Tk 2 crore, were issued from the bank branch, it said.

On November 9, 2016, the pay orders were deposited to Sinha's account with Sonali Bank's Supreme Court branch, the statement said, adding the ex-CJ withdrew the money on different dates.

Sinha also transferred about Tk 2.23 crore to his brother's Shahjalal Bank's Uttara branch account on November 28, 2016 and withdrew the money in cash and through cheque.

"During the transaction, Ranjit Chandra Saha used chief justice's name to create influence," said the statement.

Ranjit and Shahjahan are childhood friends, the statement said, adding that, "From primary investigation and testimonies it appears that they are poor and destitute and were never involved in any business."

"Accused former chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha misguidedly them, used Ranjit Saha and took signature on bank documents. They misappropriated Tk 4 crore and the money is yet to be paid," the statement said.

"For the ill purpose of his own benefit, former chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, abusing his power and with the help of others, took a loan [using fake documents] and transferred the money to his account for misappropriation ... thus [he] committed offence under the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012," it added.

Loan scam-hit Farmers Bank was renamed Padma Bank as the troubled lender looked to get an image makeover. Padma Bank started its journey in March.

On completion of enquiry, ACC Assistant Director Gulshan Anwar Pradhan filed a report to the three-member anti-corruption commission

which approved filing of the case. ACC Director Syed Iqbal Hossain filed the case with his office yesterday.

Justice Sinha, appointed 21st chief justice of the country in January 2015, came under fire after the Supreme Court on August 1, 2017 released the full text of the verdict scrapping the 16th amendment to the constitution.

The amendment had empowered parliament to remove judges for misconduct or incapacity.

Following the verdict, the prime minister and senior ministers came down heavily on Sinha, with many of them calling for his resignation.

Some pro-AL organisations, including Bangabandhu Awami Ainjibi Parishad, held protest programmes against him. Parishad leaders threatened to launch a tougher agitation if he didn't step down.

On September 13, the Jatiya Sangsad passed a resolution calling for legal steps to nullify the SC verdict. The law minister on several occasions said the government would seek review of the judgment.

On October 2, 2017, the law minister said the then chief justice would go on a month's leave from October 3 on health grounds. However, while leaving the country for Australia on October 13 the same year, Justice Sinha said he was not sick.

On the following day of his leaving, the SC in a statement said Justice Sinha was facing 11 charges including "graft and money laundering".

Amid flak from the ruling quarters over different issues, including the 16th amendment verdict, Sinha resigned on November 11, 2017.

The anti-graft watchdog began the enquiry in May last year.

'Mash should play his last at home'

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may be caused by a communication gap between the board members back home and Hassan in London. There is a possibility that Rhodes was offered a continuation in the short term, which he refused -- something Hassan alluded to yesterday.

While attending a match, the ruling-party lawmaker also delved into the reason for not continuing with Rhodes.

"I will talk about this when I go back to the country. There were no lackings," Hassan said when asked what the problem with Rhodes was.

"After every World Cup, there is an evaluation of the coaching staff and the players and this was part of that process. Each individual has different styles; I am not saying that his style was bad. But there are problems when mentalities don't match with

us. Which is why we were thinking... we did not let him go; he had an option that he could stay on if he wants for a few more months. We had a discussion with him and thought that there is a possibility that he may leave. But we haven't gotten anything from him yet. So, the option is still there."

Then he seemed to backtrack again.

"I don't know yet. Maybe he gave the decision yesterday night [Tuesday night] or today [Wednesday]... it hasn't come to me. Since there is the T20 World Cup ahead, I think we should straighten this out soon."

This, of course, is in direct contradiction with what the board has been saying since the team returned from England on July 7. Bangladesh finished eighth in the 10-team event and BCB CEO

Nizamuddin Chowdhury said on July 8 that the board, in a meeting in London following the Tigers' loss to Pakistan in their last World Cup match, had decided to cut ties with Rhodes and that it was a mutual decision.

About the 35-year-old Mashrafe, who took just one wicket from eight matches in the World Cup, Hassan said that he had discussed retirement plans with the pacer.

"We will do it [his farewell] as nicely as possible," Hassan said. "It should be done at home. We told him that during our last conversation with him, that we want to do it back home."

Hassan spoke at length about Mashrafe the captain and Mashrafe the player.

"He doesn't make it as a player, but if you talk about it in terms

of captaincy then we won't find a captain like him anywhere," Hassan said. "I always say that Shakib [Al Hasan] as a player and Mashrafe as captain have no replacements.

"He [Mashrafe] could not do well in the World Cup, but we knew that it was likely that he would not do well. I did not hope that he would do well on pitches and in conditions like this. He was injured and had a Grade 2 tear since the [tri-series] final in Ireland [on May 17], but he's a fighter. There were discussions once or twice to the effect that he would sit matches out, and he had also determined to do so. Then he thought 'I have fought all my life for the country, now I will sit the last two matches out? I have often played with injuries'," was Hassan's foray into Mashrafe's thoughts. "Everyone needs to have this mentality."