

Make sure your work helps people

PM urges researchers

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the researchers to ensure that the practical use of their research knowledge is for the wellbeing of the country's people.

"The practical application of your invented knowledge should be for the welfare of the people. So, I also want to see what would be the impact of the research you are doing now," she said.

The prime minister said this while conferring "Bangabandhu Science and Technology Fellowship", "NST Fellowship" and special research donations among teachers, scientists, researchers and science students of different universities and research institutes.

The science and technology ministry arranged the ceremony at Osmani Smriti Auditorium, while the PM joined the event virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

On her behalf, Science and Technology Minister Architect Yeafesh Osman handed over the cheques of the fellowships and donations to recipients.

Sheikh Hasina said the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) is now knocking at the doors.

"So, we'll have to create skilled manpower for it [4IR]. We've been assisting you [researchers and students] keeping it in mind. We want the people of the country to get assistance from you," she added.

Noting that the fellowships and research donations are provided from the government's revenue fund, she said, "You, those who are getting the fellowships, will have to work hard for the national development with utmost responsibility."



Holding each other, Tareque and Sanjida cry near their home in Hosnabad village of Barguna's Betagi upazila yesterday. Their brother Hadisur Rahman died in a "missile attack" on a Bangladeshi ship in Ukraine on Wednesday.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

IPCC paints grim picture for Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh would face serious challenges due to climate change and the national economy might bear the burnt, suggested a report of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

According to the report, the continuous greenhouse emission in the country would result in the displacement of millions of people, reduced agricultural production and weather with extreme heat and humidity.

IPCC Working Group II AR6, in its recently released report, also predicted that the agricultural production would reduce between 31 and 40 percent by this century as the sea level would rise.

The country's power plants may also need to be relocated over the next decade to avoid floods caused by the rise of sea level.

Rawshan Ara Begum, one of the lead authors of the report, said the rise of sea level could eat up between 2 and 9 percent of annual GDP by the middle and end of the century.

Citing the report, she said the climate

change could displace 1 to 2 million people living in the south by mid-century.

The overall impact will further worsen the country's current challenges including extreme poverty, income inequality, economic and non-economic losses and damages and low adaptive capacity.

Rawshan also said that urgent and accelerated actions are required for rapid and deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions in the country to avoid increasing losses and adapt to climate change.

"As a result of climate change and increasing demand for water, about 25 percent of people in Bangladesh will live with water scarcity by 2050, compared with about 10 percent now. Both the Ganges and the Brahmaputra river basins will also see increased flooding," she said.

Climate change will hit international supply chains, markets, finance, and trade, reducing the availability of goods in Bangladesh, and increasing their price, as well as damaging markets for Bangladeshi exports, she said.

The economic shocks caused by climate change, including reduced agricultural yields, damage to critical infrastructure,

and commodity price rises, could lead to financial instability in the country, she added.

This report informs scientific evidence of climate change impacts and potential risks, as well as provide a range of adaptation options for reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience.

Mohammad Arfanuzzaman, another lead author of the IPCC report, said the climate change impacts Bangladesh facing now would increase substantially in the coming years.

It is very likely that most of our existing adaptations would be ineffective under both 1.5 and 2C warming conditions, he added.

"To reduce socio-economic and environmental vulnerability and build resilience Bangladesh must focus on transformative and multi-sectoral adaptations," he said.

This report assesses a wide range of adaptation options across sectors and regions for societal choices to act and implement in the decades to come which in turn will determine future pathways to climate-resilience.

Putin vows not to back down

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process would "only lead to additional demands on Kyiv in our negotiating position".

For his part, Macron said he feared that "worse is to come" in the conflict and condemned Putin's "lies", according to an aide.

The invasion, now in its eighth day, has created a refugee exodus and turned Russia into a global pariah in the worlds of finance, diplomacy and sports.

The UN has opened a probe into alleged war crimes, as the Russian military bombards cities in Ukraine with shells and missiles, reports AFP.

In his latest message, Zelensky said yesterday Ukrainian lines were holding. "We have nothing to lose but our own freedom," he said.

Moscow said it has lost 498 troops. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei

Lavrov kept up a verbal barrage, accusing Western politicians of fixating on "nuclear war" after Putin placed his strategic forces on high alert.

While a long military column appears stalled north of Ukraine's capital Kyiv, Russian troops seized Kherson, a Black Sea city of 290,000 people, after a three-day siege that left it short of food and medicine.

Russian troops have been advancing elsewhere on the southern front and are besieging the port city of Mariupol east of Kherson, which is without water or electricity in the depths of winter.

