

DHAKA DOCLAB, BRITISH COUNCIL

Documentaries on climate change to be screened today

STAR REPORT

Dhaka DocLab and the British Council are collaborating together to showcase a collection of four climate documentaries titled “Short Films on Water.” Taking place today, from 5:00pm onwards on the British Council premises, this screening aims to shed light on the adverse consequences of climate change.

The films, produced under the project “Bangladesh Cymru Climate Stories” in collaboration with Wales One World Film Festival, delve into the experiences of coastal communities and river dwellers in the face of climate breakdown.

The four compelling films included in the screening are “Doprujhiri” by Asma Bethée and “Latika” by Samsul Islam Shopoon from Bangladesh, along with “Our Home, the Sea” by Mared Rees and “She Sells Shellfish” by Lily Tiger Tonkin from Wales, UK.

Democracy wins

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protesting the recent death threat to AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

He said the countrymen became happy as the election was held in a free, fair and impartial manner.

Like Gazipur city polls, the AL general secretary said the next national elections and four more city polls will be free, fair and neutral ones.

About the recent death threat to Hasina, he said it was not a slip of the tongue.

After a BNP leader’s threat to kill AL President, thousands of voters went in favour of her party and in contrast, the popularity of BNP reached its bottom, Quader said.

He said the development achieved by Hasina’s government and the good behaviour of the AL men will play an important

role in the next general elections.

About the US visa policy, the road transport and bridges minister said, “Why will we obstruct the elections? We should oversee who is impeding polls. Those who do not want elections to be held and those who want to restore caretaker government system may obstruct elections.”

“No foreign friend ever told anyone about the caretaker government,” he added.

Quader said it has to be observed whether this US visa policy comes into effect against those who obstruct the elections.

BNP wanted sanction but the US announced a visa policy, he said, adding that after noticing this visa policy, BNP leaders became sleepless and terrified.

Foreign office

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infrastructures. It is also coordinating a trilateral mechanism for Rohingya repatriation.

China has proposed its flagship Global Development Initiative that will also come up during the FOC, foreign ministry officials told this correspondent.

“Starting the Rohingya repatriation is also a very important issue for us. China is also supporting us. How they can help us better will be discussed,” an official said.

Also, the two sides will discuss the progress of the projects being implemented with Chinese funding.

We are targeted

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of the Hindu religion. They are enforcing illegal and unlawful programmes against the rights of Hindu and Buddhist women,” she added.

She demanded that the government take legal action against such offenders.

In a written statement, she said Hindu women, the disease-affected persons (men and women), and the gender-diverse population are deprived of properties under the existing Hindu family laws in Bangladesh though there is no gender discrimination in the Hindu laws in India, Nepal and Mauritius.

The BHLRC placed six demands before the

state. The demands are – equal rights to property for women, people with disabilities and gender-diverse communities; cancellation of the provision for multiple marriages of a man during the lifetime of his wife; introduction of divorce in special necessary spheres; recognition of women’s guardianship on children; women’s rights to adopt children; and making marriage registration compulsory.

BHLRC’s General Secretary Pulak Ghatak; Vice President Suvasih Saha; Treasurer Pulak Raha; and Office Secretary Mita Rani Roy Chowdhury were also present at the press conference.

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for every child

All hype, no result

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Nanak, Nasim, and Afzal are set to be present in Barishal from June 1 onwards to provide guidance and monitor the overall situation, with Nasim warning of strict action against those who oppose the party’s decision.

Campaigns begin

Meanwhile, after receiving their electoral symbols, the mayoral candidates wasted no time and hit the streets immediately to kickstart their campaigns. The AL mayoral candidate pledged his commitment to development and accessibility to city corporation services for all residents. He addressed the issue of unequal progress, promising to address the city’s problems and establish

industries for employment opportunities. The Islami Andolan Bangladesh candidate also emphasised development, while the Jatiya Party candidate urged voters to participate and cast their votes, highlighting concerns about voter turnout.

With the upcoming Barishal City Corporation election scheduled for June 12, the electorate consisting of 276,298 people across 126 polling stations is eagerly awaiting a resolution to the AL conflict.

As the uncle-nephew feud remains unresolved, the city’s political landscape hangs in uncertainty, leaving both supporters and observers wondering about the outcome and its impact on the upcoming election.

Not enough support

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seem different from everyone else,” Nurul said.

