Bangladesh Seeks Climate Justice, Grants and Global Support at COP31

Bangladesh has called for a fundamental shift in global climate financing, urging the international community to allocate at least 50 percent of climate finance to adaptation and provide grants instead of loans to climate-vulnerable nations, as Prime Minister Tarique Rahman outlined the country's ambitious vision for building a climate-resilient economy at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP31) in Antalya, Türkiye.

Addressing the high-level segment of COP31 on Thursday, November 12, the Prime Minister stressed that countries on the frontlines of climate change should not be burdened with additional debt to address a crisis they have contributed little to creating.

"Climate-vulnerable countries do not need more loans. They need reliable financial support, access to modern technologies and stronger cooperation to adapt to the impacts of climate change," he said.

Emphasising the need for climate justice, Tarique Rahman noted that Bangladesh contributes less than 0.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, yet remains among the countries most exposed to climate-related risks.

Despite these challenges, he said, Bangladesh is committed to building a one-trillion-dollar climate-resilient and sustainable economy, guided by the government's philosophy of 'Bangladesh First'.

The Prime Minister said economic growth and environmental protection must go hand in hand, with industrialisation and

development pursued without compromising ecological balance.

Ambitious green transition agenda: Outlining the government’s climate and energy priorities, Tarique Rahman said Bangladesh aims to generate 20 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030, while working towards net-zero carbon emissions in line with the Paris Agreement.

The government is pursuing initiatives to generate 4,000 megawatts of solar power through special tax incentives and encouraging waste-to-energy projects, he said.

Highlighting progress in green industrialisation, the Prime Minister said Bangladesh currently has around 300 LEED-certified garment factories. Initiatives are also underway to expand environmentally friendly transport, including electric vehicles, promote sustainable products such as jute bags and establish a national framework for carbon trading.

He further announced an ambitious plan to plant 250 million trees over the next five years.

The government is also pursuing the Padma Barrage and Teesta Barrage master plans, alongside initiatives to excavate 20,000 kilometres of rivers and canals. These measures are intended to improve water conservation, reduce flood risks, restore wetlands and replenish groundwater resources.

Restoring mangrove forests on reclaimed coastal land is another priority, aimed at strengthening coastal protection and improving the resilience of vulnerable communities.

Five key priorities for climate action : Highlighting the shortcomings of the existing global climate finance architecture, the Prime Minister said current financing arrangements remain inadequate and fail to sufficiently reflect the needs and priorities of developing countries.

Climate-induced losses and damages are placing enormous

pressure on national economies, while mounting debt-servicing obligations and limited financial resources are making the situation increasingly difficult.

Bangladesh called for at least 50 percent of international climate finance to be directed towards adaptation, alongside continued support for emissions reduction.

The Prime Minister also urged the international community to introduce emergency debt relief and disaster-response facilities for climate-vulnerable countries, ensure equitable access to environmentally friendly technologies and technology transfer, and accelerate the transition to renewable energy through affordable financing and capacity development.

He proposed adopting a ‘Belém-Antalya Action Mechanism’ at COP31 to promote a just energy transition based on fair financing and trade arrangements.

Stressing the importance of inclusive climate action, he called for greater participation of women and young people, the creation of decent green jobs and stronger global efforts to limit the rise in average temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Thanking Türkiye for hosting COP31 and Australia for its leadership in the conference’s negotiating process, Tarique Rahman expressed hope that the summit would deliver meaningful, balanced and ambitious outcomes, particularly for countries most vulnerable to climate change.

Bangladesh seeks Australian investment and support for Rohingya repatriation : On the sidelines of COP31, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman held a bilateral meeting with his Australian counterpart, Anthony Albanese, focusing on climate cooperation, investment opportunities, agricultural development and the safe repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar.

The meeting took place at around 10:30 am local time in Antalya, according to the Prime Minister’s Deputy Press Secretary Hasan Shiplu.

During the talks, Tarique Rahman invited Albanese to visit Bangladesh. The Australian Prime Minister expressed hope of making the visit at a mutually convenient time next year. Albanese also invited the Bangladesh Prime Minister to visit Australia, and Tarique Rahman welcomed the invitation.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister highlighted the investment potential of the country and called for increased Australian investment, particularly in sectors offering opportunities for sustainable economic growth. Both leaders also discussed cooperation in agriculture.

On the Rohingya crisis, Tarique Rahman sought Australia’s diplomatic support to facilitate the safe and dignified return of Rohingya refugees currently sheltered in Bangladesh to their homeland in Myanmar.

He called for stronger diplomatic engagement by Australia, stressing that the crisis originated in Myanmar and its lasting solution must also be found there.

The two leaders also discussed climate-related challenges and the importance of prioritising the needs of developing and climate-vulnerable countries in international negotiations.

Tarique Rahman appreciated Australia’s leadership in the ongoing COP31 negotiating process and outlined Bangladesh’s renewable energy ambitions, including the target of meeting 20 percent of national electricity demand through renewable sources by 2030.

He also briefed Albanese on the government’s environmental initiatives, including the plantation of 250 million trees and nationwide canal excavation programmes.

A call for collective climate responsibility : Bangladesh’s engagement at COP31 reflects its broader effort to place climate justice, adaptation financing and the needs of vulnerable communities at the centre of global climate negotiations.

By combining ambitious domestic climate initiatives with calls for international grants, technology transfer and stronger diplomatic cooperation, Dhaka is seeking to strengthen its position as a leading voice for climate-vulnerable nations.

The Prime Minister urged world leaders to translate their commitments into concrete action, strengthen global solidarity and work collectively towards a sustainable future.