

## C'wealth ministers' confce

## Back Third World democracies: Saifur

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman now visiting USA has called upon the international community to support developing democratic countries with increased funds, according to a message received here yesterday (Saturday), reports UNB.

Addressing the Commonwealth finance ministers conference in New York on Wednesday Rahman said developing countries like Bangladesh should be extended adequate support by way of private investment, market access to their products and significant debt relief.

He gave an outline of measures taken by his government in Bangladesh towards market-oriented economy during the last one year.

"Bangladesh firmly believed in the market-oriented economy, but it is regretted that various conditionalities (of aid giving countries) stood in the way of increasing allocation of funds for development," Rahman said.

He expressed the hope that international community particularly those who are also members of the Group-7 to help the poor countries in overcoming the difficulties of the transition period.

Rahman observed good governance, accountability and transparency alone cannot substitute favourable international climate for achieving growth in developing countries.

The Finance Minister said results of market-oriented measures and structural adjustment process cannot be achieved in a short time. "During the transition period, unemployment and other economic hardships can lead to social instability and tension threatening the democracy in a developing country like Bangladesh."

He particularly referred to the plight of the poor and the vulnerable groups due to the structural adjustment measures and stressed the importance of social safety net to mitigate sufferings of those people.

"It is extremely important for the developed countries particularly those belonging to G-7 to pursue policies that will help the developing countries overcome this difficult period."

Rahman also stressed the importance of taking into consideration the specific political, economic and social conditions of the developing countries while formulating structural adjustment policies.



Three of the Awami League General Secretary aspirants (L-R) Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Jalil and Tofael Ahmed MP at the council session yesterday. Who knows their fate as there are two more in the row. — Star photo

## AL: Discipline

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Those who came from the nearby areas marched through the streets carrying banners, placards and festsions.

Organisers said that 2,500 councillors and another 2,500 delegates from all the districts attended the inaugural function.

Also present on the occasion were thousands of party activists, sympathizers, guests from other political organisations, diplomats and representatives of international organisations and intellectuals.

Riot police were deployed outside the Engineers' Institution while plainclothesmen maintained strict security inside.

Veteran Awami Leaguers on arrival at the venue hugged each other and exchanged greetings while the younger ones stayed busy organising the opening function.

However, there were many who could not attend the opening function.

The road in front of the institution from Matsya Bhaban to Shahbagh crossing was closed at 3:15 pm and traffic diverted. Food and ice-cream vendors did brisk business.

Awami League President and chief guest at the opening function Sheikh Hasina arrived at the venue at about 3:30 pm. Minutes after, she hoisted the national flag as the National Anthem was played over scores of loudspeakers installed in and outside the venue.

Hasina also released white pigeons and balloons symbolising continued peace and freedom.

The Awami League General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury hoisted the party flag while district leaders hoisted their flags, each representing a district unit.

Sheikh Hasina and Begum Sajeda Chowdhury sat in the front row of the seats on the stage while other central leaders behind them.

A huge portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was set up on one side of the stage with garlanded pictures of the martyrs in the 1975 jail killings forming the background. Hasina garlanded the portrait of her father.

Artists of the Bangabandhu Sangskritik Parishad sang the National Anthem and "Joy Bangla-Bangla Joy."

The crowd overflowed the venue and spilled over to the Suhrawardi Uddyan and to the Ramna Park.

The opening function started with recitations from the holy Quran, the Bhagwat Geeta, the Bible and the Tripitak.

Awami League leader Tofael Ahmed then read out a long list of obituary references.

The audience, the Awami League leaders and workers stood for one minute in solemn silence to pay respects to the dead.

After the condolence, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, convenor of the reception sub-committee of the council session, delivered the address of welcome.

She was followed by Five-Party leader Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan and the Patriotic Democratic Front leader Nurul Islam Nahid, who spoke on behalf of the guests of different political organisations.

Hasina began speaking at the session at 5:10 pm and ended after an hour.

The inaugural ceremony of the council session ended at 6:30 pm.

## Mymensingh-3: Five submit nominations

Five candidates yesterday submitted their nomination papers for the bye-election in Mymensingh-3 constituency of the Jatiya Sangsad scheduled for October 15, reports UNB.

## Hasina opens Council Session

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The Party more organised and disciplined to achieve the goals of ensuring the economic well-being of the downtrodden in a democratic society free of all evils and injustices.

