



Awami League General Secretary and former commerce minister Abdul Jalil speaks at the closing ceremony of Bangladesh Apparel and Textile Exposition (Batexpo) 2006 at Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday.

Traffic Month begins

UNB, Dhaka

A countrywide month-long campaign for disciplining traffic got off to a festive start yesterday with a colourful rally in the capital.

Home Secretary Safar Raj Hossain formally declared commencement of the 'Traffic Month 2006' at the rally at Police Headquarters.

IGP Anwarul Iqbal, senior officials of the Home Ministry and Police, leaders of transport sector, members of Boy Scout and Girl Guide, and people from walks of life joined the rally.

The main objective of this traffic month is to free roads from traffic congestion, create a "culture" of abiding by traffic rules, and to raise awareness among the road users such as drivers, helpers, passengers and pedestrians.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police has requested all to extend cooperation in achieving the goals.

Price hike of CU admission forms protested

CU CORRESPONDENT

Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) Chittagong University (CU) unit yesterday condemned the decision of university authorities to increase the price of admission forms.

CU authorities on last Monday decided to increase the price of admission forms to Tk 300 from previous year's Tk 250 at a meeting of the admission committee.

SCF leaders at a rally held on CU Railway Station premises in the afternoon said only Tk 50 is needed to complete the admission process for each student.

The high official of the university would share the additional money among them, they alleged.

The leaders demanded immediate withdrawal of the increased fee and threatened to enforce tougher agitations if the decision is not withdrawn.

SCF CU unit President Kanchan Sarker presided over the rally while General Secretary Zamir Uddin Russel and Kalin Chakma also spoke.

16M HUNGRY CHILDREN IN COUNTRY  
Multiplier effects of hunger eat up 8pc GDP a year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has 16 million hungry and malnourished children, the third largest number in Asian countries after India and China, said speakers quoting a study at a seminar yesterday.

The multiplier effects of hunger and malnutrition eat up eight per cent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country every year, they noted.

Eradication of hunger and malnutrition calls for development actors' focus on access of the poor to food along with its productivity and availability, they observed.

They also underscored the need for strong political commitment that can ensure equitable resource allocation within states.

The seminar titled 'Child Hunger and Malnutrition: Role of the Media' jointly organised by Food Security Journalists Network (FSJN) and World Food Programme (WFP) was

held at IDB Bhaban conference room in the city yesterday.

Speaking at the programme, Deputy Country Director of World Food Programme (WFP) Edward Kallon said hunger and malnutrition have direct bearing on achieving targets of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Emphasising the need for political commitment to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, he said, as the pattern of resource allocation depends on the national government, in-depth analysis of political economy of hunger is necessary.

Senior Adviser of WFP Usha Mishra Joshi discussed how hunger and malnutrition are directly related to productivity and overall development of a country.

As the media sets public agenda and brings issues to public as objectively as possible, it should also shoulder responsibility of sensitising people to the issues like poverty, hunger and malnutrition, she added.

Hunger and malnutrition reproduce themselves perpetually through a cycle, said Country Director of Helen Keller International Bangladesh Chantell Witten.

Breaking the cycle requires long term, needs-driven and effective interventions, she noted.

Although the media has its own political economy, over the last ten to fifteen years the media has been playing positive role in promoting food security for the poor, said Editor of The New Age Nurul Kabir.

Convener of FSJN Reaz Ahmed stressed long term partnership between different development agencies and media professionals so that people be informed of the success stories as well as limitations of different development initiatives and can take appropriate steps.

Form Saarc Dev Bank as alternative to WB, IMF  
Demand non-government organisations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday called for forming Saarc Development Bank as an alternative to World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

They also demanded transparency in the overall process of loan sanctioned by WB and IMF.

The press conference was organised by the Alliance for Economic Justice, Bangladesh (AEJB), a platform of 35 NGOs and civil society organisations at Dhaka Reporters' Unity Office in the city.

The speakers also called for political commitment of both the government and the opposition ahead of the election for not taking

any loan from WB and IMF after a certain period of time.

They condemned WB and IMF for not fulfilling its commitments to poor countries including voting reform and the right of access to decision-making.

The speakers urged the donor organisations including DFID not to consider WB and IMF as 'Intellectual and Implementation Gatekeeper' while financing in Bangladesh.

Instead, they suggested bilateral negotiations.

The speakers also slated police harassment in Singapore of Bangladesh representatives who went there to join the annual conference of WB and IMF from

September 14 to 20.

In a written statement Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, secretary of Campaign for Good Governance, condemned the double standard of WB Chief Paul Wolfowitz for the harassment of around 54 activists from 17 countries at Singapore airport.

