

# No scope for interest-free loan, Saifur tells JS

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman last night told the Jatiya Sangsad that there was no scope for providing loan to anybody without interest, reports BSS.

He was replying to a private member's resolution moved by Jamaat member Sheikh Ansar Ali proposing that steps be taken to give interest-free loan to the farmers.

Rejecting the resolution, the Finance Minister said interest free economic system had not been established in the country.

Under the existing system, banks could not extend interest free loan as the banks were to pay interest to the depositors.

Referring to the functioning of the Saudi based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) he said even the IDB charges high rate for loan, though not in the name of interest but in the name of profit.

The Finance Minister appreciated the Jamaat member for his concern for the welfare of the farmers and said the

present democratic government under the leadership of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had given top-most importance to the welfare of the farmers and improvement of the country's agricultural system.

He said the government was spending the huge amount of money on the development of irrigation and flood control system.

The Finance Minister said the programmes taken up by the nationalist government for the economic emancipation of the people would help improve the condition of the peasants.

It is not the interest-free loan but the infrastructural facilities like provision of irrigation system and flood control measures that would benefit the farmers and help increase farm production, the Finance Minister said.

Defending the Islamic Development Bank Sheikh Ansar Ali said IDB did not charge any interest. They take service charge only.

## Ahmedyya mosque

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'Inaction' against the perpetrators of the 'blatant attack' on the members of a religious community.

Saying that a section of 'religion peddlers' attacked the Ahmedyya complex in Bakshibazar, he said they were using religion to create an issue to destabilise the religious harmony in the country.

The CPB leader demanded a statement from the Home Minister regarding the actions taken against the alleged attackers of the Ahmedyya complex.

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury informed the House that police had been deployed at the complex to ensure that no such incident recurred in the future.

'Many of those who were involved in the incident have been already arrested and they will be tried according to the existing laws of the country,' he added without elaborating.

Jamaat-e-Islami member Sheikh Ansar Ali took the floor and criticised those who defend the Ahmedyyas saying that as the Kadianis do not abide by the Holy Quran and the Hadith they should be declared non-Muslims.

Shamsuddoha was furious at the insinuation by the Jamaat member and immediately jumped to his feet in protest and sought the floor.

But Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni refused to give him the floor as he did not want the debate on the subject to be prolonged any further.

## Jamaat leader murder case: 4 granted bail, 5 refused

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 5: Sadar Thana Court today granted bail to four persons and rejected that of five others, accused in the murder case of local Jamaat leader Abul Kashem, reports UNB.

Kashem died in a clash between activists of Jamaat and Nirmul Committee in the town on May 13. Ameer of district Jamaat Jamil Bari filed a case against 51 persons in this connection.

The court granted bail today to Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) district unit President Abdul Hai Talukder, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote Convenor Ashaduddin Papiu, Convenor of the District Muktiyoddha unit Sahjan Ali Tara, Secretary of Ekok Sangha Club Shafuluddin Sharif.

Five others whose bail petitions were rejected are: District unit Convenor of Ghatat Dalal Nirmul Committee Amirul Islam Chowdhury, District unit Convenor of BSD Firoze Bhuiyan, member of Sramik Sangha of BSD Abu Bakr Bhuiyan, CPB district unit Secretary Ismail Hossain and Sadar Thana Deputy Commander of Muktiyoddha Sangsad Fazur Rahman.

Of the accused, 20 persons have been granted bail, six are in jail and 25 are absconding.

# SKOP calls hartal

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of solving existing problems in the industrial belt.

Steps are being taken against the interest of the working class, they observed and said the Anti-terrorism Bill was passed in parliament to increase and consolidate the ruling party power, which they said was in violation of ILO Convention and UN Charter.

The government, breaching the July 6 agreement with SKOP and with advice and under pressure of World Bank and IMF, continued retrenchment in mills and factories, the trade union leaders alleged.

Moves are there to hand over even the service sectors like T&T, riverine transport and power to private sector when the disinvested mills and factories are being closed down, they said.

'We firmly believe that congenial atmosphere could be created by developing management and solving the crisis in the industrial belt,' the SKOP statement said.

Proper steps were not taken to protect local industries although the government agreed to do so, it said, adding government's wrong economic and industrial policies allowing free import, uneven competition and disinvestment have turned the country into a market of foreign goods.

Patkal Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad and Suta-Bastrakal Sramik-Karmachari Federation announced their programme at a separate press conference.

They urged the government to resolve crises in the two sectors through discussion before November 29.

