

Govt will set up body to promote private sector

By Inam Ahmed

The government will soon set up a commission for private sector development in the country, according to concerned sources.

The plan was taken in view of the poor response from private sector entrepreneurs in the industrialisation of the country.

Concerned official sources said that despite different incentives by the government, private sector entrepreneurs were still shy in coming forward to invest.

The commission aims to identify the reasons behind the non-response of the private sector.

Sources said that the plan for the commission was made as different donor agencies had expressed concern over the sluggishness of the private sector.

According to sources the private sector, after the change of government in 1990, suddenly became stagnant. The investment and credit operations also declined as a result of the stagnation.

The Finance Minister himself had also expressed concern over the issue on several occasions in the past.

Sources said that the new commission would consist of officials from different relevant ministries and government bodies as well as representatives from the chambers. The commission would also include some foreign entrepreneurs who would advise on creating congenial investment environment.

Sources said that the government had already identified the prevailing labour-management relationship as a problem for investment.

The commission would recommend fiscal measures, banking facilities and changes in existing laws required to attract investment.

The government now feels that the investment environment should be streamlined as a new class of entrepreneurs is about to emerge with the success of the garments sector.

These entrepreneurs are well aware of the international market and the competitive factors, sources said adding that given the proper incentives they would also venture into newer areas other than the garments sector.



Nirmul body procession demanding ban on Jamaat, Shibir politics (top) and CPB procession protesting damage to their office, demanding reconstruction of Babri Mosque yesterday in city (above). — Star photo

Khaleda, Sharif talks

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ated Pakistanis. The Prime Minister expressed the hope that the repatriation process of the 3000 stranded families would start from this year.

During the talks the Bangladesh Prime Minister was assisted by Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, Planning Minister Zahiruddin Khan, Principal Secretary K M Rabbanji and Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman. The Pakistan Prime Minister was aided by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Siddique Khan Kanju, Railway Minister Golam Ahmed Bitor, Chief Minister of Punjab Golam Haider Wyne, State Minister for Women Affairs Nayem Chhatta and Secretary Foreign Affairs Shahryar Khan and Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Kemal.

During the meeting both Pakistan and Bangladesh underscored the need for intensified cooperation in trade and commerce for reducing the existing trade imbalance between them.

The Pakistan side showed interest in joint investment in some sectors including sugar industry and railway. The meeting discussed the possibility of increased tea import from Bangladesh.

The meeting agreed to strengthen the existing cul-

Processionists

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"We should also resist fundamentalists trying to destroy communal harmony in our country," they said, "just as we resisted them in the War of Liberation."

The CPB held a rally at the Purana Paltan crossing protesting the attack on its office urged the democratic forces to resist fundamentalists.

Chaired by party president Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, the rally condemned the local fundamentalist groups for using the Mosque issue to reap political gains.

The rally was also addressed by party General Secretary Nurul Islam Nahid and central leader Mukul Chowdhury.

Manik condemned the demolition of the Babri Mosque by fanatic Hindus in India but also blasted the Jamaat and other fundamentalist forces for fanning communal violence in different parts of the country.

"The communal forces irrespective of their identities are enemies of the people and democracy," he told the rally alleging "there is no differences between the BJP and the Jamaat."

He urged the people to maintain communal harmony in the country as well as resist communal powers.

He accused the government of "failure" in protecting property and life of innocent people in the aftermath of the Mosque demolition.

Manik alleged that the CPB office was attacked and set afire in presence of the law enforcing agency men who took no action against the attackers.

He demanded adequate compensation for the loss and punishment to those responsible for the arson Monday.

The Jagpa brought out a procession and burned the effigy of Rao at the Dainik Bangla crossing accusing him of failure to protect the ancient Mosque.

The Islami Khelafat Majlis brought out a procession in the city demanding punishment of the killers of one of its workers in the old Dhaka area on Friday.

In a brief rally at Dainik Bangla crossing the Majlis leaders gave the authorities an ultimatum until 2 pm Sunday to arrest the killers. They also condemned the Babri Mosque demolition.

Babri Mosque demolition 'BNP govt did nothing to avert backlash'

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman has deplored the BNP government's tacking of the law and order situation following the destruction of the Babri Mosque and said, "It (the government) did nothing except regretting the incident at a cabinet meeting."

The AL leader said yesterday that the situation following the demolition could have been averted if Prime Minister Khaleda Zia had addressed the nation calling upon the people to maintain peace.

