

India allocates funds for barbed-wire fencing

NEW DELHI, July 28: The Indian government plans to strengthen and expand the Border Security Force (BSF) by adding manpower, and mobility, setting up more border outposts and observation towers and providing the paramilitary force with sophisticated equipment, reports PTI.

The 1991-92 budget estimates raise the BSF allocation by Rs 100 crore and it has now been pegged at Rs 645.70 crore.

A fresh impetus has also been provided for erection of barbed-wire fencing and construction of roads along the Indo-Bangladesh borders "to check illegal immigration" by increasing the budget sanc-

tions by nearly Rs 20 crore with a total allocation of Rs 51 crore while Rs six crore has been earmarked for barbed-wire fencing work Rs 45 crore has been kept for construction of roads.

The government also proposed to go in for big expansion of the Central reserve Police Force by sanctioning new battalions besides normal growth for this purpose.

VCS

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is also the Chancellor of the universities, assured them that he would do his best to see that the problems faced by the universities are solved soon.

Tk 7,744cr export

From Page 1 Col. 7 employment opportunities for the educated unemployed through strengthening the marketing mechanism of the exportable goods.

The Commerce Minister also announced the bi-ennial tea policy fixing the export target at 30 million kg with earnings valued at Tk 189 crore for 1991-92 and 31 million kgs with earnings valued at Tk 200 crore for 1992-93 fiscal years. The projected earnings are 12 and 24 per cent increase respectively over that of the 1990-91 fiscal year, the minister said.

He said in the last fiscal year Bangladesh earned Taka 155 crore by exporting 27 million kg tea against the target of Taka 175 crore through export of 28 million kg.

BSS adds: The Minister said, to achieve the objectives

of the export policy, efforts would be made to increase the use of local raw materials in the export-oriented industries, to increase participation in the international trade fairs, and send more trade missions abroad.

He said, backward linkage industries would be set up to strengthen the ready-made garment industries, and the wet-blue leather manufacturing industries would be converted into finished leather production and exporting establishments.

The minister said, a separate fund named "export promotion fund" would be established to meet the expenses for strengthening the overall export activities.

He said, production and marketing of high quality packet tea would be strengthened to establish the brand name of Bangladeshi tea in the world market.

Bank credits

From Page 1 Col. 2 He noted, his July 22 replies to a question in the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) were misquoted. "I never said that some directors of private sector banks borrowed from public sector banks and development financing institutions (DFIs) to set up banks. Nor I said that the borrowings, as were shown in my replies, were all bad debts or delinquent credits", he stated.

Saffur Rahman said, he was obliged under Rules of Procedure to furnish full information to the House on questions raised by the members of parliament. He added that his replies on July 22 were based on information collected from the banks and the DFIs.

When his attention was drawn to the reaction in business circles, to his replies, the minister, said that the reaction was due to misquoted reports in a section of the press. He observed that one basic opera-

tional purpose of the banks was to make credits available to trade and industry and other clients. Credits can be Taka one crore or Taka 100 crore, depending upon specific needs and purposes, he added. All bank borrowers, he said, are not necessarily defaulters.

Meanwhile, the government will constitute a committee with representatives of the private sector to look into the operational aspects of the Value Added Tax (VAT) to dispel any misgivings.

The Finance Minister indicated that the committee would be set up after the budget session. The minister is likely to wind up the general discussions today (Monday) on the budget.

The government will also go for new bridge-building moves to win the support of the private sector for its economic reforms for a market-oriented economy, the sources said.

Parliamentary form

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From amongst non-MPs. The proportion of such non-MP ministers would, however, be 10 per cent and not 20 per cent as proposed by the Government. At opposition's insistence, however, the rights of such ministers to participate in the proceedings of parliament have been further restricted by proposing that they would not speak on matters not related to their ministries. Non-MP ministers will not be able to vote in parliament.

In respect of keeping certain articles under a guarantee clause that holding of referendum shall be required to amend these articles, the committee's recommendation is interesting. Initially the opposition members demanded that there should be no guarantee clause, while the Government tried to put the Preamble and Articles 8, 80 and 92A under such a clause. Finally, when the government side was ready to remain satisfied with keeping only the Preamble and Article 8, containing 'Bismillah' and the changed basic state principles, the opposition suggested that two more articles — 48 and 56 — relating to parliamentary structure of the Constitution also be put under the clause, so that change of the system was difficult. The suggestion was finally accepted by the committee.

The Select Committee accommodated the proposal made in the AL bill that Acting President Justice, Shahabuddin will be eligible to resume his responsibilities as the Chief Justice after the President elected under the amended Constitution enters upon his office.

The committee inserted two provisions proposed in Rashed Khan Menon's bills that gap between two sessions of parliament should not exceed 60 days and that foreign treaties connected with national security shall be placed in a secret session of parliament. The existing Constitution provides that there should be at least two sessions a year, and that the President can withhold laying of any such treaty before parliament if he considers that it will go against the national interest.

