

No hard cash for Gorbachev

LONDON, July 19: Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev left Britain today with an invitation to join the capitalist club but no hard cash, just expressions of good will and technical assistance to smooth his country's bumpy passage, reports AFP.

Leaders of the Group of Seven (G-7) most industrialised countries turned a deaf ear to the billions of dollars Gorbachev asked for to stabilise his country's collapsing economy, judging such spending "premature."

His appearance in London however was a political boost for him. Practically a gate-crasher — he lobbed hard for his invitation — he made sure that Soviet economic reform dominated the three-day summit.

Gorbachev's announcement of a summit meeting between himself and US President George Bush at the end of July coupled with an accord on a key Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) put G-7 leaders into a favourable frame of mind to listen to his pitch for aid.

Fears of the consequences of failure for Gorbachev were whipped up by Soviet officials before the Soviet leader arrived late Tuesday, with warnings of the risk of "uprising and turmoil" embroiling the whole world "being thrown about."

The Western leaders who listened to Gorbachev for hours in a historic encounter after the close of their summit on Wednesday, were any well aware that they could not risk rebuffing him haunted as they are by fears of a "conservative" backlash from Soviets who feel only nostalgia for the cold war.

The day before the meeting US Secretary of State James Baker said, "there is no chance of him leaving here empty-handed."

Gorbachev's hands as he boarded his plane today for Moscow were perhaps not as full as he might have wished but he came away with a new relationship with the world's money institutions.

"Special associate" status with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank will for the time being give access only to technical assistance but he may expect real money to be in the offing if full membership is eventually granted.

British Prime Minister John Major who is current Chairman of the G-7 and who will travel to Moscow before the end of the year, gave a lead Thursday after around four hours of talks with Gorbachev, announcing direct British technical assistance.

He announced the dispatch to Moscow, probably before the end of the month, of Chancellor of the exchequer Norman Lamont to begin talking economic cooperation with the Soviet Union.

He said he would send a senior mission from the department of employment this Sunday to examine small and other business possibilities between the two countries.

Major also announced a doubling to 20 million pounds (32 million dollars) for next year of Britain's so-called "know-how" fund to provide help to small and growing businesses in the Soviet Union.

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President Mikhail Gorbachev welcomes former prime minister Margaret Thatcher to the Soviet embassy in London on Friday before the Soviet delegation, who had been in London to meet the Group of Seven leaders, left for Moscow. — AFP photo

MSC missed chances

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which had puddles caused by the heavy showers earlier in the afternoon.

The Group B encounter, which started after a minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect to the memory of AFC Vice President Jamil Jawad al-Jishi who died in Bahrain yesterday, was crucial for both teams who find themselves clustered with favourites Esteghal Club of Iran and the strong April 25 Club of North Korea in the four-team group. The other group has only three teams, including reigning champions Laoning provincial side of China, following the late withdrawal of Jordanian champions Al-Ramatha from the tournament.

Despite the heavy playing conditions, the young and energetic Mohammedan midfielders and forwards displayed tremendous speed and threatened to run all over the slower, more tentative Thais in the early minutes of play. In a series of fine attacking moves the black-and-whites closed in on the Bangkok Bank goalmouth only to see their efforts go to waste due to poor finishing up front.

Striker Intiaz Ahmed Naqub, on whose young shoulders rested most of the Mohammedan as well as local hopes, failed to rise to the occasion and his off-colour performance forced freshly-arrived Mohammedans Iranian coach Nasser Hegazi to call him off in favour of substitute Zakir in the early part of the second half.

Mohammedans always looked likely to score, and they did so in the 20th minute of play when Ghouse pushed the ball into the net from a goalmouth melee after right-

winger Mamoon Joarder had failed to do justice to a fine Intiaz Sultan Johnny throw-in from the right (1-0).

Prior to this success, of course, Mohammedans should have scored at least on two occasions but each time Naqub failed to do the needful after his teammates had set him clear well inside the Thai danger zone.

Naqub can hardly offer any excuses for not placing the ball into the Thai net with only goalee Somkiat at his mercy after he had beaten an attempted off-side trap as star midfielder Shabbir laid on a brilliant through ball. Instead of aiming for the first bar with his left foot Naqub shot wide of the far post with his right. Such chances don't come every day.

In the 29th minute it was Ghouse's turn to play the villain and his attempted over-ambitious side-volley from a hand-shaking distance upon yet another beautiful Shabbir pass had the partisan crowd pulling at their hair in disgust. It was a slightly different scenario in the second session with the Thais, who have as many as seven players in their ranks who did duty in the recent under-23 Olympic qualifiers, managing to get a better grip on the proceedings. Outside-left Chamnan almost put the Thai level within two minutes of the resumption from a melee in front of the Mohammedan goal.