"They are trying to create a blockade here, just like in Leningrad," Mariupol mayor Vadym Boichenko said.

The war has displaced more than one million people, according to the United Nations.

Cooking becomes

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"We are forced to hike the local LPG price as the Saudi contract price (CP) has risen globally - from \$775 per tonne to \$911. Earlier, local firms faced supply disruptions. But now the problem has been resolved."

The Saudi CP is the international price benchmark set at the beginning of each month by Saudi Arabia's state-

owned oil company Aramco.

The BERC chairman, however, said prices of the state-owned LP Gas Company's LPG will remain unchanged as it's not linked to the global market rates.

The BERC, for the first time, fixed the retail-level LPG price on April 12 last year after holding a public hearing.

Bound for safety

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"Alhamdulillah! It is a new lease of life," said GM Noor-e Alam, captain of the ship, heaving a sigh of relief.

"We are not out of danger yet. I have lost words to express gratitude to the Almighty. I still cannot believe we survived. We will feel that we are safe only when we will be able to cross the border."

He said that all 28 sailors have safely reached the shelter and they were all still in mourning for the loss of Hadisur.

"It is really painful to carry our bother Hadisur's body with us. We did not leave our brother in the ship," said Alam.

Asked about the condition of the ship, Alam said, "It is damaged so badly that it would be tough to voyage in this condition."

Alam, a father of two daughters and as many sons, said he could not talk to his family members for a long time as the ship's generator was damaged in the attack.

Omar Faruk, chief engineer of the ship, said he was not in a mental state to talk.

"We are really tired and hungry. We are very happy that we reached safely in a shelter centre at last. Just pray for us so that we can return home safely. Just pray, nothing else brother," he said in a weary tone.

Another sailor said they were evacuated around 20 hours after the attack.

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen told journalists

last night that the ship has been abandoned.

"We received a letter from the shipping ministry approving the abandonment of the ship and we informed them [Ukraine authorities]."

Concerns over the stranded sailors' safety gripped the country after Hadisur Rahman, who was serving as the third engineer of the vessel owned by the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC), was killed.

The anxious family members of the sailors were critical over the authorities taking "no steps" to move the vessel from the Ukrainian port of Olvia to a safer zone in the last one week.

They had been urging the government to bring back their loved ones safely and quickly at any cost.

Several hours after the "missile" attack on the ship, family members thronged the head office of BSC in the port city yesterday morning to know the whereabouts of their loved ones.

On a day of panic and concern, some of the sailors who were stranded in the engine room until 1:00pm Bangladesh time yesterday, sent family members voice messages and asked the government to take steps for their immediate evacuation from the ship, fearing further attacks.

Roksana Khondokar, mother of one of the two female sailors, Deck Cadet Fariatul Jannat Tuli, told The Daily Star

that her daughter, a final year honours student of nautical department of Bangladesh Marine Academy, boarded the ship in March last year as part of her one-year internship.

"She was supposed to get off the ship after finishing the internship by the end of this month," said the mother.

Roksana said her daughter told her in a voice message around 1:00pm yesterday that the sailors were panicking.

In weeping tones, Roksana urged the government for immediate rescue of all the sailors.

BSC Executive Director (Commercial) Pijush Dutta at a press briefing at the BSC conference room yesterday morning said their main concern and task now were to bring back the survivors as early as possible by ensuring proper security arrangements.

All authorities concerned including the shipping ministry, foreign ministry, DG shipping and others are now trying to accomplish this, he informed.

Talking to reporters, State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury said extensive diplomatic efforts were underway to rescue the sailors.

"Every effort is going on to shift them to a safer place," he said while briefing reporters at the secretariat yesterday.

He also said bringing Hadisur's body back to Bangladesh will depend

on the situation in Ukraine, adding that the government will support Hasidur's family in every possible way.

Family members of at least four sailors were found waiting at the BSC office to know the latest updates on their loved one's evacuation from war-torn Ukraine.

Sixty-year-old Obaidul Hoque came from the city's Kathgar area in the early morning as he could not sleep the whole night after getting a voice message at 3:00am from his son Masum Billa, one of the crew members of the ship.

"My son informed about the attack and asked us to pray for him," the anxious father said, adding that he tried to contact his son several times but failed.

Masum's family were able to talk to him while the ship was stranded in the port. Obaidul said everything was okay until the attack, but the sailors were in panic afterwards.

He requested the government to take immediate steps to bring back all the sailors unhurt.

Masum, third of his six children, joined the profession two years ago and boarded the vessel in January.

