

World's power shifting from West to Asia

Says OIC secretary general

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference Prof Ekmeluddin Ihsanoglu yesterday said the world's economic and political power is transferring from the West to Asia and the Muslims need to take the benefit through modernisation of OIC.

The Islamic world wants to build new partnership through mutual respect and interest that the US President Barack Obama has also pledged, he said while delivering a special lecture at the Dhaka University Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban on the occasion of the

40th anniversary of OIC. "We stand in a transitional period where world's power is transferring from the West to Asia. We need to understand where we stand in this transformation process. Muslims can be benefited with this transformation," he said.

The OIC has been changing and will change to modernise it, he said at the lecture titled 'OIC's vision: Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century'.

About the relationship of the Muslims with the United States, the OIC secretary general said, "We have sent an open letter to the US president where we said the Muslim

world is looking for new relationship with the US based on mutual respect and interest."

"President Obama also vowed that he would build up new partnership with the Islamic world, now it has to be seen how the Obama administration would implement its pledge," he added.

He also said OIC is actively involved in negotiations with the Western countries both at the UN and bilaterally.

About the OIC's role and goal, Prof Ekmeluddin said the OIC is committed to democracy and upholding basic freedoms.

"The OIC is convinced that modernisation cannot be

achieved if women who comprise a major segment of the society are left lagging behind in their empowerment and access to the opportunities. The issue has been taken up by us with all seriousness," said Ekmeluddin.

He also said the OIC would replicate the micro-credit system in the member states to eradicate poverty.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Pro-Vice Chancellor Harun-or-Rashid and Treasurer Prof Mijanur Rahman also spoke. Deans of different faculties, teachers and students of the university were present at the lecture session.



Winners of the TIB Investigative Journalism Award 2009 pose with the guests at the award giving ceremony at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are the Prothom Alo Editor Matur Rahman, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, TIB Chairman M Hafizuddin Khan and TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman. The winners are (standing from left) Dipu Sarwar, Md Nuruzzaman, Syed Ashfaul Haque and Julfikar Ali Manik.

'Investigative journalism can help rectify flaws in governance'

Four journalists receive TIB awards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The role of investigative journalism is immense in raising public awareness and rectifying the flaws in the governance system, said Editor of the Prothom Alo Matur Rahman at an award giving ceremony yesterday.

"But intimidation is a foremost obstacle to an investigative report," he said while speaking on challenges of investigative journalism in Bangladesh.

The Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Investigative Journalism Award 2009 ceremony was held at Brac Centre Inn in the city. Syed Ashfaul Haque and Julfikar Ali Manik, chief news editor and senior reporter of The Daily Star respectively, Dipu Sarwar, staff reporter of television channel ETV, and Muhammad Nuruzzaman, Khulna bureau chief of the Dristipat, won this year's award under three categories.

The award carries a crest, a certificate and Tk60,000.

Matur Rahman said that most often, reaction from the government, administration, parliament member and politicians following the publication of an investigative report remains a serious issue.

There are many examples of murders and attacks on reporters following the publication of such reports, he added.

Matur Rahman said newspaper editors and publishers too need training and better orientation and should be courageous and enterprising for desired performance of a mass

media organisation.

Referring to a recent investigative report on the president's military secretary published in the Prothom Alo, he said that they took four years to do the report.

"They even waited after the report was ready and contacted with the highest level of the government and intelligence agency, he added. "At length we decided to run the story out of a sense of responsibility," he said. "We had to face pressure."

Pointing at another investigative report, Matur Rahman said a powerful businessman has recently unleashed a malicious campaign against the Prothom Alo as it carried investigative reports on his dubious and unlawful activities.

Veteran journalist ABM Musa said, "Investigative journalism has always played a pivotal role in the downfall of any government."

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad said the mass media should remain responsible and objective while enjoying the professional freedom.

TIB Trustee Board member Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, Adviser to ATN Bangla Nawazish Ali Khan and TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman attended the ceremony chaired by TIB Chairman M Hafizuddin Khan.

A total of 65 entries were submitted for this year's award.

The panel of adjudicators was comprised of journalists Syed Badrul Ahsan and Shaymol Dutta, Nawazish Ali Khan and Prof Sumaia Khair of Dhaka University.

BMA election held amid boycott by DAB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The election to the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) was held across the country yesterday, with participation of only the ruling party-backed panel of Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad (SCP).

Three other panels, including the main opposition BNP-backed panel of Doctors' Association of Bangladesh (DAB), boycotted the election, expressing doubts about the credibility of the election process.

Meanwhile, clashes between the factions of SCP took place at Sylhet Osmani Medical College centre, disrupting voting for about one hour, our staff correspondent in Sylhet reports.

The turnout of voters was also low across the country.