Two minutes later it was Mamoon Joarder's turn to miss a good opportunity.

The Thais took advantage of a tiring Mohammedan side to equalise in the 60th minute when Apirak gave goalee Syed Hassan Kanon hardly a clue after Chamnan had sent in a

Iraqi-Kurdish fighting flares : 500 killed

GENEVA, July 19: Fighting between the Iraqi army and Kurdish rebels has broken out again and as many as 500 people have been killed or wounded in the last two days, a United Nations official said Friday, reports AP.

The fighting occurred in the northern Iraqi city of Sulaymaniyah on Wednesday and Thursday, according to Sylvania Foa, a spokeswoman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees office.

Kurdish rebels took control of Sulaymaniyah late Thursday, she said, citing reports from UN observers there.

Hospitals were reportedly unable to cope with the flow of casualties in Sulaymaniyah, where unconfirmed reports said 1,000 Iraqi troops had been captured, she said.

Another UN official, who declined to be named, said UN guards in Sulaymaniyah had informed the UN in Geneva of about 500 casualties but had no breakdown on deaths or injuries.

The source said the unrest occurred Wednesday and

Thursday in Sulaymaniyah and Erbil, cities where clashes between Iraqi troops and the rebellious Kurds occurred in June.

Sulaymaniyah, the largest city in Iraqi Kurdistan with a population of about 750,000, is about 120 miles (190 kilometers) south of the Turkish border and 30 miles (50 kilometers) west of Erbil, the capital of the Kurdish region in northern Iraq, is about 75 miles (120 kilometers) south of Turkey and 60 miles (100 kilometers) west of Iran.

Salah Jmhor, a Kurdish representative at the UN in Geneva, claimed 100 people had died in the Sulaymaniyah fighting and four Kurds were killed by Iraqi security forces in Erbil.

Salah Jmhor said Iraqi troops killed local Kurdistan Front leaders in Sulaymaniyah who tried to mediate and quell the unrest.

The unidentified UN source said the situation seemed "slightly quieter" Friday.

Flood

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Flood forecasting centre said the Buriganga remained steady Friday but may rise today.

Manikganj control room said the flood situation in Daulatpur upazila deteriorated due to incessant rain. About 25 thousand people are now marooned. Crops of 1500 acre land were damaged. The other affected upazilas are Hari Rampur, Shibaol, and Ohior.

Five tons of rice, 20 bags of chira and ten thousand taka was distributed among the flood victims.

In Pabna, new areas in Bera and Fridpur upazilas were inundated. 60 thousand people were affected in Bera alone and thousands of people have taken shelter on WAPDA embankments. Sujanagar, Chandmahar and Bhangura upazilas are worst affected. One lakh taka and 10 metric tons of rice have so far been given as relief.

The overall flood situation in the district has deteriorated further with the inundation of two more unions of Sadar upazila over the last two days.

About two lakh people of Dhuat and Shariakandi upazilas were rendered homeless by the onslaught of the flood since its inception two weeks ago.

The rivers Jamuna and Bangalee passing through the district are still flowing two and one centimetres above the danger levels respectively.

According to district administration, 30 unions of six upazilas of the district have been affected by the floods. Diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases have aggravated the situation further.

The flood hit people took shelter on flood control embankments and other makeshift places and have been passing their days without food, drinking water and medicare facilities.

Local people have urged the authorities to supply relief materials including life saving drugs to the marooned people immediately.

All the nine upazilas of the district are flooded affecting over 70 thousand people, 40 thousand homeless. Chilmari upazila is the worst affected upazila. Crops of 36 thousand acres of land were fully damaged and 18 thousand acres partly damaged in the upazilas.

The rivers Tista, Brahmaputra and Dharla are now flowing slightly below the danger level.

In Gaibanda, situation in Sadar, Fulchhari, Gaghata and Sundarganj upazilas remained unchanged where about 1.5 lakh people are marooned. Fulchhari is the worst affected. Only 86 mounds of chira and ten tons of rice were distributed. Two persons died in snake bite in the district.

Overall flood situation in Jamalpur district improved a little. River Jamuna and Brahmaputra were still flowing above danger level at Dewanganj. Madarganj upazila is the worst hit. A special food distribution centre has been set up in Madarganj.

