



Residents in the low-lying areas at Narayanganj negotiate knee-deep floodwater as they go about their everyday work yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

TI faces Saifur ire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman has said the Transparency International (TI) often exaggerates figures on corruption of the country.

"There is no doubt that we have corruption in our country. And without corruption we could have derived double benefit with the resources we have spent. But, the Transparency International often shows high figures that do not match with reality," the minister told newsmen after attending a discussion.

The minister was speaking as chief guest at a discussion on 'A National Strategy for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction: Bangladesh (I-PRSP)' organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) in the city yesterday.

TI, a Germany-based organisation, releases data on the corruption of different nations and rates them accordingly. In 2001, it rated Bangladesh as the most corrupt country.

However, Prof. Muzaffar Ahmed of Dhaka University, who is also a member of the trustee board of the Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB) indicated that the corruption has increased in the country after the last general election.

Citing a particular instance, he said, "In the Dhaka-Chittagong route a trucker on average had to pay Tk 500 in toll to the extortionists. But the rate went up to Tk 2,500 after the last general election."

With Prof. Wahiduddin Mahmud in the chair, the discussion was addressed, among others, by Dr Abu Abdullah, Kazi Fazlur Rahman, Professor Mustahidur Rahman, Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, Dr Mahbubullah, Dr Salahuddin Ahmed, Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan, Economic Relations Division Secretary Anisul

Huq Chowdhury.

The economists emphasised uprooting corruption to give the poverty reduction programme a chance, a view the finance minister shared.

Dr Binayak Sen and Dr MK Mujeri of the BIDS presented the draft I-PRSP that they prepared on behalf of the government. Dr Omar Haider Chowdhury, Dr Zaid Bakht, Dr Quazi Shahabuddin, Dr Rushidan I Rahman and Dr Simeen Mahmud of the BIDS discussed different aspects of the draft I-PRSP.

Citing reasons behind the preparation of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Saifur Rahman said the donors these days made it a condition for access to external assistance.

"If we want to get foreign assistance to make up the gap in our foreign exchange resource, we have to prepare the document," the minister said, adding that the document should be a homegrown one.

"We will prepare our document and if the donors do not like it, we will go ahead with our strategy," Saifur said.

Prof. Wahiduddin Mahmud said concrete steps are absent in the draft I-PRSP that is necessary for pro-poor growth.

Mentioning different reform measures taken in the country for macro-stabilisation, Prof. Mahmud said there should be an analysis on how far the country should go for exchange rate liberalisation and whether there should be any rigid stance on deficit financing.

"Stabilisation does not mean we should have a rigid stand on deficit financing. We may have to go for increased deficit financing in a particular year depending on the situation," he pointed.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

14 killed in Mymensingh, Natore road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 14 people were killed and 60 others were injured in separate road accidents in Mymensingh and Natore yesterday.

Of them, ten were killed in Mymensingh and the rest four in Natore.

UNB adds: A collision between two buses on Mymensingh-Sherpur road at Tarkanda left 10 people dead and 50 others injured yesterday morning.

Police and hospital sources said a Sherpur-bound bus from Dhaka collided head-on with a Dhaka-bound bus from Sherpur at Bakunda at 9 am, killing eight people on the spot. Two other passengers died on way to hospital.

Four of the deceased were identified as driver of the Sherpur-bound bus Saiful, Amir Hossain, 40, Rupom Snigha, 19, Tufun, 32, identity of others could not be known.

Some of the injured who were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital were identified as Nazim, 45, Kazol, 14, Alhaj, 23,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Enough food in stock for relief: PM

UNB, Gaibandha

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday assured that the government has enough stock of food grain to meet any exigencies arising out of the flood situation.

She, however, asked officials concerned to remain prepared in case of floods due to possible excessive rains over the next two months.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

WASA clarifies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka WASA in a clarification to a report published in The Daily Star said yesterday there is no question of leakage in the Saidabad water treatment plant or in its pipeline.

The leakage may be in the old pipeline near the Saidabad bus terminal and necessary steps have been taken to repair it, it said.

The report titled 'leaks in water treatment plant' was published on August 7.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Aug 8		6-37 pm
Aug 9	5-31 am	

Prayer Timings		
August 8		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



A Rajasthani balances earthen wares on her head as she performs an Indian folk dance at the National Museum auditorium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Polluters' latest trick

Political support for movement sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The owners and employees of the pollutant-spewing two-stroke three-wheelers are now out to get support of political parties as well as different professional bodies for their movement against the government decision to ban such vehicles from September 1.

The government has decided to ban movement of all two-stroke three-wheelers in the capital from next month.

A directive of the High Court Division on March 27 this year has also asked the government to stop movement of two-stroke three-

wheelers in the city by this December and to arrange clean fuel-run alternative vehicles.

Meanwhile, leaders of 13 associations of two-stroke three-wheeler owners, employees and spare parts traders at a meeting yesterday decided to hold an opinion exchange meeting with representatives of different political parties and professional bodies on 14 or 15 of this month.

The meeting also chalked out a future course of action to be announced at a 'grand' rally at the Outer Stadium on July 20.

