

Reforms and policies praised IMF sees steady growth in Bangladesh

WASHINGTON, Apr 23: Asian output and exports rose strongly in 1991 while inflation held steady and the region is expected to see a growth rate of 5.5 per cent a year in the short term, the IMF said Wednesday, reports AFP.

But the IMF noted in its world economic outlook report that the inflation performance of the region's fast-growing economies worsened further.

Real output in Asia grew by an estimated 5.75 per cent in 1991, while exports in volume terms grew almost 13 per cent, nearly four times faster than the growth of world trade.

"A significant proportion of the increase was due to growing intra-regional trade, especially exports to China and Japan," the report said.

China's growth increase to seven per cent despite severe floods, aided by a bumper harvest and more flexible monetary policy, and the outlook for sustained growth was good, the report said.

Regional inflation was fairly stable at 9.5 per cent in 1991, up from just under nine per cent the previous year, and is forecast to slow to 7.5 per cent by 1993, the IMF said.

But the report noted that moderate inflation in some countries was offset by a worsening performance in the seven fast-growing economies — Hong Kong, Indonesia,

South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

This was the result of "capacity constraints, labour shortages, and strong consumption and investment demand arising from a long period of rapid economic growth", the report said.

It noted that in an attempt to counteract this problem Indonesia had tightened monetary policy, while South Korea took measures to control overheated sectors of the economy and Malaysia and Thailand combined tight credit conditions with measures to improve supply.

Higher oil prices as a result of the Gulf War had also had an effect on inflation, but the Middle East crisis had a wider effect on many regional economies some of which rely on exporting labour to that region.

"The negative effect on Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka was attenuated by structural reforms and prudent policies," the report said, but India and the Philippines were less resilient.

India also suffered from the collapse of the Soviet Union, previously a major trading partner, as well as a shortage of foreign exchange.

The largest IMF credit arrangement in 1991, outside Eastern Europe was stand-by

credit for India totalling 2.3 billion dollars.

"Under present policies, growth is likely to be sustained in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Economic conditions in India and the Philippines could improve markedly if their reform programmes are implemented as planned."

The report said that developing countries' economic conditions and creditworthiness were strongly dependent on the external environment, but added that "it has become increasingly evident in recent years that the most decisive determinants of a country's economic performance are its own structural and financial policies."

"The remarkable growth record of the four Newly Industrializing Economies in Asia (Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan) is a frequently cited case in point."

The NICs had generally followed cautious fiscal and monetary policies to correct imbalances, the report said, and developing countries which had experienced problems with their external deficits such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand had often failed to exercise fiscal and monetary control at home.

The report was released to coincide with the spring meeting of the Washington-based IMF and the World Bank here.



Foreign Minister A S M Mustafizur Rahman receiving Myanmar counterpart Ohn Gyaung on his arrival at ZIA yesterday. — PID photo

Donors slam

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manifesto on which the government had been elected. The key steps that the government intends to take in the fiscal year 1992-93 are in three broad areas of priority, the press release noted.

On increasing public revenues and savings, steps will be taken to raise revenues by one-half per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually and control current expenditures, so as to gradually increase the domestic share of public investment to about 35 per cent by the mid-90s.

Measures will also be taken to establish consistent policies regarding compensation to retrenched employees, with a view to eliminating excess public-service officers and workers over a three-year period, and some 15 to 20 per cent by FY '93.

Steps are to be taken to reduce the combined systems loss of the PDB and the DESA from 41 per cent in February 1992 to 32-34 per cent by October 1992, and comparable reductions in other public service companies.

Steps will also be taken to reduce railways' financial loss by about 50 per cent between FY '92 and FY '93.

On the revenue generation front, measures will be taken to complete the privatisation of a 'significant' share of the 42 industrial units already identified for divestiture and for acceleration of the pace of privatisation in other public-sector enterprises.

To boost the private sector, according to the Bank press release, the government will take steps for early adoption of liberalised financial and trade regime, and rationalised tariff structure, to help re-gear the economy around an export-focused growth strategy.

The 1991 industrial policy

will be fully implemented and licensing, regulations and public-sector monopolies constraining private investment in industry and trade will be sharply reduced.

Steps will also be taken to restrain labour unrest and indiscipline and the relationship between wages and productivity and wage-levels in other relevant exporting countries will be taken into account to ensure competitiveness.

