

System loss must be cut: Khaleda

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Sunday emphasised cohesion between the government and employees of public enterprises to sort out problems for ensuring national progress, reports UNB.

"There will be many parties in democratic system, but we all should face national problems unitedly," she said.

The Prime Minister was addressing the leaders of the workers' and employees' unions of the Power Development Board (PDB) who called on her at Sugandha Sunday evening.

Referring to the newly formed Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA), Begum Zia said the present democratic government wants to alleviate people's suffering multiplied during the past autocratic regime.

DESA, an offshoot of the PDB, aimed at streamlining power distribution and slashing system loss to the tune of an estimated Tk 800 crore annually, goes into operation Tuesday.

DESA launching was earlier deferred at least thrice in the face of resistance from the PDB workers and employees, incurring donors' resentment. Later, an agreement was reached between the government and the trade unions for launching it on October 1.

RU Masters exams Nov 10

RAJSHAHI, Sept 29: Masters degree final examination of 1988 under Rajshahi University will begin on November 10. Subsidiary Part-II examination under the University will be held on October 21 and Part-I on October 24, official sources said, reports UNB.

Textile mills

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rest within September 30 would be declared laid off.

About Tk 50 crore loss was estimated in the 11 textile mills, the sources said.

The mills are: Noakhali Textile Mills, Madaripur Textile Mills, Magura Textile Mills, Monnu Textile Mills, Fine Cotton Mills, Khulna Textile Mills, Barishal Textile Mills, Bangladesh Textile Mills, Bengal Textile Mills, Kurigram Textile Mills and Carlyn Textile Mills.

Saifur

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the proposed industrial units to be disinvested would be distributed through Industrial Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) so that the middle income group people could purchase them. The rest half of the shares would be channelised through the stock exchange market with a view to reactivating the stock exchange, he added.

The Finance Minister, who was critical of the disinvestment procedure and practice during the last nine years of autocratic rule of ex-president Ershad, said disinvestment during that period was nothing but sheer wastage of public money. Many of the industrial units disinvested during Ershad's period were either closed and those who had purchased them were not willing to pay to the government. In this connection, he referred to the cases of some cotton mills and a number of jute mills.

International financial institutions like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank are expecting the restoration of financial discipline which was seriously violated during the past regime, the Finance Minister said.

On the role of the government, he said, it should be limited to social and welfare services like health and education and added that a good government was to ensure the proper utilisation of funds in various sectors.

In reply to a question, the Finance Minister however said that the recovery of overdue loan was not so discouraging. It is quite good now, he added.

Answering another question on the progress achieved so far in preventing tax evasion, smuggling and other misdeeds, Rahman said: "My fight will continue and I will spare nobody so long as I remain the country's Finance Minister."

In reply to a question on the efficacy of the private sector, the Finance Minister said: "Since the public sector has failed to deliver the goods, we shall have to find out some sort of a vehicle for development of the country and welfare of the people centrally controlled state economy can never do good", he asserted.

To another question on the house building finance corporation loans, the Finance Minister said that the procedure of HBFC loan should be rationalised.

The democratic government is accountable, the system loss in different sectors must be cut in order to regain confidence of the donors, the Prime Minister said.

Terming power as an essential for socio-economic development, including industrial growth, Begum Zia said country's products could be exported at competitive price if electricity could be provided to the consumers at cheap rate by arresting system loss, rated world's highest 41 per cent.

She praised the PDB workers and employees for their untiring effort for restoring power at different places after the April 29 devastating cyclone.

Energy Minister Dr. Mosharraf Hossain, who was present at the meeting, hoped the recommendations drawn after long discussion between the government and the five trade unions of PDB would help effectively check the system loss in the power sector.

General Secretaries of Jatiya Bidyut Sramik-Karmachari Union, Bidyut Workers Union, PDB Sramik-Karmachari Union and PDB Jatiya Sramik-Karmachari Union, Mohammad Zafrul Hassan, Abdus Salam Khan, Sayedur Rahman and Zahir Ahmed respectively were present among the leaders.

