

Anti-poverty plan lacks vision to meet MDGs

Economist Jeffrey Sachs at city dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The special advisor to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) yesterday criticised the World Bank's (WB) key strategy paper on poverty reduction in Bangladesh, saying it lacks a realistic vision of how the prescribed policies should be implemented.

"There is no realistic vision of how Bangladesh can achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), a poverty reduction recipe of the World Bank," said Jeffrey D Sachs, also advisor to the WB, International Monetary Fund

(IMF), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Sachs, however, termed the paper an 'extremely good document' in terms of fixing goals for poverty cut.

He was delivering the keynote speech on, "Millennium Development Goals: Reality and Prospects", at a session of a three-day international conference on 'Emerging Global Economic Order and Developing Countries', organised by Bangladesh Economic

Association (BEA) at Osmani Memorial Hall in Dhaka.

Sachs said the World Bank and IMF should not provide any directions in the policy-making process of such a big economy of over 140 million people.

He appreciated Bangladesh's performance in implementing the PRSP but said this is 'not enough' to attain the MDGs. "Huge financing and good governance to ensure proper utilisation of the funds will require [to meet that end],"

Sachs emphasised ensuring good governance, saying: "Without it all plans will go in vain."

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250 shanties gutted in Banani blaze

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A raging fire yesterday gutted over 250 shanties and injured a teenage boy at a slum in the capital's Banani area.

The flames, believed to be originated from an earthen oven, engulfed about 350 tin-roofed shanties of Banani T&T slum, popularly known as Godown Slum on road No. 1, at around 11:30pm, sources said.

"In vain we tried to extinguish the fire that burnt all our belongings in front of my eyes," said a crying elderly woman.

Fire fighters from Tejgaon, Cantonment and Mohammadpur units reached the spot at 12:05pm and doused the flame at 1:15pm, sources added.

Witnesses said the rooms, mostly 10 feet by 12 feet, turned into ashes during the two-hour long blaze.

Rafiq, 17, who was working in a shanty behind Banani T&T College boundary near Chairmanbari, suffered minor burn injuries. However, Gulshan police said no report of injury reached them.



PHOTO: STAR

Firefighters douse the last flames of the inferno that burnt down a 250-shanty slum in Banani yesterday afternoon, as slum-dwellers sift through the remains of what were their homes.

Hosts wary of Nistelrooy



AFP, Lisbon

Were it not for the "Ruud health" of one player at the peak of his form Euro 2004 hosts Portugal would be confident of stretching a 13-year unbeaten run against today's semi-final rivals the Netherlands.

Ruud van Nistelrooy is the man whose exploits threaten to keep the

SEMIFINALS

Portugal vs Netherlands
Live on ESPN & BTv at 12:40 am
(Thursday)

Trade gap with top 20 countries over Tk 30,449 crore

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka's trade deficit with 20 major countries was over Tk 30,449 crore in fiscal year 2002-03.

Replying to Awami League lawmaker Kazi Sirajul Islam's query at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury said trade gap with India alone was Tk 7,358.53 crore during the same period.

The second in line was Singapore with Tk 5,006.59 crore in trade deficit while China followed with Tk 4,408.28 crore, he added.

During the same period, trading disparity with Hong Kong was Tk 1,985.54 crore, Taiwan Tk 1,811.20 crore, South Korea Tk 1,773.84 crore, Japan Tk 1,693.80 crore, and Indonesia Tk 1,012.00 crore. The g a p

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PHOTO: STAR

Ruling coalition candidate Mosaddak Ali Falu and Senior Joint Secretary General of BNP Tarique Rahman, top, wave to supporters in Segunbagicha and Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh candidate Abdul Mannan acknowledges applause in front of Matsya Bhaban at the last hustings for Dhaka-10 by-polls yesterday.

Roadside bomb kills 3 US troops in Iraq

American soldier shot dead in captivity

AP, Baghdad

A roadside bomb killed three U.S. Marines and wounded two others yesterday in the first fatal attack on American forces since the transfer of sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government, U.S. officials said.

In one of his first acts since

taking power, interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi said Saddam Hussein will be transferred to Iraqi legal custody and face charges before an Iraqi court this week -- but he won't go on trial for months. The ousted former Iraqi leader will remain in a U.S.-run jail for now because his government does not have a suitable prison.

Meanwhile, Iraqi militants shot to death an American soldier they had held hostage for three months, saying the killing was punishment for U.S. policy in the Mideast nation, Al-Jazeera television said.

The Arab-language station reported the slain soldier was Spc.

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Bikalpa Dhara fears massive vote rigging in Dhaka-10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh fears massive rigging in tomorrow's Dhaka-10 by-elections, alleging the government is preparing to bring voters from neighbouring places of the capital to cast fake votes.

