
ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER

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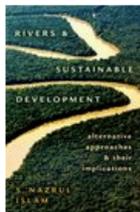
Presented by **Bangladesh Environment Network (BEN)**

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This issue of the Environment Newsletter includes the following items:

- 1) **Publication of the book, *Rivers and Sustainable Development*, by Dr. Nazrul Islam.**
- 2) **International Tiger Day (July 29) observed by BAPA and Pashur River Water Keeper**
- 3) **Alarming decline of primates in Bangladesh**
- 4) **COVID-19 pandemic could be an advantage to take defining global climate actions**

- 1) **Publication of the new book, *Rivers and Sustainable Development*, by Dr. Nazrul Islam**



Rivers and Sustainable Development

Alternative Approaches and Their Implications

S. Nazrul Islam

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The Oxford University Press has published the new book, *Rivers and Sustainable Development – Alternative Approaches and their Implications*, authored by Dr. Nazrul Islam, Founder of BEN and Initiator of BAPA. In this about 500-page book, Dr. Nazrul offers a new and comprehensive

conceptual framework -- using such concepts as the Commercial and Cordon approaches to rivers and their opposite, the Ecological and Open approaches -- for discussion of river policy issues. The book draws upon the river policy experience from across the world to argue that the Ecological and Open approaches are more conducive to sustainable development, while the Commercial and Cordon approaches are detrimental to it.

The book has two large chapters (11 and 12), extending over 100 pages, devoted to the discussion of river policies of Bangladesh. In these chapters, Dr. Nazrul offers a thorough analysis of Bangladesh's miserable experience with the Cordon approach and shows how the Open approach could help the country to better manage its land and rivers and to cope with the increasing threats of climate change and upstream diversion and the aggravation of flood and bank erosion they are causing.

Dr. Islam shows that the new conceptual framework offered in this book can help to connect the river related discussion of experts with that of activists. It can thus help to move the discussion of river policies from the narrow confines of experts to the wider arena of the public, who should have a greater role in formulation of river policies in order to safeguard public interests and ensure sustainability. The book serves as a valuable guide for those interested in learning about river policy changes necessary to promote sustainable development.

Bangladesh is witnessing more than usual flooding and bank erosion this year, showing that the country is yet to get a handle on these problems, despite more than sixty years of so-called water development. Time has therefore come for a fundamental rethinking of the river policies of the country, and Dr. Islam's new book can definitely be of much help in this endeavor.

Below are the URLs of the OUP and Amazon pages devoted to the book.

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/rivers-and-sustainable-development-9780190079024?q=S.%20Nazrul%20Islam&lang=en&cc=us#>

https://www.amazon.com/Rivers-Sustainable-Development-Alternative-Implications/dp/0190079029/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=S.+Nazrul+Islam&qid=1596566379&s=books&sr=1-1

2) International Tiger Day (July 29) observed by BAPA and Pashur River Water Keeper

In celebration of the International Tiger Day, 2020, BAPA, along with its partner organization Pashur River Water Keeper, arranged a demonstration and organized a webinar on the 29th of July on Tiger protection and their unique habitat conservation.



<https://m.somoynews.tv/pages/details/227055?fbclid=IwAR3rCx3q9C9m3xFSOTKRly-t7fB4QexNZKpxMoPnzhRL62yRQ5XKj5YpCgk>

A peaceful demonstration, by forming a human chain, was arranged in Mongla, Bagerhat demanding biodiversity conservation of Sundarbans—a unique habitat of the Royal Bengal Tigers. The program was presided over by Md. Noor Alam Shekh—Convener of Pashur River Waterkeeper of Bagerhat District and Coordinator of BAPA, Mongla. Among others who attended the program include local BAPA leaders and volunteers Nazmul Haque, Kamala Sarker, Abdur Rashid Hawlader, Mostafizur Rahman Milon, Jahir Kamal, Maruf Billah and Sheikh Rafsan Rana.

The webinar on “Tiger’s stories on Tiger Day” was inaugurated by BAPA General Secretary Sharif Jamil and jointly coordinated by Md. Noor Alam Sheikh, Bagerhat District Convener of Pashur River Waterkeeper. The program was presided over by BAPA Executive Vice-president Dr. Mohd. Abdul Matin. This was a unique webinar arranged to raise awareness about tiger conservation efforts. The webinar involved story-sharing from many invited speakers who are actively working in Sundarbans areas to protect tigers. Speakers (see details in flyer below) shared their efforts and challenges in tiger conservation. Key issues, such as tiger-human conflicts, counting methods of tiger population, village-based tiger protection initiatives in collaboration with local forest department and other organizations were discussed. Many real-life stories from the speakers reflected the urgency of the protection of tiger’s habitats as well as the need for more comprehensive and collaborative approach to mitigate the tiger-human conflicts.

Globally, it is estimated that we only have 3,900 wild tigers, and in many regions including Southeast Asia, tigers are declining in numbers primarily being threatened by poaching, tiger-human conflict, and loss and fragmentation of their habitat. According to Bangladesh Forest

Department tiger census 2018, there were about 114 wild tigers in about 2,323 square miles area of Sundarbans which was a slight increase from 106 tiger population in 2015.



<https://www.facebook.com/108672827511396/videos/317782942923498/>

3) Alarming decline of primates in Bangladesh

Primates are mostly known as monkey or “*banor*” in Bangladesh although biologically many of the primate species are quite different. The diversity of primate species and their habitat requirements are usually least understood and often ignored or neglected in Bangladesh, leading to an alarming decline of various primate populations in last couple of decades. According to a recent report published by IUCN Bangladesh, primates in Bangladesh are quite diverse with 10 different species, seven of which are at the risk of extinction. The report claims that we might have already lost one—the long-tailed macaque. Last count of this primate species was only 3 in Teknaf more than a decade ago.



