

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

One-third Bangladeshis at risk of displacement

Says IMF

UNB, Dhaka

International Monetary Fund has said Bangladesh is considered especially vulnerable to climate change with one-third of its population at risk of displacement because of rising sea levels.

According to some indicators, the country ranked among the top 10 countries in the world most affected by extreme weather events during 1998-2017 (Global Climate Risk Index).

Losses linked to such events were estimated annually to average 1.8 percent of GDP between 1990 and 2008.

Rising sea levels and coastal erosion could lead to a loss of 17 percent of land surface and 30 percent of food production by 2050, according to experts from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a body of the United Nations.

Recognising the urgency of the issue, Bangladesh became one of the most active countries in terms of planning and action on climate change, according to IMF.

While Bangladesh accounts for less than 0.35 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, the country took several measures in recent years to promote climate change investments, it said.

Chief among these is adopting a fiscal framework designed to channel more resources towards adaptation investments, according to the latest IMF assessment shared on Wednesday.

At the same time new environmental guidelines promote green financing, foster green banking, and establish dedicated funds.

Bangladesh is also active in seeking grant financing from the international community, notably through the Green Climate Fund, it said.

It said Bangladesh continues to make progress in reducing poverty, improving education opportunities, particularly for girls, and reaching other development-

related goals.

With a relatively young population, the country is well positioned for the next few decades to build on its recent success, IMF said.

However, in aspiring to reach upper middle-income status, Bangladesh faces several challenges, as discussed in the IMF's latest economic assessment.

Near the top of the list is coping with the risks associated with climate change.

Looking forward, IMF said, there is room to improve capacity to address climate change, particularly compared with emerging countries in Asia.

A priority for the government will be to gradually reform energy subsidies and free up fiscal and other resources to address climate change, including through revenue mobilisation – a significant challenge given the country's low tax revenue-to-GDP ratio, which stands at less than 10 percent.

More can also be done to promote climate-friendly investments, IMF said.

Several options are feasible:

Reduce and gradually eliminate costly energy subsidies, while mitigating the impact on the poorest through targeted transfers.

Consider phased introduction of a carbon tax on selected fuel products, notably those consumed by more affluent households, such as petrol and diesel at the pump, which could help raise revenue, reduce pollution, and encourage the use of cleaner, emissions-saving technologies.

Prepare financially against the impact of natural disasters through a dedicated contingency line in the budget and the use of insurance mechanisms such as catastrophe bonds that provide more extensive coverage.

Foster climate-friendly investments, including by taxing pollution, incentivising green products, and enhancing the business environment to attract foreign investors who promote the use of clean technologies.



Onrush of water from upstream has washed away soil from under the approach slab of a bridge on the Dhaleshwari river in Tangail's Charabari area, cutting communication on Tangail-Torabganj road since yesterday morning.

PHOTO: STAR

They turn their house

FROM PAGE 1

Joyal is an office assistant of Double Mooring Thana Election Office under the EC office in Chattogram.

"During the drive yesterday, police found two laptops, including an official one, two pen drives, signature pads and internet modems at the house. Police also recovered a camera cover, but the camera was missing," the DC said.

The police official claimed that the laptops and the pen drives had a list containing names of Rohingyas who the law enforcers believe contacted the syndicate members in the past.

"The arrested technical expert admitted that one of the laptops was an official one. The device had a software needed to upload data to the NID server," he said.

Talking to The Daily Star later in the day, several EC officials looking into the NID scam confirmed the matter.

The CMP DC said, "We're working to trace the Rohingyas who already made or were trying to make forged NID cards. We're also trying to know more about the laptops."

"We will write a letter to the Election Commission providing it with details about the [official] laptop. I hope they would be able to tell us the 'name of the office from which it was stolen.'"

Several police officials said Mustafa was from Feni's Domdoma area and he started working for the EC in 2014 on a

temporary basis.

For the next two years, he was part of different EC projects. He then took a break and again joined the commission as a technical expert last year.

He was well known for his skills and had access to different EC offices, thanks to his "good relations" with officials, they said.

On September 17, Kotwali police recovered another official laptop of the EC after raiding Joyal's house in the port city's Andarkillah area.

Earlier this month, police and passport officials said some Rohingya refugees were making Bangladeshi passports using forged NID cards with the help of some locals and Rohingya brokers.

The Rohingyas people were using fake names and addresses while applying for the identification documents.

Recently, a government probe body found that at least 73 suspicious applications were uploaded to the Election Commission database for issuing NID cards. The committee unearthed the information while probing the forged NID card of a Rohingya woman in Chattogram.

DC Shahidullah said they have identified several EC staffers involved in syndicates providing forged NID cards to Rohingyas in exchange for money. He did not elaborate on the matter for the sake of investigation.

Investigators probing the NID forgery

said Joyal and Mustafa were once part of the same gang that would charge Tk 50,000 to Tk 60,000 for each NID card.