New policies and programmes will also be developed to ensure the ready availability of credit to small farmers and other producers. In emphasizing human development, the government will provide priority within the public expenditure budgets to improve the quality, effectiveness and coverage of basic human development services.

It will also introduce a new system of elected local self-government accountable to the electorate rather than to the bureaucracy and rely on NGOs with a proven track record to share with the government the responsibility for identifying as well as executing programmes to substitute for the overloaded government services or to supplement them.

The social safety net will also be expanded to serve the destitute population more adequately. The development partners and the government agreed at the meeting that with the application of the accelerated and simplified procedures for approval of projects and procurement of goods and services, a reasonable target of project aid disbursement would be about \$1,250 million in FY '93, at least 15 per cent above the likely figure in the current fiscal year.

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JP demands trial of Golam Azam

The central executive committee meeting of Jatiya Party ended Thursday night with a demand for trial of Golam Azam as "war criminal".

Party's Acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury chaired the meeting which discussed in detail the prevailing political and socio-economic situation, meeting sources said, reports UNB.

Other issues like Rohingya refugees, price-hike, drought in northern region, deterioration of law and order and "repressive measures" against the opposition, including JP, came up for discussion.

BDR man hanged to death in Jessore jail

JESSORE, Apr 23: A BDR sepoy was hanged to death in the Jessore Central Jail early today for killing his boss, jail sources said, reports UNB.

A court order to hang Mollah Rafiqul Islam (32) was executed at about 12.30 pm after his mercy petition had been rejected by the President, the sources said.

Rafiqul Islam, son of Shamsuddin of village Chhargam in Bagerhat district, was found guilty by the Jessore Judge Court of shooting Habilder Abdul Barez of 8th Battalion to death.

Top executives

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from BCI and bought huge property, it is alleged. These were registered under pseudo names to evade any action being taken by the authorities.

Finance Ministry sources said the BCI authority could not arrange fresh funds from different commercial banks for its normal transaction. The banks that did business with BCI have become reluctant to do so due to repeated allegations of 'unauthorised dealings' of the company.

They said BCI needs about Taka one crore to overcome the crisis. Sources said the ministry has been trying to contact the chairman of the company, Mustafizur Rahman, but could not do so as he was not available.

Sources said that when some officials of BCI asked to be financed by the company to meet the demand of the depositors, they were sacked.

Sources said the company was authorised by the Finance Ministry during the Ershad regime to expedite investment process.

According to rules, the company could borrow money from individuals or organisations for sums above Taka five lakh. It could also take money as investment above Taka one thousand.

It is alleged that the company started functioning more like a banking enterprise rather than an investment en-

Myanmar FM

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should be safe and get back their rights."

Besides holding official talks with a Bangladesh team led by Foreign Minister A S M Mustafizur Rahman, the Myanmar delegation will call on the President, the Prime Minister and other officials.

During their five-night stay, the members of the Myanmar delegation are scheduled to visit the Buddhist monastery at Paharpur.

Apart from some 2,20,000 Rohingya Muslims, about 5,000 Rakhaines who are Buddhists have also crossed into Bangladesh.

Prior to the delegation's departure on Tuesday, the two Foreign Ministers are scheduled to jointly address the press, sources said.

The 14-member Myanmar delegation includes Information Minister Brigadier-General Myo Thant as alternate leader, Director General of the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Aye, Director General of Immigration Department U Maung Aung and Director General of the Relief and Resettlement Ministry U Saw Thain.

Bangladesh delegation includes Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury as alternate leader, State Minister for Relief Lutfur Rahman Khan, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Additional Secretary in Charge of Relief Ministry, two Additional Foreign Secretaries, Director General of BDR, Bangladesh's Ambassador to Myanmar and other officials.

On the last night's developments in Yangon, Dhaka officials declined to comment.

General Saw Maung took over from Dr Maung Maung on August 18, 1988. Dr Maung succeeded Sein Lwin whose 17-day reign witnessed a severe bloodshed.

Earlier, on September 23, Ne Win, who ruled for 21 years, stepped down amid pro-democracy protests.

In May 1990, Aung San Su Kyi's National League for Democracy won a landslide victory in general elections but the ruling junta led by Saw Maung refused to hand over power.

Meanwhile, Dhaka authorities yesterday handed over the 15th instalment of the list of Rohingya refugees numbering 24,060. With it, the number stood at 191,263.

