

'Allocate budget, formulate strategy to tackle annual embankment damage'

The tragedy of cyclones and consequent floods and embankment damage is an annual saga in Bangladesh. This year was no exception, reports UNB.

But what's lacking is a sustainable embankment and river management policy, say policymakers and experts, as they have urged the Bangladesh government to allocate an emergency budget for repair of embankments across the country in the wake of damage by Cyclone Amphan.

In fact, the clarion call for a long-term approach to tackle embankment damage came from none other than MP Saber Hossain Chowdhury, the chairman of the Parliamentary Standing

Committee on Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, at a virtual seminar on Saturday.

"Due to lack of sustainable embankment and river management policy, the country faces huge financial losses every year as money is spent on embankment repairs. We need a long-term plan to tackle the problem as well as an integrated approach by engaging with ministries that are related with water and river management directly or indirectly," he said.

Saber Hossain was the chief guest at the seminar, titled 'Demand Emergency Budget Allocation in Upcoming Dry Season to Embankment Repair & Maintenance', was organised

by non-government organisations, COAST Trust and Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihood (CSRL).

Arif Dewan of COAST Trust, on his part, said the latest Cyclone Amphan and consequent floods had damaged around 600km embankments across the country, thus causing losses to the tune of BDT 75 billion to the state exchequer. "In this context, emergency repair is needed in the upcoming dry season to avoid further devastation, he said.

Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, the chairman of Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), who chaired the seminar, however, said that