“They can have fulfilling lives with their families and communities if they are given the opportunity to attend schools with appropriate training,” he added.

A number of legislations were introduced in 2013 with an objective to safeguard the rights of children with special needs, notably those with neuro-developmental disorder like down syndrome. These include the Persons with Disability Rights and Protection Act, the Children Act, and the Protection of Persons with Neuro-Developmental Disability Trust Act.

Sarder A Razzak, social activist and chairperson of Down Syndrome Society of Bangladesh (DSSB), said children with down

syndrome often have dormant talents, including the ability to sing, recite, and dance. Sometimes they even outperform their neurotypical peers.

His son, Rafan, 14, was born with down syndrome.

“He’s always had a thing for the dance floor, so I gave him plenty of support and put him through dance school to help him realise his abilities and develop a sense of self-worth and confidence,” Razzak said.

“Since the number of children and individuals diagnosed with down syndrome is steadily rising, it is essential that the government ensure they have access to a fully inclusive educational and employment system,” he added.

(“Names have been changed to protect the identity of individuals.)

Mayoral candidates

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address their demands. Despite the time constraint of covering all 31 wards, I will try to visit every voter’s home personally,” he said.

Shafiqul Islam Madhu, the Jatiya Party candidate, expressed concerns about the fairness of the upcoming election. He remarked that fair elections would only occur if the ruling Awami League government desired.

“Citizens had been deprived of their right to vote in all previous elections, from Union Parishads to Jatiya Sangsad,” he said.

Madhu called for a reversal of the fear among the people that might lead to low voter turnout and expressed doubts about the Election Commission’s strength, which he believed would impact the election environment negatively.

“I plan to kick-start his campaign from ward 1,” he said.

Abdul Awal, the mayoral candidate from Islami Andolan Bangladesh, voiced his intent to transform the city into a modern, pollution-free space. He urged city dwellers to support their cause through voting and called for united opposition

against corruption and misrule, encouraging everyone to be present at the poll centres.

SM Sabbir Hossain, the mayoral candidate from the Zaker Party, received the rose symbol and began his campaign around 12:15pm. He assured that his campaign would adhere to the electoral code of conduct and expressed optimism about the favourable election environment.

Returning Officer Md Alauddin disclosed that 12 councillor candidates had withdrawn their nominations, resulting in a competition among 179 candidates for the posts of councillors.

“Four candidates are vying for the mayoral post, while 39 candidates are running for the reserved councillor position. Meanwhile, 136 candidates are competing for general ward councillor seats. The election will employ Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), and to ensure fairness, CCTV cameras will be installed at 289 centres and 1,732 polling booths,” he said.

Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) has identified 128 poll centres as normal and 161 as vulnerable out of the total 289.

Pak diplomat

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front part of the car was twisted.

On information, highway police rushed to the spot and rescued them.

Police detained bus driver Md Saiful Islam, 30, son of Md Shafiqul Islam of Habiganj district, and seized the bus.

Later, the deputy high commissioner and his family members left for Moulvibazar in another vehicle.

“A case will be lodged over the incident,” added the OC.

Comments from Pakistan high commission were not immediately available.

Petition for recognition underway

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the genocide in Bangladesh. The delegation arrived on May 21 and is scheduled to leave today.

He also said to effectively raise awareness for recognition, foreign missions and embassies of Bangladesh can collaborate closely with the diaspora communities.

“The Armenian genocide was recognised by 29 countries, thanks to the efforts of the Armenian diaspora in foreign nations,” he said.

“Diasporas can play a significant role by filing petitions in foreign parliaments and organising public debates to bring attention to the issue. Politicians in foreign countries often pay attention to diasporas, particularly when they are a large, vocal, and visible group, such as the European Bangladesh Forum – an organisation working since 2017 for this cause in European countries,” added van Bommel.

To garner support for the cause, he proposed

compiling accounts of witnesses, victims’ family members, and other relevant parties, and publishing a booklet about the genocide in Bangladesh.

“Shedding light on the necessity of international recognition of genocide, a former lawmaker of the Netherlands from May 1998 to March 2017, said recognition, especially on an international level, provides support to the families who have lost their loved ones and became victims themselves. It offers them a sense of justice and acknowledgement of the atrocities they endured,” mentioned van Bommel.

Moreover, international recognition can lead to legal proceedings where the perpetrators might face criminal charges for their international crimes, he said.