Zillur Rahman addressing a rally, organised by the Mukti-joddha Sanghati Parishad in connection with the Victory Day celebration alleged the fundamentalist political parties, backed by the government were attempting to gain politically from the current situation.

The attacks on the offices of CPB, JSD (Inu) and Banglar Bani newspaper had proved that these forces were taking revenge against their political opponents, he told the rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday afternoon.

The AL leader said that the fundamentalists had gained an edge in the country's politics since the time secularism as a state principle was dropped from the Constitution by the government of Ziaur Rahman.

He accused all the post-75 governments of destroying the spirit of Liberation War.

Chaired by parishad chief Col (Retd) Shawqat Ali, MP, the rally was also addressed by AL Presidium Member Abdul Mannan, and Parishad leaders Col (retd) M M Hanif, Flt Sgt (Retd) Fazul Huq, Advocate Mujibur Rahman, Golam Mostafiz Khan, and Mattur Rahman. Editor of Daily Khabar Mizanur also spoke.

Abdul Mannan in his speech thanked the government for its decision to distribute medals among the war heroes but criticised it for not 'properly evaluating' the contributions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his close aides to the emergence of Bangladesh as independent state.

Col (Retd) Shawqat Ali, MP alleged that misuse by the post-75 governments had turned the independent Bangladesh, achieved through a bloody struggle, into a Bangladesh of the defeated forces of the war of independence.

Today's Bangladesh is no more the Bangladesh of Bangabandhu, he remarked, it's a Bangladesh of 'Rajakars' and 'al-Badars' whom late President Ziaur Rahman and deposed President Ershad rehabilitated.

The rally was followed by a cultural function.

Tk 20.22 lakh foreign clothes seized

By Staff Correspondent

Customs intelligence team and police in separate hauls seized foreign clothes worth about Taka 20.22 lakh in the city late Friday night.

Police also arrested two persons and detained them in the Dhanmondi police custody, said police.

A customs intelligence team following a truck from Tongi held it at Sonargaon Road in the city at around 10:30 pm Friday and seized 15000 yards of cotton and TC clothes worth about Taka 18,72,000.

In another incident, Dhanmondi police held a truck bearing number Dhaka Bha-318, seized 1964 metres of clothes worth about Taka 1,50,000 and arrested two persons Monir Hossain and Shaheed at Elephant Road late Friday night, said police.

Premadasa

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Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in honour of both the Sri Lankan leader and Pakistan Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif.

The Sri Lankan President said several initiatives had been taken in SAARC and expressed the hope that they would surely move towards fruition under the leadership of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, the next SAARC Chairperson.

He said, "We have progressed with the central issues affecting our people." These are, he listed, trade liberalization, economic cooperation, poverty alleviation and capital resources for development.

President Premadasa stressed the need for ensuring that all countries in the region be benefited from trade liberalisation. Each country should have easy or free access for at least one of its products into the SAARC market, he suggested.

The Sri Lankan President termed the poverty alleviation as one of the core issues, saying many in the region go hungry for want of food.

Premadasa, in this connection, mentioned that Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had taken the bold initiative of providing 'Daal-Bhat' for the people of her country.

He underlined the need for creating opportunities for those who yearn for work.

Terming the SAARC as a natural alliance, the Sri Lankan President said it is one that is blessed by ancient tradition. "It is now being sustained by a growing process of closer cooperation in SAARC. It will benefit the millions we are privileged to serve," he added.

Paracetamol tragedy: Speaker directs concerned bodies to send report

Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Shaikh Razzak Ali yesterday directed concerned authorities to send a full report to the Law Section of the Parliament Secretariat on the reported deaths of children resulting from the use of Paracetamol syrup manufactured by Adilem Pharmaceutical Company, reports BSS.

According to a parliament press release yesterday directives were been issued to the Managing Director of Adilem, Director of Shishu Hospital and Director of Drug Administration to send their reports by December 19, so that early and effective measure could be taken in this regard.

JCD activist killed: College closed sine die

JESSORE, Dec 12: An activist of Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was killed in Lohogora College here today allegedly by supporters of Awami League-backed Chhatra League, reports UNB.

The college was closed sine die to prevent further untoward incidents.

Witnesses and police said JCD activist Milon (18), a second year student, was chopped to death by a group of 10-12 youths allegedly belonging to BCL. He died on the spot.

Princess Anne re-marries, breaks 400-yr royal record

CRATHIE, Scotland, Dec 12: Queen Elizabeth's divorced daughter Princess Anne made history today by becoming the first senior British Royal to re-marry for 400 years in a simple ceremony at a tiny granite church in Scotland.

