

Thailand to impose VAT

BANGKOK, July 20: Taxes will not be increased but the tax system will be overhauled, Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun said when he unveiled the country's 1992 budget bill, reports AFP.

Anand, speaking to the military-appointed National Legislative Assembly on Friday, told the assembly that the re-organisation of the taxation system, which will include the imposition of a new Value

Added Tax (VAT), was aimed at reducing costs and promoting fairer competition in the industrial and commercial sectors.

The new tax structure will be less complicated and will also enhance liquidity in the monetary sector and promote savings, Anand said.

The Prime Minister said his government had already introduced tax reforms including the reduction of import duties on cars and computers.

Taxes on corporate mergers have been adjusted and dividends paid between corporations have been made tax exempt, reducing obstacles to business operations, Anand said.

Tk 1.5 lakh snatched from businessman

By Staff Correspondent

In a daring daylight hold-up, Taka 1.5 lakh was snatched at gun-point from a businessman at Segunbagicha on Saturday.

The private car of Maksudul Huq, the businessman, was stopped by two gunmen riding a motor-cycle on the street in front of the Shikapala Academy at around 2:30 pm.

Holding a pistol to his head, the muggers snatched away the money kept on the dash board of the car and fled.

Maksudul Huq said that he was on his way to Motijheel from his residence in Kalabagan when the incident happened.

3 DU students injured in fights over nominations

By Staff Correspondent

At least three Dhaka University students were wounded in clashes over the selection of election candidates to two hall unions.

Hefazuddin Choudhury and Shah Alam of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) who intended to contest for the Vice-President and General Secretary posts of the Ziaur Rahman Hall students union were seriously beaten up and later detained in the hall by their rivals Kakon and Babul.

Kakon and Babul then submitted their panel for the polls. Hefaz and Alam were later rescued by their fellow JCD members and hospitalised. Hall sources said that the incident occurred a few hours before the expiry of the time for the filing of nominations.

Meanwhile, Nazma Akhter of the Chhatra League (S-A) was repeatedly punched by another member of the Chhatra League (S-A), Shimul who wished to be a General Secretary candidate for the Rokeya Hall students union.

Nazma became the Vice-President candidate and selected Alma for the General Secretary's post.

Witnesses said that Shimul angered at Nazma's decision had an argument with her over the issue and beat her up in the corridor of Rokeya Hall main building at about 3:30 pm.

Nazma was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where she was given first aid.

DU CSU polls

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Huq Khan Shibir - Science Commonroom Secretary, Shajahan Howlader Sujan - Social Welfare Secretary, Jamalur Rahman - Social Entertainment Secretary, Raquibul Islam Bakul - Transport Secretary and nine others for the DUCSU member posts.

JCD sources later said, Habib-ul-Nabi Sohel will withdraw his nomination in favour of Ali Akkas Nadim.

Islami Chhatra Shibir submitted its panel for DUCSU posts with Mujibur Rahman and Shaiful Alam Helal as the candidates for the posts of VP and GS respectively. Besides, Shibir also filed nominations for elections to 13 hall unions. It did not nominate any candidate for the Jagannath Hall, a dormitory for the Hindu students.

Islami Chhatra Sena filed nominations for 20 DUCSU seats. Moshahabuddin Makh-tiar and Abul Bahser were VP and GS candidates respectively of the organisation. Chhatra Bangla Parishad also submitted an incomplete panel for DUCSU with Abu Zahir Kanak and Abu Taher Rokon as VP and GS respectively.

Till the 2 pm dead line Saturday, 217 candidates belonging to JCD, Shibir, Chhatra Sena and Chhatra Bangla

BNP MPs

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rations of the people. The BNPPP meeting, held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban with the Prime Minister in the chair, took stock of the market situation and suggested steps to check rise in prices.

Responding to MPs' suggestions, Begum Zia assured that all possible steps would be taken to contain price hike of essential commodities.

The meeting expressed concern at the deteriorating flood situation in different parts of the country, and the Prime Minister asked the MPs to look after relief operations in the flood-affected areas properly.

Select body

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The BNP bills seek to continue the existing provision of appointment of one-fifth of the ministers from non-MPs.

