

Utilise foreign remittance

Economists urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted economists at a seminar yesterday urged the government to pay more attention to utilising foreign remittance rather than putting emphasis on seeking foreign aid.

Speaking as the chief guest Qazi Kholiuzzaman Ahmad, chairman of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, said it is a matter of regret that we do not utilise foreign remittance amounting to 10 to 11 percent of our GDP but seek foreign aid.

The discussion titled "Joint cooperation strategy: Context of aid and development effectiveness" was organised by Aid Accountability Group at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

Kholiuzzaman said government officials while negotiating with foreign countries and organisations for aid and loans should be more efficient and careful about securing national interest.

He said government had to take several policies and decisions according to the prescription of donor agencies, for instance, the closure of Adamjee Jute Mills (AJM).

Kholiuzzaman suggested adopting plans and policies according to the reality and need of the country, not following prescriptions of foreign donors.

Former finance adviser to a caretaker gov-

ernment Mirza AB Azizul Islam differed with Kholiuzzaman about the closure of Adamjee jute mills saying it was shut due to corruption and mismanagement.

Mirza Aziz also said foreign aid is needed for the development of the country but should be utilised effectively.

Speaking at the seminar, Prof Anu Mohammad said foreign donor agencies take away Tk 90 out of every Tk 100 they give as aid.

He said the money they give us is not at all but is mainly loans.

The main chunk of their aid is being spent to appoint consultants of the donor agencies, airfare, office equipment and computers, he said.

The donor agencies prescribed to shut our jute mills and at the same time funded India and Pakistan to revive their jute mills, said Prof Anu.

He said the expatriates send 10 billion US dollar as remittance while foreign aid is only 1 billion US dollar but government does not pay any honour to our fellow countrymen rather follow prescription of the donors.

He suggested the government to be more interested in utilising foreign remittance.

Lawmaker Anisul Islam Mandal, former finance secretary Siddikur Rahman Chowdhury and women rights leader Khushi Kabir also spoke at the seminar.



Bangladesh Standards and Training Institute (BSTI) seizes huge quantities of chemicals used in making polybags from a factory of Jora Hathi Polythene at Pilkhana No-11 Lalit Mohon Das Lane in the city yesterday.



Bangladesh Mahila Parishad forms a human chain at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding punishment to stalkers.

Stern action against stalkers demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) leaders at a human chain programme at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanded stern action against the stalkers and perpetrators of violence, repression and sexual harassment of women.

BMP organised the human chain programme protesting stalking and violence against women.

The Parishad leaders also urged the government to launch a programme to create social awareness about stalking and sexual harassment that will help resist these sorts of violence against women.

BMP President Ayesha Khanam in her speech called for united movement to resist all sorts of repression and violence against women as well as the stalkers.

BMP General Secretary Maleka Banu, Masuda Rehana Begam, Rekha Shaha and Sarabon Tahura also spoke at the rally.

They leaders also expressed concern over the rise of incidents of violence against women.

According to a BMP statement based on reports of 14 national dailies, at least 2586 incidents of violence against women occurred, including 386 rapes, 59 gang rapes, 37 women and girl children were killed after rape, 261 abduction, 200 trafficking and six women were sold to the prostitutes between January and June this year.

E-MAIL THREAT Maruf on remand again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Maruf Raihan, accused of threatening to blow up important installations of the country and attack the police, on a one-day remand.

He was earlier placed on a nine-day remand in three phases in the same case.

Metropolitan Magistrate AGM Al Masud passed the order after Detective Branch (DB) of police produced Maruf before it with a seven-day remand prayer for further interrogation.

In the forwarding report, DB Sub-Inspector Farid Uzzaman, also the investigation officer of the case, said Maruf has given important information about the e-mail threat, which is being verified. To know more about the threat, the accused needs to be remanded again, Farid said.

Detectives arrested Maruf, a civil engineer and manpower broker, on September 7 from Natun Babupara in Saidpur upazila of Nilphamari district.

He sent the e-mail on August 25 in the guise of a Jamaat-e-Islami Majlis-e-Sura member to the science and information and communication technology ministry using his client Mohammad Monir's e-mail address.

PACKAGING FOODSTUFF AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Law in the offing to make jute bags mandatory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has prepared a new law to enforce the use of jute bags in packaging foodstuff and agricultural products, officials say.

According to jute ministry officials, manufacturers will be required to use packaging materials made up of 75 per cent jute fibres, under the proposed "Mandatory Jute Packaging Act 2010".

Non-compliance will invite a fine of Tk 50,000, and one year in jail while second time offenders have to pay twice the penalty, they said.

Initially products such as rice, paddy, wheat, sugar, seeds, fertilisers and sapplings will be brought within the purview of the law.

More commodities will be added to the list later, on the basis of recommendations from a committee led by the ministry and other stakeholders.

Gradually, almost all products except for a few that require strict and special packaging methods will be included.

Jute Ministry Secretary Md Ashrafur Moqbul said the law aims to increase the use of jute bags, eco-friendly and good for safe health, instead of polythene.

"Jute is more environment friendly and safer for health than polythene," he said.