Mustafa used to get Tk 3,000 to Tk 4,000 in cuts. He thought the money was not enough and so decided to join another syndicate, headed by a technical expert working at the EC office in the capital, they said.

Asked, DC Shahidullah said they were trying to arrest the ringleader and other members of the nexus.

Wishing not to be named, an investigator said Mustafa had access to at least six local NID servers. He claimed that Mustafa admitted getting internet modems from some office assistances at EC offices.

Inspector Rajesh Barua, investigation officer of the case filed on September 17, said Mustafa knew many user names and passwords of the NID servers.

DC Shahidullah said they were investigating to know how the devices reached the house and whether there was any negligence on part of EC officials in this regard.

Meanwhile, a Chattogram court yesterday placed Mustafa on five-day remand in the case.

Metropolitan Magistrate Abu Salem Md Noman passed the order after Mustafa was produced before the court with seven-day remand prayer.

The same court sent Joyal to jail after the end of his three days in police remand yesterday.

PM reaches Abu Dhabi

UNB, Abu Dhabi

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reached Abu Dhabi yesterday on her way to New York to attend the 74th UN General Assembly.

A special flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines that departed Hazrat Shahjal International Airport at 3:35pm touched down at Abu Dhabi International Airport, UAE, at 6:15pm (local time).

Mohammad Imran, Bangladesh ambassador to the UAE, welcomed her at the airport.

The PM will depart from Abu Dhabi International Airport for John F Kennedy International Airport at 10:30am (local time) tomorrow by a flight of Etihad Airways. Ambassador Imran will see her off at the airport.

She is scheduled to reach John F Kennedy International Airport at 4:25pm (local time).

Mohammad Ziauddin, Bangladesh ambassador to the USA, and Masud Bin Momen, ambassador and permanent representative of Bangladesh to the UN, will welcome her there.

At the UNGA, Hasina may place new proposals to find a solution to the Rohingya crisis.

10-day survey

FROM PAGE 1

caused the spread of dengue outside Dhaka.

A survey by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) has found the presence of Aedes albopictus outside Dhaka.

The IEDCR survey, which was launched last month, is being carried out in Barishal, Meherpur and Kushtia. According to a preliminary survey report, there were seven Aedes albopictus out of 755 adult mosquitoes in Barishal, 78 Aedes albopictus out of 116 adult mosquitoes in Meherpur and 14 Aedes albopictus out of 21 adult mosquitoes in Kushtia.

Aedes albopictus, also called Asian tiger mosquito, is a small, dark mosquito with a white dorsal stripe and banded legs. It can transmit the virus that causes dengue fever. It lays eggs on the inner sides of water-holding containers in urban, suburban, and rural areas as well as the edges of forested areas. Larvae can also be found in natural habitats such as tree holes and hollow bamboo stumps.

Meanwhile, 508 new dengue patients were admitted to hospitals across the country yesterday. Of them, 343 were admitted to hospitals outside Dhaka, according to DGHS data.

A total of 83,989 dengue patients were hospitalised this year until yesterday. Of them, 38,113 were admitted to medical facilities outside Dhaka.

Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist at Jahangirnagar University, said dengue might have been transmitted locally as a lot of infected people went to rural areas from cities and towns during the Eid vacation last month.

He said it would be a matter of concern if Aedes albopictus had become a vector in rural areas as its management was different.

The local administration, under the leadership of DCs, would have to be proactive, and they would have to be provided with necessary training, he added.

Md Mahbub Hossain, additional secretary of the Local Government Division, recently told this correspondent that city corporations were revising their work approach as dengue fever became a problem in the country in recent years.

He said they sought master plans about mosquito control activities from every city corporation and they would take a final decision on those later.



Maldives bans Bangladeshi workers

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Maldives has imposed a year-long ban on recruiting Bangladeshi workers as it says the quota for Bangladeshi workers was already reached.

The authorities imposed the ban on Wednesday and announced a programme to regularise undocumented foreign workers. Migrant workers from Bangladesh would be able to register at an office set up in Male, said Ahmed Fayyaz, minister of economics in Maldives.

The country has fixed a quota of 150,000 migrant workers for a country and Bangladesh has already reached the limit, he said.

The restriction, however, will not be applicable to skilled workers.

"We decided to impose a limit for each country. In determining this limit, we refer to the unskilled labour category and due to the current situation, we are unable to allow any more Bangladeshi labourers into the country at the moment," said Fayyaz.

Contacted, ATM Moshfiqur Rahman, first secretary (labour) of Bangladesh Embassy in Maldives, told The Daily Star over phone that the authorities of Maldives had not informed them anything about the ban.

Asked about the exceeding of 150,000 quota of Bangladeshi workers, he said it was very unlikely. The number of Bangladeshis could be hardly more than a lakh.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Final dress rehearsal today

FROM PAGE 1

yesterday, Zimbabwe – the third team in the tri-series – was already eliminated after their defeat against Bangladesh on Wednesday. That meant that Afghanistan and Bangladesh were already into the final scheduled to be played at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on September 24.

