

Paris meet

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this month that it would require 1.4 billion dollars for emergency relief, repair and recovery operations in the wake of the devastating cyclone.

A separate meeting of the donors to consider the medium and long-term cyclone and tidal surge action programme at a subsequent stage is not ruled out. In December 1989 after two successive floods in 1987 and 1988, a similar meeting of donors was held at Lancaster house, London where a 130-million flood action plan (FAP), mostly covering studies, was endorsed. However, progress and follow-up action on the FAP have so far been limited.

Meanwhile, the government has estimated the requirements for aid pledges by the external donors on the basis of its projection about aid disbursements at 1.88 billion dollars for budgetary resource management in 1991-92. The disbursement target includes 1200 million dollars as project aid, 500 million dollars as commodity aid and 185 million dollars as food aid.

The fresh aid pledge to be sought by the Government for 1991-92 will cover 1.5 billion dollars project aid, 529 million dollars commodity aid and 108 million dollars food aid, according to the aid memorandum of the Government approved by the Council of Ministers on Thursday last. Some changes in required amount of food and commodity aid pledges will be made before the memorandum is forwarded to the donors.

New aid pledges or commitments at the forthcoming Consortium meeting will not however influence disbursements much in next year. The bulk of normal aid requirements next year, as in the past, will be met through disbursements primarily from the outstanding pipeline. Country's opening aid pipeline for 1991-92, on the basis of agreements concluded with the donors, is estimated at six billion dollars. About 90 per cent of it is accounted for by project aid resources. The overall aid pipeline has been bulging over the years mainly because of slow utilisation of project aid for lack of matching local resources and other implementation problems.

The aid pipeline stood at 5.3 billion dollars at the close of fiscal year (FY) 1988-89 and rose to 5.6 billion dollars in 1989-90.

Fresh pledges of commodity and food aid at the annual Consortium meeting will, however, be important for the budgetary resource management by the government, the officials sources said.

The World Bank in its recommended aid commitment of 2.18 billion dollars for 1991-92 proposed that the package should consist of 1.51 billion dollars as project aid, 428 million dollars as commodity aid and 234 million dollars as food aid. It forwarded its final version (in grey cover) of Country Economic Memorandum to the Government early this month.

Reviewing the prospects of increased external aid support by the donor community at this year's Consortium meeting, the official circles observed that the situation was "more favourable" than last year. They attributed the reasons for the same to several positive factors. Restoration of democracy through free and fair elections and improvement in overall economic management are the most notable factors in this context, the same circles said. Besides, the recent cyclone and tidal surge, the worst natural disaster in country's history, will also draw more international support, they added.

About overall improvement in economic management, the officials pointed out that the World Bank in its Country Economic Memorandum for 1991-92 had already taken note of it. Unlike its alternative aid recommendations at last year's Consortium meeting, the Bank said such alternatives "are not warranted" this year in view of "the improved macro-economic performance".

At the Paris Aid Club meeting in April 1990, the World Bank recommended "a lower case" aid commitments for 1.5 billion dollars and "a higher case" aid commitments for two billion dollars, depending upon the Government's serious efforts to accelerate economic growth and development activities.

The Bank has however stressed a number of areas where the new Government will need to clarify its policy position as well as resolve related issues. The areas include tax reform, clear priorities for public investment programme, curtailment of wasteful current expenditures, input liberalisation in agriculture, trade and tariff, financial sector reforms and public sector restructuring.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presiding over a meeting of BNPPP on Saturday at the committee room at the Sangsad Bhaban. —PID photo



BIANIBAZAR: Knee-deep swirling flood waters keep them together, safely for the moment at least. —Star photo

Form of govt

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cussions. Some were pleading for a parliamentary form of government, some were favouring the existing presidential form while a third group was favouring a marriage between the presidential and the parliamentary forms.