He also said recognising the genocide serves as a means of prevention. When perpetrators are not held accountable for their actions, it sends a dangerous message that such atrocities can

be committed without consequences.

“By recognising the genocide, we send a message of warning that such acts will not be tolerated in the future, promoting a culture of deterrence.”

During the 1971 Liberation War, the Pakistan occupation forces killed 3 million Bangladeshis in nine months, one of the largest figures since World War II. They also raped 2 to 4 lakh women. Their atrocities compelled more than 10 million people to take refuge in India. Sensing the imminent defeat, they also killed thousands of intellectuals with the help of their local collaborators, when the war was nearing its end.

Asked about Pakistan’s persistent denial of carrying out genocide on the Bangalees, Harry van Bommel said they have witnessed similar reactions from the perpetrators in the past. “These patterns are not new.”

Four esteemed scientific institutions have confirmed that the

atrocities committed in Bangladesh in 1971 were indeed a genocide. In line with the genocide convention established by the United Nations, it becomes evident that the events in Bangladesh fall under the definition of genocide. The intention was to systematically eliminate or partially eradicate a specific group with the involvement of a state, which fulfils the criteria for genocide.

“Hence, it falls upon the international community to politically acknowledge this fact, which would then lead to discussions and debates within the United Nations,” said van Bommel.

He said one reason for this lack of recognition could be attributed to Pakistan’s alliance with the West during the Cold War.

“Despite the passage of time, Pakistan continues to be viewed as an important partner by countries like the US and others, despite the global fight against terrorism and Pakistan’s possession of nuclear weapons,” he added.

Of tragedy, desperation, and a failed

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tears stream down her face, mingling with her words.

“The trauma inflicted upon Imran’s younger brother has left him in a state of mental despair,” she said.

Their once-unified family now faces an uncertain future, burdened not only by the loss of a husband and brother but also by the debts they incurred to secure his release.

Imran, Zamir Uddin Rubel, and Mohammad Yousuf were lured away under pretences, enticed by promises of a potential bride for Rubel. Tragically, their hopeful journey ended in abduction, leaving their families in a state of anguish and despair.

Despite their desperate pleas, the initial response from the authorities only added to their misery. Caught in a bureaucratic maze, they were shuffled between police stations,

each one deflecting responsibility, leaving them in a state of despair. Days turned into weeks, and hope grew dim as their cries for help fell on deaf ears.

“As soon as we received calls from the kidnappers, who provided us videos of torturing my husband and his friends and demanded Tk 30 lakh as ransom on April 29 noon, we roamed back and forth from Cox’s Bazar Sadar Police Station to Teknaf Police Station to file a case of abduction.”

“However, no police station reported our case. Teknaf police told us to register the case with Sadar Police Station while Sadar Police advised us to file the case with Teknaf Police,” she said.

Finally, after a relentless pursuit and with the intervention of a compassionate political leader, their case was officially recorded by

Teknaf Police Station. However, by then, precious time had slipped away, and their dear Imran remained missing.

In a last-ditch effort to secure Imran’s release, Moyna’s sister-in-law, Minu Begum, bravely ventured to the location provided by the abductors on May 5, accompanied by a Rapid Action Battalion team, carrying the promised ransom. But fate had other plans. The abductors, sensing danger, vanished into the shadows, leaving behind a chilling threat that still haunts their shattered hearts.

“You’ll face dire consequences for it,” these were the abductors’ last words to Moyna.

Their agonising wait came to an excruciating end on Wednesday, when both families were summoned by Teknaf Police Station, 25 days after the abduction, to identify

the bodies of their loved ones. The bodies, recovered from the depths of the treacherous Damdamia forest, were in an advanced state of decomposition—a grim testament to the horrors they endured.

In their pursuit of justice, the authorities have managed to apprehend two individuals, including Shafi Alam, a Rohingya who had become entangled in a web of criminality as a member of an abduction syndicate, claimed Lt Colonel Saiful Islam Suman, the commanding officer of Rab 15 in Cox’s Bazar.

“Acting on a crucial tip-off, Rab forces apprehended Syed Hossain, also known as Sonali Dakat, a notorious Rohingya robber. Through his confession, a breakthrough was made, leading the authorities to conduct a daring raid deep within the terrain of Damdamia’s dense forest,” he said.

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