At a hurriedly called press conference yesterday afternoon, BDB national committee member Mahi B Chowdhury said, "The voters' list of Ramna-Tejgaon constituency has not been up-dated. Using its machinery the government has identified those of that list who meanwhile have changed residence. The number of such 'missing' voters we guess to be somewhere between 65,000 and 70,000. And we fear the government will show these missing voters have participated in the voting."

Under what he termed a 'gigantic plot', Mahi said agents of the '12 dummy candidates' are assigned to

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AL leader harassed for 'supporting' BDB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elderly leader of city's Mirbagh Awami League (AL) was arrested early yesterday and later released after being coerced to sign 'a blank paper' allegedly for entertaining Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) candidate's supporters on Monday evening.

Ramna Police arrested Habibur Rahman, the 73 years old veteran Awami Leagueur from his residence at around 1:30am without specifying any charge against him.

Locals said Habibur is a highly respected person, better known in

the locality for mediating various social problems. A group of canvassers from BDB as part of their door-to-door campaign visited his house on Monday evening and hours later police picked him up.

The members of his family said he was arrested and then released at 2:00pm yesterday but refused to say anything else about the incident.

But a relative who witnessed the arrest said police scaled the wall of his residence and forced the guard to open the main gate. They told

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Observer chief editor passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Professor KMA Munim, chief editor of Bangladesh Observer, died of old age complications in the city yesterday. He was 84.

He left behind wife, three sons, two daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death. Born in 1920 at village Lemua Bazar in Feni, Prof Munim did his Masters in English from the Dhaka University in 1943. He was teacher of the university from 1955 to 1982.

Prof. Munim began his career in

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US resumes diplomatic ties with Libya

REUTERS, Tripoli

The United States Monday formally restored diplomatic ties with Libya severed for 24 years and President Bush pledged to work toward a complete normalisation of relations between the two countries.

US Assistant Secretary of State William Burns said in a statement he had formally inaugurated the new US Liaison Office in Tripoli and restored direct diplomatic ties.

"This occurs 24 years after the withdrawal of American personnel and the closure of the US Embassy. ...

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Dengue situation under total control: Mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday claimed the dengue situation in the capital is 'under total control'.

"We have taken massive steps for building awareness in the city to stop breeding of aedes mosquito," the mayor said at a meeting of Cleanliness and Mosquito Control Advisory Committee (CMCAC) held at the conference room of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) yesterday.

Khoka said mosquito control activities now are much wider than in any previous time. "The DCC has enough larvacide and adulticide to destroy the larva and adult mosquitoes and preparations are on for aerial spray in the city, if needed."

The mayor said dengue patients in Dhaka are rare and reported dengue patients now being treated at city hospitals are from other districts. Lack of treatment facilities outside Dhaka has compelled them to get admitted to city hospitals, he claimed.

According to the Directorate of Health, 114 dengue patients were admitted to city hospitals and clinics between June 15 and yesterday. And 62 patients still remain hospitalised after contacting the disease, sources said.

Several steps including distributing leaflets and broadcasting over four electronic media on dengue will be taken soon, Khoka said.

CMCAC President Khandokar

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2.2 million jobless

UNB, Dhaka

The country's unemployed population was 2.2 million in 2001, according to a report of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Replying to Jatiya Party MP GM Kader at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday,

State Minister for Labour and Employment Aman Ullah Aman quoted the report.

The minister said the government and donor agencies funded various programmes to eliminate unemployment problem through technical and vocational training.

Prayer Timing		
June 30		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-54	6-57
Esha	8-17	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Govt giving free rein to Bangla Bhai

Politicians talk of rising religious extremism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition political leaders yesterday accused the government of giving a free rein to Bangla Bhai, operations commander of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh, to carry out criminal activities in the northwest.

Religious extremism is on increase in the country as the government has failed to take legal action against the Islamic zealots, the leaders said at a roundtable organised by Muktijoddha Samonnoya Parishad in Dhaka.

They urged all pro-liberation political parties to stand up unitedly against rising extremism across the country.

Speaking at the roundtable as chief guest, Awami League presid-

ium member Tofail Ahmed said the Islamic radicals are spreading their wings across the country under the patronage of the BNP-led coalition government.

"Fundamentalists are taking revenge for their defeat in 1971 through unleashing terror across the country," Tofail said.

He expressed the fear that the communal forces may jeopardise the country's electoral process through their criminal activities. He also urged all progressive political parties and pro-liberation forces to be united to fight against the growing Islamist militancy.

Gono Forum General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik said progressive political parties should have a common stand against com

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