City

June 28, 2015

Govt's political will key to protecting environment

Prothom Alo roundtable told

Staff Correspondent

The government's political will and coordination among the ministries are key to implementing national policies and plans to protect the environment, said experts yesterday.

They opined that the country has sufficient laws, policies and plans for protecting the environment, but those are not successful due to poor implementation.

They were addressing a roundtable titled "Let's protect environment-built golden Bangladesh", organised by Prothom Alo in association with Standard Chartered Bank at the Bangla daily's office.

"Our environment is endangered. We know our problems but we cannot get solutions until the government's political will is ensured," said hydrologist Ainun Nishat.

He also criticised the government for the lack of coordination among the ministries in implementing the national plan of actions.

Land grabbing, water pollution and deforestation are the major reasons behind environmental degradation, said Nishat, also professor emeritus of Brac University, adding that the perpetrators are so powerful that they remain untouched.

Another environmental expert, Dr Atiq Rahman, said development activities of Bangladesh can be termed economic and infrastructure development.

"But we want environmental development; the ministries should work together in this regard," he said.

Prof ATM Nurul Amin of North South University suggested construction of more footpaths to encourage people to walk, which will cut down fuel consumption.

Chief Conservator of Bangladesh Forest Department Yunus Ali said representatives of local government institutions, government officials and the general public must work together for protection of the environment.

Prof Khandker Sabbir Ahmed of Buet; Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmed, Bangladesh country director of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); and officials of Standard Chartered Bank, World Bank and UNDP, among others, attended the function.