The transport owners and workers have already observed a mass

hunger strike under the banner of Dhaka City Auto-tempo, Amir-ricshaw, Auto-truck Malik-Sramik Oikya Parishad (employer-owner unity forum) at the Central Shaheed Minar on Tuesday last to press home their six-point demand.

Their six-point demand includes conversion of all two-stroke three-wheelers into CNG-run ones. However, such conversion has no effect on emission of blue smoke through the burning of lubricant.

They also demanded relaxation of rules in issuing driving license to three-wheeler drivers and route permits to all three-wheelers regis-

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Businesses for transparent political donations

MONJUR MAHMUD

As 78 per cent corporate houses give donations to the political parties, business leaders feel that the contribution should be made public and reflected in the books of accounts for the sake of transparency.

Termining the present situation completely a non-transparent one, they said it encourages corruption, and sometimes the businessmen are rewarded in a way that undermines the national interest.

According to a recent study, as many as 77.8 per cent corporate houses give donations to political

parties, candidates or causes. The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) conducted the study among 49 large and medium enterprises representing readymade garments, energy, leather, pharmaceuticals, construction, ceramics, plastic, software, engineering, food and agro-based industry, textiles and jute.

President of the International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh (ICC-B) Mahbubur Rahman said a businessman or anyone, for that matter, can make donations to any political party according to his choice. But this contribution should be made open and it should come in the accounts

properly, he observed.

Such practice would help political parties to be more transparent, he said, adding that businessmen would not have to pay taxes for the money they contribute if these are shown in the accounts as expenditure.

Echoing the ICC-B president, President of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Kutubuddin Ahmed said political parties should be transparent in their income and expenditure.

Since businessmen are secretive

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

So much for road repair

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many roads and intersections in the city, 'repaired' under a crash programme of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), are once again in a bad shape within a week because of 'improper repair', sources said.

The DCC which did not maintain city roads for over one year due to fund crisis took up the crash programme for repair of many of those last week, considering the urgency of it.

The programme brought a sense of relief among city dwellers who suffered a lot because of the run-down roads, but they are now surprised to see that there are no signs of repair only a few days after those were 'repaired'.

"How could a road be damaged within a week of its repair?" asked Yasin Ahmed of Begunbari area of the city. Many others also expressed similar sentiments.

Numerous potholes on the Tongi diversion road were 'repaired' just last week but those very much exist even now.

Many of the 'repaired' road intersections in the city including Satrasta, Mohakhali, Gulistan and Green Road only show that stone chips and bitumen were not used properly for the work.

When contacted, a top official of the DCC on condition of anonymity attributed this to allocation of inadequate funds for the repair work.

However, some other officials of the DCC blamed rain and water logging due to defective drainage system for quick damage of the repaired roads.

The crash programme covered 20 worst-damaged spots of the city roads and 200 people were engaged to repair those during night.

The DCC in its budget for the present fiscal has allocated TK 60.80 crore for development and maintenance of city roads. Moreover, Tk 10 crore has been allocated for widening of different roads.

Lack of maintenance for over one year due to fund crisis of the DCC has led to dilapidated condition of most of the 2,220 kilometres of city roads used by over 10 million inhabitants of the capital.

Monsoon rains over the last few weeks worsened the condition of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8



Yawning potholes on the stretch of the Biswa Road between Syedabad and Malibagh sum up the futility of the Dhaka City Corporation's emergency road repair programme.

PHOTO: STAR

Meeting Saturday on presidential polls schedule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is yet to choose its candidate for the presidential election to succeed AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, who resigned on June 21 under pressure from the ruling party lawmakers.

The constitution requires that election should be held within 90 days of resignation of the president and in this case, the cut-off date is September 18.

According to sources in the Election Commission (EC), Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed will meet acting Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddiqui next Saturday to work out the schedule for the presidential election.

The EC will need at least a week to complete the electoral procedure and start preparations once it gets the go-ahead from the BNP, the sources said. Meanwhile, both the hardline and the moderate leaders in the ruling party fold have started intense lobbying to get their chosen man nominated for presidency.

A section of the BNP leaders wants Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, who has taken over as the acting president after Chowdhury's resignation, nominated and elected as the next president.

Sources in the party believe Sircar stands a far better chance than any other to win the nod from Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia. In 1991, she nominated then Speaker Abdur Rahman for presidency.

The BNP lawmakers feel it will be wise to go for Sircar, as he has not performed well as the Speaker in the Jatiya Sangsad, the sources said. They don't think Sircar will be able to run parliament when the main opposition Awami League joins the sessions.

Besides, many BNP leaders believe that Sircar with a proven loyalty to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

2 kids drown in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A boy and a girl drowned in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Mohammad Selim Miah, 12, a student of class six, drowned while trying to swim in a lake at Mirpur. He was the son of one Mohammad Samsad.

Selim along with five other boys went for swimming in the lake. Suddenly Selim slipped into deep water and drowned, the victim's relatives told newsmen at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

They said after rescue Selim was taken to Suharwardi Hospital. He

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2