Awami League wants a return to the provision made in the 1972 Constitution which states that non-MPs can be made ministers, but their ministership will go if they do not get elected within six months of such an election.

The Constitution amendment bills now being scrutinised are meant for a return to a parliamentary system, in keeping with the November 19 Joint Declaration of the eight-party, seven-party and five-party alliances.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party has introduced two bills for validation of the appointment of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed as Vice-President, and all his actions as Acting President, and switching over to a parliamentary system.

The Awami League first introduced a bill seeking to ensure both. Subsequently it introduced another bill to ensure judicial independence.

Four more bills were introduced by Workers Party member Rashed Khan Menon.

These bills seek to protect the fundamental rights provided in the Constitution by deleting a provision made in 1975 and ensure regular sessions of Parliament in keeping with the provisions of the 1972 Constitution.

Parishad and some independent submitted nominations against 20 posts of the DUCSU. Those were being scrutinised by the returning officers till late night Saturday and a list of the candidates would be published today (Sunday) at 12 noon.

The number of the candidates for the hall union polls could not be known.

The boycotting organisations asked their respective candidates who earlier submitted nomination papers for the hall union polls to withdraw those by July 25. But it was gathered that many of the hall candidates might not abide by the decision since they were hopeful of their victory in the polls.

The polls boycotting organisations were prepared with their panel for the DUCSU till Friday night in the hope that the authorities might reconsider the special admission issue. But the authorities made it clear that by no means such opportunity could be made available since the decision was taken by the DU Syndicate, the highest decision-making body of the university. Besides, the courses, where the irregular students used to be absorbed in the past, were abolished.



The city Awami League held a rally at the Bangabandhu Avenue Saturday to protest VAT introduced by the BNP government.

CU teachers

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were held till today. Most of the residential students also did not return to their halls for fear of fresh violence in the campus.

A delegation of the Chittagong University Syndicate was summoned last week by the Acting President who is also Chancellor of the University and asked for immediate resumption of classes.

Parole

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children of Ershad also accompanied their mother.

Ershad was granted parole for an hour and Raushan two hours. Ershad also attended the namaz-e-janaza of late Badrunnahar held at the hall-room of the Mamata Wahab's Uttara residence.

Both Ershad and Raushan Ershad were taken back to the jails after the expiry of the parole period.

Acting chairman of Jatiya Party Maudud Ahmed and Secretary General Shah Moazzem Hossain and other JP leaders joined the janaza.

AL ultimatum

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indiscriminately on most of the essentials of common people. VAT has blanketed the items exempted earlier by that dictator, she said.

She said that the new tax system, VAT, was prescribed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and the government taxed the helpless people although their sufferings had multiplied.

"We can't expect no better than this from a Finance Minister like Saifur Rahman who was rejected by the people in the February 27 election", she told the rally.

AL Joint Secretary Amir Hossain Amu said that the budget was prepared to serve personal interest of some ruling party members. Tax from ceramic and textile were withdrawn as two stalwarts of BNP were involved in these businesses, he added.

Amu said that the Constitution Amendment Bill placed by the ruling party in the Parliament contained some undemocratic clauses.

The BNP bill had proposed expulsion from the party and

five year ban on electioneering for floor crossing in the Parliament. This was encroachment on his right to free opinion. Amu said this was an autocratic clause.

AL Publicity Secretary Mohammad Nasim said those who will oppose his party's indemnity bill in the Parliament would be considered as associates of the killers of Bangabandhu. "We will try the killers in this land and oust any new autocrat with the help of peoples' support", he added.

Mozaffar Hossain Palto in his presidential address demanded withdrawal of VAT by August 20 and declared that the city unit will observe a month-long mobilisation programme against it in and around the capital.

He also demanded immediate implementation of Pay Commission Report for the government employees and Wage Board Award for the newspapermen, preparation of a new voter list, election of mayors and ward commissioners and restoration of peaceful situation in the educational institutions.

Suranjit calls JS incident unfortunate

Ganotantri Party MP

Suranjit Sengupta Saturday described last Wednesday's incident in Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) "unprecedented and unfortunate", saying such incidents will hamper transition to democracy, reports UNB.

Suranjit was explaining his position to newsmen at the Jatiya Press Club over the incident in which he was ordered by the Speaker to be removed from the House on charge of obstructing the proceedings.

