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Wolfensohn visits Barisal 'WB now focuses on poverty alleviation'

BARISAL, Oct 16: World Bank President James D Wolfensohn today said the bank was now laying emphasis on poverty alleviation programmes side by side with financing big projects for sustainable human development, report agencies.

"The World Bank now focuses on poverty alleviation and environmental protection in supporting the government and non-government efforts for human development," he said while visiting Proshika supported programmes here.

Wolfensohn further said the bank deals with 'big economic works' to help developing countries build their infrastructures so that they themselves can fight and alleviate poverty and ensure sustainable human development.

James D Wolfensohn, accompanied by his wife Elaine Ruth, came here to visit three NGO projects in Banaripara and Gournadi thanas.

He talked to women and children who gathered at Chuaripara village in Banaripara thana.

"We are glad to meet you... this country is very beautiful and we have been charmed by this Bangladesh," said the World Bank President.

Wolfensohn observed that there is a great potential among the Bangladeshi children.

The World Bank chief came to see Bhumihin Mahila Samity (Landless Women Association) under the supervision of Grampan Bank. Bank Managing Director Dr Mohammad Yunus received the guest.

Earlier on way, Wolfensohn visited a WB-financed project run by BRAC at Soliabakpur village.

The Nutrition Project involves satellite clinic, nursing of pregnant mothers, and supplementary food processing. The six-year project began last January.

The World Bank chief along with Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed and Health and ERD secretaries flew into Jammu Dip in Banaripara thana where State Minister for Jute and Textiles Fayezul Haq received them.

40 more premium buses in city from Oct 30

Forty more air-conditioned premium buses will be introduced in Mirpur-Gulistan route in the city on October 30, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Metro Bus Company will operate the luxury buses which will start from Mirpur and ply via Shyamoli, Asadgate, Kalabagan, Bangabandhu Hospital and Nagar Bhaban in Gulistan.

The decision to introduce the new buses was taken at a meeting on Operation and Expansion of Premium Bus Service in Dhaka Metropolitan held at the Communications Ministry yesterday.

The bus fare, from Mirpur to Nagar Bhaban, has been fixed at Tk 20 and it will come down in between the stoppages, depending on distance, according to an official handout.

Eating dirt can be good for you

LONDON, Oct 16: Eating dirt can be good for you, according to scientists who have analysed soil consumed by people in China, Zimbabwe and the United States, reports AFP.

The samples contained exactly the nutrients needed to provide the benefits reported by soil-eaters, they said today in an article in the New Scientist Magazine.

Researchers led by Susan Aufreiter, from the University of Toronto, Canada, investigated three soil samples to see whether there was any evidence to support "geophagy", eating earth, for medical reasons.

Chemical analysis showed a Chinese sample used as "famine food" to be rich in iron, calcium, vanadium, magnesium, manganese and potassium — all of which would be in short supply in times of famine.

In a sample soil from Zimbabwe, the researchers found kaolinite, the chief ingredient in the commercial diarrhoea treatment, kaopactate, they told the weekly.

The third sample, from North Carolina in the United States, was rich in iron and iodine, both important for the health of children and women of child-bearing age and often missed from the diets of the poor.

Eating earth has a long history. New Scientist noted, Romans made medicinal tablets from soil and goats' blood. Germans in the last century spread fine clay on their bread instead of butter, and in some African countries clay is still sold as a digestive remedy.

But the traditional view of health professionals in the West is still that the habit is a symptom of mental illness.

President hosts dinner for VCs

President Shahabuddin Ahmed hosted a dinner for the Vice Chancellors and Pro-Vice Chancellors of the universities, both government and private, at Bangabhaban last night, reports UNB.

Education Minister ASHK Sadek, Deputy Minister for Primary and Mass Education Prof. Jimmatunnesa Talukdar, Chairman, Bangladesh University Grants Commission Prof. Iajuddin Ahmad were, among others, present on the occasion.

President Shahabuddin welcomed the guests and exchanged pleasantries with them.