In her prepared seven-page speech, Hasina portrayed a brief scenario of the socio-political situation in the country since the Pakistan period, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's uncompromising leadership for the cause of people, the achievement of independence and the AL's crusade against autocracy since 1975.

Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, stressed on the urgency to make the Party "stronger, more disciplined and more well-organised" under the prevailing socio-political situation in the country.

Establishing democratic practices along with strengthening internal supervision and accountability in the party would be the basic guideline in administering the party, Hasina said.

"Disciplined democratic behavior and the successful completion of given responsibilities through self-purification and self-criticism will be the yardstick to evaluate the leaders and workers of the Party," Hasina declared.

She said that necessary amendments to the Party manifesto and Constitution had already been initiated in this regard. "I want to announce that immediately following the Council Session a drive would be initiated to set up a grassroots level organisational structure."

The AL leader reiterated the pledge to ensure the fundamental rights and economic emancipation of the people.

"We promise to ensure fundamental rights, justice, scrapping of black laws, separation of the judiciary, people's participation in state affairs and effective functioning of parliamentary democracy."

Recalling the course of events in the national life, she said, it had been proved that the Awami League was the only political party representing all sections of the people.

"Awami League was not born in the cantonment, it was born and-reared among the people. Awami League cannot be destroyed by conspiracies," Hasina declared.

The AL chief brought charges of gross inefficiency, mismanagement and needless politicisation of the administration against the ruling BNP.

## New AL leadership

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Secretary of the party's district level units.

Usually the subject committee unanimously proposes the list of the members of the party's fresh Central Working Committee before the council session for approval.

According to sources, the subject committee of the council will meet tonight for selecting the new leadership. But the Working Committee sources told The Daily Star last night that most of the subject committee members are likely to authorise Sheikh Hasina to select the new General Secretary for the party among at least four contestants for the post.

Meanwhile, the incumbent Organising Secretary of the party Tofael Ahmed MP, former BKSAL leader Abdur Razzak MP who merged his party with AL August last year, party Joint Secretary Amir Hossain Amu and other Joint Secretary of the party Abdul Jalil are known to be the aspirants for the post of General Secretary of the AL.

All these four candidates for the party's second top position were seen yesterday

that she said had resulted in a severe deterioration of law and order in the country.

Denouncing the promulgation of the Anti-terrorism Ordinance bypassing Parliament, she voiced her fear that it would deny people their fundamental rights.

She recalled that as a responsible opposition party the Awami League had offered co-operation, proposed formation of a parliamentary sub-committee and even suspended its students wing the Chhatra League's activities at the Dhaka University, to curb terrorism on the campus. "But the government turned down our hand of cooperation."

Hasina charged that the

refugee problem effectively. Despite agreements with Myanmar, she added, the government has failed to send back a single refugee.

Referring to the long-standing unrest in the Chittagong Hill Tract region, the AL chief, noting her Party's proposal to set up a parliamentary committee, blasted the government inability to bring about a political solution to the problem.

Leaders of different political organisations present at the function included Nirmal Sen of Samik Krishak Samajbadi Dal, Bimal Biswas of the Workers Party, Khalequzzaman Bhuiya of the BSD, Nurul Islam Nahid of the Communist Party, A F M Mahbulul Huq of the BSD, Pankaj Bhattacharya and Maulana Ahmedur Rahman Azme of the NAP, Hasanul Huq Inu and Kazi Aref Ahmed of the JSD, and Nurul Alam of the Gana Azadi League.

Other personalities present were Dr Wajed Ali Mia, Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Architect Majharul Islam, K M Sobhan, Gazul Huq, Advocate Shamsul Huq Chowdhury, Rangul Sen, A K Azad Chowdhury, Harunur-Rashid, S A Malek and Advocate Syed Ahmed.

World Bank country representative Christopher Willoughby, Deputy Indian High Commissioner Amitabh Tripathi, US diplomat James F Cole and PLO Chage-d'Afaires Shahta Jarab were also present.

BSD leader Khalequzzaman blasted the Anti-terrorism Ordinance and said that "the Ordinance empowered the law-enforcing agencies to arrest even the participants of this council after they go out of this area."

He said that instead of repealing the Special Powers Act according to the declaration of the Three Alliances, this government promulgated another black ordinance and passed the Special Security Force Bill in Parliament.

He said that CPB leader Ratan Sen was killed and the Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon was shot and critically injured but the government failed to curb terrorism or punish the culprits.

Nurul Islam Nahid of the CPB said that as long as the law barring the trial of the killers of Sheikh Mujib remained in force, the fight against terrorism would be difficult.