Abul Bashar, Convenor of the Sangram Parishad, told the news conference that the government didn't concede to major demands of jute and textile workers, including Wages Commission, even after entering into an agreement with them last December.

Government's free-market economic policy has turned the country into a market for Indian yarn and fabrics, he said, adding more than a thousand small and medium textile mills were closed down after

the government signed agreement with the Parishad on December 19, 1991.

The government on prescription of World Bank not only destroyed country's jute market abroad but was also closing down local jute mills, he alleged.

Besides, he said, the government did not take any step to retain world jute market when India devalued its currency to increase its export.

The trade union leader further accused the government of destroying domestic textile industries by not implementing the July 27 accord. By closing down the textile mills, the government has already 'finalised' handover of yarn and fabrics market to foreign countries.

He also criticised the passage of the get-tough Anti-terrorism Bill.

Replying to a question, Bashar said the 'so-called nationalist government' had opened up everything for foreign exploitation by swallowing the prescription of World Bank and IMF instead of protecting country's interest.

Garments Sramik Union brought out procession in the city in support of the 48-hour strike.

## Clinton

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guided just as he was during the campaign:

'I am going to focus like a laser beam on this economy, and foreign policy will come into play in part as it affects the economy,' he said.

With vice president-elect Al Gore at his side, Clinton delivered an afternoon statement designed to reassure world leaders, and American and global financial markets, of his intentions.

'I want to reaffirm the essential continuity of American foreign policy and my desire to seek bipartisan support for our role in the world,' he said. Even as America's administrations change, America's fundamental interests do not.... The greatest mistake any adversary could make would be to doubt America's resolve during this period of transition.'



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the Bogra Bar Council centenary celebration in Bogra yesterday. —PID photo

## Alleged killer of Farhad held

Detective police yesterday arrested one person on charge of killing Dhaka College student Farhad Hossain, reports UNB.

The arrested person, identified as Abdul Khalek, 45, was detained from the city's Badda area. Police said he had been wanted for a long time.

Farhad Hossain, a sophomore of student of Dhaka College, was killed at Bakushah Hawker's Market at Nilkhet on August 25.

## HC orders Titu's release

A High Court Division bench yesterday ordered release of Khaledur Rahman Titu from detention if he is not wanted in any other connection, reports BSS.

The Bench comprised Justice Anwarul Huq Chowdhury and Justice KM Hasan.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed with Advocate Azizul Huq appeared for the petitioner.

Deputy Attorney General Alhaj M Shamsul Alam appeared for the State.

## Ahmed Sharif

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seminar held recently at the Jatiya Jadughar auditorium commented that the atheists were generally better than the believers.

The Jamaat leader also claimed that Prof Sharif said that only uneducated believed in religions including Islam.

He demanded of the Speaker to allow a general discussion on the issue and adopt a resolution condemning Prof Sharif's alleged remarks on religions in general.

Incidentally, the Awami League MP Abdul Awal moved a privilege motion on the issue on October 22 last and the Speaker sent the notice to the special privilege committee of the House for scrutinising the whole affair on the same day.

The moment Nizami finished his appeal to the Speaker, Shamsuddoha, leader of the parliamentary group of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) stood up and protested against Nizami's claim for a general discussion on the issue.

The CPB leader said that Prof Sharif had already protested reports published in a section of newspapers which claimed what Nizami just told the House.

According to Sharif's 'rejoinder' published in the newspapers next day, he told the seminar that 'the religions had footings only among the unenlightened lower class people.'

The CPB leader told the House that a section of religion 'peddlers' and few reactionary newspapers had indulged in using the issue only to create communal disharmony in the country.

'The same section of people opposed our War of Independence in the name of great Islam,' Shamsuddoha said, adding, 'we are the followers of Prophet Mohammad (SM), not Maulana Mowaddi. Islam does not allow communal conflict.'

Moulana Ataur Rahman of BNP said, 'Although all of us do not observe all the rituals of Islam on a regular basis, we can not let any attack on religion from any atheist go unchallenged.'

The BNP MP also demanded for a general discussion on the issue in parliament.

Moulana Obaidul Hoque of the Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) observed that the 'atheism issue does not concern the Jamaat only, it should be taken seriously by all the Muslims of the country.' Abdul Latif Bhuiyan of the ruling party speaking on the issue said that Sharif had hurt the delicate feelings of the religion-loving people of the country. Parliament must take up the issue for discussion, he felt.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali asked Nizami to give a notice under certain provision of the Rules of Procedure today and assured the House that he would consider whether a 'short discussion' on the issue could be allowed or not this (Friday) afternoon.