4 Sirajganj AL leaders held

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 16: Four local leaders of Awami League and student wing BCL were arrested from Rangiram in the town today, reports UNB.

Police said Abu Sayed, 40, Abdul Awal, 35, Akbari Sheikh, 40 of Awami League and Ripon of BCL were arrested on charge of ransacking the Korean Hyundai Company office and extortionism.

Ferry service

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or two if dredging is not carried out properly to keep the ferries in operation. The existing single channel route in the river is not dependable. An alternative route is immediately needed to keep the ferries running," a BIWTC high official said, while talking to The Daily Star.

About 2300 vehicles remained stranded at the ghats yesterday evening. BIWTC sources said the vehicles were being ferried to respective destinations but at much too slower pace.

State Minister for Shipping, Dharendraana Debnath Shambhu visited Aricha ghat yesterday. He instructed officials concerned there to speed up dredging to cope with the situation.

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tour due to rivalry in the district Awami League, party sources here said.

As the district administration imposed restriction, both groups refrained from holding meeting.

Meanwhile, Mostaque Ahmed Chowdhury at a press conference accused his rivals of unleashing terrorist activities at the meeting venue.

Oil companies react

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which company gets which block.

"Besides, several companies had submitted proposals for more than one block. These companies now do not know which block they are bidding for," the source noted. "Anyone can now question, after the agreements are signed, whether those agreements are really based on solid proposals. Question can now be also raised whether all the deals will be done without any under-hand dealing."

The government had opened bidding for 15 blocks on July 15 on 'competitive bidding basis' and encouraged the participating companies to submit more than one proposals for different blocks. This had resulted in submission of 36 proposals for exploration in 12 blocks. High-profile companies like Shell, Exxon and others had submitted proposals for more than one block and Block 9 became the centre of competition.

"Now, negotiation on one block one company or group basis would disregard more than one proposals. This means 12 companies or group would share the 12 blocks. This also means that competition and competitiveness are secondary in this bidding process," said a source.

Besides, formation of the negotiation committee with a Joint Secretary as its head continued to generate criticism from almost all levels in Petrobangla and the Energy Ministry.

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BCL, Jubo League activists block road at Sitakunda

CHITTAGONG, Oct 16: Chhatra League and Jubo League activists put up road barricade at Sitakunda today in protest against the arrest of their partymen, halting traffic on the busy Dhaka-Chittagong highway, reports UNB.

At 11 am, Sitakunda police arrested Jubo League leader Ruhul Amin and BCL activists Anwar, Shahjahan and Dulal on various charges.

Witnesses said the protesters put up barricade in front of Thana Health Complex near Sitakunda sadar thana. They also punctured tyres of some buses and trucks.

These vehicles created a heavy traffic jam, snapping road communications between the capital and the port city.

They also damaged about 10 vehicles, including bus, truck and car, amidst the violence.

Police sent crane to the spot to remove the vehicles with punctured tyres. Hundreds of vehicles remained stranded there as the barricade continued.

High police officials intervened and efforts were continuing to remove the road blocks.

Ruppur N-Power Project to be implemented

The government has decided to implement the Ruppur Nuclear Power Project to generate power at less cost to meet the country's increasing power demand, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Ruppur Nuclear Power Project Implementation Committee held at the PM's Office yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The Prime Minister directed the committee to speedily implement the project.

She said her government wants to reach electricity to each village within the shortest possible time.

The environment-friendly nuclear power project, she hoped, will meet the country's electricity demand, particularly of the northern region.

The meeting discussed funding of the project and observed that on completion of the project, huge power would be generated at lower cost to meet the increasing demand of power.

Ruppur Nuclear Power Project in Pabna district was designed in 1963 and 290 acres of land acquired for the project site. But the then Pakistan government shifted the project to Karachi.

Even during the last 21 years, no government has made any attempt to implement the project, a meeting source said.

The present government, immediately after assuming power, took the initiative to revive the project and in November 1996, formed a nine-member implementation committee headed by the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary.