Anne, 42, and her second husband naval Commander Timothy Laurantec, 37, emerged from the tiny church in the Scottish highlands close to the Queen's Balmoral Castle after a short wedding ceremony.

The Princess met Laurence when he was on the Queen's staff in the 1980s but kept silent about their romance until her divorce from Captain Mark Phillips in April. Anne has a son, Peter, and a daughter, Zara, from her first marriage.

Their private ceremony, only days after heir to the throne Prince Charles and his wife Diana announced they were separating, was attended by a host of other royals. Princess Diana did not attend.

Sharif visits Savar Memorial

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan visited the National Memorial at Savar yesterday soon after his arrival on a day-long visit to Dhaka.

He signed the visitors' book and planted a sapling in the premises of the Memorial.

"Today I have come to Bangladesh to express Pakistan's solidarity in the aftermath of the tragic incident of Babri Mosque," Sharif began the comments he wrote in the visitors book at the Memorial dedicated to the millions of martyrs of the Liberation War.

The remaining part read: "I wish the very best to the people of Bangladesh and hope that the close ties between Bangladesh and Pakistan will become stronger in the days to come."

The seeds of the sapling — Jagaranda mimocifolia or Neelgul Mohar as they are locally known — that the Pakistan Prime Minister planted were brought by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia from Harare where they both attended the Commonwealth Summit last year.

Sharif stayed in the Memorial area for 22 minutes and enquired about various trees already planted there.

Premadasa places wreaths at Savar Memorial

SAVAR (Dhaka), Dec 12: Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa paid tributes to the martyrs of the Bangladesh Liberation War by placing wreaths at the National Martyrs Memorial here this morning, reports BSS.

President Premadasa, who flew in here accompanied by Minister-in-waiting Energy Minister Dr AKM Mosharraf Hossain, was received by Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia and GOC Nine Infantry Division, Major General MA Matin.

President Premadasa was then led to the altar of the memorial where he placed the wreaths and stood in solemn silence as the bugle played the last post.

The visiting dignitary signed the Visitor's book. Paying tributes to the unknown martyrs he wrote: "These heroes have given their lives so that their countrymen live in honour and in peace and prosperity. I am confident that the people of Bangladesh will achieve their objective."

President Premadasa also saw the sapling which he had planted in the memorial premises on October 4 last.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Harold Herat, Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Alfred David and Bangladesh High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury were also present.

Sick units may place proposals to BSB

By Staff Correspondent

The owners of the industrial projects under Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB) loan which have either become sick or against which cases are pending may place specific proposals to the bank for re-vamping the units after paying a part of their due loans, by December 31, 1992.

This was stated by the Chairman of BSB, A T M Alamgir in a meeting with over 300 owners of sick industries Saturday.

The owners of the industries facing problem also urged the bank authorities to provide fund and other co-operations for their smooth functioning.

The Midnight File

One killed, 52 hurt in Gaza clashes

JERUSALEM, Dec 12: Israeli soldiers fired on hundreds of stone-throwing Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip on Saturday, killing one protester and wounding at least 52 others, Arab reports said, reports AP.

Italian youths march against racism

ROME, Dec 12: Italian youths, marking the 23rd anniversary of a terrorist bomb attack at a Milan bank, demonstrated Saturday against fascism and racism in several cities. About 30,000 youths marched in Milan where a bomb, believed detonated by right-wing terrorists on Dec 12, 1969, killed 16 people. In Rome, police estimated there were about 10,000 demonstrators and authorities in Naples said 2,000 people marched, reports AP.

Air service accord with Germany

An air-service agreement between Bangladesh and Germany was signed in Bonn Tuesday, reports UNB.

Earlier, a memorandum of understanding was signed providing legal basis for commercial airlines with two weekly frequencies from Bangladesh to two points in Germany.

This also provides flexibility of selection of points in Germany for Bangladesh Biman's choice, says an official handout.

Ulema group plans long-march to Ayodhya Jan 2

A group of Ulema yesterday said they would start a long-march towards Ayodhya in India on January 2 demanding that the demolished Babri Mosque be rebuilt in its site, reports UNB.

Addressing a press conference at a local hotel on behalf of the Ulema, Moulana Azizul Haq called on cross section of the people irrespective of party affiliation to make the programme a success.

BJP programme

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government does not move soon.