Abdullah Al Mamun, a service holder of Pally Biddut, came from the whereabouts of his brother-in-law Masudur Rahman, an electrical engineer on the ship.

Abdullah said Masudur's elderly parents, who live in

Bongaon village in Rajbari, became very worried after hearing about the death of their son's fellow sailor.

Masudur's elder brother Mofizur Rahman, who is now in Dhaka, told one of these correspondents over phone that his brother sent a text at 12:30pm yesterday informing that all the equipment needed for cooking was destroyed in the attack and the sailors had only biscuits to eat.

The anxious brother had also urged for immediate evacuation of the sailors from the ship since the ship has already been targeted once.

MOSCOW CONDOLES HADISUR

Russia yesterday expressed condolences to the family of Bangladeshi sailor Hadisur Rahman.

"We express deep condolences to the near and dear ones of the deceased," said Russian Embassy in Dhaka in a statement on its verified Facebook page, adding that it will make every effort to ensure safe departure of the Bangladeshi ship from the port.

It also said it is establishing the circumstances around the killing of the Bangladeshi.

Banglar Samridhi had reached the outer anchorage of Ukrainian port Olvia on February 23 to load ball clay.

But due to delay in getting port clearance, the ship failed to leave and was stranded as the port's operations halted after the Russian invasion.

Shab-e-Barat on March 18 night

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muslims in Bangladesh will observe the Shab-e-Barat on the night of March 18 because the Shaban moon was not sighted in the country yesterday.

The decision was made at the National Moon Sighting Committee meeting at the Baitul Mukarram Jatiya Masjid last evening, the religious affairs ministry said in a press release.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Faridul Haque Khan presided over the meeting.

Shab-e-Barat is observed on the 15th night of the Arabic month of Shaban.

Muslims offer special prayers, recite the Quran, and take part in other religious rituals.

Two burglary suspects beaten dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Villagers beat two burglary suspects to death and seriously injured another in the Banparil area of the district early yesterday.

Police have yet to identify the two men.

The three men are suspected to be part of a gang that committed a burglary at a house before daybreak and was fleeing the area when the locals caught them, said Abdur Rouf Sarker, officer-in-charge of Manikganj Sadar Police Station.

He added that the two men died at the scene, the OC said, adding that a case would be filed regarding the incident.

5 die, 657 get Covid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Officials reported 657 new cases of Covid and five deaths from the disease as the positivity rate dipped below three percent in the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday.

At least 4,628 patients recovered from Covid during the period, said a press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The latest number takes the total number of confirmed deaths from the disease to 29,058.

The positivity rate from 22,584 samples tested in the period was 2.91 percent.

Of the five reported dead yesterday, one was male and four were female. One was aged between 31 and 40, two were between 41 and 50, one was between 71 and 80, and one between 81 and 90.

BGB man dies by suicide

UNB, Naogaon

A Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) man allegedly died by shooting himself with his service weapon at a camp in Sapahar border in Naogaon early yesterday.

Tanvir, 26, hailed from Narail district and was posted at the BGB camp in Sundarail.

Other BGB members at the camp rushed a severely injured Tanvir to Sapahar Upazila Health Complex around 7:00am.

He died on the way to another hospital, said Tarekur Rahman Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Sapahar Police Station.

Tarekur said an unnatural death case was filed in this regard.

Papul's aide

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In December 2020, CID filed a money laundering case against Papul, his daughter Wafa Islam, brother Kazi Badrul Alam Liton, sister-in-law Jesmin Prodhan, Papul's employees Monir and Golam Mostafa, and two overseas employment agencies owned by Badrul and Jesmin.

According to the case, Papul and his family members amassed more than Tk 355 crore and the money was transacted through more than 500 bank accounts and fixed deposit receipts (FDRs).

Over Tk 130 crore was available in these accounts, most of it gotten from human trafficking, it added.

Papul's associate Monir took Tk 5-7 lakh from each victim seeking overseas jobs through "Job Bank International", an organisation owned by Papul's brother Badrul.

The CID found that Tk 38.22 crore was transferred and withdrawn by Papul, Wafa and Jesmin from Monir's account with a state-run bank between 2016 and 2020.

Though Jesmin had no business relationship with Monir, Tk 17.48 crore was transferred to her bank account from Monir's. He also transferred Tk 1.18 crore to Papul's company "Four Point Housing and Real State", the case statement said.

On November 28, 2021, Kuwait's top appeals court upheld Papul's sentence of seven years in prison and fine of Kuwaiti Dinar 2.7 million (Tk 76 crore) in a human trafficking case.