Bangladesh have come out as second best every time they have faced Afghanistan in the ongoing tour. Afghanistan started their tour by humiliating the hosts, handing a 224-run thumping at the same ground in the one-off Test earlier this month. Afghanistan came out on top even in the shorter format as Rashid Khan's side dominated in their 25-run victory over Bangladesh in their first league match in Mirpur on Sunday.

And although this match will not have any impact on the tournament, both teams will be looking to gain some momentum and fine-tune some aspects of their game before the all-important final.

Shakib Al Hasan's side have had

issues with their batting in the first two matches. And although the Tigers have found some stability in that department in their last match against Zimbabwe – with Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim playing with authority – Bangladesh still need to work on their bowling, especially against today's opponents. Although Afghanistan are not known for their batting prowess, the Tigers have allowed them to score big and then struggled when facing their strong spin bowling. With leg-spinner Aminul Islam, who had an impressive debut against Zimbabwe on Wednesday, will likely miss the match because of an injury and that may open the door for left-arm spinner Taijul Islam. The team management could also experiment with giving Rubel Hossain a game and resting pacer Mustafizur Rahman.

Meanwhile, after Afghanistan's unbeaten streak was ended by Zimbabwe yesterday, they will want to get back on track by reasserting their dominance before the final.

Jubo League expels Khaled

FROM PAGE 1

for running a casino in Fakirerpool Young Men's Club. Khaled, also president of the club, was placed on a seven-day remand on Thursday.

In a fresh raid, Rab busted a torture cell that he allegedly run in a building near Kamalapur Railway Station early Thursday. They also recovered different tools for torture, including two machines to apply electric shock and five sticks.

Rab officials said Khaled used the cell to torture people who refused to give him money as per his demand.

Four cases were filed against Khaled with Motijheel and Gulshan police stations under the firearms, narcotics control and money laundering acts.

Meanwhile, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the drive against corruption and irregularities would be conducted across the country, reports UNB.

"Everywhere in the country where there're irregularities and graft, drives

will be conducted there. It's not only for Jubo League and Chhatra League, those who will be found involved in graft in the Awami League will face the same fate," he told a press conference at the party's Dhanmondi office.

Replying to a query about BNP leaders' statement that the AL has turned the "city [Dhaka] of mosques" into a "city of casinos", Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said, "It's the BNP who made Dhaka a city of casinos."

Action will be taken if it is found that the "casino business" was being operated with support from any political leader or anyone from the administration as no godfather will be spared, he said.

Asked whether the AL is embarrassed over the allegations raised against its associated bodies, he said, "We're happy as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has become more popular with the action she has taken as it has brightened the image of the party and the government."

Construction mogul busted

FROM PAGE 1

in Agargaon, the Artha Building and two 25-storey buildings at the secretariat, the National Institute of Traumatology Orthopedic and Rehabilitation, the Neuro Science Building, and the NGO Foundation in Agargaon, he added.

"We raided the house of GK Shamim as we had information that he accumulated some money and was involved in extortion and tender grabbing," said Sarwar-Bin-Kashem, director (Legal and Media) of Rab after the drive.

Rab Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam said they had specific information of his involvement in money laundering and tender grabbing by brandishing firearms.

His arrest came just two days after Jubo League Dhaka (South) Organising Secretary Khaled Mahmud Bhuiyan was held from his Gulshan home for running a casino at a football club in the capital's Fakirerpool.

Shamim's Personal Secretary Didarul Alam said Rab members entered the house of his boss on Road-113 in Niketon around 6:30am yesterday.

Shamim, his family members and four of his bodyguards were in the house at that time. His three other bodyguards were also called in.

"Rab members wanted to see the licences of the firearms, which they

produced," said Didarul, who was also present there.

Around 10:30am, the Rab members took Shamim to his office on Road-5 in the same neighbourhood and recovered his firearms, the cash, FDRs, five bottles of foreign liquor and ammunition.

Shamim bought the five-story office building on 4.8 khatahs of land for Tk 14 crore in 2017, said Mominul Islam, a former manager of the building.

Shamim used to travel on his SUV, escorted by armed bodyguards. His vehicle was equipped with hooters that are normally used by police and ambulances. His bodyguards would scream at commuters through loudspeakers to clear the way, like police would do during a VIP movement, locals said.

Of the Tk 165 crore FDR, Tk 25 crore was in his name while the rest Tk 140 crore is in his mother's name.

Rab said his mother had no mentionable business.

Sarwar-Bin-Kashem, the Rab director (Legal and Media), said they would investigate the allegation of extortion against him as well as the source of his income. They would also look into how he obtained so many firearms.

Sarwoer Alam, the executive magistrate, said firearms are allowed on certain conditions.



Rab officials make an inventory of bundles of money, foreign currencies, and fixed deposit receipts found at the office of GK Shamim in the city's Niketon yesterday after detaining the contractor.

PHOTO: STAR