

Bribe culture not in pvt banks, but in state-run ones: Saifur

BSS, Dhaka

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman has strongly criticised the state-run banks saying that due to their inefficiency, default loans of the banks stood at Tk 13,573 crore.

Replying to a question from BNP lawmaker Mohammad Sohrab Uddin (Kushtia) and several supplementaries and un-starred questions, Saifur told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday Sonali Bank topped the list of default loans with Tk 5,945 crore while default loans of Agrani Bank were Tk 3,514 crore, Janata Bank Tk 2,820 crore and Rupali Bank Tk 1,294 crore.

Replying to a supplementary, he categorically declined to reopen any of the closed branches of the state-run banks and appreciated performance of the private banks.

"The private banks are more

dynamic ... unlike the state-run ones, there is no 'bribe culture,' Saifur said.

Replying to a question by Gazi Nazrul Islam, the minister said the government undertook measures to introduce internal control system with increased accountability and transparency in the management of the state-run banks to reduce their losses.

He said the state-run banks were authorised to fix interest rates on their lending on the basis of client relations while the central bank was asked to strengthen its monitoring system on commercial banks under a separate monitoring cell.

The minister said as part of six specific initiatives to reduce losses of state-run banks, the authorities concerned were asked to close down their unnecessary branches or reorganise the units.

Bush links Saddam

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peace based on two secure states living side by side, a blueprint he agreed at Israel's request to put on hold until after elections there.

And Bush worked to quiet some critics worried Washington will not do enough to get Iraq back on its feet after any military action, and others who fret a US "imperial" occupation would destabilise the volatile region.

"Rebuilding Iraq will require a sustained commitment from many nations, including our own: We will remain in Iraq as long as necessary, and not a day more," said Bush.

If it comes to war, he said, Washington and its allies will care for refugees expected to number in the millions; secure any weapons of mass destruction; and quell any sectarian violence or score-settling.

While the United States "has no intention of determining the precise form of Iraq's new government," he stressed, "we will ensure that one brutal dictator is not replaced by another."

But the administration's plans for post-war Iraq drew criticism earlier Wednesday from Democratic Senator Joseph Lieberman, who said appointing an American civilian administrator for Iraq after a period of military rule would be a mistake.

Lieberman said such a move could put "America in the position of an occupying power, not a liberator," and urged the administration to work with the United Nations to name a non-American civilian administrator.

Taking aim at critics in the Muslim world and elsewhere who have charged that a US thrust for oil drives Washington's Iraq policy, Bush said US forces would safeguard such resources from any attempt to make them unusable — as Iraq did to Kuwaiti wells during the 1991 Gulf War.

"We will seek to protect Iraq's natural resources from sabotage by a dying regime, and ensure those

Court martial

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on October 17 last year.

Headed by Lt. Col. Rabiul Mahub Chowdhury, a three-member military tribunal was formed on February 24 to try the captain and two soldiers.

The captain and his two soldiers were withdrawn from duty on February 9 following statement by a police informant that they extorted Tk 3 lakh from Indian trader Suresh Kumar Dhanuka on January 29.

The incident came to light after eight police men and a police informant were caught when they went to Bangabazar Hawkers Market on February 6 to kidnap the same Indian trader to extort more money.

Focus on women

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ment, they said.

Display of women's picture in the media in a degrading way not only affects their participatory role in the society but also contributes to erosion of social values, they said.

Protham Alo Editor Motiur Rahman who moderated the discussion said the media should be cautious in projecting women, both in words and pictures, so that their image is not tarnished.

Manab Zamin Editor Motiur Rahman Chowdhury said men and women should work together to project a better image of women. They should get treatment and facility equal to man.

Jai Jai Din Editor Shafiq Rehman said men and the media have a great role in building a positive image of woman in the society. "Women should be allowed to move freely and work."

Jugantar Editor Golam Sarwar said the media can play a great role in women's development by evaluating and projecting their contribution properly.

resources are used for the benefit of the owners — the Iraqi people," he said.

The speech came as Bush led an uphill diplomatic battle to get a new UN resolution paving the way for war against Iraq through a divided UN Security Council.

"If the council responds to Iraq's defiance with more excuses and delays, if all its authority proves to be empty, the United Nations will be severely weakened as a source of stability and order," Bush said.