# BNP ruling country in Ershad style: Hasina

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday flayed the government for what she said patronising the anti-liberation Jamaat-Shibir axis in a bid to hang on power through killing and conspiracy, reports UNB.

The Leader of the Opposition, who is leading an indefinite boycott of parliament, she also alleged that the ruling party was misusing the sacred parliament for adopting various 'black laws' by dint of its majority.

'Parliamentary democracy exists in the name only. As a matter of fact, the country is under certain quarters' and individual rule.'

Making a call for realising the objectives of the mass upsurge of 1990s, Hasina asked the students to dedicate themselves to building a welfare-oriented democratic society alongside their studies.

She also called for united student movement for education and democracy as well as a violence-free campus.

Sadat College VP Shamim Al Masur Siddiqui Azad and GS Baduzzaman Faruq also spoke on the occasion.

## US goes to war in 94 days, astrologer says

NEW DELHI, Nov 5: A popular Indian astrologer who in August foresaw Bill Clinton's victory has predicted that the United States would go to war and Japan face a serious economic crisis — in less than 100 days, reports AFP.

'All this is due to two eclipses — one lunar and the other solar — in December,' Lachman Das Madan was quoted as saying in Thursday's edition of The Times of India, 'together they will set off... catastrophes.'

The lunar eclipse is on December 10 and the solar eclipse on December 24.

Madan, who writes a popular weekly column of astrological predictions, said the United States would become 'highly aggressive' and get involved in overseas military operations. He did not name the theatre of the would-be conflict.

'Clinton will be handling a highly tense situation. Because by then, the eclipses will have taken their toll,' The Times quoted him as saying.

'You see, 60 per cent of the human body is water and when these eclipses occur they generate a particular kind of thing which lead to drastic events,' Madan said, attributing the Soviet Union's breakup to similar celestial events.

He said China would also become 'aggressive and get involved in military operations.'

Madan predicted that Japan would be hit by a serious crisis, Japanese shares worldwide would nosedive and 'worse, there will be many scandals, economic ones, that will lead to more trouble.'

For India, he foresaw epidemics and natural disasters and a Hindu-Muslim conflict over the ownership of a 16th century religious site reaching a flashpoint.

The astrologer, who was quoted as saying that all his predictions would come true in 94 days, said there was case for hope.

'We should not be scared,' he told The Times, adding that happier times will dawn once the eclipses lose their effect.

## Diplomatic ties with Lithuania

MOSCOW, Nov 5: Bangladesh has established diplomatic relations with the republic of Lithuania, reports BSS.

A protocol to this effect was signed in Vilnius, capital of Lithuania on November 2.

The Lithuanian Foreign Minister A Saudargas and Bangladesh Ambassador to Moscow Mustafizur Rahman signed the document on behalf of their respective countries.

## PM: Controversy

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Gazdul Huq, Barrister Mainul Hossain and Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation Mizanur Rahman Manu were present on the occasion.

The Prime Minister lauded the role of the members of the Bar Association during the War of Independence and anti-autocracy movement. She had words of praise for the glorious tradition of the Bar Association which had its birth 123 years ago.

Begum Zia said the government had already taken various steps for ensuring independence of the judiciary. The process of shifting of now defunct Upazila Criminal and Civil Courts to the district headquarters would complete within next June, she said.

Referring to market economy policy pursued by her government she said a bill for reform in the existing Company Act would be introduced in the next session of parliament suiting the changed situation.

She said her government would appoint judicial officers in increased numbers for quick disposal of cases. The government wants that not even one innocent person is punished, she said.

UNB adds: Begum Zia today reaffirmed her government's pledge to ensure constitutional right of the people to health care.

'Development of human resources is a pre-requisite for national progress and the focal point of human development is health care facility,' she said formally opening Bogra Medical College this morning.

The college, set up by Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman, was closed even after the admission of students by the Ershad regime when it came to power.

She said her government had given top priority to health sector and was implementing programmes accordingly.

Begum Zia said allocation to the health sector had been increased significantly and mentioned the 60 crore US dollar project undertaken in the health and family planning sector.

She also pointed out another programme involving Tk 400 crore for welfare of children and mothers. 'We are fast building health infrastructure at the union level,' she said.

Begum Zia urged all concerned to make Bogra Medical College an ideal institution free from terrorism and hoped its students, on graduation, will dedicate themselves to mitigating the sufferings of rural people.

She unveiled the plaque of the college, set up in an area of more than 11 acres, which has started its classes with 50 students.