"Apart from harms to the environment, polythene also poses serious health risks, because foodstuff stored in polythene may get affected by the chem-

ical substance." Jute bags are also stronger and longer lasting, and protective to what is kept inside, he added.

The secretary said the law, already passed by the cabinet, will be placed at the ongoing parliamentary session for passing.

According to the ministry, only four per cent of 50 lakh bale produced in the country last year was used in products packaging, and the rest were imported, used by private jute mills and spinners or made into ropes.

The government imposed a nationwide ban on polythene bags in 2002, after thousands of discarded bags clogged up sewerage.

Since then, authorities concerned have pushed for an increase in jute production and encourage the use of jute bags.

Several drives have been conducted to enforce the ban by seizing the poly bags and sealing polythene factories.

In recent crackdown, the Department of Environment (DoE) has sealed two factories -- Babu Plastic Industry and Mintu Miah Polythene Karkhana -- in Lalbagh in the city yesterday.

The DoE's Dhaka Divisional Director, Sukumer Biswas, led the mobile court, with Executive Magistrate Mohammad Al Amin.

The drive, in which 18 storeowners are already fined Tk 1,55,000 for trading polybags, will continue till September 23.

Pvt varsities miss deadline to opine on campus shift

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry is soon to send reminder letters to the private universities, which missed the deadline to express opinions about shifting to their own campuses.

On August 18, the ministry in a meeting with the Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh (APUB) set a three-week deadline for the institutions to come up with opinions with a tentative date regarding the shift.

But, none of the 54 private universities gave their opinions till yesterday, said the ministry sources.

"We will issue a letter to the universities reminding them of sending their opinion as soon as possible," Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to Private University Act, it is mandatory to own a campus within five years as of the inception, a condition only nine private universities have satisfied.

Decision was also taken not to allow any private universities, which failed to shift to their own campus, to open any more departments.

AUPB Chairman CM Shafi Shami said the universities could not give their opinion due to Ramadan and Eid vacation.

IBRAHIM MURDER CID starts fresh investigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has started a fresh probe into Awami League activist Ibrahim Ahmed murder case to unearth the persisting mystery behind the killing.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Khandaker Abdul Halim, who has been made investigation officer of the case, said this while receiving the case docket from the Detective Branch (DB) around 5:00pm yesterday.

CID will visit the place of occurrence today, and review the DB findings on the case.

Halim told journalists that they would conduct a thorough investigation into the incident to remove the controversy over investigation into the case so far.

Additional deputy commissioner of DB Moniruzzaman said yesterday they had nearly completed their investigation into the case. But in the face of controversy centring it, they handed over the case to CID on orders from the police headquarters.

AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK CID prays for remand to quiz Duke

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday again prayed for a seven-day remand to interrogate Saiful Islam Duke, nephew of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, in connection with the August 21 grenade attack case.

CID Special Superintendent of Police (SSP) Abdul Kahar Akand, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the prayer with Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

Third Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Ali Hussain fixed today for hearing on the remand prayer in Duke's presence.

In the remand prayer, the CID officials said the grenade attack was launched aiming to assassinate the then opposition leader and incumbent Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Former naval officer Duke is accused of helping militant leader Moulana Mohammad Tajuddin, who supplied the grenades.

Duke had fled the country on instructions of the high command of the then prime minister's office. Moreover, Duke had given important information about the attacks on the rally. So, Duke needs to be remanded again to know about the names of the culprits who had supplied the grenades used in the attacks, the IO said.

WORLD CAR-FREE DAY TOMORROW

Encourage use of public vehicles to ease gridlock

DU CORRESPONDENT

Use of public vehicles needs to be encouraged instead of private cars to reduce traffic congestion on the streets in the capital, speakers at a press conference said yesterday.

Narrowing the footpaths and other steps are taken in the capital which basically encourages the wide use of private cars, they claimed.

Three organisations -- Citizens Rights Movement, Nirapad Development Foundation and Paribesh Bachao Andolan -- jointly organised the press conference ahead of World Car-free Day 2010 on September 22 at the National

Press Club.

Citizens Right Movement's secretary general Tusher Rehman said the increased use of private cars in the capital can be controlled if the public vehicle service is made satisfactory and available.

He also said a single bus can carry as many passengers as of 30 private cars.

Speakers also stressed encouraging bicycle riding and walking in specific lanes which may help reduce emission of carbon and ensure healthy environment. They urged the government to observe the day formally.

The three organisations will arrange a public gathering at Shahbagh intersection in the capital on September 22 to

mark the day and to make people aware about the negative impact of uncontrolled use of cars.

The World Carfree Day was first observed on September 22 in 1970 and in some European countries in 1999 and many countries across the world started observing the day formally from 2000.

Maruf Rahman, an advocacy officer of WBB Trust, presented a multimedia presentation highlighting the bad impact of frequent use of cars on the city streets while Poribesh Bachao Andolan's chairman Abu Naser Khan, acting president of Citizens Rights Movement Enayetur Rahim and Imrul Saeed Rana of Nirapad Development Foundation also spoke.



Supro-Shushashoner Jonno Procharobhijan, forms a human chain at Shahbagh in the city yesterday demanding an end to the interference of donor agencies in the country's development projects.