Defending his stand, Suranjit claimed a member of parliament can never be obstructed by the chair as long as the member speaks relevantly to the subject matter.

"I did not obstruct the proceedings, rather I was obstructed by the Speaker", he told a questioner. "As a custodian (of the House), the Speaker should protect the rights of MPs."

Suranjit said on Wednesday he moved some amendments to the Administrative Tribunals (amendment) Bill, 1991 so that government employees who are affected by the judgements of the administrative tribunal could appeal to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

He said, he wanted provisions made so that those government employees who were affected by the judgements of the tribunal during the period from 1981 to 1991 are allowed to appeal to the Supreme Court and those employees who lost jobs under MLO 9 also given the same opportunity.

Suranjit regretted he was interrupted by the Chair while he was trying to speak in support of his amendments to the bill.

"Only settlement of the form of government is not enough for transition to true democracy in the country", he said, adding, "Democracy must be established in the administration and the judiciary."

Citing articles 133 to 143 of the Constitution, he said all these articles are related to services of the government employees.

All government employees should have equal access to law, Suranjit said.

Latin America becoming toxic wasteland

GUADALAJARA (Mexico) July 20: Latin America is on its way to becoming a toxic wasteland, a leading ecological group told the region's Presidents on Friday, reports Reuter.

The group, including two Nobel laureates, told 19 Presidents attending an Ibero-American summit here their countries face environmental catastrophe unless they act fast to stop it.

relief materials was not adequate.

Our Sirajganj Correspondent reports: Four children were drowned in the flood affected Belkuchi upazila in Sirajganj Saturday raising the death toll in the district to ten. The children were identified as Rubita (7) of village Surbatulshi, Morzina (5) of Char Belkuchi, Abdul Karim (6) of Char Gopalpur and Salma (5) of Metuani.

UNB adds from Sirajganj: Overall flood situation in the district worsened further with some 10,000 people rendered homeless by erosion in the flood-hit areas over the last 24 hours.

Their homesteads in Royganj upazila were eroded by the overflowing Karotoa and Fuljhor rivers still swelling with downflow from upper catchments, although the Jamuna receded.

The erosion has also threatened the existence of the Nagarbari-Bogra highway, now only 20 feet from the landslide into the Karotoa at Sahebganj.

About one kilometre of the Sirajganj-Bogra highway at Pachlia in Ullapara, one kilometre of the Tarash-Sirajganj road at Dewbhogue and part of the Kazipur-Sirajganj road were inundated by flood waters during the period.

Loading and unloading of ferries at the terminal, the main roadlink between 16 northern districts and the capital, have become almost impossible and officials feared, might stop anytime.

A total of 341 educational institutions, about 48,815 dwelling houses, 953 kilometre of road were damaged. In Pabna 20 unions of seven upazilas were engulfed

Flood situation worsens in 3 dists, static elsewhere

By Staff Correspondent

The flood situation in Sirajganj, Mymensingh and Chandpur deteriorated Saturday while it remained by and large unchanged in other districts.

Death toll rose to 32 with four more deaths in Sirajganj and one in Mymensingh.

Outbreak of Diarrhoea and dysentery was reported from the flood affected areas of Tangail.

Flood situation in Mymensingh district deteriorated as more nine unions of Sadar and Phulpur upazilas reeled under water where 27 thousand people were affected and 5000 acres of crop land damaged.

One minor boy was drowned in Bororechar union Saturday.

In Chandpur, crops in over 30 thousand acres including 20 thousand acres within the Chandpur irrigation project, went under water due to incessant rain. Erosion of swelling Meghna devoured vast tract of land along the Chandpur town belt.

Our Rangpur Correspondent reports: Flood situation in Kurigram and Gaibandha districts remained critical Saturday. Vast area of Raumar, Chil-mari, Rajibpur, Fulchari, Shaghata and Sunderganj upazilas remained inundated and over one lakh houses in these upazilas were under floodwater.

Lakhs of people are passing their days in a marooned state. A flood control embankment at Nohal union in Gaibandha was washed away which has aggravated the situation. Supply of

BCCI knot stays united

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nated bank and the BCCI to handle foreign trade operations. "It is not even a post office". The Chamber chief said about the designated bank.

