

Say good-bye to IMF

Speakers urge govt

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged the government to "say goodbye to IMF" and not to sign any agreement that would go against the interest of the country.

They also called upon the government to place the proposed Policy Support Instrument (PSI) in front of the public before signing it.

Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) President Quazi Kholiquzzaman emphasised that the country must be freed from the clutches of IMF. "We don't want the IMF at all, they can leave the country tomorrow," he said.

About the PSI agreement, he said the government must let the people know the conditions laid by IMF.

Dr Atiur Rahman said it is the high time to think about throwing IMF out of the country. "We don't need another PRGF agreement as this type of agreement compromises the sovereignty of a country to take policy decision," he said.

"The government should discuss more to make the PSI treaty transparent," said Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaking at the roundtable titled 'IMF policy and Bangladesh' at Jatiya Press Club.

Media Foundation for Trade and development and Young Entrepreneurs' Forum of Global-Bangla Foundation jointly organised the roundtable.

Prof Muzaffer, also chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), suggested a thorough discussion on the PSI agreement in the media in the absence of parliament.

He said the objectives of the IMF are now under question for it has deviated from its initial objectives.

Interest of the country must be preserved in entering into any agreement with donor agencies and countries, he added.

Prof Muzaffer was highly critical of the bureaucrats. "The bureaucrats always tend to take decision quietly, hiding the intricate issues from the economists lest their intention is exposed."

He added, "Many of the ministers of Ershad regime were appointed in the World Bank and for that they could not get out from that

mentality."

Economist Abu Ahmed wanted that the PSI is informed to the people before signing any agreement with IMF. "IMF wants to sell loans to us as our present policy makers are weak-hearted ... IMF is not at all a donor agency."

"People of this country are ready to extend loans to the government through capital market and that may help overcome its problems," added Prof Abu.

College student killed in city road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A third year student of Leather Technology College at Hazaribagh was killed in a road accident in the city yesterday.

The dead was identified as Manjurul Haq Manju, son of Shamsul Haq of Narinda Lane at Sutrapur in the city.

The accident occurred when a bus hit his motorbike from behind at Motijheel while he was going to his college, leaving him injured seriously.

Local people rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead, police said.

Family members said Manju left home for his college at around 10:30am.

Brahmanbaria
Our Correspondent from Brahmanbaria adds: Two people were killed in separate road accidents at Sarail and Nabinagar upazila in the district in last two days.

The dead were identified as Rima Akter, 12, of Bariura village under Sarail upazila and Noorunnher Begum, 40, of Jalla village under Nabinagar upazila.

Noorunnher was killed yesterday as a speeding bus knocked her down while she was crossing the Nabinagar Companyganj road in Nabinagar upazila, leaving her dead on the spot.

A speeding bus knocked Rima from behind and crushed under the wheels on Dhaka Sylhet highway at Bariura village under Sarail upazila, leaving her dead on the spot on Friday.

The drivers and helpers of both the buses managed to escape.

Int'l Ozone Day today

UNB, Dhaka

International Ozone Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere across the world today with a vow to protect the ozone layer.

The theme of the day is 'Celebrating 20 years of progress in 2007'.

Various organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes to mark the day.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed and Environment and Forest Adviser CS Karim yesterday issued separate messages on the occasion.

In his message, President Iajuddin Ahmed said Bangladesh, as a signatory to the Montreal Protocol, has already taken up various measures to protect the ozone layer.

But the people across the world are still concerned about ozone layer depletion, as there has been no fall in the use of ozone layer depleting substances, he said.

He hoped that the celebrations of the day would raise awareness among the people to protect the ozone layer.

Sadeque laid to rest at Banani graveyard with state honour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ASHK Sadeque, former education minister and Awami League (AL) leader, was laid to rest yesterday at the Banani graveyard in the city with state honour.

Before the burial, a namaz-e-janaza was held at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddique, Foreign Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Education Adviser Ayub Quadri, former speaker Abdul Hamid, former chief whip and BNP secretary general Khandaker Delwar Hossain, former opposition chief whip Abdus Shahid, former ministers and MPs attended the namaz-e-janaza.

They also prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar and Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddiqui placed wreath on the coffin of Sadeque.

Earlier in the morning, the body of Sadeque was brought to AL central office at Gulistan where different parties including AL and its front organisations paid tributes to their leader.

The coffin was covered with national and Al party flag.

Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Motia Chowdhury, Hasanul Haq Inu, Advocate Rahmat Ali, Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, Mukul Bose, Abdul Matin Khasru, Habibur Rahman Siraj, Advocate Sahara Khatun, Nurul Islam Nahid, Prof Nazma Rahman and Dr Dipu Moni were present on the occasion.

A namaz-e-janaza was also held there.

The ex-minister died of cardiac arrest at his village home in Keshabpur upazila in Jessore on September 9.



PHOTO: STAR

BNP's expelled secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan speaks at a meeting of his followers at a city community centre yesterday.

Uneven deals cause Tk 2,100cr loss a year in energy sector

Speakers tell view exchange meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country is losing Tk 2,100 crore every year in the gas and power sector due to uneven deals with the multinational companies implementing development projects, said speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday.

If the previous governments had made the deals public before signing them, the people would have prevented the deals, thereby stemming the losses, they said.

As a result, the country's economic growth could have exceeded 8 percent, they added.