"If the members rise to this moment, then the Council will fulfil its founding purpose."

In a thinly veiled slap at France and Germany, Bush noted that World War II saw US forces defeat tyranny and help build democratic institutions that flourish today.

Bengal lawmakers decry harassment over alien deportation

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Members of the Lower House of Parliament from West Bengal yesterday expressed serious concern over harassment of Bengali-speaking citizens in different places of India in the name of deporting alleged illegal migrants from Bangladesh.

Hannan Mollah of CPI(M) raised the issue. To back up his charge, he cited the plight of 200 Bengali-speaking people, mostly from West Bengal, who are engaged as labourers at a place near Delhi.

Congress member Adhir Ranjan Choudhury urged the government to exercise caution in detecting "illegal migrants" and said Bengali-speaking Indians should not be bothered. He, however, made it clear that "illegal migrants" from Bangladesh should be asked to return.

"Trinamool Congress' Sudip Bandyopadhyay stressed the need for careful identification of "illegal migrants" and wanted the process to be proper.

In the Upper House, it was told that Pakistan was attempting to push in "agents" into Indian territory under the identity of Bangladeshi nationals. They are being pushed through Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bangladesh borders with forged passports.

Minister of State for External Affairs Digvijay Singh told the Upper House that India has already conveyed this information to Bangladesh.

No tax on small savings: Saifur

BSS, Dhaka

There is no tax on small savings including Deposit Pension Scheme (DPS), Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

"If taxes are levied on small savings, they will be returned," he said responding to a supplementary question stemming from a starred question by Abdus Subhan (Jamaat-Pabna).

Replying to another supplementary question, the minister said the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country was set to grow by 5.2 per cent in the current fiscal, up from 4.8 per cent in the last fiscal.

He, however, said the current year's GDP rate was not estimated yet.

Replying to another supplementary question, he said the rate of domestic resource mobilisation rose by 24.5 per cent in the current fiscal in comparison to last year's exploration.

Boy killed in bomb blast in Sherpur

UNB, Sherpur

A boy was killed in bomb explosion at Dakkhin Nakshi village in Nalitabari upazila Wednesday.

Police said a bomb went off when Ronny, 4, son of Abdul Latif, was playing with it at their kitchen in the afternoon, leaving him critically injured.

Ronny died on way to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. Police sent the body to hospital morgue for autopsy.

Later, police raided the house of Ronny's uncle Abdur Majid Master, a defeated chairman candidate of Kalashpur Union, and arrested his elder brother Samedul Haque, 45, and brother-in-law Firoz Miah, 33.

Abdul Majid and other family members of Ronny have been absconding.

Pioneer

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powered by its fast fading batteries. The last flight information was sent on April 27 last year.

At the time of its last signal, Pioneer 10 was 7.5 billion miles from Earth. At the speed of light, its radio signal took 11 hours to reach Earth.

"It ranks among the most historic as well as the most scientifically rich exploration missions ever undertaken," said Colleen Hartman, director of NASA's Solar System Exploration Division.

"Pioneer 10 was a pioneer in the true sense of the word. After it passed Mars on its long journey into deep space, it was venturing into places where nothing built by humanity had ever gone before," Hartman added.

"Originally designed for a 21-month mission, Pioneer 10 lasted more than 30 years," said project manager Larry Lasher. "It was a workhorse that far exceeded its warranty, and I guess you could say we got our money's worth."

The probe may send no more signs of life but it is still ploughing a pioneer path deep into space.

At the time contact was lost, Pioneer 10 was heading toward the red star Aldebaran, which forms the eye of the constellation Taurus. It should reach there in about two million years.

People fed up with corrupt govt: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday called on the people to free the country from the "misrule" of BNP-Jamaat alliance government at any cost.

"We have to shed blood, if necessary, to free the country from the misrule of this autocratic regime," she told a discussion meeting at Engineers Institution on the occasion of Amar Ekushey.

"People are fed up with this corrupt government. Corruption has gripped the entire country. Let's take a fresh vow in the names of those who laid down their lives for the Bangla language to revive the lost image of Bangladesh," Hasina said.

The AL chief urged the people to unite and establish their voting rights with which the government was now "playing ducks and drakes".