Available indications suggest that the central bank is examining various options to resolve BCCI affairs. But the Bank is maintaining closely guarded secrecy on its moves.

The Governor of the Bangladesh Bank reviewed the BCCI situation on Saturday with BCCI's top executives.

Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman, on his return today from abroad, will discuss the BCCI situation with the central bank Governor and other high officials. Some decisions are likely to be taken following this review.

The Minister discussed the issues arising out of the closure of the Bank with the Governor of the Bank of England Robin Leigh Per-

berton on Friday in London on his way back home after attending the special UNOSOC session in Geneva.

A news agency reported that the Finance Minister drew the attention of the Bank of England Governor to the plight of Bangladeshis expatriates in Britain including owners of small business concerns following the closure of the BCCI in the UK. Such business concerns, having operations with the BCCI, have been severely affected with their entire savings frozen now.

A considerable amount of money raised in the UK for cyclone relief to Bangladesh has also been frozen, the Minister observed.

Meanwhile, trade industry circles in Dhaka have expressed fears that the prevailing situation involving BCCI in Bangladesh, indicates that "a liquidation move is in the off-

ing." "This will be most unwelcome," said Mahbubur Rahman, President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He suggested that the depositors of the BCCI be given an option to buy the shares if an alternative arrangement for forming a separate bank with existing BCCI operations in Bangladesh is found suitable.

"BCCI in Bangladesh has been running at a profit. There is no good reason why it should be liquidated", the BCCI chief said.

He suggested that the central bank appoint an administrator for the Bank to enable immediate resumption of its operations pending a final decision about the Bank by its overseas owners. This can be an interim arrangement and there may be other arrangements too, he added. Mahbubur Rahman said that

the "woes" of the depositors were mounting and the central bank should take some independent initiatives, and not merely toe the line of others, he felt.

A Bangladesh banker working with the BCCI, Hong Kong, told The Daily Star that the international freeze on the Bank's operations would cost the jobs of many senior Bangladeshis executives of the Bank serving under the BCCI global network.

The banker M Rahman, in Dhaka now, said that there were 16 Bangladeshis manning the BCCI Hong Kong when the authorities there took the unprecedented move to liquidate a foreign bank.

He feared that inward remittances to Bangladesh would fall because of disruptions in the Bank's operations in different parts of the world. More reports on BCCI on Page 8

The Midnight File

Ajit blames VP for debacle

NEW DELHI, July 20: The Janata Dal leader, Ajit Singh, today revolted against party leader, VP Singh, blaming him for the party's electoral debacle and accused him of running the party through President, SR Bommai. Bringing into the open the rumblings within the party following its electoral rout, Ajit Singh wrote a hard hitting letter to VP Singh in which he questioned Bommai's continuance in his post, reports PTI.

Laws to be changed for Sonia's security

NEW DELHI, July 20: Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, today said government was fully aware of the risk faced by Mrs Sonia Gandhi and her family and will change the relevant laws, if required, to provide adequate security to her. "If a law has to be changed, Yes, we will do it", Rao said amid thumping of desks by Congress-I members while replying to a discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President of his address to both houses of Parliament, reports PTI.

France won't go for mobile N-missiles

PARIS, July 20: France has decided to drop plans for a mobile nuclear missile system to be developed over the next dozen years at a cost of 30 billion francs (five billion dollars), the newspaper Le Monde said. The daily, which has close contacts with France's most senior officials and sometimes floats "trial balloons" for the Government, gave no source for today's front-page story, reports Reuter.

Dhaka-Male talks

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sional bodies in the SAARC member countries for carrying forward different development programmes.

Proposals for immediate launching of SAARC associations of lawyers and women were discussed at the meeting. On bilateral issues, the two leaders observed that relations and co-operation between the two countries established in 1978 were progressing satisfactorily.

Begum Zia offered education facilities for Maldives students in medical, engineering and other institutions in Bangladesh.

The two leaders also discussed the possibilities of exporting skilled and unskilled manpower to Maldives from Bangladesh.

Expansion of tourism and trade between the two countries were also given importance.

It was decided that the Bangladesh-Maldives Joint Commission will meet soon to follow up the proposals.

