

# Dhaka wants more trade, not aid, Saifur tells Keating

Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating assured Bangladesh Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman of increased trade between the two friendly countries, reports BSS.

Rahman told the newsmen in Dhaka yesterday morning at Zia International Airport on his return from Australia after a week-long visit at the invitation of the Australian government.

The Finance Minister said that he had met the Australian Prime Minister on October 13 in Canberra and briefed him on the recent economic and fiscal policy reforms undertaken by the present government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

Rahman specially emphasised Australia's possible investment in Bangladesh in the form of joint ventures in areas like coal exploration, livestock and cattle development, dairy farming and processing of hides and skins and aluminium processing.

The Australian Prime Minister showed his keen interest to strengthen further the bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

"I am not looking for more aid but for more trade and more Bangladeshi exports into Australia," Rahman told the

Australian Prime Minister. Paul Keating said that his country was now interested to expand relationships with the South Asian countries particularly with Bangladesh.

The Finance Minister during his stay in Australia also met Australian Treasurer (Finance Minister) John Dawkins, Foreign Minister Gareth Evans and Minister for Trade and Overseas Development John Kerin.

Rahman said that in his meeting with the Australian Foreign Minister the Rohingya refugee problem had come up for discussion. He sought Australian cooperation in forming international opinion to resolve the issue.

The Australian Foreign Minister expressed his concern about the problem and assured him of all possible cooperation from the Australian government for immediate repatriation of the Rohingya refugees, he said.

In his meetings with the Treasurer and the Minister for Trade and Overseas Development, Rahman drew their attention to the persisting unfavourable balance of trade between the two countries and suggested increased Australian imports from Bangladesh to narrow the yawning trade gap. Rahman met a group of

Australian investors at a luncheon hosted by the Australian Minister for Trade and urged them to invest in Bangladesh. He told them about the congenial investment atmosphere now prevailing in Bangladesh after necessary policy reforms and improved law and order.

The Australian side expressed satisfaction on the various policy initiatives, taken by the present government and gave indications for enhanced Australian aid to Bangladesh and hinted to explore Australian investment possibilities in Bangladesh, the Finance Minister said.

## Tk 25000 looted from bakery

By DMCH Correspondent

Extortionists severely beat the owner of a bakery and looted Taka 25,000 in cash at Mogbazar in the city yesterday night.

A group of trouble-mongers who earlier demanded tolls to Mohammad Kasem Mia, owner of Chand Bakery at Mogbazar, stormed into the shop at around 9 pm last night, severely beat the owner and looted Taka 25,000 in cash, the victim said.



Sheikh Hasina addressing a discussion meeting organised by Russel Jatiya Shishu Kishore Parishad on the occasion of Russel's 28th birth day in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Rao due in Kathmandu today Police, protesters clash in Nepal: 17 held

KATHMANDU, Oct 18: An anti-government transportation strike was foisted early today when police arrested 17 communist activists in the southwestern town of Mahendra Nagar, party sources said, reports AFP.

The police action undermined the 24-hour 'wheel-jam' strike along the Mahendra National Highway to Kathmandu called by members of the Nepal Communist Party-United Marxists-Leninists (NCP-UML) in the town, located 390 kilometres (240 miles) from here.

The strike was to protest against a police firing Thursday night in which seven people were injured following disturbances over a controversial water project.

Thursday's disturbance had erupted after activists carrying protest letters to Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao and Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala were prevented from going to Kathmandu and detained by police.

Rao is to begin a state visit to Nepal starting Monday. The letter opposed an agreement between the two countries over a hydro-electric power and irrigation project to be built by India.

After the police intervened in Rupandehi township, 290 km (180 miles) southwest of Kathmandu, protesters began setting up roadblocks with boulders and tree trunks.

When police tried to clear the roadblocks the activists went on the attack with makeshift weapons, prompting the police to fire on them, leaving seven injured.

The arrests in today's protest included NCP-UML parliamentarian Prem Singh Dhama, advocate Bhoj Raj Joshi, pro-leftist journalist Rishi Raj Lamsal and a woman activist Shanti Joshi, local police said.

The controversial memorandum of understanding between New Delhi and Kathmandu paves the way for completion of a 120-megawatt hydroelectric power and irrigation project to be built by India that involves an embankment in Nepalese territory.

Hasina appealed to the countrymen to stand against the government's 'conspiracy' to, what she said, protect the killers and offenders.

"The ruling party is now playing hide-and-seek on the question of indemnity Act", Hasina said, "despite its earlier commitment to annul the black laws".

Besides, she remarked, a national consensus had been emerged on holding the trial of those "who staged the heinous crime of murdering the father of the nation."

"The government's unwillingness to repeal the ordinance is obstruction democracy's onward march."

Hasina became emotional while narrating the tragic episode of the black night of August 15. The killers even did not spare her youngest brother Russel.

