



Need combined effort to protect environment

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government alone cannot protect the country's environment, and a combined effort is needed in this regard, said speakers at an event on Thursday.

Eighteen green organisations — including Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, Association for Land Reform and Development, and Nagorik Uddyog — organised the seminar at the Department of Environment auditorium in the capital.

Lawmaker Amatul Kibria Keya Chowdhury said political and administrative leaders are responsible for environmental destruction, not the poor.

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LAWMAKER AMATUL KIBRIA KEYA CHOWDHURY

Amatul emphasised the need for proper planning in haor development to prevent floods and called for accountability among officials.

Lawmaker Tanvir Shakil Joy said raising awareness among the people is important. He also called for an increased national budget for environmental protection.

DoE Director General Abdul Hamid said environmental impact assessments for sand mining leases would be conducted in the future, along with plans to amend the Environment Act to ensure stricter regulations.

Bapa Vice President Iqbal Habib said, "Rajuk's role should be to protect the capital's land, but often the authorities act like developers."



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina places a wreath at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in Dhaka yesterday, marking the historic Six-point Day. PHOTO: PID

Empower indigenous women: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Representation of indigenous women in parliament and local government bodies is vital to protect their rights, said speakers at an event yesterday.

The remarks were made at the fifth national indigenous women conference, "Strengthen the United Movement to Establish the Rights of Indigenous Women," organised by the Bangladesh Indigenous Women Network in the capital's CBCB center on Asad Avenue.

Data presented at the conference revealed that between 2007 and 2022, 747 indigenous women and girls were victims of physical and sexual abuse, yet they did not receive fair trials.

Indigenous women experience discrimination on multiple levels — as women, as indigenous individuals and specifically as indigenous women.

SHAHNAZ SUMI
Director of Nari Progati Sangha

Khushi Kabir, social activist and coordinator of Nijera Kori, pointed out that despite Bangladesh emerging as a secular country after its independence, oppression against indigenous communities persisted.

"There should be special arrangements for these marginalised communities so that they too can move forward along with others," she added.

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Nayeemul appointed PM's press secretary

STAR REPORT

The government has appointed senior journalist Nayeemul Islam Khan as the new press secretary to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

He has been appointed to the post on contractual basis with the status of a secretary, according to a Public Administration



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A realistic and cautionary budget

Says former BB governor Atiur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year has been realistic and cautionary, as the government increased the budget by only 4.6 percent from the outgoing fiscal year, said Atiur Rahman, chairperson of Unnayan Shamannay.

"The social sectors have not been exempted to the level intended from the overall budget cuts. Allocations for social security programmes could have been more generous to adjust for inflation," he said during a press briefing on the budget at Unnayan Shamannay's office yesterday.

He said the ongoing economic challenges will not make it easy to reduce inflation to 6.5 percent from nearly 10 percent.

"If the inflation rate can be reduced to the targeted level, it will relieve people from its pressure," said Atiur, a former Bangladesh Bank governor.

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This budget is for promoting black money: Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said the proposed national budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 as black money-friendly, saying it will further widen scope for corruption in the country.

"This budget is for promoting black money. This is also the budget of how black money can be whitened, corruption can be expanded, and money can be made [illegally]," he said.

Speaking at a seminar, the BNP leader also said the budget was not formulated for the welfare of the people or for creating job opportunities.

"There is no need to talk about the budget. You see the cartoon on the front page of The Daily Star, where a huge elephant is sitting on top of many ordinary farmers, workers, hardworking people... This brilliant cartoon has depicted a clear picture of the budget," he observed.

The BNP leader said the government has allocated a huge amount of money for unproductive sectors for creating more scopes to plunder public money.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

High price of cattle irks buyers

HELEMUL ALAM

Despite the government's announcement of a surplus of sacrificial animals this year, their prices remain high so far, compared to the same time last year.

Traders at Gabtoli cattle market attribute this to the increased cost of cattle feed, transportation, and staff salaries.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdur Rahman has recently said the number of available sacrificial animals this year is 1.29 crore. This is at least 22.8 lakh more than the demand and 4,44,034 more than last year.

This includes around 52 lakh cows, 1.60 lakh buffaloes, 68 lakh goats, 767,743 sheep, and 1,850 other sacrificial animals.

Md Dhoni Mandal, a cattle trader, said, "A mid-sized bull is selling for Tk 10 to 20 thousand higher than last year. Customer numbers have dropped. Last year, I sold around a hundred bulls a few weeks before Eid. The number has dropped to 10

this year."

Sabeton, Mondol's wife who helps in raising the bulls, said local farmers will suffer if the government doesn't stop cattle smuggling from India.

Monzu Bepari of Manikganj said, "I sold around 250 bulls 15 days before Eid-ul-Azha last year. So far I sold only 100 this year."

Md Santu Bepary, who brought four bulls to Gabtoli and plans to bring around 100 more on Wednesday, said sacrificial animals are available in local markets, but prices remain high. "We have to pay an extra Tk 10,000 to Tk 15,000 for a mid-sized bull outside Dhaka."

Regarding the low sales at Gabtoli market, Md Jahangir, a cattle food seller, said many people buy bulls directly from farms well before Eid-ul-Azha, leading to fewer customers at this permanent cattle market.

Doly Akhter from Dholaiipar, who went to Gabtoli cattle market 10 days before Eid to buy a bull for her son Ibrahim, said prices of bulls,

buffaloes, and goats are higher this year. "I couldn't buy it, it's beyond my reach," she added.

Five other buyers echoed her. Amzad Hossain, a Gabtoli trader who bought 28 buffaloes, said small buffaloes are costing Tk 2 lakh this year, which is Tk 20,000 more than last year. Meanwhile, large buffaloes cost Tk 8 lakh.

Md Babul, a trader, said mid and small sized goats were Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,200 costlier than last year, with a 13kg goat selling for Tk 1,300 and a 45kg goat for Tk 50,000.

Besides, two camels were brought to the market, and their prices are also very high. Trader Amzad Hossain, who brought them from Pakistan, is asking for Tk 26 lakh for each camel, noting that if there were no restrictions on bringing them from India and raising them locally, prices would not be so high.

Sixteen cattle markets have been set up in two city corporation areas in Dhaka this year.

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