As Bangladesh has already signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty and CTBT, the country has no bar to set up and get foreign technology for the proposed nuclear power project.

The nuclear power will be used for peaceful purposes in development fields and it would be a milestone in the country's scientific and technological arena.

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria, Education Minister A S H K Sadique, Energy Minister Noor Uddin Khan, State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr S A Samad, secretaries concerned and Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Dr M A Qayyum were present in the meeting.

Interpol

From Page 1

of some National Central Bureaus (NCBs) in tracing and detaining fugitives.

As a result of quick action by some NCBs, five of the fugitives had already been traced in different countries.

He urged the NCBs of other countries to trace the remaining offenders from their hide-outs. Bangladesh government was taking necessary measures to expedite extradition process of the traced fugitives, he added.

Huq assured the Interpol general assembly, now in session here, that there was "total transparency" in the trial process of Bangabandhu Murder Case which began in Dhaka in April this year.

He said the defendants in this murder case were getting the best possible legal protection as admissible in the Criminal Procedure Code of 1908.

He said Bangabandhu was killed along with his wife and other family members, including 10-year-old son Russel by a group of "adventurist and power hungry people."

The same group of offenders, he said, again killed four top ranking elected members of parliament including former vice-president, former prime minister and two former ministers a few months later.

Azizul Huq said the trial of 19 accused in the Bangabandhu assassination case commenced in April this year. Five of the accused are in custody while the remaining still absconding, he added.

He said the warrants of arrest against them have been issued by the competent judicial authority on charges of criminal conspiracy, murder, grievous assault and abetment. Twenty prosecution witnesses have so far been examined, he added.

Earlier, while inaugurating the conference, Indian Prime Minister I K Gujral called for a global treaty for extradition of criminals sheltered in various countries.

PCJSS

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Draft has been proposed by the PCJSS which are likely to be sorted out, the source said.

But the contents of the letter or the amendments were not available.

Meanwhile, a report sent by our correspondent from Khagrachhari last night said that a rally arranged by the Pahari Peshajibi Oikyo Parishad and a Nagarik Committee will be held in the town on Saturday in support of the proposed peace agreement. Agriculture Minister Ms Motia Choudhury is expected to be the chief guest at the rally. A procession will be brought out after the rally.

The decision to hold the rally follows a meeting in the town on Wednesday. The meeting was arranged jointly by the BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and a settlers coalition, voicing their disapproval of any accord without disclosing its details demanding equal rights for the settlers and retention of the Army in the CHT.

They have also called a hartal on October 29 in the hill districts.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Nagarik Committee, addressing a press conference yesterday, said they stand for peace. "We will welcome the accord the government and the PCJSS signs," they said.

The press conference was addressed by Shaikhun Chakma, Jahedul Alam, Nabin Kumar Tripura, Sudorsy Chakma and Mohammad Shafi.

Pvt power plant

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will sell electricity to PDB initially at the rate of Tk 2.24 per kilowatt hour, based on imported furnace oil for generation. When the machines will run on natural gas, the cost of electricity will be reduced to Tk 1.88 per kWh.

PDB Chairman Nuruddin M Kamal and Khulna Power Company Managing Director Ahmar Iqbal signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations.

Clas Erik Strand, Senior Vice President, Peter McEwan, Vice President of Wartsila and high officials of PDB were present on the occasion.

This is the second agreement. The first one was signed between PDB and a US company on October 14.

Beximco

From Page 1

a banker.

The Malik account is handled by two executives of the Tk 12 billion Beximco Group, which is controlled by two brothers Sohel Rahman and Salman Rahman and has considerable stakes in both AB and IFIC banks.

Clearly enough, the officials of both banks went out of the way to serve the Beximco purpose.

This was one incident that showed how money and corporate muscle had long made a mockery of the banking system.

Detailed story on Business Page.



Mohammadpur thana BNP unit brought out a procession in the city yesterday as part of the party programme protesting the ruling party's 'terrorist activities'. — Star photo

Maj Dalim was first to enter Radio Station

The 24th prosecution witness in the Bangabandhu murder case yesterday recollected the names of nine army officers who went to the Radio Station on August 15, 1975, reports UNB.

