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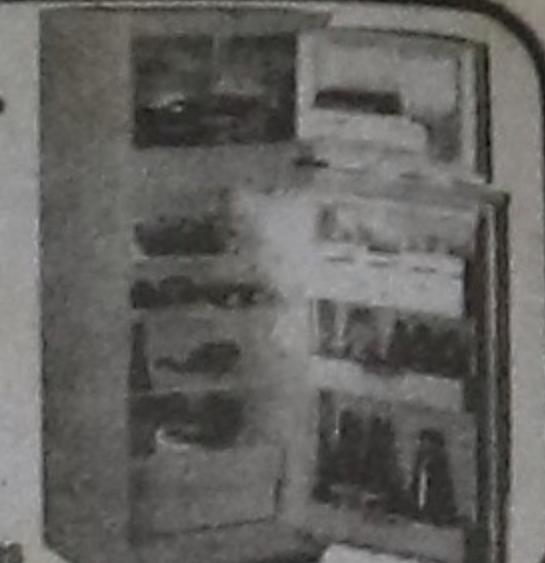


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IFC official observes Congenial atmosphere a must to ensure flow of FDIs

By Staff Correspondent

The visiting Executive Vice-president of IFC Peter Woicke has said that foreign direct investment (FDI) would not flow into Bangladesh until a congenial atmosphere for investment was created.

"Interruption in business is not good for FDIs," he said, deliberately refraining from making any comment on the prevailing political situation in the country.

He, however, observed that FDIs were urgently needed for the country to cope with the fast growing demand for employment.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) official was addressing a press conference at the end of his five-day visit to Bangladesh at the Dhaka office of the World Bank yesterday.

The World Bank country director Frederick T Temple and other members of the visiting team were present.

Peter Woicke, who is also the managing director of The World Bank, expressed his firm belief that private sector would come forward to make huge investments in Bangladesh if and when a favourable situation was created.

According to the figures provided by the IFC official, the total investment by his agency in Bangladesh was in the neighbourhood of 175 million dollars. Another 185 million dollars were in the pipeline.

Replies to a question, he said that he was 'not happy' over the IFC investment in Bangladesh, because he wanted a 'greater volume' of investment.

Underscoring the need for accelerating various reform programmes in the country, the World Bank official said that the reforms should be speeded up, no matter whether it was in power, gas or the telecommunications sector.

Peter Woicke also emphasised the need for privatisation of telecommunication and electricity distribution system.

He told newsmen that during his meeting with high government officials, he had advised them to take an immediate decision regarding gas export from the country.

"As gas export is a political issue in Bangladesh, the final decision would have to be taken by the government and that the world bank could only advise it," he said.

There can be more debate on the issue, but the decision should be taken immediately," he emphasised.

Peter Woicke contradicted



A colourful procession was brought out from the TSC of Dhaka University yesterday marking the Valentine's Day.

— Star photo

Big turnout of visitors at book fair

By DU Correspondent

The month-long Ekushey Book fair experienced a big turnout of visitors yesterday, as an unusually large number of young men and women celebrating the Valentine's Day found the fair premises to be the most suitable venue for rendezvous.

Books containing poems on love sold like hotcakes on the day, said some of the stall owners. "Specially the 'card sets' of poems were in high demand," they added.

Some 20 books arrived at the fair yesterday including 'Gilgamesh' authored by Hayat Mahmud.

Bangla Academy held a discussion on the theme 'Bangladesh of the 20th Century: Progress of Fine Arts' was held at the Bol-mela Mancha in the afternoon.

Prof. Matiul Ali delivered the keynote speech on the topic, while artist Aminul Islam was in the chair.

Among others, Prof. Abdur Razzaq, Prof. Syed Monjurul Islam, Dr. Syed Azizul Haq and Moiuddin Khaled took part in the discussions.

A discussion on 'Bangladesh of 20th Century: Progress of Classical Music' will be held at the Bol-mela Mancha today at 4.00 pm.

Dr. Mridul Kanti Chakrabarty will present the keynote paper on the theme, while Omer Faruk, Nilufer Yasmin, Rawshan Ara Mustafiz, Shamima Parveen and Towhidur Rahman will be present as discussants.

Dr Kamal Hossain submitted

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The Daily Star

BCL leader shot dead in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 14: unidentified assailants gunned down a BCL leader at his residence at Sholakabbari, a busy residential area in the city, this morning, police said.

The victim identified as Pukul Biswas, 23, was the leader of BCL, Mamun group of MES College unit in the city.

The assailants stormed into Pukul's residence and shot him in front of his family members at 9:30 am today. He succumbed to his bullet wounds on way to the hospital, police said. The assailants fled the spot immediately after the incident, police added.

BCL blamed the Islami Chhatra Shibir activists for the killing. Shibir denied the charge.

The killing sparked tension in the port city as the BCL activists went on the rampage and damaged some vehicles, police and witnesses said.

They put up barricades at GEC Crossing and Probarak point that disrupted traffic movement for three hours from 10 am today, witnesses said. Later police forced the BCL activists to remove the barricades at 1 pm.

Child shot dead during gunfight in city

A child was killed during a gunfight between two armed groups at Agargaon slum at Mohammadpur in the city yesterday afternoon, reports UNB.

The child, identified as Rony, 4, was caught in a crossfire while playing in the area at about 4 pm.

Police sources said the gunfight erupted when a terrorist group led by one Ambar Ali chased his rival Shukur Fakir group.

The miscreants traded several rounds of gunshot during the gunfight.

Hartal paralyses life in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Feb 14: Hartal paralysed normal life in the district today, the second day of the five-day hartal enforced by the All-Party (Opposition) Action Committee.

The All-Party (Opposition) Action Committee enforced the hartal demanding withdrawal of names of all buildings and halls of the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology.

Vehicles, including rickshaws were off the roads while inter-city bus services remained suspended during the hartal.

All trains ran behind schedule and Biman flights were operated with fewer number of domestic passengers.

All business establishments and educational institutions were closed and attendance in government and private offices was thin.

No untoward incidents were reported from anywhere of the district.

The Action Committee held a rally at the Court point in the afternoon with the District BNP President M A Haque in the chair.

It was also addressed, among others, by District Jatiya Party President Advocate Glassuddin, Central Nayebi Ameer of Khefajal Majlis Principal Habibur Rahman and City Jamiyat Ameer Dr Shafiqur Rahman.

The speakers iterated their other demands that include renaming of the halls and building of the university after the companions (saints) of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA), trial of the killers of the Shibir activists who were shot dead in BDR firing during agitation on December 25, removal of VC Habibur Rahman and withdrawal of the cases filed against the opposition activists.

They also threatened to continue their movement if demands were not met immediately.

MM Reza new Home Secy

By Special Correspondent

M.M. Reza, the former Health secretary, has been appointed the new Home Secretary by the government on a two-year contract.

Mr Reza, a member of the erstwhile CSP of 1968 batch, had gone on Leave Preparatory to Retirement (LPR) on December 13 after his last assignment.

Mr Reza, who has a distinguished service record, was called back following frantic efforts to find a proper replacement of Shafiqur Rahman whose three year contract as Home Secretary terminated last month.

A number of Secretaries were considered for this very important government job. Initially Syed Rezaul Hayat, Secretary to the communication ministry was given appointment. But he declined to take over the charges, leading to a cancellation of his transfer order.

It left the ministry without a Secretary since January 31. The post of the additional Secretary also remained vacant.

M.M. Reza's appointment was signed by the Prime Minister on Sunday. Necessary orders would be made as soon as the formalities are completed, competent sources said.

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