Gayoom was assisted at the talks by Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Abdul Rasheed Hussain, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ibrahim Hussain Zaki and High Commissioner to Bangladesh Ahmed Abdullah.

Begum Zia was aided by Foreign Minister A S M Mustafizur Rahman, State Minister for Food Nazmul Huda and Foreign Secretary Abul Ahsan.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Later talking to newsmen prior to his departure for Bangkok President Gayoom said on Saturday that necessary national legislation to prevent terrorist activities as per the SAARC convention could help eliminate cross-border terrorism.

Replying to a question at a press conference at Zia International Airport the current SAARC Chairman said that a convention on the suppression of terrorism in this region was signed by all the member countries earlier, but the convention should be made operative through necessary national legislation.

Maldives President Gayoom came to Dhaka on a two-day visit to discuss about SAARC with Bangladesh leaders. He said that his visit was productive and satisfactory and that his talks would help further strengthen the seven-nation regional organisation.

When asked about the prevention of terrorism, as the killing of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was suspected to have been the result of cross-border terrorism, he said that the convention on terrorism had been ratified by all the member nations.

But the nations are required to initiate necessary national legislation to make the convention fully operational, he added.

He said that some of the countries have done so and that it would be possible to eliminate such terrorism once the convention became opera-

tive. Answering a question whether he was satisfied with the achievements of the SAARC, Gayoom said that he firmly believed that the SAARC had made some achievements in recent years and these achievements were not mean given the economic conditions of the member nations.

It was necessary to assess the progress in terms of the realities and one could be reasonably satisfied with the achievements made so far, he added.

Answering another question the SAARC Chairman said that SAARC was consciously avoiding bilateral issues because of some obvious difficulties.

Though the issues were being ignored SAARC leaders during their meetings with each other were consulting and discussing the problems, and that is a good practice for resolving the disputes, he added.

He told another questioner that the changes in the governments of some of the SAARC countries were normal phenomenon which would not affect SAARC but only contribute to its further well-being.

President Gayoom, one of those three founder leaders of SAARC who are still in power, said that prior to his visit to Dhaka he went to Kathmandu, where he held talks with the Nepalese King and the Prime Minister on the agenda of next SAARC summit.

He left for Bangkok enroute to Colombo for talks with Sri Lankan leaders on SAARC matters.

President Gayoom said that he came here to talk with Bangladesh leaders on SAARC affairs and described the discussions as extremely "fruitful".

"It is always a pleasure to visit Dhaka, which hosted the first SAARC summit", said the SAARC chairman who has attended all the SAARC summits held so far. He said that his talks in Kathmandu were also purposeful. "We are discussing the consolidation and expansion of SAARC activities as well as the coming summit in Colombo to be held in November", he said.

The press conference was also attended by Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Abul Ahsan and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Maldives Ibrahim Hussain Zaki.

Hearty send-off

After the press conference the Maldives President and his wife Nasreena Gayoom were given a hearty send-off. They were seen off by the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia, Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman and members of the cabinet.

Pak Constitution amended

ISLAMABAD, July 20: Pakistan's Constitution has been amended after the Senate, Upper House of the Parliament, passed the 12th Amendment Bill tonight, reports Xinhua.

Amendment bill

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bill introduced by the AL had made clear provisions acceptable to all.

It urged the AL members of parliament to play an uncompromising role for the establishment of a parliamentary form of government in the real sense of the term.

The meeting in a resolution said that the present Parliament, elected on the basis of the Joint Declaration after a long and bloody movement, was pledged bound to establish unfettered parliamentary democracy. The political parties had no right to withdraw from the pledge.

It urged the government to provide gratuitous relief immediately, sanction loans on easy terms and supply seeds, house building materials, medicines and water purification tablets to the flood vic-

It demanded of the government to implement rehabilitation programmes in the greater Chittagong district battered by the devastating cyclonic storm and tidal surge in April and called for exempting the affected people from the payment of taxes, electricity and WASA bills and other government dues.

The meeting expressed its solidarity with the demands of the journalists and newspaper employees as announced by the three federations and called upon the concerned owners to accept the recommendations of the Wage Board.

It expressed the hope that strike in the five newspapers would end with the acceptance of the demands of the striking journalists, press workers and employees. It criticised the government's silence on the issue.