Chitta Dutta

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nial national conference at the Institution of Engineers in Dhaka.

He urged the donor countries to put pressure on the government to spend one-third of the foreign aid for the development of the Hindu, Buddhist and Christian communities in Bangladesh.

"Like the Rohingyas in Burma (Myanmar), houses of the minority communities in Bangladesh are being set ablaze, their lands taken with forged documents resulting in thousands fleeing to India for shelter and to escape persecution," General Dutta said.

"Do not leave Bangladesh... if the situation arises we, the three crore members of the minority communities will leave home en masse," he said.

Presided over by T Rozario, the inaugural function was also addressed by Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Rashed Khan Menon, Shudhanganj Shekhar Halder, Nurul Islam Nahid, A F M Mahbulul Huq, Dilip Barua, Suranjit Sengupta, Kader Siddiqui, Maulana Muhammad Iqbal Yusuf, Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Faiz Ahmed, Alhaj Syed Najibul Bashar Majibhandari, Prof Ahmed Sharif, Azizul Islam Khan, Maulana Ahmedur Rahman Azmi, Alhaj Abdus Samad, Justice K M Subhan and Sreemant Bodhipal Mahathero.

Former Chief Justice Kemaluddin Hossain attended the function as guest.

Poet Sufia Kamal inaugurated the conference.

Sufia Kamal called upon the people of the country to work unitedly for eliminating communalism from society.

She also pointed out to the Council leaders to include the word 'Muslim' in the name of the organisation.

Justice Kemaluddin Hossain in his speech said that the time had arrived to educate the people about the role of religion in the democratic state and urged all to shun politics of religion and communalism.

Awami League General Secretary Sajeda Chowdhury criticised the government for filing 'framed charges' against the organisers of the public trial of Golam Azam.

Rashed Khan Menon in his speech said that no state could move forward with contradictions in the basic principles of national life.

Kader Siddiqui in his speech said it was natural that the minority communities in any country felt some kind of mental pressure from the majority but that all of them were united on the basic state principles.

The Midnight File

13 injured in Delhi blast

NEW DELHI, Apr 23: At least 10 foreigners were among 13 people injured today when a bomb exploded inside a restaurant in a crowded central Delhi area, police said. Police suspected Sikh militants were behind the blast near New Delhi's railway station in a part of the city frequented by low-budget tourists, reports Reuters.

SAARC Foreign Secretaries

meet in Colombo Apr 27

COLOMBO, Apr 23: A special three-day meeting of standing committee of Foreign Secretaries of SAARC countries will begin here on April 27 to deliberate on vital matters like external linkages of the seven-nation group and changes in its charter to make the association more effective, reports PTI.

Two killed in Pak army

plane crash

KARACHI, Apr 23: A Pakistani army training aircraft crashed in Karachi Wednesday, killing at least two people, police said. But an ambulance service worker said at least four died when the aircraft crashed into an industrial area west of the city, reports Reuters.

Satyajit dead

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immediately after completing "Ghare Baire" based on Rabindranath Tagore's novel. He later had to undergo bypass surgery at Houston in the USA.

This kept him away from film-making for nearly three years. His doctors also advised him against shooting outdoors.

As a result, his recent films, including his last, "Agantuk", which bagged the Sarna Kamal Award for the best feature film and best direction at the 39th National Film Festival, were mostly shot indoors.

During an interview to PTI on December 21, probably his last to the press, he had said optimistically that he was getting better and his doctors had relented and he hoped to do more outdoor shooting for future projects.

Ray had then said that he was working on a script about a doctor and was planning to begin shooting sometime in

April this year, but fate has something else in store for him.

In the third week of December he was informed about his nomination for the honorary Oscar. He had planned to go to Los Angeles to receive it. "I am planning to go to America for a medical check up which I am planning to coincide with the Oscar Award ceremony on March 30," he had told PTI.

But as his condition continued to worsen, a three-member delegation of the Oscar Award Committee came down to Calcutta on March 16 to hand over the prized statuette to Ray and videotape the event.

This was later shown on a giant screen at the Oscar Awards Night on March 30, with Audrey Hepburn, Ray's favourite actress, officially announcing the conferment of the honorary Oscar to him.

PM dissatisfied

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one of the 15 ambulances kept at the CMSD which have been donated by Pakistan government for carrying out medicare operations for the Rohingyas refugees.