Campaign on Citizens' Right to

Information organised the meeting on 'International lending organisation: Development and deal' at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

The political governments had concealed all the deals signed with some multinational companies as per donors' prescriptions, Prof Anu Mohamamd said.

The country is losing Tk 2,100 crore every year in the gas and power sector as it has to pay higher prices to multinational companies for gas and power, he said.

Welcoming the finance adviser's remarks that the government will make public all deals with donors before signing them, Prof

Abu Ahmed said the government should also reduce its dependence on aid with conditions.

He also suggested raising funds for the proposed Padma Bridge through capital market.

Presenting a paper, Zakir Hossain, member secretary of the organisation, said the country has significantly reduced its dependence on aid in the last few years.

The government should now focus on homegrown policies as guidelines for the development of every sector, he added.

Indian citizen sued for enrolling as voter in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The district election officer (DEO) of Khulna lodged a case yesterday with Sonadanga Police Station against an Indian national accusing him of enrolling himself as a voter of Ward-25 in Khulna city on September 8.

DEO Mujibar Rahman filed the case against Maheshwar Bairagi who was picked up by security forces at the house of Kishore Kumar Bairagi of Banargati in Khulna city on September 12. He had enrolled himself at the Shahid Suhrawardy School voter enrolment centre in the city.

Maheshwar is an Indian national hailing from Akrapur of Hawrah district of West Bengal, sources said.

According to the officer-in-charge (OC) of Sonadanga Police Station, Maheshwar's citizenship certificate from Hawrah municipality was recovered and he has been accused of violating Section-18 of Election Ordinance-2007 of Bangladesh.

The complainant said the case was filed after thorough investigations following his arrest.

Meanwhile, intelligence agencies, following allegations, are investigating whether similar cases exist. The army is assisting the investigations, the DEO said.

He said 1,18,866 voters of the 31 wards in Khulna City did not register their names on the voter list. The total number of voters according to the last voter list of the city is 4,81,480. Work on enumerating voters, which started August 17, in the city concluded Friday.

Software Freedom Day celebrated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local proponents of free and open source software, along with their counterparts in 90 other countries in the world, yesterday celebrated Software Freedom Day by holding a discussion and bringing out a colourful procession in the city.

Organised by the North South University Computer Club (NSUCC), the celebrations centred around calls for an free and open source revolution, whereby computer software can be used with relaxed or non-existent intellectual property restrictions through collaboration between computer users.

Software Freedom Day is a global as well as grassroots effort to educate the public about the importance of software freedom and the availability of free and open software.

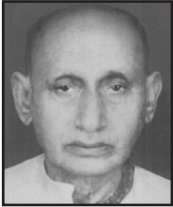
Local teams from all over the world organise the events on the third Saturday in September.

The NSUCC organised a workshop on the university premises where they discussed the advantages and drawbacks of using open source software.

The workshop was followed by ceremoniously installing the popular open-source operating system Linux, and how it can be used for the development of software for the benefit of users.

An exhibition on customised Linux desktop and a rally from the NSU premises were also part of the celebrations.

Death anniversary



Today is the 8th death anniversary of Pran-kishna Bala, a noted social worker in Gopalganj, says a press release.

He was well known for his active role in establishing schools and colleges.

On the occasion of his death anniversary, religious programmes will be held at his eldest son's residence in Gopalganj and Dhaka.



PHOTO: STAR

Namaz-e-janaza of ASHK Sadeque, former education minister and Awami League leader, was held at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

US report on religious freedom

UNB, Dhaka

A US report has said while Bangladesh government publicly supported freedom of religion and there was traditional inter-community amity, "attacks" on religious and ethnic minorities continued to be a problem.

"Religion exerted a significant influence on politics, and the government was sensitive to the Islamic consciousness of its political allies and the majority of its citizens," said the International Religious Freedom Report 2007 in its Bangladesh chapter.

The report released by the US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour on September 14 said protests demanding that Ahmadiyyas be declared non-Muslim and instances of harassment continued sporadically, but the government generally acted in an effective manner to protect the Ahmadiyyas and their property.

It said citizens were generally free to practice the religion of their choice; "however, government officials, including the police, were often ineffective in upholding law and order and were sometimes slow to assist religious minority victims of harassment and violence."

The report noted that the government and many civil-society leaders stated that violence against religious minorities normally had political or economic motivations and could not be attributed only to religion.

It cited reports of what is dubbed as societal abuses and discrimination based on religious belief or practice during the period covered by this report.



"Hindu, Christian, and Buddhist minorities experienced discrimination and sometimes violence... Harassment of Ahmadiyyas continued along with protests demanding that Ahmadiyyas be declared non-Muslims," the report said.

It said the US government discusses religious freedom issues with the Bangladesh government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

In meetings with officials and in public statements, officers at the US embassy encouraged the government to protect the rights of minorities.

"Publicly and privately, the embassy denounced acts of religious intolerance and called on the government to ensure due process for all citizens," the report said.

It said the US ambassador made several visits to minority religious communities around the country. In



WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or southerly wind is likely at many places over Sylhet and Dhaka divisions and at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy rainfalls are also likely at places, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 34.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 24.5 degree Celsius at Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:01pm today and rises at 5:45am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in	
percentage	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.1	26.7	76	92
Chittagong	31.7	27.0	76	84
Rajshahi	33.0	26.7	73	83
Khulna	33.7	26.2	83	92
Barisal	32.2	26.0	76	95
Sylhet	28.5	24.5	97	86
Cox's Bazar	33.0	25.5	77	83