Executive Director of Voice Ahmed Swapan Mahmud, Chairperson of Unnayan Anneshon Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, Chief Executive Officer of Voice AHM Bazlur Rahman and Director of Faith and Hope Lutfun Nahar Runu also spoke on the occasion.

Cellphone sets worth Tk 6.5 lakh looted in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Burglars stole cellular phone sets worth around Tk 6.5 lakh from a shop at the port city's Agrabad Sheikh Mujib Road under Doublemooring Police Station.

The miscreants entered Saiful Telecom at JM Bhaban sometime on Friday midnight after breaking the shutter, sources said.

Then they broke five locks of its storeroom and took away about 150 pieces of cellular phone sets, largely of the brand Nokia and chargers worth Tk 6.5 lakh.

Saiful Islam, the owner, said they closed the shop on Thursday night and found everything displaced when they came to open the shop yesterday morning.

In last one and a half year, three incidents of burglary including this one took place at his shop, he said adding that not a single criminal was arrested as of yet.

However, mystery shrouded the incident as the main gate of the building was found under lock and key yesterday morning.

Both Saiful and police were confused as to how the burglars could get inside the building and took away the goods since there was no alternative entrance.

Sub Inspector Mahbub of the Doublemooring PS said it is impossible to enter the market avoiding the main entrance and that they are investigating the matter.

The incident took place within 24 hours of a similar burglary where cash and cellular phone sets worth over Tk six lakh were stolen from a Nokia showroom in the same area in the early hours of Friday.



Students of Surbihar Music and Art School perform a dance number at a cultural programme at Natmandal of Dhaka University yesterday.

Govt employees demand 50pc DA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Council for Implementation of Demand of Government Employees yesterday demanded immediate payment of 50 percent of basic salary as dearness allowance after fixing the minimum DA at Tk 2000.

In a written statement at a press conference in the city, council Secretary General Mohammad Shahabuddin placed a five-point demand including formulation of a service commission and a permanent pay commission to remove service and pay discriminations.

He termed the 6th Pay Commission as discriminatory and anomalous.

Shahabuddin alleged that the council has been continuing its efforts on behalf of 10 lakh Class three and four employees since last five years to press the government to pay heed to their demands but the government seems quite indifferent to their issues.

"Though the government has announced a 10 percent dearness allowance it is negligible than the requirements," he added.

Shahabuddin also demanded

fixation of selection grade for non-gazetted staffs at two-scale above and two annual increments with two years seniority for the freedom fighters employed after the liberation war.

He also called for restructuring house rent, medical and other allowances.

Harun ur Rashid, Abul Hashem Mian, Lokman Ali, AKM Mahbubul Alam, Mahfuzur Rahman, Abu Saleh Talukder, Rezaul Mostofa and Sheikh Al Beruni were present at the press conference.



Lawmaker Tazul Islam Chowdhury of Kurigram speaks at a seminar titled 'Monga 2006: What we should do' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Shueb Siddiqui, Shahidur Rahman, Golam Mortuza and eminent economist Atiur Rahman. The Shaptahik 2000 and ActionAid Bangladesh jointly organised the seminar.

CPA land recovered after 27 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A mobile court here yesterday bulldozed a two-storey building, a sawmill and a few other structures to recover about 10 katha land of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) that was encroached 27 years ago by an influential quarter.

Sources said CPA Magistrate Munir Chowdhury led the four-hour drive from 8:30am at Avoymitra Ghat area in Feeringi Bazar under Kotwali along the north bank of Karnaphuli river and demolished the structures built on the land worth over Tk 1 crore.

They said Badiur Rahman Sawdagar, a businessman, took lease of the property from the CPA back in 1966 but the CPA authority had it cancelled in 1979 for constructing unauthorised structures and encroaching additional land.

Later on, Badiur left the country by handing the land over to another businessman Mohammad Ishaq Sawdagar, who built more illegal structures there.

Sources said the CPA failed to recover the land in the last 27 years since 1979 due to legal tangles owing to seven cases filed by the encroachers. Eventually, the cases were disposed off recently in favour of the CPA.

Following the disposal of cases, the CPA magistrate served a notice to Ishaq Sawdagar on September 21 asking him to vacate the land in 24 hours.

A 50-member team from Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) and another 50 eviction staffs of the port assisted the magistrate in the drive.

After the recovery, a team of 10 ansars were deployed on the land.



Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) bulldozes a two-storey building, a sawmill and a few other illegal structures during an eviction drive in Avoy Mitra Ghat area along the north bank of the river Karnaphuli.