Situation in Sribardi, Sadar and Nakla upazilas in Shepur district remained unchanged. Over 1.40 lakh people are marooned. Crops of over six thousand acres of land were totally damaged while over seven thousand acres partly damaged. Over five hundred houses were washed away in flood water damaging another four thousand houses.

Thirty five thousand Taka and some 20 metric tons of rice and wheat were distributed.

Iraq's N-plant must be removed

LONDON, July 19: Iraq must eliminate its nuclear plants or the Western allies will do so, British Prime Minister John Major told parliament today, reports Reuter.

The Midnight File

Fundamentalists protest Bush's visit to Turkey

ISTANBUL, July 19: Some 1,000 fundamentalists demonstrated outside an Istanbul mosque after Juma prayers today in protest at the weekend visit of US President George Bush to Turkey. The crowd chanted slogans, carried placards against the United States and Bush and burned an American flag. Some threw stones at the police, witnesses said, reports Reuter.

Massive erosion in Nepal

KATHMANDU, July 19: Unprecedented erosion from the flooded Koshi river in two districts southeast of here is endangering the lives of more than 100,000 people, a home ministry official said today, reports AFP.

Newspaper employees reiterate demand

The leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), Newspaper Press Workers Federation and Employees Federation Friday reiterated their demand for enhanced wages and allowances in all the newspapers and news agencies by July 23, reports BSS.

BFUJ President Rezauddin Ahmed, and Secretary General Amanullah Kabir, DUJ President Zahurul Haq and General Secretary Ruhul Amin Gazi, Press Workers Federation President Mosharrif Hossain and Secretary General Basir Rahman Milon and Employees Federation President Jahangir Kabir and Secretary General Mir Mozammel Hossain, in a joint statement, said their attention had been drawn to the resolution of the meeting of Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad (BSP) which appeared in a section of the press Friday.

They said, "We fail to understand what the BSP meant by the Fourth Wage Board Award given during the Ershad regime." In reply to the "ludicrous statement" of BSP, they said the Wage Board Award for the employees of newspapers was declared during the period of neutral interim government (March 9).

They said many owner-editors and publishers under the fold of BSP would be entangled in their own net, if "Ershad's period" as referred to by them, was analysed.

It is known to all what they had done during the Ershad regime, the journalist and employees leaders said, adding many of the newspaper owner-editors, publishers became members of P

arliament of the Treasury Bench at that time. Some of them giving lip service for socialism and democracy voted in favour of Ershad's Seventh Amendment Bill sitting in the Opposition Bench, the leaders said.

Some of them even possessed plots, and buildings in Tejgaon and wrote post-editorials in their own names in respective newspapers addressing Raushan Ershad as 'Amma' (mother).

The leaders said, therefore, the BSP would not be able to reap benefit by raising the question of Ershad's period or mislead the conscious countrymen. No body has forgotten the role of the 'flatterers'.

"We cannot understand why the BSP raised the question of Constitution regarding the Wage Board Award of journalists after about two decades," the journalists and newspaper employees leaders said.

The incumbent President of BSP was a Member of the Parliament which passed the bill in 1974 for constituting wage board for the newspaper employees, they said, adding, why did he not raise such questions at that time. In fact it is not a question, they said.

They said, the BSP seems to have adopted the policy — "the journalists and employees of the newspaper industry will have to be deprived of their legitimate dues, so say anything whatever you like." The BSP in the meantime had gone to court, where they were defeated, after having failed to conspire against the journalists and employees, they said.

"Does the BSP consider it freedom of the press to accumulate crores of Taka by depriving the employees of their just dues and raising newspaper price and advertisement rate?" the journalists and employees leaders questioned.

They said, "We are not interested to comment on the members of BSP" and quoted the writings of the President of BSP in his own paper on may 28 — "It has been observed that the businessmen, smugglers and millionaires who were connected in the plundering and exploitation during the reign of autocratic government are encouraging publication of newspapers."

The leaders said, "We have nothing to add after what the BSP President himself has said about the newspaper owners."

The journalists and employees leaders said the allegation of BSP that the union had stopped the publication of five newspapers because they went

to court is an utter lie. In fact the BSP has continued to create an impasse by hiring toughs in different newspapers, conspiring against the legitimate rights of the employees and threatening the union leaders over telephone, they said.

They expected that the government and political parties would be able to comprehend that the growing deadlock, created by BSP, might create a delicate situation for the democratic system of the country.

The leaders further hoped that there was still time for BSP to return to "the path of law and equity."

There is no reason to think that they would achieve their goal by using threat and issuing provocative statements, the leaders said.

"They must give legitimate benefit to journalists and employees, otherwise the BSP will have to bear its consequences," the leaders said.