The amendment bills seek to restrict the powers of the President by providing that he would summon and prorogue parliament session on the basis of advice given by the Prime Minister in writing. Again, the President's declaration of a state of emergency will require a countersignature of the Prime Minister to become effective.

The President may dissolve the parliament on the basis of written advice of the Prime Minister. The Select Committee has inserted a new sentence: The President shall do so if he is satisfied that no

other member of parliament commands support of the majority of the members of parliament.

Presenting the Select Committee report amid table thumping committee chairman Mirza Golam Hafiz termed the moment as historic and auspicious, and said that the 12 crore people and the world would remember it. The report is a historic document because through it the 16-year-old presidential system is being reverted to parliamentary form, he said. He thanked all members of the committee for unanimously adopting the report by resolving differences. "We worked as a family," he said adding these values should be nurtured and terrorism removed to make parliamentary democracy a success. The change is meant for human welfare and progress, he said emphasising the need for a strong opposition and rule of law to make the new system effective.

Abdus Samad Azad, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who was also a member of the Select Committee said the amendment bills were to implement the Joint Declaration of the three alliances. He paid tributes to students, workers and the people as a whole for their sacrifices during movement against autocracy.

The AL leader said that the Joint Declaration also called for independence of the judiciary, and AL MP Salahuddin Yusuf had moved another amendment bill to ensure this. Referring to the indemnity bill brought by AL leader Mohammad Nasim, he hoped that the entire House would support it to reject politics of killings.

Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the House, said that the amendment bills were a death blow to the forces opposed to democracy. Submission of the report of the Select Committee marked a victory of the pro-democratic forces, he said.

Transport strike

From Page 1 Col. 4 as the drivers of about 200 tank lorries joined the strike. The city's nearly 60 filling stations became almost dry due to lack of supplies. Long queues of cars and baby taxis were seen in filling stations but most of them were found returning disappointed.

Some unscrupulous traders charged as high as 40 taka a litre of petrol.

There was an attempt by the Petroleum Corporation to supply fuel to the filling stations from the Godnal depot under special arrangement with police escort. But the bid was foiled as some picketers hurled a bomb at a tank-lorry near Adamjee on its way to Dhaka. The bombed tank-lorry fell into a road side ditch and its driver was seriously injured, Petroleum Corporation sources said.

Gallery

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Exactly at 5.50 pm the Deputy Speaker, Sheikh Razzak Ali, with a stroke of his gavel, declared the acceptance of the two bills, thus paving the way for the deliberations that are now expected to lead to a switchover to the parliamentary form of government. As the gavel struck, a dark chapter of our constitutional history, definitely — and we all hope irreversibly — recedes into the past. It was a new dawn that the House was welcoming with such a thundering applause.

By all counts, it was an historic moment in the House yesterday, giving legal shape to what has so far been a mere dream. Everyone present sensed the singular importance of the event they were watching. One could almost hear the Speaker's voice crack with tension as he conducted the business of the House. The two leaders — of the House and of the Opposition — watching their handiwork coming into play, smiled nervously as their deputies delivered the set speeches.

DEPUTY Leaders of the Opposition, Abdus Samad Azad rose to occasion and matched the Law Minister's warm overtures and paid tribute — a little more enthusiasm would have suited the occasion better — to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the BNP for their cooperation and flexibility. Not to be left behind, the Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza said the bill dealt a deathblow to the forces that usurped power and introduced autocracy.

THE mood of the House was jubilant. As it adjourned for a short break, crowd of MPs could be seen to gather around their respective party leaders to felicitate them for a job well done. For after all, behind the negotiations that went on in Select Committee, the role of the two leaders — of BNP and AL — were crucial. The warmest felicitations were, however, reserved for the Law Minister. It was perhaps his finest hour, crowning a public life of patriotism, sacrifice, struggle, integrity, courage and honesty. It was most fitting that it was he who played the pivotal role in restoring to the parliament its dignity, high status and centre-stage in national politics.

IT was, however, difficult not to do contrast the jubilation and unity of action seen inside the parliament with the sense of chaos and absence of direction that is evident outside it. One only hoped that the spirit that prevailed in reaching the historic consensus on the vital questions affecting the form government would now spill over in solving the problems which are much less complicated and need urgent solutions.

Khaleda

From Page 1 Col. 4

Referring to the present price hike, Begum Khaleda Zia said the unscrupulous traders were raising the prices in the name of Value Added Tax. She said the price of soyabean oil had been fixed at Taka 35.70 per kg.

Begum Zia said her government would keep the prices of essentials within the reach of the commonman. She called upon the leaders and workers to set up committees in their respective areas to check the price spiral.

Jamaat

From Page 1 Col. 7 government was not included in the proposed bill and necessary amendments were not made to ensure independence of the judiciary.