The leaders hoped that they would be able to solve different problems of the sector through discussions with the government.

SI assaulted

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Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) rally held at the DUCSU building premises blamed the Chhatra League (S-A) for repeatedly creating anarchy in the educational institutions.

It denied the responsibility of attacking BCL (N-S) workers at the Rangpur Medical College hostel and said that it was caused following a conflict within the organisation.

The rally addressed by Eltus Ali, Habibunnabi Sohel and Ali Akkas Nadim, however, condemned Saturday evening's rampage on the campus by the BCL (N-S) workers.

Chhatra League (N-S) rally held at Madhu's Canteen premises accused the "armed hoodlums" of the JCD of killing Habibuzzaman Habib and demanded exemplary punishment to them.

It blamed both the JCD and the BCL (S-A) for unleashing terrorism in the educational institutions and said it might not be allowed further.

The rally was addressed by Obaidur Rahman Chunnun.

Ershad

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see whether the money was in the possession of Ershad or not.

Ershad yesterday said that the money was collected by the Jatiya Party members and was deposited with him as Party Chairman. The money actually belonged to the Party, he said.

In the Court yesterday the Defence Counsel listed 10 leaders of the Jatiya Party all MPs, as defence witnesses.

The list of witnesses will be submitted in the Court tomorrow.

The names of the witnesses as listed by Defence Counsel Yousuf Hossain Humayun as per advice of Ershad are: Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Shah Moazzem Hossain, Tajul Islam, ABM Shahjahan, NK Alam Chowdhury, Mujibur Rahman Sentu, Shah Rafiqul Bari Chowdhury, Abdul Barak, Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury and Maqsood Aziz Ibne Lama.

However, the defence lawyers did not name Ershad and his brother-in-law as defence witnesses.

Earlier it was expected that Ershad would depose as a defence witness in this case as it is permissible under the law in this kind of wealth amassing case.

Accused Ershad, in his brief statement in the Court, sought time till next Tuesday (October 1), when hearing of the case will resume.

At the start of the hearing, Attorney General Aminul Haque submitted an application which furnished dates of military commissions of accused Ershad for the Court to take judicial notice for the ends of justice.

Continuing, Ershad said that despite his written request neither he nor his wife was permitted to be present at the time of making inventory of the goods at the Sena Bhavan. As a result the goods were not properly identified and prices thereof were inflated and unreasonable.

Further, he submitted, during the investigation of the case neither the investigation officer nor the members of the Inventory Committee sought his explanation. If they did it, he said, he could give them the exact picture.



Striking interdistrict buses jammed in Gabtoli Bus Terminal as the transport strike continued in the northern region for the third day yesterday.

Transport strike

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ing appointment letters was being solved nationally through dialogue. But the leaders of the workers called the strike from Bogra.

Our Rajshahi correspondent reported that normal life in the district was paralysed due to the strike. Prices of most of the commodities soared due to shortage in supplies.

A BRTC ticket between Rajshahi and Dhaka priced at Taka 103 was being sold at about Taka 200 in the black market. The strike has stranded thousands of people in and around the city.

President of the North Bengal Workers Federation Abdus Sattar accused the transport owners for the strike and the situation arising out of it.

However, negotiations were on locally and centrally to resolve the issue, a Federation source said.

Our Rangpur correspondent adds: The transport strike has turned thousands of people in the flood-hit district hostage.

The strike has hampered post-flood relief and rehabilitation programmes threatening many flood victims with starvation.

At least 8,000 transports including buses, trucks, tem-

pos and baby taxis went off the roads in the region leaving lakhs of passengers stranded.

Prices of essentials have also shot up. Only ambulances and rickshaws were seen plying in the city.