5-party for early implementation of Wage Board award

The central Five-Party Alliance and Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) expressed grave concern at the continuous strike in five national dailies and called for early implementation of the New Wage Board award to bring an end to the impasse, reports BSS.

The Central Steering Committee of the Five-Party Alliance, which met in Dhaka in Thursday, said the allegations against the newspaper owners were serious regarding implementation of the New Wage Board award. "It is not at all comprehensible as to why the owners have taken recourse to the court on the issue of the New Wage Board since they have implemented the past three awards," the leaders in a set of resolutions said.

The meeting, held with Comrade Bimal Biswas in the chair, was attended by A F M Mahbubul Haq, Maminul Haider Choudhury, Sharif Nurul Ambia, Saiful Haq, Nayeem Jahangir and Nirmal Sen, an alliance press release said in Friday.

Expressing concern over the continuous strike in five national dailies, the leaders said the owners were not trying to resolve the problems through a meeting with the three federation leaders while they were killing time being defeated in the cases against Wage Board in the High Court.

They called upon all concerned to sit together immediately and resolve the problems through discussions.

BSD leader Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan, in a statement, on Friday called for stopping all conspiracies against the New Wage Board and asked all concerned to fulfill all demands of the journalists employees including that of the increased salary and allowances.

"The situation created out of the non-implementation of the New Wage Board award is not desired by anybody," he said.

Bhuiyan also urged the newspaper owners and the government to take immediate steps for resolving the crisis prevailing in the newspaper industry.

Select Committee

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of the President. Awami League members want the election to be conducted by the Chief Election Commissioner. They reportedly said they would have to discuss the question at higher levels in the party if they are to change their stand.

About the appointment of non-MP ministers the members of the committee discussed the possibility of reducing the proportion of such ministers from present 20 per cent to 15 per cent. A decision is, however, yet to be taken. Committee insiders refuse to call this a deadlock. They insist that there still remains scope of negotiations on all the three questions. The committee is expected to meet again at 11 am today (Saturday).

VAT system realistic

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The NBR also made it clear in the press release that the VAT was not imposed on primary agricultural products and essential items like rice, pulses, flour, potatoes and clothes. Exportable items were also exempted from the VAT, it said.

Dispelling the misconception of certain quarters, the NBR said that the VAT was imposed at the same rate on produces manufactured out of indigenous or imported raw materials. The Board mentioned that duties were imposed on imported raw materials to protect the interest of the country's raw materials producers.

However credit facilities will not be applicable for those industrial units which will buy raw materials and intermediary goods from the industries or cottage industries exempted from the VAT, it said.

Though the VAT system was scheduled to be introduced from January 1, 1991, as per the budget for 1990-91, the NBR said it was made effective from July 1, 1991 for giving more time to the tax payers.

Besides, the issue was discussed with various chambers and manufacturers' associations for the last 18 months for policy formulation and function of the new tax system, it added.

Necessary booklets and forms were sent to them before July 1, 1991 and most of them were apprised of the issue realistically, the Board said emphasising that it was not correct that the issue was not made known to the tax payers beforehand.

DUCSU poll

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members of JCD tried to drive home a different opinion despite the fact that JCD leader and DUCSU Assistant General Secretary Nazimuddin Alam was one of the signatories to the application seeking shifting of the elections date.

Sources said, Nazimuddin Alam, later had to face those leaders of his organisation, who then met the Vice-Chancellor to inform him of their stand of holding the election on schedule.

The Vice-Chancellor assured them also that if any student organisation differed with the content of the application, the date of DUCSU election, would not be shifted.

JCD, later held a rally in front of the TSC protesting the attempt to shift the date of DUCSU election. The rally, addressed by Khairul Kabir Khokon, Fazlul Huq Milon Nazimuddin Alam, Habiburrahman, Sohail and Ali Akkas Nadim, said the conspiracy to foil the DUCSU polls was still there. They pledged to hold the

election on schedule and said any attempt to foil the election would be resisted untidely.

According to the election schedule, intending candidates will have to submit their nomination papers today by 12 am.

Another main reason for shifting the election date as mentioned

by different sources is: Most of the prospective candidates from different student groups may not be able to contest the July 31 DUCSU and hall union polls following a ban by the DU Syndicate on participation of the irregular students, through amending the DUCSU and Hall Union constitutions.

The Syndicate, the highest policy making body of the university, issued the ban after amending the DUCSU and Hall Union constitutions at a meeting on July 17 following a proposal of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA).

The amendment stipulates that only the regular students will be eligible to be voter and contest the elections.

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