Havildar (ret'd) Aminur Rahman told the court that he saw Major Khandaker Abdul Rashid, Capt Zohair Siddiqui, Major Muihuddin Ahmed, Capt Mostafa, Major Shahriyar, Capt Majed, Major Rashed, Major Dalim and Major Syed Farooqur Rahman entering the radio station.

Asked by Khan Saifur Rahman, defence counsel for Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooqur Rahman, the witness recalled that Major Dalim was first to enter the radio station, followed by Major Rashid.

But he could not serially recall names of the other officers who entered the Radio Station on August 15.

The question by Khan Saifur Rahman apparently made the other defence counsels angry as names disclosed by the witness in reply involved their respective clients.

The PW-24 during his deposition, Wednesday said that his officers immediately before the August 5 carnage, told a joint gathering of Artillery and Lancer that they were to topple the government.

"By government, I meant my officers," Aminur said, replying

Ministerial body

From Page 1

tion in the country.

It also discussed different types of crimes like murder, rape, trafficking of women and children and drug abuse, and directed the authorities concerned to take effective measures to check such crimes.

Education Minister ASHK Sadek, Energy Minister Nuruddin Khan, Cabinet Secretary Ataul Haq, Home Secretary Saiful Rahman, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Secretary Aminullah, Additional IG of Police Ismail Hussain and other senior officials were present.

Biman aircraft

From Page 1

and an Airbus-A310-300 — were grounded due to leakage in their fuel tanks a couple of days ago.

An ATP aircraft, mainly used for domestic flights, has been out of order for more than three months after it met with an accident while landing at Chittagong Airport in the first week of July.

Besides, another DC-10-30 aircraft is now in Italy for scheduled maintenance work since the middle of last month.

Biman officials said repair of leakage in the DC-10 aircraft's fuel tank was completed at Biman hangar in Dhaka on Wednesday and is likely to go into operation soon.

They hoped that the Airbus having the same problem would go into operation within shortly. Besides, the other DC-10 aircraft would join within this month on completion of scheduled maintenance work.

The officials were, however, not sure about the fate of the ATP as repair of its broken nose wheel was yet to begin. Insurance-related matters regarding the ATP was 'almost cleared' and experts were now preparing to start repair work.

Biman aircraft now fly to eight destinations in the country and 26 in three continents. Its fleet consists of four DC-10-30s, two Airbus A310-300s, two F-28s and two ATP aircraft.

Dialogue abortive so far

From Page 1

of election expenses from the date of acceptance of his nomination papers till submission of his final return within 24 hours of the conclusion of the polls with further penal provision for automatic cancellation of the election result for non-compliance, besides provision for long-term imprisonment on trial as an election offence.

Shahabuddin also emphasised that international election monitor groups and said they had played an important role in enhancing the credibility of the general elections in 1991 and 1996 to the contestant political parties as well as the

general public.

"The Election Commission has its own organisational setup and powers for implementing its decisions. But the Commission should remember that its every step is monitored by thousands of conscious eyes with critical scrutiny," he said.

"Election-is-fair-if-I-win" kind of attitude is common in this part of the globe. This attitude emanates from lack of democratic tolerance which is essential for a democratic environment. "Habits of tolerance and compromise and rejection of conflict and confrontation as a means of resolving dispute have been absent in our politics," Shahabuddin said.

He noted that consensus on fundamental state policies and constructive opposition politics is essential in resolving problems that hinder development and good governance.

"The need of the hour is to practise democratic culture as the democratic form of government, in spite of its defects, is better than any other form of government," the President observed.

Physicians urged to ensure best treatment

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the physicians to ensure the best and modern treatment facility in the country to stop patients from going abroad, reports UNB.

"Despite limited resources, the government will extend all cooperation to remove any deficiency in modern appliances, chemicals and drugs for diagnosis as well as treatment," she said.