BSPS, BETOA appeal

Meanwhile BSS adds: Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity and Bangladesh Bus, Truck Owners Association last night appealed to all vehicle owners to issue appointment letters to their employees immediately.

In two separate statements, the Samity and the Association urged all transport owners to abide by the respective ordinance and the decision of the Sarak Paribahan Samity taken in a meeting of its executive committee on September 24.

They also appealed to the owners of Naogaon particularly to issue appointment letters to their employees, saying the non-issuance of appointment letters has already created severe dislocation in public transportation between North Bengal and rest of the country.

Bangladesh Bus, Truck Owners Association also urged the owners to issue the appointment letters by September 30.

SKOP ultimatum

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October 21 to press its demands.

It demands minimum wage of Tk 1400, removal of anomalies in wage and pay commission, provision for variable dearness allowance, allowing trade union activities under ILO convention of 1969 and repealing Clause 19-A of the Service Rules which allows free termination.

The entire country would be paralysed if the demands are not fulfilled by October 21, the trade union leaders warned at a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club on Sunday afternoon.

The speakers, however, said they had discussions with government authorities on Saturday regarding the demands and the proposed strike.

"We do not want to distrust them (government), nor do we want to lower their prestige, but they must meet our demands without further delay," Yakub Ali Bhuiyan of Bangladesh Federation of Labour said.

Chaired by Jatiya Sramik League President Fazul Haq Mantu, the rally was also addressed by Trade Union Centre leader Abdus Salam Khan, Jatiya Sramik Dal President Iskander Ali, Jatiya Sramik Federation President Abul Isahar, Samajtantrik Sramik Fe-

deration acting Convener Shajahan Kabir, and Samajtantrik Sramik Federation President Abdullah Sarkar.

"Time is running out.... kicking at our belly and appeasing the owners will not consolidate the hard-earned democracy," said Abdullah Sarkar.

"We're labourers, don't play with our fate, we know how to react," said Abdus Salam Khan, also a central leader of CMB.

Scotland Yard

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keeping a close watch on other places in her itinerary.

Amu said they received a message on Saturday that there was a plot to make an attempt on the life of Hasina during her visit to London.

They communicated with the UK Awami League leaders and asked them to take additional security measures for the party chief, he said.

Two Dhaka dailies on Sunday ran stories on the alleged plot against Hasina.

Hasina left here for the United Kingdom and France on Thursday on an organisational tour. Party General Secretary Sajeda Chowdhury MP and Akhtaruzzaman MP are accompanying the party president.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Meanwhile Awami League expressed its deep concern at and strongly condemned the reported plot to assassinate the party chief Sheikh Hasina and demanded immediate measures against the persons involved in it.

A two-day emergency meeting of the Awami League Working Committee, with its acting president Abdus Samad Azad in the chair, blamed an "anti-liberation force having links with various national and international terrorist forces" for making attempts on the life of Sheikh Hasina "both at home and abroad".

The meeting also expressed strong indignation at what it termed as the "government's indifference and inactiveness" in providing adequate security for safe-guarding the life of Sheikh Hasina. The meeting also demanded immediate action against the "identified and self-confessed killers".

Our DU Correspondent reports: Chhatra League (S-A), the student wing of Awami League at a rally on Sunday demanded clarification from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the alleged presence of Major Dalim at London during the visit of Sheikh Hasina there. The rally expressed concern at the presence of Kenya, at London during that time. It was part of a conspiracy to kill her, speakers at the rally said.

The Election of President Act, 1991 provides that the Chief Election Commissioner, who will conduct the presidential election will have to call a meeting of MPs with at least seven days' notice for the election. He will conduct the election at the Sangsad Bhaban with officials appointed by the Election Commission.

Supreme command

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At the Supreme Command Headquarters Division, she was received by the PSO to Supreme Commander of Armed Forces Brig MSA Bhuiyan.