Hasina criticised the Gram Sarkar Bill 2003 saying the country would gradually become a "rogue state" if Gram Sarkar was imple-

mented. "Gram Sarkar will rather allow the ruling party men to collect toll from markets in rural areas as had happened during President Zia's regime," she said.

She termed the ruling BNP and Jamaat as "enemies of the people" and said collaborators of the defeated forces of 1971 were now spreading distorted information about the Liberation War.

About the Joint Forces Drive Indemnity Bill, 2003, the opposition leader accused the prime minister of murdering people by unleashing the army on them.

The discussion meeting was also addressed by AL leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Shah AMS Kibria, Abdul Jaill, Zillur Rahman, Tofail Ahmed, Abdur Razzak and Faruk Chowdhury and veteran of the language movement Halima Khatun.

Poet Bela Chowdhury, Abdullah Al Mamun and journalist Abed Khan took part in the discussion.

Hosts sweat

FROM PAGE 1
It could have been even more humiliating, Dippenaar dropped at slip by captain Joe Harris with the score on 40.

The miss proved costly as Dippenaar and Smith then put on 109 for the fourth wicket.

With the South African batting line-up weakened to allow room for experimentation with the bowling attack, both batsmen were under pressure and batted well within themselves.

Smith was particularly powerful off his legs but, on 63, played down the wrong line to off spinner John Davison's arm ball just as he looked set to capitalise on a solid start. He faced 79 balls and struck six boundaries.

Mark Boucher made 21 before chopping Nicholas de Groot onto his stumps and Dippenaar's defiance ended shortly afterwards when he paddled the same bowler straight to short fine leg. He faced 118 balls and found the boundary ropes seven times.

Captain Shaun Pollock (32 off 23 balls) hit de Groot back over his head for consecutive sixes to wade in with quick runs at the death, while Andrew Hall (22 not out off 11) hit Joseph for six over midwicket and Mahyaya Ntini drove Patel out of the ground in the final over. The last three overs cost 46 runs.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the World Cup Pool B match between Canada and South Africa at Buffalo Park on Thursday:

SOUTH AFRICA
Smith b Davison 63
Gibbs c Bagai b Patel 8
Kirsten c Bagai b Joseph 0
Kallis c Ifill b Patel 1
Dippenaar c Seebaran b de Groot 80
Boucher b de Groot 21
Pollock c Bagai b Joseph 32
Hall not out 22
Ntini b Patel 14
Zondeki not out 1
Extras: (lb-3, w-8, nb-1) 12
Total: (For 8 wkts in 50 overs) 254
Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-22, 3-

Man-of-the-match: Boeta Dippenaar.

Toss: Canada

Umpires: Daryl Harper (Aus) and Kevan Barbour (Zim)

TV umpire: Aleem Dar (Pak)

Match referee: Wasim Raja (Pak)

Did not bat: Allan Donald

Bowler O M R W

Joseph 9 1 42 2

Patel 7 0 41 3

Ifill 7 0 35 0

Davison 10 1 45 1

Seebaran 10 0 43 0

de Groot 7 0 45 2

CANADA

Maraj not out 53

Davison c Zondeki b Ntini 1

Chumney c Smith b Pollock 2

Billcliff b Zondeki 9

De Groot c Boucher b Hall 16

Harris c Boucher b Ntini 15

Bagai not out 28

Extras: (lb-6, w-4, nb-2) 12

Total: (For 5 wkts in 50 overs) 136

Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-8, 3-28, 4-58, 5-84

Did not bat: Nick Ifill, Barry Seebaran, Davis Joseph, Asish Patel

Bowler O M R W

Pollock 8 5 13 1

Ntini 10 2 19 2

Donald 10 2 27 0

Zondeki 9 1 24 1

Hall 7 1 26 1

Kallis 5 1 11 0

Smith 1 0 10 0

Result: South Africa won by 118 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Boeta Dippenaar.

Toss: Canada

Umpires: Daryl Harper (Aus) and Kevan Barbour (Zim)

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23, 4-132, 5-174, 6-197, 7-227, 8-249

Did not bat: Allan Donald

Bowler O M R W

Joseph 9 1 42 2

Patel 7 0 41 3

Ifill 7 0 35 0

Davison 10 1 45 1

Seebaran 10 0 43 0

de Groot 7 0 45 2

CANADA

Maraj not out 53

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