Describing the scene of killing Russel, an emotion-choked Hasina said, "when Russel was screaming for going to my father, the killers took him upstairs near the bodies of my father and mother and killed him."

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## Hasina: Parliament

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won democracy and plug the conduit of capturing state power through killing in future".

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# The Midnight File

## Afghan govt to withdraw militia

KABUL, Oct 18: The beleaguered Islamic government bowed Sunday to renegade rebel Chief Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's demand that a commando-style militia leave the capital. Shomali Khan told reporters outside the heavily fortified Presidential palace where he met interim President Burhanuddin Rabbani that troops would leave Kabul Monday.

## ME talks open Wednesday

JERUSALEM, Oct 18: Palestinians left today for the seventh round of peace talks in Washington warning that the escalation in killings on the occupied territories undermined the urgency of a settlement. "I regret the loss of life especially innocents on both sides," said Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace negotiations, which open on Wednesday, reports AFP.

## New Kuwaiti cabinet sworn in

KUWAIT, Oct 18: A new 16-man Cabinet that includes six politicians drawn from opposition ranks — the largest number ever — was sworn in Sunday. In a ceremony at Bayan Palace, the ministers pledged to the Emir, Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah to respect the constitution, abide by the law and defend the people's freedoms, interests and financial interests. The same oath will be taken by deputies of the 50-member parliament on Tuesday as it begins its first session following elections earlier this month in which opposition candidates took 35 seats, reports AP.

# From the Gallery

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splendidly attired in a gleaming white safari suit, said he was new in the House (after 18 months of regular sittings) and that he would only learn what the elders (Nasim?) taught him. As far as Akhteruzzaman was concerned, what Nasim "taught" him was not a novice parliamentarian should learn at all.

"When the minister had already started speaking, Nasim stood up and demanded the floor. He kept on standing, giving the impression as if he had some sort of right over the floor, as if he had to be given the floor", complained the retired warrior.

This was not, the Major maintained, the sort of example to set, as "We want to follow the rules and become good parliamentarians", he said.

Speaker Shaikh Razaque Ali didn't seem terribly impressed by this discourse on ethics, and confined himself to mumbling "well, if the minister does not say anything, what can I do", or something to that effect.

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## 9 Nirmul body men sent to jail in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 18: Nine leaders of the Ghatat-Dalal Nirmul Committee, including district unit convenor and local correspondent of the Ittefaq Aminul Islam Chowdhury, were sent to jail with a murder charge after they surrendered to the court today, reports UNB.

They were among 24 activists of the committee who appeared before the Sadar Thana Magistrate today in connection with the Kashem murder case. Fifteen of them were enlarged on bail.

Eight others sent to jail today are district JSD president Abdul Hye Talukder, convenor of the district BSD Fitroze Bhuiyan, member of central BSD labour wing Abu Bakr Bhuiyan, district CPB secretary

## Dissension

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defused and overlapped among different institutions such as the Controller of Capital Issues, Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and other bodies," ADB said in a report.

Presently, the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies is under the Commerce Ministry while the Controller of Capital Issues is under the Finance Ministry.

The proposed commission will be under the Ministry of Finance.

Observers note that majority of the countries around the world have a similar singular body to regulate the capital market. In the Asian region, India, Thailand and Malaysia have formed such a body earlier this year.

## PM: Italians

From Page 1 Col 4

Items. She said that the Italian government had assured of help in the modernisation of the Zia International Airport and the construction of the Rupsha Bridge and some other areas.

Referring to her talks with the chief executives of the FAO, IFAD, WFP, the Prime Minister said that these organisations had renewed their pledges to help Bangladesh.

Earlier, on arrival, she was received by Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz, other cabinet colleagues, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Myntar Ambassador Soe Myint, Italian Charge d' Affaires.

During the press briefing, the Law Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Information Minister and the Foreign Secretary were present.

BSS adds: Replying to a question, the Prime Minister said her "Daal-Bhat" approach as a means of poverty alleviation in countries like Bangladesh earned laurels from different quarters.

Answering a question about IFAD's plan to control flood in Bangladesh since the organisation had considered the floods here in 1988 as due to "Parakka" problem, Begum Zia said the IFAD had taken up plans towards flood protection here.

## DB to probe gold case

By Staff Correspondent

Detective Branch (DB) of police Sunday was entrusted with the investigation of the gold-case lodged with Cantonment Police Saturday.

Customs officials Saturday noon seized about 65 KG of gold bars from a baggage of one Syed Amir Ali, of 151 Bangla Bazar, at the Air Freight Department of the Zia International Airport (ZIA). The gold was smuggled from Singapore, customs sources said.

Later a Customs Superintendent Kazi Golam Mostafa lodged a case with Cantonment Police in this connection Saturday night, said police.

Meanwhile, following a directive from the higher authorities, the case was handed over to the Detective Branch yesterday.