The Chief Election Commissioner of BMA Dr AS Mashur Rahman said, "The polling started at 9:00am and continued until 5:00pm without an interruption."

"The election was held peacefully. The polling agents did not report any violence," he said. Dr Mashur said 40 percent of the total 10,100 votes were cast in Dhaka district.

SCP claimed that voter turnout across the country was 70 percent.

Dr Sharfuddin Ahmed, SCP candidate for the post of secretary general, said the election was peaceful except a trivial incident at Sylhet.

SCP was divided over selection of its candidates, particularly for the post of secretary general.

In Sylhet, two factions of SCP contested the election. Dr Rukan led the official SCP panel while Dr Mahub led the other panel.

The counting of votes was going on as of filing of the report last night.

The results will be available today, said the chief election commissioner.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Kazi Mahbubullah, father of Prof Kazi Shahidullah, vice-chancellor of National University

and Kazi Zafarullah MP, president member of Awami League, passed away due to old-age complications at a city hospital yesterday at the age of 94, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three sons, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

National University provice chancellors, treasurer, teachers and officials expressed shock at his death and prayed for salvation of his departed soul.

Death anniversary

DU CORRESPONDENT



Today is the first death anniversary of Asha Alamgir, daughter-in-law of folk singer Fakir

Alamgir, says a press release. On the occasion, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held after Asr prayers at 259/B, Anarkali Bhaban, Chowdhurypara, Khilgaon in the city.

Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programme.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visits a stall after inaugurating the 20th Bangladesh Apparel and Textile Exposition-2009 at Sonargaon Hotel in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

SALINITY AFFECTS HUGE LAND IN COASTAL BELT Matia blasts water board for negligence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday blasted Water Development Board (WDB) for its negligence to water resources development which caused increased salinity and threatened vegetation in large coastal belt.

Around 10 lakh hectares of land in the coastal districts got salinity problems. Besides, because of filling up of the rivers, some coastal areas like Tala and Kolaroa in Satkhira got serious waterlogging problems, agriculturists said.

"You (WDB) have been working for decades, but

never talked about dredging the rivers. You talk about polders (low-lying tract of land enclosed by embankments) to get money. And you even cannot do it properly," she said in reaction to a WDB official's preference for polders to check salinity intrusion and damage from tidal surges.

The minister made these comments at a seminar on 'Agriculture development approach to coastal areas of Bangladesh' organised by International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) at LGED auditorium in the city.

Referring to waterlogging

at Tala, Matia said, "When people are dying at Tala, you, the WDB officials, are suggesting for polders. Polder is not the answer, rather dredging of the rivers can help address salinity and waterlogging."

She said Water Resources Ministry and Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation have big tasks to do in coming days and the government was trying to make more activated to boost the water resources and farm sectors.

Matia urged both the development partners to assist in river dredging, and the agriculture research institutions to strengthen cooperation among each other for development of agriculture technologies and crop varieties to tackle salinity, drought, cold and submergence.

IRRI scientists TP Tuong and Dr Ismail Abdelbagi and Additional Secretary to the ministry Anwar Faruque also spoke.

1972 CONSTITUTION BNP rejects PM's remarks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rejecting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's remark about the restoration of the Constitution of 1972, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said there is no scope to return to the '72 constitution since people will not accept it.

It was the Awami League (AL) government who fragmented the 1972 Constitution and over the years it had underwent major changes. So, it will not be possible to go back, he said while talking to reporters during a human chain in the city.

Jatayatbadi Swechhasebak Dal, an associate body of BNP, formed the human chain

demanding withdrawal of "false" cases and end to "smear campaign" against BNP's senior joint secretary general Tarique Rahman, who is now in London.

NOV 7 PROGRAMMES BNP has chalked out elaborate programmes to observe November 7 as 'National Revolution and Solidarity Day'.

The programmes include hoisting the party flag atop the party's central office at 6:00am and offering Fateha at the grave of late president Ziaur Rahman and laying wreaths there at 10:00am.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will be present on the occasion.

Besides, a discussion will be held at the Engineers Institution in the city at 3:00pm, said a party release yesterday.

EXTORTION CASE AGAINST HASINA SC dismisses leave-to-appeal petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday dismissed a leave-to-appeal petition filed by the then military backed caretaker government against a High Court order that granted bail to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Tk 3 crore extortion case.

A three-member bench of Appellate Division, headed by Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim, passed the order upon a prayer moved by Attorney General (AG) Mahbubey Alam.

The AG told the court that the government will not proceed with the appeal since the original case against Hasina has already been withdrawn.

Businessman Azam J Chowdhury on June 13, 2007 filed the case with Gulshan Police Station against Hasina.

The High Court on September 16 last year granted bail to her in this case.

The caretaker government then filed a leave-to-appeal petition with the Supreme Court against the High Court order.

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