In course of her visit to the government dispensaries the Prime Minister went to Motijheel Government Dispensary, Zikatala Government Dispensary, Green Road Government Dispensary and Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Government Dispensary.

The Prime Minister was dissatisfied to see the lack of cleanliness in the dispensaries. She directed the concerned authorities to improve the condition and increase facilities there to provide proper medicare to the people. She also asked the authorities to supervise the dispensaries regularly for maintaining proper atmosphere.

The Prime Minister asked the concerned physicians and other employees of the dispensaries to timely attend their duties.

10 killed

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Mohammad Ali Hospital and Royganj Health Complex. Among them, the condition of five are stated to be critical.

In another accident that occurred at Kalai, a Dhaka-bound coach from Joypurhat (Dhaka-Metro-Ja 5499) skidded off the road into a ditch when giving side to a cycle. The cycle rider, Abu Sayed (45), was killed and three others were injured.

Two separate cases have been lodged in this connection.

Our Jhenidah correspondent reports: One person was killed and eleven others were injured in a road accident at Bluhar Square in Kutchandpur town Wednesday noon on the Kaliganj-Jhenidah-Jibannagar road.

According to eyewitnesses, a Kaliganj-bound bus (Pabna-Ba-1719) rammed into a tree beside the road.

Two critically injured people were admitted to Kutchandpur Hospital.

The dead was identified as Abdullah (38).

20 killed

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tively. The telecommunication between Mymensingh and Ishwarganj, Fulpur, Haluaghat and Nandail, was totally disrupted. The electric supply system of the areas was also disrupted due to the devastating tornado.

Meanwhile, the district authorities have set up eight medical teams to look after the people of the affected areas.

The authorities sent 20 metric tonnes of wheat to the people of the affected areas as relief.

Chira, milk and other relief materials were also distributed among the affected people by the upazila administrations of the two upazilas.

Ray's death condoled

By Staff Correspondent

A pall of gloom spread over the capital and other parts of the country Thursday evening as the news of the demise of the legendary Bengali film maker Satyajit Ray reached Bangladesh.

Telephones began buzzing in the news paper offices as cross section of people enquired details of the reports of the death of Ray whose name is highly revered in Bangladesh.

Leaders of different political, social and cultural organisations and individuals expressed their deep sympathy at the death of Ray who established Bengali films in the rank of world classic films.

They said the death of Ray was an irreparable loss to the Bengali culture.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia last night condoled the death of Satyajit Ray. Begum Zia in a message said his death was "an irreparable loss not only to India but also to the entire film world".

The Prime Minister conveyed her deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina in a note of condolence said Satyajit Ray added an international dimension to the Bengali films.

"He was an uncompromising cultural activist and his creativity opened a new horizon in the Bengali life."

She recalled with gratitude the role of Ray during Bangladesh's War of Independence and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Ritwik Film Society, Bangladesh, Udichti Shilpi Gosthi, Theatre, and Theater School in separate statements condoled the death of Satyajit Ray.

Saw Maung

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day accepted the doctors' advice and decided on Gen. Saw Maung's retirement."

Saw Maung, 63, had been widely reported in recent months to be suffering from a nervous disorder affecting his capacity to work.

Though the radio announcement did not specifically mention Saw Maung's retirement from his positions as armed forces supreme commander, prime minister and president, it was understood that "complete rest" meant he would retire from all his duties.

Since the reported decline in his health, Saw Maung had given up the posts of foreign minister and defense minister to colleagues.

Than Shwe, 58, has been holding the positions of army commander, deputy chairman of the SLORC, deputy supreme commander of the defense forces, and defense minister.

Political freedom

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stant Resident Representative and Amanullah Khan, Programme Officer, dwell on various aspects of the report.

The reports in 1990 and 1991 introduced the Human Development Index (HDI), which ranks countries not by Gross National Product but by combined rates of life expectancy, education and basic purchasing power.

The third report focuses more on the global dimensions of human development — how international trade, immigration and financial policies contribute to human development and income disparities between rich and poor nations.

This year's report adds a new dimension to human development saying political freedom is an essential element of human development.

Referring to the tide of freedom across the globe during 1991, the report observes that Bangladesh switched from martial law regimes to elected Parliamentary system. But the report adds, "close to a third of humankind still lives in countries that place restrictions on political freedom and participation. But the world today is a much freer place than it was three decades ago."

The checklist of indicators of political freedom, according to the report, includes personal security, rule of law, freedom of expression, political participation and equality of opportunity.