He hoped that the Awami League would take initiative to unite the pro-independence forces to help establish a democratic system.

## Montu's plea

By Staff Correspondent

The expelled Awami League leader Mostafizur Rahman Montu Saturday appealed to the Party councillors and delegates at the Council Session for justice against the expulsion order on him.

A four-page open letter from Montu was discreetly distributed among the participants at the Awami League session which began Saturday in the capital.

The letter accused "some ambitious leaders and conspirators" of trying to "pocket" the Party and said that the main crisis within the Awami League focused on a clash between the internal democratic system and the one-man leadership.

"I submit my statement for justice from the councillor-delegates whom I consider my supreme court," the letter said.

government was pursuing a policy of politicisation and occupation instead of nurturing the nascent democratic system and an accountable administration. "Arrangements are on to set up neo-autocracy instead of eliminating the autocratic system," she added.

Hasina also went on to criticise the government economic and foreign policies.

She blamed government's "unguarded" import and "tax-laden" export policies for what she said a near collapse of trade and commerce and sagging industrial production.

On the foreign policy front, Hasina said that the BNP government had completely failed to deal with the Rohingya

## One killed as bandits hurl crackers

By DMCH Correspondent

An employee of the Fisheries Department, Jonab Ali, was killed in a blast at Mirpur in the city early Saturday.

A group of bandits while fleeing from a house hurled crackers at Jonab Ali who was chasing them. He was immediately rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors on duty declared him dead at 3:30 am yesterday.

The people of a house of Colony No-1 at Lalkuti, Mirpur, raised hue and cry as they saw the bandits storming into the house. Jonab Ali a residence of a nearby house came out of his room hearing the shouting at around 2:30 am yesterday, witnesses said.

About five bandits, who were attempting to rob the house, fled after they had hurled crackers at Jonab Ali, witnesses added.

The 50-year-old victim was a peon of Fisheries Department. He left behind his wife and two sons.

## The Midnight File

## Germany under pressure to cut interest rates

WASHINGTON, Sept 19: Finance officials of the world's seven richest industrial countries conferred Saturday in an effort to find a successful joint strategy to calm the worst currency crisis in two decades. Pressure was building on Germany to do more to relieve strains on the system by cutting interest rates further but German Finance Minister Theo Waigel pointedly told reporters "blaming one side doesn't advance matters, it just leads to mistakes," reports AP.

## Kashmiris protest death of 11 in police custody

JAMMU (India), Sept 19: Hundreds of Muslims launched rallies in Kashmir today to protest the death of 11 militants allegedly in police custody earlier this month in this troubled northern Indian province. Police said the street protests flared in Srinagar, Kashmir's summer capital, and in the towns of Sopore and Baramullah, centres of a regional Muslim drive for the states' secession from India, reports AFP.

## Jharkhand militants step up violence

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: Tribal militants campaigning for a homeland in Bihar stepped up violence today in a bid to prevent the supply of coal from the eastern province to steel and power plants throughout India, reports said. The Press Trust of India (PTI) said the activists belonging to the Jharkhand Peoples' Party (JPP) and All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) blew up train tracks at three places in Bihar's mineral-rich areas to halt goods trains, reports AFP.

## Four killed, 20 hurt in road mishaps

By Staff Correspondent

At least four people were killed and 20 others injured in three separate road accidents in Narayanangj, Sherpur and Savar late Friday night and Saturday.

Our Narayanangj Correspondent reports: Two persons were killed and 20 others wounded when a minibus skidded off and plunged into a roadside ditch after hitting a truck on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway near Mukti Sarani yesterday morning.

The victims were identified as Alauddin, 35, helper of the truck and a minibus passenger Fazlul Haq, 30.

The truck helper died on the spot while the bus passenger succumbed to his injuries at the Narayanangj Sadar Hospital immediately after his admission. All the injured persons were admitted at the same hospital.

In another incident, a young doctor, Moslemuddin, 35, was killed when a truck ran over him at Kandapara in Sherpur town yesterday morning.

Moslemuddin was a doctor of Nalibata Thana Health Complex.

Our DMCH Correspondent reports: Montaj Majhi, 65, a pedestrian was killed when he fell under the wheels of a speeding truck on the Dhaka-Aricha Highway near Parabot Cinema Hall late Friday night.

One gets life term for killing student

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 19: A man was awarded life imprisonment and fined Tk 5,000 here today for killing a student of Sirajganj Government College on March 19, 1988, reports UNB.