Shantibahini

From Page 1 Col 7  
a helicopter and was flown back to Dudukchhari, a bordering village, after the meeting. They were received there this morning by the Liaison Committee members.

The meeting was held amid tight security. Movement of people was restricted around the Circuit House during talks. Even the staff of the Circuit House was not allowed to stay inside.

'We are very much hopeful about finding out a political solution to the troubles in the hill districts and we will sit again within 20 days,' the minister said, according to UNB.

During the 7th round of dialogue the two sides had an informal lunch.

The members of the government sponsored Committee who attended dialogue are: Kalparanjan Chakma MP, Mohammad Shahajan Chowdhury MP, Moshtaq Ahmed MP, Mohammad Shahajan MP, Syed Wahidul Alama MP and Barkatullah Bulu MP.

The PCJSS team members besides its chairman Jyotirindra Badhipriya Larma were Goutam Chakma, Rupayan Dewan, Shudhashindhu Khisha and Raktoutpal Tripara.

This was the first time that the PCJSS chairman attended any dialogue.

The six-member Liaison Committee headed by Hangshadhaja Chakma was also present at the talks as observer.

Some school boys were seen picketing, but no untoward incident took place.

## Hartal

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road during the unannounced hartal.

Most government officials, NGO staffers and officials of UNHCR could not attend their duties in at least 20 camps of Rohingya refugees.

Local people said they thought today's strike in educational institutions demanding retention of the SSC examination system of 1992 was turned into a hartal to protest Tuesday's police action in Mirsarai.

Some school boys were seen picketing, but no untoward incident took place.

# The Midnight File

## Yeltsin invites Clinton to visit Russia

MOSCOW, Nov 5: Russian President Boris Yeltsin called Bill Clinton today and invited the US President-elect to visit Moscow after he moves into the White House in January, his press service said. Yeltsin, who in an earlier letter proposed that the two leaders discuss substantial new cuts in their countries' strategic nuclear arsenals, expressed the hope that 'the capital of mutual confidence' built up between himself and outgoing US President George Bush would continue and become more 'dynamic,' the Itar-Tass news agency reported, reports AFP.

## Bush returns to White House

WASHINGTON, Nov 5: George Bush returned to the White House on Wednesday to a hero's welcome from thousands of staffers and set a graceful, chin-up tone for his last days in office, saying: 'Let's finish this job with style,' reports Reuter.

## Ties with US to grow

From Page 1 Col 3  
House. Talking to The Star on the eve of his departure for Sri Lanka, and the Maldives yesterday Rahman said, 'we go along with the people in the United States in their hope that, under the leadership of President-elect Clinton, the economy of our country will experience a resurgence which would benefit the world at large, especially the developing nations.'

The statement by the Foreign Minister reflected the overwhelmingly positive view taken by knowledgeable people here of Clinton's victory at the presidential polls.

'The domestic issues of the United States of America will get topmost priority from the Clinton administration... that's been the message in the President-elect's speech,' commented Prof Shamsul Huq, a former foreign minister.

The fledgling democracies like Bangladesh should receive US assistance and support, the National Professor said quoting Clinton and Bush's congratulatory statements.

'It was well-expected... the Americans wanted a change... it is a common electoral behaviour,' said Dr Anwar Hossain, a professor of history.

'I don't expect any major shift in strategic perception... there may be some reordering of policies in domestic affairs... but on the foreign policy front, changes are unlikely,' he said.

'In fact in US history there is hardly any precedence of a major change,' the professor added.

'As far as the South Asia is concerned, I don't think there will be much of a difference... election was not fought on foreign policy but on domestic issues,' said AKH Morshed, a former Foreign Secretary and now the Chairman of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies.

'There is one hopeful sign... Clinton has great admiration for Dr Yunus of the Grameen Bank... so he (Clinton) should have a special regard for Bangladesh also,' Morshed said.

## Eden College may become women's varsity

Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar told parliament yesterday that the government is considering to empower five university colleges to award degree certificates, reports UNB.

The colleges are: Eden Girls University College, Rangpur Carmichael College, Myrmensingh Anandamohan College, Barisal B M College and Comilla Victoria College.

The Education Minister said the government plans to turn the Eden College into a full-fledged university for women, but identified fund constraints and shortage of space and qualified teachers as main obstacles in implementing the plan.

The members who moved the amendments were Kazi Shamsur Rahman, Gazi Nazrul Islam, Moulana Sakawat Hossain, Moulana Sakawat Hossain, Riasat Ali and Enamul Huq. The House rejected all the amendments by voice vote.

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