This year, Canada displaced Japan at the top of HDI for industrial countries, while Romania stays at the bottom. Among developing countries, Barbados remains at the top, while Guinea has replaced Sierra Leone at the bottom.

The report has called for major changes in the functioning of the World Bank, IMF, GATT, global environment facility and UN programmes to ensure better management of the global economy in the interests of all nations and all people, particularly to promote greater access of the developing countries to opportunities of global markets.

The report also makes an appeal for a development security council within the United Nations. The council would provide a prominent and powerful forum for global policy coordination, trusted by both industrial and developing countries.

The report further observes that restricted and unequal access to the world's financial, trade and labour markets costs developing countries and their poor populations \$500 billion annually. That is nearly ten times what those countries receive in foreign aid.

"The gap between the rich and the poor, according to the report, has doubled during the

past three decades, so that the richest fifth of the world's population now receives 150 times the income of the poorest fifth. If opportunities do not travel towards people, people will start travelling towards opportunities.

"It should never be forgotten that poverty needs no passport to travel across international frontiers — in the form of migration, environmental degradation, drugs, disease and political instability," warns the report.

The real causes of poverty and human deprivation are deeply rooted in the national policy actions of developing countries themselves. "Global environments should never be used as an alibi for domestic inaction nor can global reforms substitute for domestic reforms," says Dr Mahbulul Haq, the report's chief author and architect.

Reduction in military spending by 3 per cent a year through the 90s will create a peace dividend of 1500 billion dollars in industrialised nations and 300 billion in the developing countries, the report points out.

UNDP officials in Dhaka said 3 per cent reduction in Bangladesh's current military spendings — 370 million dollars a year — will save 97 million dollars annually by the year 2000. The saving could set up 608 new health centres in the country.

A unique institution styled as "honesty international," similar to Amnesty International, has been proposed to be set up. The report said such organization should monitor corruption both at national and international levels exposing both those who take bribes and those who offer them. This, the authors hope, would not only deter many officials and multinational staff from temptation, but would also give national legal system evidence to allow it to enforce law.

Hasina

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ing the terrorists instead of bringing them to book. The ruling party activists were attacking the workers of AL and its front organisations at different parts of the country, she alleged adding "but the government was lodging false cases against the workers of AL, Jubo League and Chhatra League and arresting them on false charges."

The AL chief regretted that the BNP government had not yet withdrawn the 'false' cases filed against her partymen during the autocratic regime.

In her statement, Hasina cited a number of incidents at Jessore, where, she alleged, her party workers were being harassed by police and attacked by the ruling party-backed terrorists.

Kabul

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acknowledged Hekmatyar met Rafie but said he bluntly told the Vice-President the government must surrender unconditionally or face an assault on the capital.

"Hekmatyar made it abundantly clear to Rafie that his regime was an illegal, puppet and tyrant one... therefore, no question of intra-Afghan dialogue on the future of Afghanistan arises with it," the Hizb-run Afghan News Agency (ANA) reported.

If the communists surrendered by Hekmatyar's deadline of April 26 they would be allowed a general amnesty. If not they would be punished.

"He said that Mujahideen did not believe in the intra-Afghan dialogue involving the treacherous and atheist communists and there was no question of a coalition with them," ANA said. While Hekmatyar's forces, armed by the United States and Pakistan, are massing south of Kabul, his old rival guerrilla commander Ahmad Shah Masood has a powerful army about 60 km (37 miles) to the north.

A defiant Hekmatyar has given Masood until the end of today (Thursday) to remove his forces from around Kabul's outer security belt or face attack. A senior government source said today that Masood was already in effective control of Kabul.

Masood was in league with Deputy Defence Minister Nabi Azimi and three other generals who had ousted President Najibullah from office a week ago, the government official said.

"Masood's men are inside Kabul city and number in the thousands. His military experts are sitting in military garrisons and are armed already," said the official who asked not to be named.

AFP adds: UN special negotiator for Afghanistan Venon Sevan said today he was pessimistic about a rapid agreement between the Afghan Mujahideen.

"So far no one is prepared to make a compromise about Afghanistan," he told a group of journalists.

Sevan urged all Afghan parties, which have Kabul encircled, to remain where they were and not to launch an attack, otherwise "it will be like a volcano".

"Don't precipitate a disaster," he said.

Sevan met with Pak Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Siddique Kanju, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.