

Dhaka meet to devise SAARC plan on climate change

The first meeting of South Asia's environment ministers is to take place here July 3.

High on the agenda is a deal that would facilitate exchange of information, officials preparing for the meeting said.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is gearing up to devise a regional action plan for adapting to climate change and mobilising funds for the purpose.

The SAARC ministerial meeting will be preceded by an expert-level meeting July 1 and 2, officials of Bangladesh's environment and foreign affairs ministries told the New Age newspaper.

A foreign ministry official said the expert-level meeting would make an in-depth assessment of the probable impact of climate change on the region and suggest steps to tackle the situation through regional cooperation.

The official also pointed out the agreements reached in the Dhaka meeting would pave the way for SAARC to take a common stance on the climate change issue before the UN's climate conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

Touching on the issue of regional funding for facilitating adaptation to climate change, an official said the meeting might discuss ways and means to mobilise a fund called the SAARC Development Fund.

'The meeting may also seek funds from the donor agencies whose representatives have been invited to join the meeting for that purpose,' he added.

Bangladesh Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, who heads a caretaker government and performs the prime ministerial functions, is scheduled to open the meeting that was decided at the 29th session of the SAARC's council of ministers in [New Delhi](#) in December 2007.

Besides officials and experts of the eight-nation regional bloc, donor bodies like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Global Environment Facility will join the meeting.

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