Chiefs of the three services Lt Gen Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan of Army, Rear Admiral Mohaiminul Islam of Navy and Air Vice-Marshal Altaf Hossain Chowdhury of Air Force called on the Prime Minister there and exchanged views. Defence Secretary Anisur Rahman was present.

Begum Zia, in charge of the Ministry of Defence, went round different sections of the division.

She met the senior officers of the three services and exchanged views with them. She enquired about the health of the officers and other officials and employees there.

The Midnight File

China holds first military parade since 1984

HONG KONG, Sept 29: China on Sunday staged its first military parade since 1984 in an apparent move by the armed forces to show their support for the country's Communist leaders when communism is faltering in the world. More than 1,300 soldiers joined in the four hour parade in the southern city of Canton under threatening skies, media reports and Canton city officials said, according to AP.

UN team in Kuwait to survey border

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 29: A 10-man United Nations team arrived in Kuwait Sunday to carry out a land survey of the desert border between Iraq and Kuwait. A UN official said the group would present its findings to a five member commission established by UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, reports AP.

Emergency in Algeria lifted

ALGIERS, Sept 29: A State of Emergency imposed in Algeria on June 5 following fundamentalist riots was lifted today. Meanwhile the government is to send a bill to parliament providing authority for civilian authorities to call in the army in the event of fresh unrest, reports AFP.

Diarrhoea claims more

By Staff Correspondent

Fortyeight more people died of diarrhoea in the 26 flood hit districts raising the toll to 775 Sunday, according to official estimate. 340 people were attacked with the disease during the last 24 hours.

Unofficial estimate however suggested the death figure would be above one thousand because deaths in inaccessible areas could not be recorded by the inadequate number of health personnel.

The highest 150 diarrhoeal deaths were recorded in Nilphamari district till Sunday, officials said.

2,337 medical teams were working in the 20 affected districts. Meanwhile, overall flood situation in Sirajganj district improved Sunday with the fall of Jamuna and its tributaries.

but about 30,000 people in the low-lying areas of Magura, Naogaon, Madanagar and Deshgram unions of Tarash upazila still remained marooned.

The diarrhoea situation however improved in the district with 127 medical teams working round the clock.

With the recession of flood waters, erosion in rivers has posed a serious problem displacing people.

Erosion of the Meghna has taken a serious turn affecting an area of about 20 kilometres from Chandpur to Haimchar. Water Development Board sources said the flood control embankment of the Chandpur Irrigation Project, now only 300 feet off the river, may give in any time.

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Economic reforms

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adverse impact on the development budget of the government and the overall economy.

The meeting of the Committee of the Whole which was to be held on August 23 in Washington was thus postponed. A joint WB-IMF team visited Bangladesh early this month to assess the overall budgetary and economic impact of the announced national pay scales. Elaborate discussions were held between the members of the team and the government officials.

The Committee of the Whole took up the economic reforms programme under ESAP in Bangladesh for consideration in its meeting on September 26 after the joint IMF-WB team submitted its report. Its approval came following a favourable report by the team, the sources said.

The economic reforms, planned for 1991-92, the second year of ESAP, are incorporated in a Policy Framework Paper (PFP). The PFP for 1991-92 was prepared by the government in May in consultation with the staff of the World Bank and the IMF.

Official sources said, the endorsement of the PFP by the Fund's directors after the approval of the Committee of the Whole is a procedural formality.

The endorsement will facilitate the disbursement of about 110 million US dollar in three weeks time to Bangladesh by the IMF for the balance of payments support in 1991-92.

The sources said, the entitlement under ESAP for a member-country has recently been raised. Bangladesh can finally expect to receive funds, totalling 200 million dollar, under ESAP in 1991-92.

Meanwhile, country's foreign exchange reserves, now at about 900 million US dollar, are quite comfortable, the sources said. But, the build-up of foreign exchange reserves has been mainly due to slowed-down import activities in last three months. Imports slowed-down because of depressed demand and recessionary state of the economy in its organised sectors, the sources stated.