Barrister Salam Talukder said that a final decision on the form of government would not be taken so early, and that the debate on this issue would continue further at different times and places. This was the first formal meeting of the BNP in which the vexed issue, that triggered debate between the Treasury and the Opposition Benches during the just concluded first session of the fifth Parliament, was discussed. The issue was debated during the discussion on the speech of the Acting President.

But both the Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition did not take part in any debate on the issue in Parliament. The Awami League, however, had unilaterally brought a bill which was notified to the Parliament Secretariat proposing a parliamentary form of government.

The bill may be tabled in the next session of Parliament. The BNP which was scheduled to meet on May 1 to decide about the form of government could not do so because of the cyclone. Some leaders of the BNP requested the Awami League not to bring the bill in this session, so that they get a chance to decide the issue among themselves.

Yesterday the BNPPP meeting was attended by not more than 60 MPs. Insiders alleged that most of the MPs had not been informed earlier that the meeting was convened hurriedly. They also brought allegations against the Whips of the party who did not properly convey the messages to the Parliament members.

Party insiders said that many of the MPs returned to their constituencies after the end of the first session of Parliament. Insiders also raised questions about the lack of coordination between the political leaders and the bureaucracy. They also alleged that the top-notchers of the party always remain encircled either by the bureaucrats turned politicians, or by the technocrats and the present bureaucracy.

They also pointed out that the top leaders of the party were too busy with their own constituencies and not paying heed to the constituencies of the general MPs of the party. The meeting which was scheduled to begin at 4 pm started at 5.30 pm. Begum Zia left the meeting at around 8 pm and again came back at 9 pm. The meeting was continuing till the writing of this report.

Coordination cell

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with warmth. The hectic operations by US Marines raised new hopes among the people to get back to a normal life soon.

The helicopters, hovercraft and landing craft of the US Task Force have geared up the relief operations. The helicopters are carrying goods to the inaccessible areas and every one is now getting relief, said an official source. Medical teams are working round-the-clock to check the spread of diarrhoea in the affected areas. However, 21 deaths were reported from the

Mosharrif's bail rejected, Zeenat's granted

The bail petition of former Industries Secretary Mosharrif Hossain, was rejected Saturday by the District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka, while the same court granted bail to his wife Zeenat Mosharrif, reports BSS.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption already submitted to the court a chargesheet against Mosharrif Hossain and his wife, Zeenat Mosharrif, for misuse of government property and transport for their personal use.

Tamizul Haque and AKM Abdur Rahim appeared for Mosharrif Hossain and Zeenat Mosharrif, while Moazzem Hossain and special PP appeared for the state.

Noble cause

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In an interview with BSS Special Correspondent Azzul Islam Bhuiyan, Col Salvage said, "It is my first-ever visit to Bangladesh. I am happy that we are here for a noble cause."

He said the team has arrived here at the request of Bangladesh government and would perform all its activities as per desire and instructions of the local authorities in relief and rehabilitation programme. Col Salvage, who visited the affected areas today, to survey the need, said, "Devastation was colossal but we will be able to do something good for the survivors."

He said "I am overwhelmed with the warmth of affection being demonstrated by the people and at the same time we are much encouraged by the help and assistance being extended to us by the people."

Lt Col Salvage's team will start operation on Sunday when four helicopters will reach here. He said, "We have brought all necessary tools and equipment for carrying out activities in the cyclone-hit areas."

He said 20 members of his team would be stationed at the headquarters in Dhaka while 50 to 100 troops will be in the operational area. Terming the disaster, as "tragic" and "massive" Lt Col Salvage said, "destruction was worse than of a war."

"We are friends of Bangladesh and want to help the distressed people," he said, adding, "everybody should come forward on humanitarian ground. We feel good to be here to serve the distressed humanity."

"We will not be able to stay for a long time. Our stay here will be for a few weeks," he said.

Washington Post on aftermath of cyclone

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The Midnight File

ANC suspends talks with govt
JOHANNESBURG, May 18: The African National Congress (ANC) today suspended power sharing talks with President F. W. de Klerk's white government. An ANC statement said it would shelve political settlement talks until De Klerk met the demands in its ultimatum last month for action to end black township violence that has claimed about 800 lives this year, reports Reuter.

