



1. Faulty link road on Dhaka-Aricha-Paturia Highway at Utholi intersection of Manikganj. 2. Poorly visible sign due to large background billboard of Manikganj. 3. Absence of speed bumps and bend sign on Dhaka-Cox's Bazar Highway near Dulahajra in Chakaria upazila of Cox's Bazar. 4. Faulty reverse curve on Barisal regional highway at Balajor in Agailjhara upazila of Barisal. 5. Poorly visible junction warning sign at the Utholi intersection. 6. Wrong opening at a bend and contraflow movement of traffic due to a link road to the opening on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway near Baushia in Gazaria of Munsiganj. (Story on Page 1)

Photo: STAR

Media free in Bangladesh

AL team tells Kuala Lumpur forum

BSS, Dhaka

The government has introduced the Right to Information (RTI) Act for ensuring free flow of information and people's access to information, an Awami League delegation said in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

It said media is now enjoying full freedom in Bangladesh and the government is not interfering in the work of journalists, a press release received here said.

The two-member delegation of Awami League was participating in the question-answer session of a forum on 'Creation of a global citizen: Media liberation and the new political realities organised by United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) at Putra World Centre, Kuala Lumpur.

The delegation members are Awami League leaders Nooh Ul Alam Lenin and Afzal Husain.

Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia and also deputy president of UMNO Tan Sri Dato Haji Muhyiddin Bin Mohd inaugurated the forum yesterday.

Chairman of the forum Tan Sri Syed Hamid Bin Sayed Jaafar Albar welcomed all attending participants.

Participants from political parties of 22 countries, UMNO clubs abroad and diplomats are participating in the programme. High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Malaysia was also present in the inaugural session.

The Opening Ceremony of UMNO Annual Assembly 2010 will be held on October 21 at the PWTC, Kuala Lumpur. The AL delegation will attend this ceremony.



Debate Fed executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former president of Dhaka University Debating Society AKM Shoyeb and former president of Daffodil International University Debating Club Md Ziaul Haque Sumon were selected as the chairman and secretary general of the National Debate Federation Bangladesh respectively.

The federation formally announced its national executive committee for 2010-11 at its extended meeting on Sunday, says a press release.

A total of 77 members of the committee will work in the coming year to spread the culture of practising debate at grassroots level.

Political parties blamed for power crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former adviser to a caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan yesterday blamed all political parties for failure to improve the decade-old power crisis in the country.

"I see squabbles for chairs on the first row of parliament but do not see discussion relating to decisions and indecisions on power sector," added Akbar at a discussion at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel in the city, organised by Centre for Sustainable Development (CFSD).

He was referring to BNP, the main opposition in parliament, which had earlier engaged in debates over allocation of chairs in parliament.

Akbar said a handful of people are in charge of taking important decisions regarding energy and power issues in a non-transparent manner.

"But we do not see any initiative to ensure transparency on the issue," he said, adding that researches, discussions and debates are also not taking place to take the right decision.

"The energy crisis is more of a political failure than an economic one. So our politicians should think anew," he said.

The former adviser made the comment at a time when the people under the national power grid are to suffer from 3 to 7 hours of loadshedding everyday, amid generation shortfall of 800 to 1,500 megawatts (MW).

To cope with the power cuts, city dwellers as well as factories have to depend either on instant power supply (IPS) machines or on generators run by imported oil.

This year, the daily average power generation hovers between 3,800 to 4,000 MW against a demand as high as 5,200 MW to 6,200 MW.

Businessmen said the dependence of factories and other businesses on generators take a

toll on operational costs, resulting in a rise in overall production costs.

The persistent power crisis also dampens the atmosphere for investment in the economy, which, economists say, could grow at a higher pace than the present 5 to 6 percent per year if the power and energy crisis was solved.

The former adviser said Bangladesh's development is synonymous to the development of democracy and the presence of electricity.

Democracy is needed to solve economic and social problems, he added.

"For this, we do not need a perfect democracy like in the United Kingdom. If we can have a democracy like India, our problems will be solved. But unfortunately we are yet to do that," he added.

Expressing frustration, Akbar said the country's democratic environment is deteriorating day by day. "There is no sign of it to turn for the good. We would have been optimistic if it turned out positive," he added.

Citing the tenure of BNP-led four-party alliance government between 2001-2006, he said 15 tenders were floated to set up large power plants but none were finalised.

He said today's burden of both decisions and indecisions will have to be borne in the next 25 to 50 years.

"We are yet to take any decision on whether to extract coal or not. Taking decisions on such issues requires discussion and here I hold politicians responsible," he said.

Centre for Policy Dialogue Executive Director Mustafizur Rahman and Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies Research Director M Asaduzzaman spoke at the programme, moderated by CFSD Secretary General Mahfuz Ullah.

Koica service for homeless begins

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Korea International Cooperation Agency (Koica), Korean government's bilateral development wing, along with two other Korean organisations has launched a five-day voluntary service for homeless and underprivileged people in the city.

The voluntary service started on October 17 and will continue till October 21, said a press release of Korean embassy in Dhaka yesterday.

Koica with LG display, a leading global enterprise, and Korea Food for the Hungry International (KFHI), an international non-government organisation, has undertaken to build houses for homeless people, feed 500 hungry people and give them medical services.

They will also give computer and health care education to the less privileged people.

The opening ceremony took place at Wingwing Center in Nurur Chhala in the city. Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Taiyoung Cho was present on the occasion.

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SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME Ecnec may okay today

UNB, Dhaka

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec) at its meeting today is likely to consider five development projects, including one proposed school feeding programme in the poverty-prone areas involving Tk 1,143 crore.

Ecnec Chairperson and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will preside over the 13th meeting of the current fiscal year.

Department of Primary Education under the Primary and Mass Education Ministry and the World Food Programme (WFP) will implement the project to be completed by June 2014, said sources at the planning ministry.

Under the project, each of the primary school students in the poverty-prone areas would be given 75 grams of fortified biscuits everyday.

The project area covers 86 upazilas of all the six divisions across the country.

Of the total project cost, Tk 598 crore will come from the government exchequer while Tk 545 crore as project assistance.

The project activities also aim to contribute to ensuring primary education for all as well as achieving the Millennium Development Goals and increased admission of students as well as their presence in the primary schools in the areas which are not food secure. It would also enhance the capability of the primary school students through increasing protein standard.

As poverty is the major obstacle to achieving the qualitative standard of primary education which also resulted in dropout of students, the government has implemented the scholarship project (2nd phase) for primary education. Besides, EC-assisted school feeding programme is also under implementation in 10 upazilas of three divisions.

The four other projects to be considered in the meeting are establishment of fashion design and training institute and a basic centre for the development of handloom fabrics with Tk 36 crore, rural electrification extension in Khulna division project worth Tk 393 crore, establishment of four textile institutes involving Tk 127 crore and construction of new youth training centres in the remaining 11 districts with Tk 146 crore.

The Ecnec meeting is also likely to review the ADP implementation progress of the education ministry and the Ecnec-approved projects from September 17 to October 6, 2009.

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