Addressing the 7th convocation ceremony of the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Mahakhali in the city, the Prime Minister said the government wants to introduce treatment facility for all types of complicated diseases.

Efforts are underway to move forward and keep pace with the constantly changing and improving technology to the medical science, she said.

In the convocation ceremony, some 232 physicians were conferred fellowship (FCPS) and some 191 others membership (MCPS). Fellowship without examinations and honorary fellowships were also conferred in the ceremony.

A total of 487 specialist physicians, including a few foreign specialists, were awarded fellowships at the function.

The Prime Minister said improvement of people's health does not depend on treatment only, it also demands maintaining hygienic life style and social awareness for prevention of diseases.

Cargo handling

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demanding increase of pay and engagement of more dock workers.

In protest against the demand, the stevedores today stopped booking dock labourers, port sources added.

The Chittagong Port Authority held a meeting with the leaders of stevedores and feuding winchmen this afternoon, but the problem could not be resolved, port sources informed, saying that another meeting started from 9 pm today at the Port House.

The meeting was in progress till writing of this report.

Chakma

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He also said the central committee of the JRWA decided to resume the repatriation process despite the non-acceptance of its demand for involvement of UNHCR and ICRC in it by the government.

Upendra Lal, however, said they were confident that under the leadership of Prime Minister Hasina an agreement on the CHT problems would soon be reached creating a condition conducive to return of the Juma refugees.

"Such an agreement would generate confidence among the Juma refugees and facilitate the repatriation process," he said in the faxed release.

Upendra Lal Chakma informed that a 4-member JRWA delegation led by himself met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka on September 12 to discuss the problems of the refugees in Tripura for return to the CHT.

APSU

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The Pro-Vic informed that leaders of APSU were requested to withdraw their siege programme continued today for three days.

Meanwhile, supporters of Chhatra Shibir brought out a procession in the city today demanding reopening of university.

The APSU supporters also blocked movement of transports and the shuttle train.

Resident students reached the halls on foot through other entry points as Gate No 1 was under siege.

The sources said that local leaders of Awami League may hold a closed door meeting in the city tomorrow and persuade the APSU leaders to withdraw the siege.

On the other hand, higher authorities in the government today reportedly asked the CU authorities to keep the university open under any circumstance, highly placed sources said.

জাতীয় বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি জাদুঘরের মানমন্দিরে
টেলিকোমের সাহায্যে আকাশ পর্যবেক্ষণ আশ্রয়ী সৌখিন জ্যোতির্বিদ্যে বিজ্ঞানমোদী ব্যক্তির্গ লক্ষ্য করুন

- আকাশে বর্তমানে বৃহস্পতি, শুক্র ও শনি গ্রহ দৃশ্যমান।
- প্রতি শনি ও রবিবার সূর্যাস্তের পর থেকে সন্ধ্যা ৭-৩০ মিঃ পর্যন্ত জাতীয় বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি জাদুঘরের মানমন্দিরে উৎসাহী দর্শকদের আকাশ পর্যবেক্ষণের জন্য উল্লুখ থাকবে।
- আকাশ পর্যবেক্ষণের প্রতিটি টিকিটের মূল্য পাঁচ টাকা।
- আগে আসলে আগে পাবেন ভিত্তিতে বিকাল ৫-০০ টা থেকে সীমিত সংখ্যক টিকিট বিক্রি করা হবে।
- স্কুল-কলেজের ছাত্র-ছাত্রী, বিজ্ঞান ক্লাবের সদস্যবৃন্দ এবং আশ্রয়ী ব্যক্তির্গ দলগতভাবে যে কোন দিন (বৃহস্পতি, শুক্র ও সরকারী ছুটির দিন ব্যতিত) আকাশ পর্যবেক্ষণ করতে পারবেন। সেক্ষেত্রে জাদুঘর কর্তৃপক্ষের সাথে পূর্বে যোগাযোগ করতে হবে।

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জিএফপি-২২৯৭৬-১০/১০

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