

7 journos get WFP Media Award 2006

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

World Food Programme (WFP), Bangladesh, yesterday handed over WFP Media Award 2006 to seven journalists of print and electronic media for their contribution in raising awareness about food security, hunger and nutrition issues.

Khwaza Main Uddin of the daily New Age won the first prize in the print media category while Ashraf Ali of the daily Naya Diganta was awarded the 2nd prize and Rafique Sarker of The Daily Star received a special prize. F Shahjahan of the Daily Satmatha won a Special Award in the local dailies category.

In the electronic media category, the first prizewinner is Talat Mamun of NTV and Shykh Seraj of Channel i is the winner of 2nd prize while Keramat Ullah Biplob of Channel One received a special prize.

Tk 50,000 was given for first prizes, Tk 30,000 for second prizes and special prize-winners received Tk 20,000 and Tk 10,000 respectively along with crests and certificates.

Veteran journalist Obaidul Huq, former editor of The Bangladesh Observer, handed over the crests and certificates to the awardees.

He stressed the need for a vibrant media in a democratic system and called for a stronger collaboration between the media and development partners to improve the policy and programme environment to address chronic food insecurity for the poorest people in the country.

Announcing the awards at the National Press Club in the city, WFP Representative Douglas Broderick said the awards would encourage the media professionals to put in their best efforts to capture the sufferings of the ultra-poor people and bring their issues to national level for policy influence.

The food predicament in Bangladesh does not lie in food scarcity rather it is the problem for lack of good governance, said Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) President and Executive Editor of the daily Sangbad Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul while speaking on media and food security issues.

Senior Infrastructure and Livelihood Adviser of DFID Penny Davies was present as the special guest while WFP Bangladesh Adviser Usha Mishra and Head of Advocacy Imamul Haque were also presents at the prize giving ceremony.

WFP has introduced annual "WFP Media Award on food security of the ultra-poor" supported by DFID this year for excellence in food security and hunger related reporting in Bangladesh published or broadcast between August 1, 2005 and September 30, 2006.

'50 killed in 10-day political unrest'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifty people were killed from October 27 to November 5 due to violence that erupted before and immediately after the handover of power to the caretaker government (CG) by the BNP-led four-party alliance government, Odhikar, a human rights watchdog, made the observation.

In a press release, Odhikar said one of the main reasons for the violence was the demand for resignation of the chief election commissioner.

Among the killed, 20 were from BNP,

13 from Awami League, nine from Jamaat-e-Islami, one from Workers Party, and two from Purba Banglar Communist Party (ML red flag).

According to the press release, specific political identities of two four-party alliance activists were not known.

Identities of two political activists were not known either. One of the victims did not belong to any political party.

Eight people were killed in Dhaka alone.

Odhikar observed that the recent political unrest raised grave concern and demand for an extensive inquiry

into the incidents by the CG and urged it to take stern legal action against the perpetrators.

The press release also said Odhikar believes that the violence was ignited due to impatience and profound distrust among politicians, which might have long-term adverse effects on the democratic development and human rights situation in Bangladesh.

Reception to Yunus Nov 9

BSS, Dhaka

The diplomatic corps accredited to Bangladesh will host a reception for Prof Muhammad Yunus to celebrate his winning the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize.

The reception will be held at 6:30 pm on November 9 at the residence of the Turkish ambassador at House No 13, Road No 96, Gulshan-2 for the family members and friends of Prof Yunus, Grameen Bank management and members of the Diplomatic Corps, said a press release.

JSD MEMO TO CA Implement 14-party demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) yesterday submitted a memorandum to the President and Chief Adviser (CA) to caretaker government demanding implementation of 11-point demand by 14-party combine.

These included reconstituting the Election Commission (EC) by sacking the chief election commissioner (CEC) and three other election commissioners, updating erroneous voter list and making the administration neutral by cancelling all appointments, promotions and forced retirement by BNP-Jamaat-led alliance during last six months of its tenure.

The demands also included reshuffling in police hierarchy, equal coverage for all political parties in Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar and cessation of harassing 14-party leaders and activists.

Earlier, JSD leaders organised a rally at Mukhtang in the city.

Addressing the rally JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu said people were forced to live under misrule and corruption during the last five years of BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government.

Now it is the people's turn to retaliate through their votes, he said.

Knowing that people will not vote for them, the BNP-Jamaat alliance is hatching conspiracies to win the election, said Inu.

"They have appointed Aziz, Zakaria and others to act on their behalf and politicised the entire administration to win the election," he added.

"We call upon the President to foil all evil designs of BNP-Jamaat alliance by arranging a level play ground for all by October 11," Inu said.

If the President fails to meet the demands, they would launch tougher movement to realise their demands, he warned.

JSD General Secretary Syed Jafar Sazzad, Shirin Akhter, Abul Hossain and Muhammad Khaleq also spoke at the rally.

Lawyers' Demand Day Nov 9

Sammilita Ainjibi Samannaya Parishad would observe November 9 as 'Demand Day' calling for reconstitution of Election Commission and for caretaker government's wining of people's trust, says a press release.

To observe the day lawyers would hold rallies and form human chains across the country.

Parishad Convener Barrister Amir Ul Islam and other leaders in a statement called upon the lawyers of the country to observe the day.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of the Jubo Mahila League burn an effigy of former state minister for home affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar at Mukhtangan in the city yesterday protesting repression of women by the police during the last five years.

Step back from brink of conflict

Wallich urges political stakeholders

UNB, Dhaka

Outgoing World Bank Country Director Christine I Wallich yesterday appealed to the political stakeholders in Bangladesh to step back from the brink of conflict as she expressed concern over the present political situation.

"Of course, the present political situation is of concern," she said in her farewell remarks. She will leave her post on November 19 after heading the Bangladesh operations of the multilateral lending agency for three and half years.

"I, like many other friends of Bangladesh, implore all those involved to step back from the brink of conflict and search for a peaceful way to ensure that free and fair elections are held," she said in written statement.

She said a dysfunctional political system is increasingly becoming one of the major constraints on

this country's development. "Tough debate over policy alternatives is healthy, indeed it is the lifeblood of democracy, but endless hartals, boycotts and repression only frustrate the aspirations of the people of Bangladesh."

Wallich strongly believes in Bangladesh's ability to rise to the challenges it faces and assured that the World Bank would remain a strong and reliable partner of Bangladesh by supporting the programmes and policies determined by the government and the people.

She sees prospects of the country based on the creativity of the people and the enormous strides this country has already made in both economic and social terms.

She added that since the 1990's Bangladesh has achieved steady economic growth of 5-6 per cent annually, low inflation and indebtedness and stable interest and exchange rates.

RU teachers urge CA to cancel mass recruitment

RU CORRESPONDENT

The Progressive Teachers' Society (PTS), a pro-liberation war teachers' body of Rajshahi University, urged the president and the chief adviser of the caretaker government to cancel the mass recruitment in the university.

The teachers' body on Sunday faxed a memorandum to President Iajuddin Ahmed in this regard following a steering committee meeting.

According to the memorandum, the university administration recruited 546 class III and IV employees on daily basis violating university rules and under political consideration in April 2004.

It said a number of criminals, muggers and drug addicts got appointment through this recruitment.

The controversial appointees physically assaulted teachers and officials and also destroyed valuable properties of the university several times demanding regularisation of their jobs, said the memo.



PHOTO: STAR

Winners of WFP Media Awards 2006 pose with the guests at the award giving ceremony at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.