Anti-govt rally in S. Korea
SEOUL, May 18: More than 200,000 protesters staged violent protests nationwide Saturday, the largest anti-government demonstrations since President Roh Tae-woo came to power. Tens of thousands of students and workers paralyzed the capital and major cities in violent nighttime fighting that raged between riot police firing tear gas and protesters wielding firebombs, rocks and clubs, in fighting around the country, protesters firebombed a military bus, a police armoured van and two civilian cars. Dozens of police cars were damaged by flying rocks and bottles, police reported. National Police Headquarters said Saturday's protests were the largest since 1987 pro-democracy protests, reports AP.

Croatians favour secession
ZAGREB, (Yugoslavia), May 18: Croatian leaders on Saturday criticised the presidency's failure to appoint a Croat as its first non-Communist leader. The remarks came a day before Croatians vote on whether to remain part of Yugoslavia. Opinion polls indicated that a majority of Croatia's five million citizens favours secession. Communist-led Serbia blocked the appointed Friday of Stipe Mesic, a former political prisoner from Croatia, as Yugoslavia's first non-Communist president, reports AP.

More foreign aid for cyclone victims
South Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Jai Chun Lee on Saturday called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the Prime Minister's Secretary office, report BSS.

The envoy conveyed the deepest sympathy of the South Korean President Roh Tae-woo for the heavy loss to life and property caused by the devastating cyclone in Bangladesh. Lee expressed the hope that the government under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia would face the present challenge with courage and fortitude.

The South Korean Ambassador handed over a cheque for US dollars one lakh to the Prime Minister in emergency aid to Bangladesh. The Ambassador informed Begum Zia that the local NGOs in South Korea would send 1,000 metric tons of rice for the cyclone affected people.

Lee further informed the Prime Minister that Korean Red Cross Society has contributed US dollars 20,000 in cash to the emergency relief fund of the international Committee of the Red Cross in aid of the cyclone victims of Bangladesh.

Begum Khaleda Zia thanked the South Korean President, his government and the people for helping Bangladesh in this hour of need. She stressed that permanent structures in the cyclone prone areas have to be constructed to face the onslaught.

Kuwait
Kuwait Saturday donated two ambulance boats to Bangladesh to help the injured and ailing persons and expand the medical facility in the cyclone-hit areas of the country. State Minister for Relief Lutfur Rahman Khan formally

received the two ambulance boats from the Ambassador of Kuwait to Bangladesh, Mohammed Badar, called on State Minister for Relief, Lutfur Rahman Khan Saturday.

The Egyptian Ambassador informed the State Minister that a Boeing 474 plane carrying relief materials including foodstuff, medicines, tents and clothes would arrive in Dhaka on May 21 from Egypt to help the cyclone-affected people of Bangladesh.

More planes carrying relief materials from Egypt would arrive Bangladesh soon, the Ambassador added. The State Minister thanked the government of Egypt for sending the relief materials.

USSR
An instalment of relief cargo from the Soviet Red Cross Organisation, comprising tents and other equipment for the April 29 cyclone victims is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka by an Aeroflot flight Monday, Soviet Ambassador Vitaly S. Smirnov said Saturday.

Besides, he said the Soviet committee for solidarity with the countries of Asia and Africa has decided to allocate an amount of 60 thousand roubles as (Tk 40 lakh) as relief aid to Bangladesh.

The Ambassador also pointed out that Soviet heavy duty aircraft are being widely used for deliveries of relief goods.

Tokyo Forum' for intensifying help to disaster-prone countries
Paris last September. One of the main objectives of the Forum was to sensitise the Japanese parliament and the public opinion on the need of the LDCs for greater international assistance to help them overcome different problems hindering their economic growth.

The conference was attended, among others, by former World Bank President Robert MacNamara, Administrator of the UNDP William Draper and was chaired by former Japanese Foreign Minister Saburo Okita.

