

'Laws of jungle' threaten world order: Annan

REUTERS, Davos

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan said yesterday the world faced a combination of security threats and economic dangers that put the entire international order in jeopardy.

Annan said terrorism and the global war against it threatened to undermine human rights and split the world along cultural, religious and ethnic lines.

"Business...has a powerful interest in helping to prevent the international security system from sliding back into brute competition

based on the laws of the jungle," he told corporate leaders at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

"In just a few short years, the prevailing atmosphere has shifted from belief in the near-inevitability of globalization to deep uncertainty about the very survival of our tenuous global order," Annan said.

Collective security and the role of the world body itself were under serious strain, the UN chief added.

Annan appealed directly to heads of the world's leading companies to use their influence with governments to bring about fairer

trade and enhance security.

He said business must play a vital part in averting conflicts, which were often related to struggles to control natural resources.

"Business efforts to promote transparency and fight corruption can be effective measures in preventing conflict from happening in the first place," he said.

On the economic front, unfair trade -- especially farming subsidies -- was not only destroying the environment but choking off revenues from the countries that most needed them.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Cop extortion from Eid cattle traders continues

BISHAWJIT DAS

Cattle traders yesterday accused police of extorting from them as they bring cattle to the city.

"We are compelled to pay tolls at eight to 10 places on the road from the border areas to the city," alleged Majnu Bepari, a trader at Gabtali cattle market.

The accusation comes in sharp contrast to home ministry's professed measures to curb police extortion on the eve of Eid-ul-Azha.

An inter-ministerial meeting on market situation during Eid-ul-Azha held at the home ministry on January 14 observed that due to unchecked extortion, price of cattle shoots up. So, the meeting decided to take measures to check extortion from and harassment of c a t t l e

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

A drover leads cows from outlying areas to the capital for sale ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha to be celebrated on February 2. Traders alleged toll-taking by police at different checkpoints on roads to Dhaka.

BNP'S LOWER-TIER BODY FORMATION

Deadline extended for sixth time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The deadline for the formation of the lower-tier committees of the BNP has been extended once again.

The seven secretaries-general who have been given the division-wise responsibility for formation of committees made little progress as most are busy with state affairs, highly placed sources said.

They said the BNP started extending the deadline for one month to thana and district committees from August last year. But few committees could be formed despite extension of deadlines at least half a dozen times.

Committees in 75 districts were supposed to be formed by August 31 last year, but by now about 30 district committees and 50 percent of the thana units have been formed. Currently, the deadline to form the remaining committees is by January 30.

However, BNP Secretary General and LGRD and

Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan gave a fresh deadline through a formal letter to all district units to complete their councils and form committees by February.

Besides, he asked all local leaders to strengthen organisational activities at the union level and hold political programmes regularly to mobilise support against the opposition Awami League's hartal and other anti-government programmes.

The BNP has so far formed new central committees of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Juba Dal and Sramik Dal, but there has been no development regarding formation of committees in the remaining front organisations -- Jasas, Krishak Dal, Mahila Dal, Muktiyoddha Dal, Tanti Dal, Ulema Dal, Matshyajibi Dal and Secchashebak Dal.

The BNP sources claimed the process to form committees of the remaining front organisations is on and young leadership is expected to take over these bodies soon.

Bird flu scare Chicken import banned till Mar 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has banned import of one-day-old chickens from India, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea and Cambodia in the wake of an outbreak of bird flu in those countries, official sources said Thursday.

A high-level meeting of the fisheries and livestock ministry on Wednesday took the decision making the ban effective till March 15.

Officials of the livestock directorate and poultry farm owners attended the meeting chaired by the fisheries and livestock secretary.

Although there hasn't been any report of the Avian flu from anywhere in the country, the meeting said the ban was imposed as a pre-emptive measure.

Bangladesh is a major importer

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Vajpayee meets Kashmiri separatists

AFP, New Delhi

Kashmiri separatists paid a courtesy call on Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee here late yesterday, the first ever meeting between an Indian premier and separatists.

Five moderate members of Kashmir's main separatist group the All Parties Hurriyat Conference went into the meeting at the prime minister's residence at around 6:10 p m

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Prayer Timings		
January 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-45	6-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-46	5-52
Esha	7-15	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		



THE STRENGTH WITHIN

Medicine replacing magic in Madhabpur

ASHFAQ WARES KHAN

An anxious Meraz Khan awaits the birth of his first child outside the delivery room. Wringing his fingers he says, "She started to bleed all of a sudden and has been screaming and groaning for hours and, after Allah, the first person we called was Apa."

The Apa whom Meraz called for salvation is a local Grameen Kalyan (GK) health assistant, Afreen. She like four other health assistants assigned to 67 GK centres in Madhabpur of Manikganj visits rural households at least twice a month to ensure regular observance of medical advice provided by the GK doctors.

Complementing government's rural health care services, the GK has extended modern medical facilities to such remote areas that are not covered by government health centres. As Meraz continued to explain, "If we didn't have this GK centre, we would either call our local mid-wife or would travel for at least half an hour to get to the nearest hospital."

With chronic diseases deplet

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

A patient's family looks on as a Grameen Kalyan health assistant does her weekly checkup at the Madhabpur centre.

Move to privatise textbooks

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

The education ministry is in the process of privatising selection of contents, printing and distribution of secondary level textbooks.

The Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (SESIP) has recommended privatisation to produce quality and error-free textbooks.

The ministry is now preparing a draft on the privatisation process for cabinet approval, a top official said.

The move is underway because

of alleged inability of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) to maintain the standards and quality of textbooks.

Initially, the ministry will seek cabinet approval for seven books for class nine and class ten and English second paper books for class six to class nine. The books for class nine and class ten are on English second paper, general science, physics, algebra, social science, management and history.

If okayed by the cabinet, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide around Tk 50 lakh to start the process next year.

Sources pointed out that the private sector would prepare contents of the books including texts and illustrations and print and distribute them, but it will have to obtain approval of the authorities.

The NCTB will give the guidelines for the books.

Currently, the private sector produces books on optional subjects for college students.

The government also plans to form a textbook approval authority (TAA) to oversee the quality of contents, designs and illustrations of the textbooks, officials said.