

Media News Report of Building Back a Greener Bangladesh

Monday, Jun 21, 2021

Activists call for mapping out green growth model for sustainable development

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Illustrative photo

Speakers at a webinar on Sunday said the country needed a right kind of green growth model for its successful transition to sustainable development from a polluting one.

The model should be formulated in consistent with a broad based policy framework involving other policies, they said.

The speakers put forward the suggestion at the webinar titled “Building Back a Greener Bangladesh” hosted jointly by the Policy Research Institute (PRI) of Bangladesh and the World Bank Group, and moderated by PRI Executive Director Dr Ahsan H. Mansur.

They stressed on the importance of giving more attention to the implementation part as many strategies and policies to promote environment-friendly activities remained unused.

They also suggested introducing policy incentives to all the sectors with ensuring availability of long term financial facility to encourage the private sector moving towards green.

Speaking at the event, energy specialist Professor Dr Mohammad Tamim said the path or the model of development that the country has chosen is a polluting one if the current development activities are taken into consideration.

“We really have to take greener approach, but we do not have the right model. It needs to be developed locally,” he added.

Mr Tamim, also former adviser to a caretaker government, said the country had voluntarily declared reduction of carbon emission by 5.0 per cent in line with the Paris Agreement on climate change adopted in 2015.

“We also pledged to reduce another 10 per cent subject to availability of foreign financial and technological support,” he said, adding that it is now an obligation for the developed countries to help us taking the green path.

Citing Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan, Professor Emeritus of Brac University Dr Ainun Nishat said it was now being talked about oxygen, hydrogen-based energy generation.

“But where is the technology? There are also talks about the wind power. Where is that wind? (If we) talk about solar energy, where is that space?” he raised the questions.

He said that there were so many strategy documents, but no attention was given to the implementation part.

“There are many knowledgeable persons, but how the recommendations would be translated into actions by the government that is a question,” he said.

Managing Director of Apex Footwear Limited Syed Nasim Manzur said the micro and macro policies needed to come together, which is very critical.

He also said that there is a 10 per cent special income tax rate applicable for only green certified buildings in readymade garment industry, which is fantastic.

“But why it is only for the RMG? The revenue board should extend the facility to all sectors,” he said.

He said that the lab testing equipment are highly taxed. “Even the catalyst and chemical reagents are taxed at much higher rates than the industrial raw materials. So, we are

sending the wrong messages to the companies that want to go green.”

Terming long-term financing mechanism essential for the private companies to go for greener production practices, he said the leather industry is one of the highly polluted one, but South Korea dealt it well and developed its industrial backbone around RMG and leather in Busan where the world’s most sustainable tanneries are located.

“How did Korea do that? The technology Korea is using costs money. The private firms cannot borrow it by paying 6.0 per cent interest in five-year repayment period,” he said.

Mr Manzur called upon the central bank to step in with the development partners to create a fund for lending to the private sector at 1-2 per cent interest rate for 25-year term.

“Otherwise, it will be very hard for the companies to afford it,” he added.

PRI vice chairman Dr Sadiq Ahmed said the strategies and policies to fight environmental challenges should not be considered in isolation.

“We need a broad based policy framework involving fiscal policy, trade policy, industrial policy, infrastructure policy, pricing policy, water management policy and so on. There must have right kind of incentive to encourage the entrepreneurs to make the investment in green way.”

Former BB Governor Dr Atiur Rahman, PRI Chairman Dr Zaidi Sattar, senior environmental specialist at the World Bank Group Eun Joo Yi, Dr Atiq Rahman, former BUET professor Dr Sarwar Jahan, H&M Country Manager Ziaur Rahman, among others, spoke on the occasion.

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<https://www.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/activists-call-for-mapping-out-green-growth-model-for-sustainable-development-1624248135>

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Implement policies efficiently for green growth

Experts say at PRI, World Bank webinar

Star Business Report

Bangladesh needs to formulate a plan and take appropriate and effective steps to implement it to ensure eco-friendly development, analysts said yesterday.

According to the Sustainable Development Goals, the country can't develop itself economically alone. Bangladesh must advance socially and environmentally based on green technology, they said.

They made the comments at a virtual discussion on "Building back a greener Bangladesh". The Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI) organised the programme in collaboration with the World Bank Group.

Several master plans, policies and strategies, including the Eighth Five-Year Plan, Delta Plan and Mujib Climate Change Prosperity Plan, have been formulated for the country's development environmentally, said Ainun Nishat, professor emeritus of Brac University.