JP opposes

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Bills at a press conference at his Sangsod office. Moudud said his party objected to the return of the Acting President back to his original position on "principled grounds."

The Acting President, during his tenure, took many administrative and political decisions due to circumstantial reasons and his return now to the post of Chief Justice of Supreme Court will be "an infringement on the independence of judiciary" under Article 22 of the Constitution, Moudud said.

Moudud Ahmed said his party fully appreciated the need for the 11th Amendment Bill for legal coverage of all actions taken by the interim government headed by Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. There was no constitutional provisions for transfer of power to a neutral caretaker government to conduct free and fair polls when Ershad relinquished power, he said.

The 11th Amendment Bill was an act of supreme necessity or what is known in jurisprudence as the "doctrine of necessity," he added.

Moudud Ahmed commended the role of the Acting President for conducting parliamentary elections. "We acknowledge the great role that the Acting President has played", he should be given all honour and respect by accommodating him in any respectable position other than the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, he said.

Explaining his note of dissent on the 12th Constitution Amendment Bill relating to the reintroduction of the parliamentary form of government after 16 years, Moudud Ahmed said that his party still believed in a "democratic presidential system." Unless a final decision at the national level of the party was taken on the form of the government in the change circumstances, it was not possible on his part to commit himself otherwise, he said.

The Midnight File

Israel ready to join Mideast peace conference

WASHINGTON, July 28: Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens said today that Israel is ready to attend a Middle East peace conference and official acceptance is "merely a formality." "Based on agreements that we reached during secretary Baker's visit here, in principle the answer is positive," Arens said in a US television interview, reports Reuter.

Afghan rebels capture Rostaq

PESHAWAR, July 28: The Afghan rebel forces of Ahmed Shah Masood claimed today to have won a victory in the north of the country by taking the district of Rostaq, in Takhar province. The northern council presided over by Mr Masood, one of the original leaders of Afghanistan's anti-communist guerrilla forces, said in a dispatch that the resistance had captured 1,500 government troops during its capture Friday of Rostaq, about 50 kilometres (31 miles) from the Soviet border, reports AFP.

21 killed in Punjab

CHANDIGARH, July 28: Twenty one persons, including nine militants and three members of a family, were killed while an independent candidate for Banur assembly constituency was kidnapped by some militants in Punjab since last night, reports PTI.

Bandits kill five in Pakistan

KARACHI, July 28: Bandits have killed five people in a raid on a village in southern Pakistan, police said today. Three villagers were wounded in the attack on Tando Allahyar in Sind province on Saturday. The province is plagued with Bandits, known locally as dacoits, reports Reuter.

Democracy

From Page 1 Col. 8 Abdus Samad Azad will probably be remembered long in the parliamentary history as they showed profound respect to each other. It was a rarity in our politics and a new democratic culture. The Leader of the House and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina seemingly endorsed the views expressed by the leaders of BNP and Awami League while speaking on the bill pledging to give democracy a firm footing in the country.

Rome was not built in a day, so is the case with democracy, said Badruddoza Chowdhury. "We must nurture parliamentary democracy to end the politics of conspiracy and coup", he said. Abdus Samad Azad expressed the same view. Elderly parliamentarian Mirza Golam Hafiz made a statesman-like gesture by giving due credit to the opposition for arriving at a consensus on such a vital constitutional issue. He said a strong opposition was needed to strengthen democratic institutions.

After 16 years the nation is now poised to reject presidential system which was introduced in 1975 through the Fourth Amendment. The Fourth Amendment also established one-party rule. If everything goes smoothly parliament is likely to pass two bills — the 11th and 12th amendment bills — within this month. The 11th amendment bill is to ratify all actions of the Acting President and send back Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed to the Supreme Court as Chief Justice. This will re-

main a unique example in our political history. His appointment and exit may set a democratic tradition to tide over a situation the nation confronted during nine years of autocracy.

The 12th amendment bill which provides for swing back to parliamentary form has proposed certain improvement over the provisions enshrined in the 1972 Constitution regarding parliamentary democracy. The improvements have been proposed to stabilise the system.

In the past, parliamentary democracy failed in the then Pakistan due to instability. From that experience the 1972 Constitution made certain provisions restricting floor crossing by a member. The 12th amendment bill has proposed certain stringent measures like checking group defection. Another improvement over the 1972 Constitution is the President's enhanced power to look for a leader, who may command majority, before dissolving the parliament at the request of the Prime Minister. The bill has eliminated arbitrary powers of the ceremonial president in parliamentary democracy.

In the changed situation political leaders will have to face new challenges. The politicians will need to be tolerant and shall have to show respect to each other's views. Mirza Golam Hafiz told the House that the success of democracy would depend on a terrorism-free society.

Shall our politicians get united again to end terrorism on the campus to allow democracy to function?

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