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REAPING GROWTH BENEFITS

Lack of good governance still a barrier

Speakers tell civic dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People are failing to reap the benefits of the economic growth Bangladesh has been achieving for over a decade due to lack of good governance, weakness in the regulatory bodies and structural flaws in political parties, analysts said yesterday.

Political parties should address the issue in their respective election manifestoes to ensure inclusive growth, they said at a civic dialogue titled "Middle Income with Quality and Dignity: An Agenda for Bangladesh".

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Bangladesh and Power and Participation Research Centre jointly organised the event at the LGED Auditorium in the capital.

A remarkable progress has been achieved in the socio-economic sector since 1990s, but the country's good governance is still far below different in global indexes, said Wahiduddin Mahmud, a noted economist and advisor to a former caretaker government.

"The upcoming election needs to be accepted by the people. Even after 47 years of our independence, we have a basic agenda. And that is an accountable and stable governing system," he said.

"The current politics and its unfair exercises are mainly responsible for problems in the corporate governance," he said.

There remain a number of challenges to attain sustainable development goals as the country's allocation for health and education is far lower than its peers, he added.

Sakhawat Hussain, a former election commissioner, said the country's political parties "have been doing their job like private organisations".

"There is no particular reference in our constitution

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PHOTO ON PAGE B1



WINTER VEGGIE DELIGHTS

One of the features of winter in Bangladesh is its fresh vegetables which are being grown in plenty in different parts of the country. But many farmers say they are not getting good prices as the supply is higher than the demand. The photos show a spinach field in Keraniganj and cauliflowers, below, near a market in Savar.

PHOTO:
ANISUR RAHMAN

Google users face problems

Blocking of some sites blamed; Facebook use drops by 30pc in a month, says internet operator

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

Google users in Bangladesh have been facing difficulties in using the tech giant's services, such as Gmail, Google Ads, Google drive and its cloud services, for a week as a direct consequence of the government blocking some websites and links, industry insiders said.

In some parts of the country, YouTube services were also not running smoothly, while companies who take e-mail services from the search engine giant were also facing problems, they said.

Additionally, international internet gateways and internet service providers are observing a huge decline in Facebook usage in the country.

Fiber@Home, one of the leading IIG operators, said Facebook usage fell by 30 percent in only one month.

"We estimated that usage might increase but surprisingly people are not using Facebook as much as before," said Sumon Ahmed, chief technology officer of the organisation.

Even a month ago, Fiber@Home recorded Facebook data usage at about 28 Gbps but as of yesterday, the number has come down to 18 Gbps, he added.

"People might be nervous to comment on or like [things on Facebook] and [are] avoiding using Facebook before the election."

Internet service providers (ISPs) said the sudden blocking of contents and websites

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AL takes hard line on rebels

Suspends 1 in Kurigram for breaching party discipline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League yesterday suspended one of its leaders in Kurigram for working against its candidate and also warned rebels about organisational action if they did not quit the election race.

The move came as the party began taking measures against those breaching its discipline, said its leaders.

Moti Sheuli, president of Ulipur AL, has been suspended for allegedly taking part in polls campaign against the AL candidate in Kurigram-3, said a press release from the party signed by its Office Secretary Abdus Sobhan Golap.

The party also issued a show cause notice to the leader asking her to reply within 15 days why she would not be expelled, according to the release.

While talking to our Kurigram correspondent, Sheuli, however, denied the allegation.

"The constituency will 'remain open' and my husband will contest the polls on Jatiya Party's [Monju] ticket under the Awami League-led Grand Alliance. But I am working in favour of my party candidate," she said, adding, "It seems I have been misunderstood by some local and the central leaders."

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'Deal within reach'

After days of talks, nations find 'landing zone' to implement Paris climate accord goals

AFP, Katowice

Nations yesterday inched towards a deal to implement the Paris climate goals, after all-night negotiations to hammer out a plan to limit global temperature rises exposed a range of conflicts.

A senior negotiator told AFP at the COP24 summit in Poland that delegates from nearly 200 nations had reached a "landing zone" of agreement.

But sources close to the talks said differences remained stark on the issues of ambition, how the climate fight is funded and how best to measure and ensure the fairness of each nation's efforts to reduce emissions.

Delegates at the UN summit, held this year in the Polish mining city of Katowice, must agree on a common rule book to put the pledges nations made in the landmark 2015 Paris climate accord into practice.

This means all countries, rich and poor alike, must agree to action that will cap global temperature rises to "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) and stave off the worst effects of planetary warming, and to a safer cap of 1.5C if possible.

The final draft decision text has been repeatedly delayed as negotiators seek to form guidelines that are effective in slashing emissions while protecting the economies of rich and poor nations alike.

"I think we have a landing zone. It is a compromise," Geburu Jember Endalew, chair of the Least Developed Countries negotiating group, told AFP.

"It is a bit difficult to compromise when there are 190-plus countries."

At the heart of the matter is how each nation funds action to mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as how those actions are reported.

Developing nations want more clarity from richer ones over how the future climate fight will be funded and have been pushing for so-called "loss and damage" measures.

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Rajapakse bows out, ending Lanka crisis

Wickremesinghe to return as PM

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's crisis looked over yesterday as strongman Mahinda Rajapakse bowed out of a power battle that had crippled the island nation for seven weeks and sent it heading for a possible debt default.

Rajapakse held a multi-religious service at his home where he signed a letter backing down from the post of prime minister controversially conferred on him on October 26.

Hours after the receiving blessings from the clergy, the 73-year-old ex-president sounded bitter and vowed to make a comeback at local council elections.

"There is no doubt at all that the people who stood by us since 2015 will continue to support us in the

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'Largest diamond' found in Canada



CNN ONLINE

A 552-carat yellow diamond was recently unearthed in Canada -- the largest ever found in North America.

Mining company Dominion Diamond Mines said in a press release on Thursday the diamond was discovered in October at the Diavik Diamond Mine in Canada's Northwest Territories.

The "astonishing gemstone" measures 33.74 millimeters by 54.56 millimeters, the company said.

It was uncovered in the initial screening process at Diavik's recovery plant, the company said. "Abrasion markings on the stone's surface attest to the difficult journey it underwent during recovery, and the fact that it remains intact is remarkable."

Dominion Diamond Mines added the diamond will not be sold in its rough form, and it's too early to determine its value. The company will select a partner to cut and polish the stone.

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SHIMULIA FERRY GHAT Hundreds suffer in tailbacks

UNB, Munshiganj

Hundreds of passengers had to go through immense sufferings in the long queue of vehicles at Shimulia ferry Ghat since Friday morning.

Over 500 vehicles, mostly buses, heading towards the terminal, were seen stuck in long tailbacks till filing of this report at 12:30am yesterday as a huge number of city dwellers were going home on the three-day vacation.

A total of 15 ferries,

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 16				
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha				
AZAN	5-20	12-45	3-45	5-22 7-00
JAMAAT	5-55	1-15	4-00	5-25 7-30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION				



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