The Additional District and Session Judge pronounced the judgement after the accused, Zinnah (22) of village Ariamohan, was tried in absentia.

Meeting venues

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But his suggestion was not entertained by others on security grounds of the Bangabhaban and traffic movement in the Gulistan area. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner was also present at the meeting.

Sources said that the recommendations of the Sub-Committee would soon be considered in the 10-member Parliamentary Standing Committee headed by the Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah.

Food security

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He also hoped that Bangladesh would play an active role in the international conference on nutrition due in Rome in December.

Among those who had earlier made keynote speech on the subject include Chancellor Willy Brandt of Germany, late Prime Minister Olof Palme of Sweden, Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers of the Netherlands, President Abdou Diouf of Senegal and Prime Minister Mario Soares of Portugal.

The tour will provide an opportunity for leaders of the two countries to exchange views on bilateral relations and regional and international matters of common concern.

During her stay in Rome, Begum Zia is scheduled to meet President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, Prime Minister Giuliano Amato and other leaders of Italy.

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman and Agriculture Minister M Majidul Haq will accompany Begum Zia during the visit.

Late President Ziaur Rahman addressed the World Conference on Agrarian Reforms and Rural Development in the Italian capital in 1979.

Bangladesh's bilateral relations with Italy, one of her emerging trading partners, have been expanding fast in various fields.

Bangladesh exported 200 million US dollar worth of goods to Italy last year, and exports this year are expected amount up to 225 million dollars.

Italy has so far pledged 91 million US dollars in grant and soft loan to Bangladesh.

Rome also provided an emergency assistance of 17 million US dollars to Dhaka following the devastating cyclone in late April last year.

## Operation Push Back

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Delhi, decades ago, are being evicted to send them to Bangladesh for political reasons.

The sources say these Bengalis, who have always voted for the ruling Congress (I), shifted their support to the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Observers watching the developments interpreted the initiative as an act of vengeance.

BSS adds: The Foreign Office spokesman said, the Government of Bangladesh expressed its deep concern at the sudden and abrupt developments and the manner and motivations that governed them.

He said the position of Bangladesh government on the movement of people across the long 4144 km Indo-Bangladesh border is clear and unambiguous.

It has never, now or anytime in the past, encouraged in any manner whatsoever any form of illegal immigration, the spokesman pointed out adding that this continues to remain its consistent policy.

While denying that there

are any illegal Bangladesh immigrants in India, the Bangladesh government has said, however, that over the past four decades there has always been a two-way flow of people across the Indo-Bangladesh border of a temporary nature due to religious, cultural and other reasons.

The spokesman said position of the Bangladesh government on the issue of illegal immigrations was categorically made clear in a rejoinder issued on May 30, 1992 in response to a news item circulated by Press Trust of India on the subject.

The rejoinder was given wide publicity both in the Indian and Bangladeshi media.

It was pointed out in the rejoinder, the spokesman said, there was two-way flow of people on temporary nature across Indo-Bangladesh borders owing to religious, cultural and other reasons.

It is, therefore, the spokesman clearly said, wrong and absolutely unfair to single out Bangladesh and state that illegal influx from Bangladesh into India is taking place.

## Gold smuggling case

## DB interrogating two Pakistanis

By Staff Correspondent

Two Pakistani nationals arrested Friday evening in connection with smuggling 18 kilograms of gold were detained in the Detective Branch (DB) office in the city Saturday.

Airport customs surveillance and intelligence teams arrested Rashida, 29, and Shakir Ali Azmi, 23, with 104 gold bars and 600 gold chains weighing about 18 kg when they arrived at the Zia International Airport (ZIA), Dhaka, from Karachi, Pakistan by an Emirates flight, EK-610, Friday evening.

Customs officials handed over the two accused to Dhaka Cantonment Police Saturday morning and a case was registered against them on charge of smuggling 18 kg gold into Bangladesh.

## Biman

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to bring New Delhi, Hong Kong, Ho Chi Minh City and Seoul in its network in phases.

The airlines' next winter schedule will include flights to Delhi, Hong Kong and Seoul. An accord has already been initiated to operate flights to New York via Delhi.

In another major midhaul operation, F-28 will fly once a week from the port city of Chittagong to Bangkok directly.

Meanwhile, the Biman has also decided to go for a freighter service to boost its cargo-carrying facilities. The service, at the initial stage, will be operated with a leased aircraft.

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