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Civil society demands surface water usage to avert fresh water crisis in Cox's Bazar

Zahangir Alam | Published: 2023-06-05 09:44:50



Members of civil society from Cox's Bazar called for urgent measures to address the pressing issues of plastic pollution and the impending fresh water crisis a human chain held in Cox's Bazar on Sunday.

During the gathering, speakers highlighted the alarming state of the Cox's Bazar Sea, which is now plagued by polythene waste, while garbage is being carelessly discarded throughout municipal areas.

They emphasized that the entire district is turning into a dumping ground, despite the government's existing anti-plastic laws.

It was noted that illegal polythene factories continue to operate, undermining the enforcement of regulations. The immediate cessation of plastic usage in Cox's Bazar and Rohingya camps was stressed, urging the government to enforce the law and develop viable alternatives.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (BAPA) Cox's Bazar President Fazlul Kader Chowdhury, Cox's Bazar press club president Mujibul Islam, District press club vice president and BAPA vice president HM Ershad, YPSA's project manager Md Harun, Teacher and writer Maqbool Ahmed, The New Age journalist Nurul Islam, NGO ARNAB Chief Executive Nurul Azim, ACLAB Project Manager Md Munieuzzaman, Journalist Nezam Uddin, Development Worker Suraya Nasrin, Cox's Bazar Literature Academy General Secretary and Poet Ruhul Quader Babul, Cox's Bazar Climate Committee leader Kamal Uddin Rahman Pyaru, development worker Marteen, SHAPNAJAL's chief Sakir Alam and Director of COAST Foundation Mostafa Kamal Akanda spoke at the event.

Fazlul Kader Chowdhury, President of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (BAPA) Cox's Bazar, emphasized the need to ensure proper utilization of underground water to prevent an imminent humanitarian crisis and environmental catastrophe.

He called for the government's intervention to completely eradicate plastic usage.

Md Mujibul Islam, President of Cox's Bazar Press Club, pointed out the authorities' indifference as a major obstacle in curbing plastic usage.

He proposed that by purifying and utilizing surface water effectively, the dependence on underground water could be reduced in Cox's Bazar, including Rohingya camps, thereby safeguarding the environment. He called for proactive measures from the government and all relevant stakeholders.

H.M Ershad, Project Manager of YPSA, highlighted the importance of repatriating Rohingyas to resolve the crisis, stating that the production of polythene should be halted by canceling licenses and refraining from issuing new ones.

Mostafa Kamal Akanda, Director of COAST Foundation, stressed the necessity of enforcing Bangladesh's laws to ban polythene and plastic.

He also advocated for the establishment of an environmental protection police force to ensure effective environmental preservation.

Md. Harun, YPSA's Project Manager, emphasized the significance of a united movement to eliminate plastic usage entirely. He underscored the need to cease widespread reliance on underground water and instead prioritize surface water sources such as rivers, seas, and rainwater, urging the immediate implementation of this system in Rohingya camps.

Maqbool Ahmed, a teacher and writer, highlighted the importance of policy implementation to halt the production and sale of plastic.

He called for the engagement of legislators and policymakers in the government to support the movement against plastic usage.

The event concluded with a unanimous call for joint efforts by all stakeholders to combat the fresh water crisis and plastic pollution in Cox's Bazar, emphasizing the need for immediate action to protect the environment and secure a sustainable future for the district.

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