The slack in import trade is, however, likely to affect adversely the revenue receipts of the government from import-related activities in the coming months.

The revenue earnings in first two months of current fiscal year were more than 15 per cent higher than the corresponding period last year. This was mainly due to imports available in the pipeline as on June 30, 1991.

The government, the sources said, is considering steps to further liberalise procedural arrangements for import trade and to lower the margin requirements for opening letters of credits (LCs) for different items to activate the import trade. The announcement is likely to be made within a couple of weeks in this connection.

A five-member WB economic appraisal team, led by James Sackey, will meanwhile be arriving in Dhaka on October 10 on a fortnight's visit to make an overall assessment of the economic prospects of Bangladesh in 1991-92. This will be the first appraisal team from the Bank to make an overall economic review for the current fiscal year.

The visit will be followed by another team which will prepare the draft Country Economic Memorandum (CEM) for the next Paris consortium meeting. Before the aid group meets in Paris next year, there will be yet another team visiting Bangladesh to finalise the CEM.

Badrul firm to stay

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dential election but also on other important national issues, the CPB secretariat said in a resolution that the BNP could have taken the lead in this regard.

It also observed that in nominating a candidate the Awami League also did not

Samad Azad's call to elect Badrul Haider

Acting President of Awami League and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament), Abdus Samad Azad, on Sunday appealed to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to elect a non-partisan personality as the President of the republic on the basis of a national consensus, reports BSS.

In a statement, Azad also appealed to all Members of Parliament irrespective of their parties to elect the "national candidate", Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury, as President, showing the same spirit which they had shown while passing unanimously the Constitution 12th Amendment Bill in Parliament.

Azad said that his party expected that the post of the President would not be filled by a party candidate, rather it would be filled by a non-partisan person. To reflect the national will, the name of highly respected former Chief Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury has been proposed, Azad said adding, Chowdhury is neither an Awami Leaguer nor he is the candidate from the party. His nomination is the reflection of national will, he said.

The AL leader said his party had extended its hand of co-operation to the ruling party time and again on solving many national problems and was still ready to cooperate with the government. But, he regretted that the ruling BNP had turned down their gesture of cooperation.

He said it was the general expectation of the people that the ceremonial and constitutional office of the President, the symbol of national unity, would be adorned by person respected by all, but he regretted that due to the "uncompromising attitude" of the ruling party such a consensus could not be reached so far.

show its sincerity to reach a consensus. Democracy cannot take firm roots and democratic principles do not flourish in the absence of consensus on certain national issues, the CPB secretariat said.

It termed the provision of open election of President as incompatible with democratic principles.

Jamaat leader Maulana Matur Rahman Nizami told The Daily Star that Ganatantri Party MP Suranjit Sengupta had made a request for announcing the candidature of

Rules of Business

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with the parliamentary form of government.

But at the same time it alerted the government not to frame a rule which could pave the way for revival of an autocratic government.

In a resolution the Committee reminded the government about its commitment regarding removal of anomalies in the pay scale, cancellation of the illegal promotion to the post of Additional Secretary from Joint Secretary, declaration of all scales as grades and fixation of "warrant of precedence" on the basis of that gradation and appointment of staff from the cadre services to the Cabinet Division, Prime Minister's Secretariat, and Establishment Ministry.

The meeting observed that though the Prime Minister herself had made the commitment during her meeting with the leaders of the associations, the demands had not yet been fulfilled.

They have also demanded the fulfilling of all these demands immediately.

Demanding immediate implementation of these demands the meeting also said that the Rules of Business should be framed on the basis of constitutional policy and the number of public administrations to ensure decentralisation of power at different tiers of the administration, ministry and establishment division.

The meeting also observed that during the Ershad regime all the powers were centralised in the President's Secretariat and hoped during the period of the democratic government this centralised administration would not continue.

Sir Salimullah Muslim Orphanage

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O'Ammas Saira Fala Tanhar,
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