"But, plans are usually implemented traditionally. That is why we have to pay close attention to the implementation of the projects. The projects have to be implemented transparently."

"Moreover, we have to be careful enough in choosing technology," said Nishat.

Bangladesh's economy should be developed socially and environmentally, and all the social and environmental parameters must be included in the future development plans, speakers said.

The models of the developed countries should not be copied, and Bangladesh needs to draw up its own approach for green development, they said.

Atiur Rahman, a former governor of the Bangladesh Bank, said there should be a body, and the process should start from the finance ministry.

“There should be a green window at the finance ministry, which will take the green finance forward coordinating with all ministries.”

He said entrepreneurs were interested and funding was there, but the process of securing funds was not very easy.

“So, the rules should be made easier, and more sectors should get access to the funds,” Rahman said, adding that incentives should be given to produce green energy.

PRI Executive Director Ahsan H Mansur moderated the programme, while Eun Joo Yi, senior environment specialist at the WBG, presented a keynote paper.

Mansur said enforcement was critical, and the lack of transparency, particularly with the Department of the Environment, was a serious problem.

“We have to address this issue. As of now, there is no transparency in their inspection reports. We do not know how many factories have been inspected and what the results are.”

Community involvement is also important as they should know how much harm has been done, he added.

Highlighting the successful models of Korea and Colombia’s green growth, Joo Yi presented a proposed model on “Green Growth Roadmap and Action Plan for Bangladesh”.

She also presented a three-year analytical programme in a detailed overview of the Build Back Greener to Green Growth (BBG).

Joo Yi emphasised developing a BBG platform to facilitate dialogue across sectors to refine

BBG diagnostics with the government and the World Bank Group's internal teams.

Climate change and pandemic risks are critical factors to address for a greener recovery and green growth in the future, she observed.

Zaidi Sattar, chairman of the PRI; Prof Mohammad Tamim, an energy expert; Sarwar Jahan, a former professor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology; Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director of Apex Footwear; and Ziaur Rahman, country manager of H&M Bangladesh, also spoke.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/implement-policies-efficiently-green-growth-2114961>

Incentivize green industries through legal framework, say experts

Tribune Report

- Published at 10:15 pm June 20th, 2021

Photo: BIGSTOCK

Although several policies have been identified by independent experts, no legal framework exists that enforces the implementation of an ecosystem which empowers a greener trajectory, they say

For a greener and sustainable economy, Bangladesh needs to implement a legal policy framework that not only incentivizes greener industries, but also discourages environmental degradation and holds stakeholders accountable, say experts.

They made the remarks during a virtual panel discussion titled "Build Back a Greener Bangladesh," hosted by the Policy Research Institute (PRI) on Sunday.

Although several policies have been identified by independent experts, no legal framework exists that enforces the implementation of an ecosystem which empowers a greener

trajectory, they said.

The discussants added that Bangladesh also needs to identify effective and transparent measuring tools that track progress realistically.

According to Eun Joo Yi, senior environmental specialist at the World Bank Group, Bangladesh ranked 162nd out of 180 most polluted countries as per the 2020 Environmental Performance Index (EPI). “This came with an economic loss of approximately \$6.5 billion, or 3.4% of the GDP, in Dhaka alone,” Yi added.

Additionally, \$1.44 billion, which is 0.7% of the national GDP, was lost because of air and water pollution that nearly caused 20% of all deaths in Bangladesh.

It is also a threat to global competitiveness as the Global Competitiveness Report 2019 identified environmental pollution as a major emerging risk factor for the country, induced by challenges from stricter compliance requirements.

Bangladesh has had significant economic growth, but at the cost of environmental degradation, resulting in negative health effects on the economy and natural capital, the discussants noted.

Hence, they suggested that the nation needs to focus on development that takes social and inclusive green-growth into account.

“At its very inception Bangladesh used to be a greener economy than what it currently is, with 60% of its GDP generated from agriculture in 1972,” said Dr Zaidi Sattar, chairman of PRI.

“But rapid economic growth and industrial shift induced by globalization have had massive environmental impacts,” he added.

Industrialization has been a major factor for environmental degradation, but it is critically bound into the socio-economic aspects of any nation entailing- job creation, financial security and others, the speakers said.

Hence, the industrialization process should be made greener and sustainable, as elimination would induce massive disruptions.