MP Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi, Chairman of the All-India Babri Masjid Action Committee, demanded the government take "immediate and practical steps" to rebuild the Mosque, as Rao has promised to do.

"If the government does not take immediate steps, the Muslims should be permitted to undertake Kar Seva (a building drive) and reconstruct the Masjid," the Press Trust of India quoted Owaisi as saying in southern Hyderabad city.

About the same time, India's most important leftist party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), said it would meet here Sunday to discuss Rao's proposal for a united front against the BJP and other communal forces.

The meetings also expected to consider efforts to persuade influential former Prime Minister and Janata Dal leader Vishwanath Pratap Singh to enter such a front. He has previously rejected the proposal.

Madrassa students protest assault on Principal, teacher

By Staff Correspondent

Madrassa students demonstrated in the city in protest against the assault on a madrasa Principal and a teacher near Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University Saturday.

A senior leader of Khelafat Andolon and Principal and another teacher of Mohammadpur Jamia Rahmania Madrasa were assaulted by a group of people in front of Jagannath Hall of the University while they were passing the area by an auto-rickshaw Saturday noon.

Madrassa students and supporters of Khelafat Andolon brought out processions to protect the assault in the afternoon.

Khaleda

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Addressing a banquet she gave in honour of Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa and Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at Hotel Sonargaon last night, Khaleda said, "I have no doubt our efforts to strengthen our unity will succeed."

The Bangladesh Prime Minister said that together the leaders of South Asia must direct their efforts towards that end. "The people of South Asia expect their leaders to guide them in this respect," Begum Zia said.

She said that Dhaka was fully prepared for holding the Seventh SAARC Summit on schedule. "However, we are all aware of the sad developments that led to its postponement by a month."

The Prime Minister said that she was looking forward to seeing the SAARC leaders again during the second week of January when the summit had been re-scheduled.

She said that it was heartening that all the South Asian leaders had reaffirmed their commitment to maintain the momentum of SAARC. She expressed her confidence that the Dhaka summit next month would achieve its goals.

Welcoming the two leaders and Madame Premadasa, Begum Zia said, "We are deeply honoured by your presence amidst us... You are not only wise leaders of your countries, but also looked upon as our trusted friends who invariably stand by us at times of need."

"Your presence in Bangladesh at this time is a special gesture of solidarity and goodwill for the government and people of Bangladesh."

Begum Zia recalled her visits to Sri Lanka in December last year and to Pakistan in August last.

"I cherish fond memories of the time, however brief, that I spent in that lovely island," Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said referring to her visit to Sri Lanka during the sixth SAARC summit in December last year.

"My trip to Pakistan was equally memorable," she said recalling her visit to Pakistan in August.

The Prime Minister also had words of appreciation for the leadership of President Premadasa and that of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

She was all praise for the "dynamic" leadership of President Premadasa, the incumbent chairman of SAARC. She said his contributions to the cause of SAARC will be "long remembered."

Sharif

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Sri Lankan President R Premadasa.

The Pakistan Prime Minister said SAARC would only be able to achieve its objective if all major issues between member countries were settled.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said the objective of his visit was also to demonstrate Pakistan's complete support and solidarity with Bangladesh at a time when the "evil forces of fanaticism had plunged the region into darkness."

He said the Babri Mosque was a monument of Islamic heritage in the region and the desecration of the mosque by the "sinister forces of intolerance and blind fanaticism" had shocked the conscience of all civilised people and at the same time was a traumatic experience for the Muslims throughout the world.

"We must control and defeat these forces of extremism which disrupt the fabric of civilised behaviour," Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said.

Opposition body

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The central body of the All-party committee was constituted with three representatives from each component part and organisation with the securing a five-member representation.

The district level units of the Committee would be formed in consistency with proportions maintained by the central level ones, sources in the central committee said.

The local level units were also directed to list the number of victims and estimate the losses in terms of money and lodge specific charges against those responsible for attacking the minority groups with the local police stations.

The component political parties of the All-party committee for communal harmony are: Bangladesh Awami League, CPB, National Awami Party, Samyabadi Dal, Gono Azadi League, Workers Party of Bangladesh, JSD (Inu), Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD-Khaluquzzaman), SKSD, BSD (Mahboob), Otkya Prakria, Gonotantri Party, Jatiya Janata Party and Badruddin Umar-led Gonotantrik Biplobi Jote.

The socio-cultural organisations of the central body include Sammilita Sangkratik Jote, and National Coordination Committee for Resistance to the Killers and Collaborators of 1971.