Researchers say that we can call “monkey” only five different macaques that include Assamese, Rhesus, Northern pig-tailed, stump-tailed, and the long-tailed macaque. Other five different primates include an ape named hoolock gibbon (ulluk), three different types of langurs (hanuman) and a loris (lojjaboti banor). Because of insufficient forest canopies, branches, and fruit trees as well as habitat defragmentation and degradation, hoolock gibbon (declined 90% in last 40 years) and Phayre’s langur are critically endangered now (80% decline). The slow loris population has declined more than 70 percent in the last 10 years making them now another endangered species. Among the monkeys, except the rhesus macaque, that we see around human habitats and in pockets of urban areas of Bangladesh, all others are mostly forest dwellers and are facing slow extinction. Experts say that it is high time to take actions to protect these primates by ensuring the forest habitats they need as well as enhancing our understanding and perceptions about the importance of primate populations in enriching biodiversity.



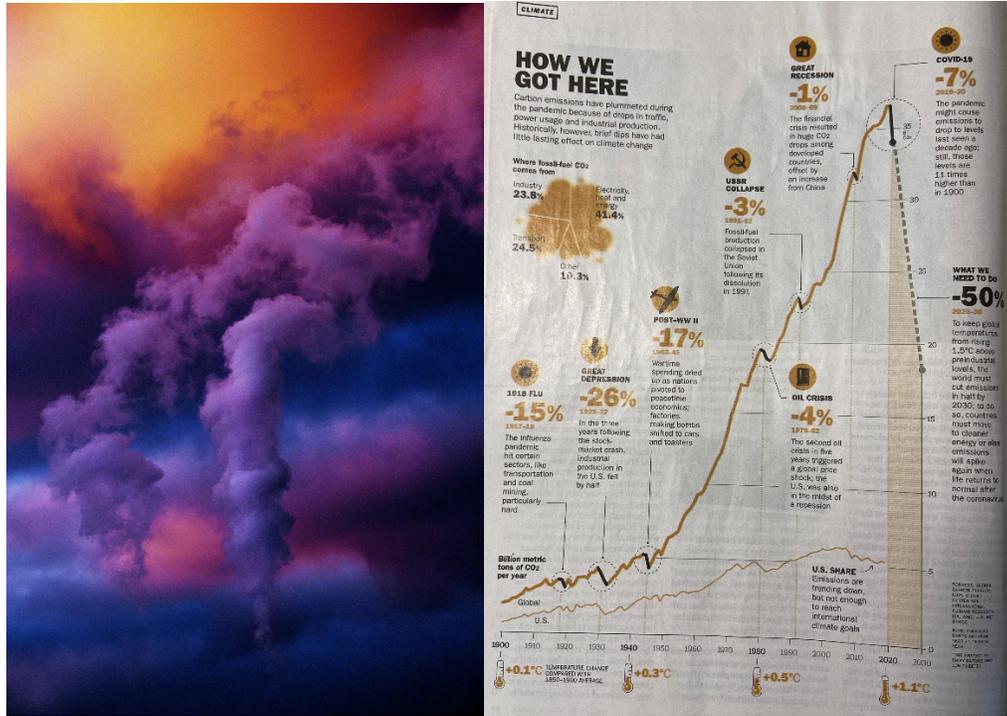
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4) COVID-19 pandemic offers opportunities for decisive climate actions

The COVID-19 pandemic is killing hundreds of thousands of people and hurting economy globally. Among all this bad news, there are some that are good! Many of us are staying home, driving less, and industries are not running in full swing-- which might have led to 7% drop in current global emissions, although it is still 11 times higher than what we had in pre-industrial times. Experts say this is the best chance to save the planet from climate change and related consequences. According to a recent U.N. report, the world already warmed 1.1 degree Celsius since the industrial revolution, and if we pass 2 degree Celsius, the climate will start changing from “gradually” to “dramatically” overnight, reshaping the planet. To keep the global temperatures from rising past the 1.5 degree Celsius, as agreed by the global leaders in Paris 2015 climate conference, we need to cut our emissions 7.6% every year for the next decade. The drop of carbon emissions this year to 7%, although because of pandemic that puts many countries in potential economic recession, is keeping us on track in reaching the climate goal. However, we need to figure out a more sustainable way to keep the global community on track in emission reduction beyond this pandemic.

We need to keep the global economy stay afloat while taking many climate friendly measures. Investing in clean energy, instead of fossil fuels, and developing greener infrastructure could lead us to achieving the climate goal, and this is the time! Many agencies, countries and regions are coming up with innovative ideas and actions. For example, The International Energy Agency (IEA) calls for an annual investment of \$1 trillion in clean energy for next three years. This would constitute only about 0.7% of global GDP, but it could increase the global GDP by 1.1% through creation of 10 million newer and greener jobs worldwide. This effort would have multiple benefits—adding more to economy than it costs to recover from the pandemic -- while cutting emissions and reducing environmental pollution.

Many countries such as South Korea, Costa Rica and Rwanda are adopting measures to invest in renewable energy and green infrastructure. European Union, one of the largest emitters, is coming up with an approach of halving its emission in 10 years by investing in energy-efficient homes, building renewable energy capacity and zero-emissions trains. Two other major players in global economy and largest emitters, USA and China, have not yet made clear commitments in adopting such green deal yet. However, experts suggest that 2020 is the defining year to make such commitments by the big players to achieve our climate goal.



<https://time.com/5864692/climate-change-defining-moment/>

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