

Free body to watch graft in WB projects

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

The World Bank has decided to deploy an independent oversight institution to monitor utilisation of its funds and check corruption in projects funded by it in Bangladesh from this fiscal year.

While the bank has committed to double its assistance to Bangladesh in four years, it says the country continues to face pervasive corruption problems, especially in roads, local government engineering and energy sectors, accord-

ing the WB's country assistance strategy (CAS) report for FY2011-14.

A Washington-based oversight institution -- Department of Institutional Integrity -- assigned to monitor WB-funded projects will independently investigate corruption charges when it receives complaints.

On the basis of the probe reports, the WB will take various measures to stop corruption. If the problem persists, it will discontinue funding the project concerned.

"There is no denying that there is corruption," Finance Minister AMA Muhith said when asked about the issue. "To combat it (corruption), the government is also taking measures. On the other hand, the World Bank will take its own steps, and we have nothing to say about it," he added.

The WB Board approved the CAS report last month, and it has also been sent to Bangladesh government. The WB has committed to give Bangladesh \$6.55

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CNG stations to stay shut for 6 hrs a day

Hourly power cut halved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The CNG filling stations in Dhaka will remain closed between 3:00pm and 9:00pm from Monday as part of a government initiative to improve gas supply to power stations.

The move would save nearly 40 million cubic feet of gas a day, which could be used to increase power generation up to around 200 megawatt, a

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Govt hurries to shut schools, colleges

Orders closure from tomorrow as gridlocks greet Ramadan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the capital crippled by gridlocks on the first day of Ramadan, the government at short notice yesterday closed all schools and colleges for over a month from tomorrow.

Being unable to control the traffic chaos yesterday, the police department now believes this move would be an easy way out of the horrendous traffic situation ahead of Eid.

Authorities of educational institutions, however, were nonplussed. They could not formally announce the vacation to their students or give them holiday homework or guidelines since it is the weekend today and there will be no schooldays before the holiday ends. They came to know about the decision from the media yesterday.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said educational institutions get this holiday every year but they brought the starting date nearer considering the students, teachers and parents who fast.

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Each weighing up to a kilogram the traditional *Shahi Jilabi*, a sweet *iftar* item, is selling in the capital's Chawkbazar on the first day of the holy Ramadan yesterday.

Sales shoot up as Ramadan starts

Prices of almost all commodities remain stable

SOHEL PARVEZ

Grocery stores and supermarkets in the capital witnessed a rise in sales in the last couple of days with a sudden influx of customers because of Ramadan.

Sales of chickpea, dates, pulses, sugar and

other ingredients of *iftar* items along with beef, chicken, egg, onion, edible oil and potato had gone up, said retailers.

Prices of almost all commodities remained stable despite the rise in consumer demand.

However, the prices of flour and edible oil --

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City all abuzz about iftar

RAKIB AHAMMED

Hundreds of fasting residents thronged the traditional *iftar* market at capital's old town in Chawkbazar yesterday to buy delicious *iftar* items on the first day of Ramadan.

Sellers of over one hundred makeshift shops on the lanes were busy calling the attention of buyers to dozens of unique and traditional *iftar* items.

It was difficult for the buyers to choose as all the varieties

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Population growth report sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the health secretary to turn in within four weeks a report on population growth over the last 10 years in the country.

The court also asked the secretary to set out the budgetary allocations for controlling population boom during the period.

The HC order came after four Supreme Court lawyers -- Manzil Murshid, Sarwar Ahad Chowdhury, Asaduzzaman Siddique and Tapan Kumar Das -- filed a writ petition as public interest litigation yesterday.

The lawyers sought court directives on the government to take steps to control overpopulation, create an independent

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CAMPUS UNREST PM orders stern actions

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the authorities concerned to take stern actions against troublemakers in educational institutions including Dhaka University (DU) to maintain congenial academic atmosphere.

"None would be spared if found responsible for disturbing peace on the campus even if they belong to my party."

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