Deputy Commissioner of DB police in Dhaka told The Daily Star that they had received the case but were yet to start the investigation.

Meanwhile police rushed to Bangla Bazar, but they did not find any house bearing number 151 and could not trace out Syed Amir Ali, a police source said.

## Revenue

From Page 1 Col 8

earnings was Taka 8,480 crore and the collection in the first three months was 21.33 per cent of the annual target of '92-'93.

In reply to Mirza Azam (Jamalpur-3) the minister informed the House that an amount of Taka 36.76 crore was realised following the enactment of the "Artha Rin Adalat Act."

He told Maulana Sakhawat Hossain (Jessore-6) that the amount of demand deposit and fixed deposit in the commercial banks stood at Taka 5691.55 crore and 19,582.28 crore respectively till August 27, '92.

Replying to another question of Prof Rafiqul Islam (Jessore-2) the Finance Minister said that on September the foreign exchange reserve stood at 1,720 million US dollar which is the highest since independence.

On February '90 the reserve was little over 456.7 million US dollar, the Finance Minister said.

The Finance Minister refuted a supplementary question on whether such huge reserve put an "ominous impact" on the country's overall trade and said that the reserve to meet five months import could be considered as normal and satisfactory for a country like ours.

Currently on an average 300 million dollars were spent monthly on account of imports. He termed the liquidity position as satisfactory and informed the House that his ministry directed the banks to release more credits for economic activities.

He urged the businessmen to come forward to take help from the commercial banks in proper ways.

The Finance Minister in reply to another supplementary question said that the government has no plan to repay the foreign loans from the country's reserve.

## BSF

From Page 1 Col 5

through Jubannagar Para of Maheshpur thana in Jhenidah district.

BDR resisted all the attempts and sent the people back to the Indian soil, according to the sources.

During a trip to different frontier villages in Jessore and Jhenidah districts today, this correspondent found the morale of the people high and they had formed small vigilance teams to accompany the BDR patrolmen.

Talking to this correspondent, community leaders of different villages of Chougacha thana in Jessore and Maheshpur thana of Jhenidah districts said that the Indian "Operation push back" was an act of bad neighbourliness.

"The pushing of these Bangla-speaking people collected from different parts of India and herding them into a neighbouring country is very inhuman and barbaric," said Shaikh Razaque Ali said, adding "I cannot say anything more at this moment."

JP stalwart Mizanur Rahman Choudhury stood up and sought a statement of the Law Minister regarding the bill.

Mirza Hafiz noted that the Parliament Secretariat has already sent a bill, to be placed as private members bill, to the ministry.

"We are scrutinizing the contents of the bill and if it is possible to bring it as a government bill we will do it or else it will come as a private members bill within the next few days," the minister said, adding "in that case if we have any objections we will place it before the House at that time."

Mirza Hafiz also observed that the Parliament Secretariat in both India and Pakistan and other SAARC countries are run under the rules of procedure. "We will provide our views when the time comes," he said.

Recalling that the Law Minister himself strongly advocated for a Parliament Secretariat while he was a Speaker in 1979, JP leader Moudud Ahmed asked "does he not feel as strongly as before that a Parliament Secretariat should be set up?"

Ganotantri Party leader Suranjit Sengupta pointed out that Article 79 of the Constitution says that a sovereign parliament should have a Parliament Secretariat.

"Get over this deadlock," Sengupta pleaded "there is no scope to violate the constitution." He called for introducing the Parliament Secretariat Bill as a government bill as soon as possible.

Addressing the function, Amu commented that this government's anti-terrorism drive was only to hoodwink the people and not the curb terrorism.

Mohammad Nasim said Sheikh Hasina met the Prime Minister's nephew Anaru remembering her brother Russel. But he alleged, the state-controlled mass media attempted to assassinate the character of a section of the political leadership capitalising the issue.

Later, Sheikh Hasina distributed awards among the members of the parishad for their outstanding results in this year's SSC examinations.

Milad Mahfil and Quran Khawani were held at the Bangabandhu Bhaban and the students of Sobhanbagh Darul Ulum Madrasa were fed lunch in observance of the birth anniversary of Russel.

# Secretariat Bill

From Page 1 Col 8

Taking the floor on a privilege motion, Jatiya Party leader Monirul Huq Choudhury brought it to the Speaker's attention that non-introduction of the Parliament Secretariat Bill was an infringement on his privilege as a member.

"I am hoping that the Parliament Secretariat Bill will be placed before the House in this session and I request the Law Ministry to take necessary measures," the Speaker said.

Shahjahan Siraj, the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader, requested the Speaker to read out the Privilege Committee decision taken earlier in regard to the Parliament Secretariat Bill.

"We are hoping that after the existing misunderstanding about the bill is sorted out it may be possible to place the bill during this session," Shaikh Razaque Ali said, adding "I cannot say anything more at this moment."

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