Professor Dr Ainun Nishat, Ainun Nishat is a water resource and climate change specialist, pointed out that to implement expert recommendations of a greener economy, there needs to be an implementable action plan bound by legal framework.

Syed Nasim Manzur, the managing director of Apex Footwear thinks both micro and macro policies need to come together for creating a green economy.

“There is a 10% special income tax rate applicable only for green buildings in RMG which has borne good results. The facility should be extended to all other sectors,” he stated.

Atiur Rahman, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, emphasized incentivizing the dependence of greener and clean energy by overpricing fuel or energy sources that causes environmental degradation and pollution.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2021/06/20/incentivize-green-industries-through-legal-framework-say-experts>

TBS Report

20 June, 2021, 09:10 pm

Last modified: 20 June, 2021, 09:21 pm

Current growth ruining public health, nature: Experts

Representational Image: Collected

The current economic growth is causing environmental degradation, resulting in negative

health impacts and loss of natural resources, experts said.

Though the country has various policies and rules aimed at protecting the environment, a lack of implementation is a major problem, they said at a webinar on “Building back a greener Bangladesh” organised by the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI) in collaboration with the World Bank Group (WBG) on Sunday.

The speakers also pointed out the absence of coordination, monitoring, transparency and accountability in making the rules and policies serve the purpose. They insisted on formulating an environment-friendly green development model for Bangladesh.

Evidence shows that the quality of the environment has deteriorated after the pandemic broke out in the country.

Covid amplified environmental externalities, said Eun Joo Yi, senior environmental specialist at the WBG, adding that the government had introduced a stimulus programme to provide relief and recovery support to industries and households, but it had not considered ensuring green recovery.

The Global Competitiveness Report 2019 identified environmental pollution as a major emerging threat to industrial competitiveness in Bangladesh.

Eun Joo Yi said the inability to enforce environmental safeguards and abate pollution created challenges to meet stricter compliance requirements for domestic and international markets.

She cited South Korea’s green stimulus that included mitigation of climate change and energy independence, creating new engines for economic growth and improvement in the quality of life.

Dr Mohammad Tamim, former advisor to the caretaker government of Bangladesh, said the country’s success model stood on polluting developmental works.

“It is actually not an easy task for a country like Bangladesh to go green like South Korea as it is the 10th largest economy in the world. We cannot have the models being followed by the

developed countries to green up their energy right now.”

Bangladesh is committed to green development and its green model has to be developed locally, Tamim said.

Ainun Nishat, professor emeritus of BRAC University, said, “We are not following any greener path. According to our constitution, the country has to be managed in an environmentally sound manner. We have many excellent documents such as strategies, plan, programmes and laws. But is there any implementation or monitoring?”

Dr. Atiur Rahman, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, suggested setting up a “green window” at the finance ministry to initiate green development.

Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director, Apex Footwear Limited, said, “We have a 10% special income tax rate applicable to only green buildings in the RMG sector, which has borne good results as we have seen. NBR [National Board of Revenue] should extend this facility to all sectors.”

Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur, executive director at the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI), said Bangladesh’s economy advanced and would continue to grow in future but the path of development must be green, environment friendly so that “we can leave a prosperous country to the next generations”.

About 24% of the deaths occur due to health problems caused by pollution. “We have to work in coordination with the global communities to avoid such man-made threats. Alongside adaptation to climate change, we have to focus on mitigation by bringing down carbon emission,” Ahsan said.

He said that the environment ministry is a weak ministry lacking capacity.

The Department of Environment is responsible for enforcing laws relating to the environment but there is no transparency in preparing the reports of inspection, Ahsan added.

Mizan R Khan, deputy director of the International Centre for Climate Change and

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের পরিবেশ, ক্লimate ও পরিষ্কার মন্ত্রণালয়, পরিবেশ, ক্লimate ও পরিষ্কার মন্ত্রণালয়

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গতকালের খবর অনুযায়ী বাংলাদেশের বিভিন্ন অঞ্চলে, বিশেষ করে ঢাকা, চট্টগ্রাম, সিলেট এবং ময়মনসিংহ জেলায় বন্যহত মানুষেরা তাদের ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত বাড়িঘর নির্মাণের কাজ শুরু করেছেন। সরকারি কর্মসূচির অধীনে প্রায় ১০ লাখ মানুষের বাড়ি নির্মাণের কাজ চলছে।

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সংবাদ প্রতিবেদন