The Forum went off very well. It focussed the problems of LDCs including the problems of natural disasters like the floods, cyclone, droughts, etc., which the LDCs often experience." Dr. Tawfique Ali, Director General of the Foreign Ministry, told newsmen.

Dr. Ali, who accompanied the Foreign Minister to Tokyo as a member of the Bangladesh delegation, said the conference discussed the Plan of Action adopted in the Second Nations Conference on the LDCs and called for taking

Clash in Sirajganj

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employees from different mills, factories and workshops took part in the procession demanding withdrawal of layoff and reopening of Sirajganj Spinning and Cotton Mills. The mill, reportedly owned by the brother of a ruling party MP, was closed on November 17 last year.

All components of SKOP, excepting BNP's labour wing Jatjatabadi Srantik Dal, took part in the action programme that paralysed official activity and transportation in the town. Srantik Dal called for boycott of the programme and went into counteraction.

The agitating workers also clashed with members of Jatjatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at Sirajganj government College and, the BNP student activists alleged, ransacked classrooms. They were intercepted by police.

About 15 workers were injured in the clash. The trouble then spread to other parts of the town when the students chased the workers.

A group of youngsters, allegedly led by JCD and BNP workers, ransacked AL and JSD offices and set the furniture ablaze.

The SKOP demonstrators, clashed with members of Jatjatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at Sirajganj government College and, the BNP student activists alleged, ransacked classrooms. They were intercepted by police.

Flood situation
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The situation in Khaliyaji upazila was serious. Other affected upazilas of the district are: Kalmakanda, Mohanganj and Atpara. Crops on about three thousand acres of land have been damaged. Road communication of the affected upazilas with the district headquarters remained cut off.

Meanwhile, Information Secretary Manjoor-e-Mowla said in Dhaka on Saturday that so far 200 metric tons of food-grains were distributed among the flood affected people of the greater Sylhet region.

Taka 18 lakh in cash, 9000 pieces of saree, 8000 pieces of lungi, and another 8000 pieces of old garments have been sent to the flood affected areas by helicopters. On an average four helicopter sorties are being organised a day, he said.

later reinforced by several thousand workers from Gawni Jute Mills, massed at the New market bus stand, railway station and Khedon Sardar crossing and clashed with BNP workers.

Police fired teargas cells near Jame Mosque and Station Road to disperse the rioters. They picked up one person, Gopal alias Hemanta.

The demonstrators pelted bricks at "Padma", an intercity train, coming from Rajshahi. The agitated workers also allegedly ransacked at least 20 houses of BNP workers at Dhanbandi during the widespread clash.

Earlier, the demonstrators set ablaze a motor-cycle in front of the district Judge's Court. A photo journalist was assaulted and his camera damaged in the melee.

Four of the injured were admitted into sadar hospital with serious injuries. They are Shajahan of Gawni Jute Mills and Shahidul Islam, Khoiruddin and Hafiz of Spinning & Cotton Mills. Others were given first aid.

Motor Workers Union President Abdul Mannan claimed at least 50 people were injured, and the activists of JCD kidnapped five workers from the college ground.

JCD supporters also stormed the sadar hospital and mercilessly beat up injured workers including Motor Workers Union General Secretary Sahjahan admitted there, he alleged.

Vice-President and General Secretary of Sirajganj Government College Students' Union Amar Krishna Das and Saidur Rahman Bacchu said the SKOP procession entered the college campus and took away 15 cycles.

APSU
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and demanded arrest and trial of the persons involved. They also demanded withdrawal of police forces from the campus and said the police presence was a violation of the autonomy of the university.

Earlier they brought out a procession on the campus.

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Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel, C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at Offset Printing Dialogue Publications Ltd., 19 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. Editorial, News & Commercial offices: 28/1, Toynebee Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: Editorial & News: 863036. Commercial: 863035. PABX-246023-4. GPO Box No. 3257 GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.