

Jute Minister tells IJC meet Collective efforts must to save jute sector

The 19th session of the International Jute Council (IJC) began here yesterday with a call for increased international collaboration and co-operation for revival, sustenance and development of the global jute economy, reports ISS.

Inaugurating the four-day council session Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah underlined that collective efforts had become imperative to halt the downward trends in jute production and marketing caused by recent changes in the international political and economic scenario and thereby save the jute sector.

"We also need to have more diversified use of jute to face the present-day challenge and thereby save the livelihood of millions of people in the jute world who are directly or indirectly involved in planting, processing and marketing of jute products," the Minister said.

The council session, being attended by representatives from five exporting countries of the Dhaka-based International Jute Organisation (IJO), will consider the approval of three new projects recommended by the IJC's Committee on Projects which conclude its three-day session here Monday.

The IJC, governing body of the International Jute Organisation, will also consider administrative matters relating to the organisation including the proposed administrative

budget of the IJO for 1993-94, the appointment of a new executive director and election of its chairman and vice-chairman for 1993-94.

The council session, being presided over by MS Hamilton Agnes of France, will also review the world jute situation and examine the competitive position of jute vis-a-vis synthetics.

Executive Director of IJO Shamsul Haq Chisty and representatives of the European Community, India and Pakistan spoke at the inaugural session of the council also being attended by delegates of UN and international agencies, trade associations and member countries.

Hannan Shah noted that the European Community's markets for jute goods had grown in the recent years contrary to the situation, prevailing in the USA. He hoped that with the intensifying of 'green movement' in Europe, the position of products made with natural fibres like jute would further improve.

Referring to the findings of the World Bank and FAO study that there would be shrinkage in the consumption of jute in North America and Western Europe, the Minister urged the council to give careful consideration to such a situation and formulate plans and programmes for the future.

Hannan Shah urged the member countries and donor agencies to make available special funds for financing IJO projects.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia speaking at the first biennial council session of the Bangladesh National Electricity Workers Union (CBA) in the WAPDA building premises yesterday. — PID photo

Edn projects

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meeting suggested the education ministry for the maximum utilisation of allocated funds for the projects during the current fiscal year.

The meeting observed that there was no financial progress of 19 projects included in the ADP.

The meeting was informed that according to planning commission and evaluation cell of the ministry, the financial insolvency has reduced the standard of education and caused failure in imparting proper training to the teachers in secondary schools. It was observed in the meeting that there was need to evaluate the role of the University Grants Commission regarding the university education.

The meeting suggested that the female school assistance project and Open University project could be considered as priority projects.

Referring to the progress achieved by some of the neighbouring countries, she said production is not hampered, resources are not destroyed and hartals are not called on trifling issues in those countries.

"Discipline has returned to Diarrhoea kills 4 in Pabna"

PABNA, Apr 20: Diarrhoea today claimed four lives and attacked 132 people in two thanas of the district, officials said, reports UNB.

The victims were identified as Azmat, 2, Shamu Mandal, 42 and Abu Talib, 12 of Ishwardi thana and Johnsna Khatun, 1 of Sadar thana.

With this the number of deaths rose to six in the district during the last two days. Afzal Talukder, 46, and Moli, 3 of Sadar thana died of the disease on Monday.

A total of 84 medical teams are working in the affected areas to combat the water borne disease.

PM: System loss

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cluding industrialisation and agricultural development, depend on this sector.

Begum Zia accused the past autocratic government of crippling the power sector in a well-planned manner. She said the system loss rose to 45 per cent during the autocratic regime but it has now been reduced to 34 per cent with the help of the employees. She stressed the need for bringing down the system loss further to 25 per cent.

She said the present government attaches priority to the power sector for continued development and said the 210 megawatt power station at Raosan in Chittagong will go into operation very soon while the 5th unit of Ghorasal Power Station will be completed by the year-end.

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the economic sector. We have reached the doorstep of self-sufficiency in food. Investment has gained momentum. Our industrial policy has been praised at all quarters and the annual GDP has increased despite worldwide recession," she pointed out.

Presided over by President of PDB CBA Kazi Habibur Rahman, the meeting was also addressed by Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Prof Khandakar Mosharrar Hossain, Social Welfare and Women Affairs Minister Tariqul Islam, State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain, Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mirza Abbas and Khulna City Mayor Tayebur Rahman.

Labour leaders including GS of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal Nazrul Islam Khan, Vice President of Sramik Dal Abul Kashem Chowdhury, DESA CBA President Kazi Mosharrar Hossain and GS of Jatiya Biddyt Sramik Karmachari Union Zaful Hassan also spoke on the occasion.

Medicines worth Tk 13.35 lakh seized at ZIA

Customs officials seized contraband medicines worth about Tk 13.35 lakh at the Zia International Airport Tuesday morning.

A customs source said that they recovered ten injectable items and tablets from four hand bags sent to Dhaka from Karachi, Pakistan, by a Bangladesh Biman flight (BG-032) Tuesday morning.

The source said, when none of the passengers claimed the bags the customs officials opened the bags in presence of several senior customs officers and recovered the contraband medicines worth about Taka 13,35,800.

Schoolmate murdered

From Our Correspondent

RAJBARI, Apr 20: A student of class seven Motiur Rahman, 14, was allegedly killed by his classmates in the village Govindapur of Khanganj Union under Rajbari Sadar thana yesterday.

Police said, Motiur's classmates Abu Newaz Mondol and Ziaur Rahman yesterday morning called him out from his residence. He has been missing since then.

Police recovered Motiur's body from the bank of river Padma this afternoon.

Afterwards, Motiur's parents identified the body and informed police the names of the suspects, Mondol and Ziaur.

Police later arrested Mondol and Ziaur who confessed killing of Motiur with the help of two others near river Padma.

On the basis of their confession, police is looking for Kawser and Wasim, two other classmates of Motiur.

Annual audit report presented to President

The Comptroller and Auditor General presented annual audit reports along with appendices to audit reports and appropriation accounts to President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports UNB.

The reports include annual audit reports for four fiscal years till 1988-89, appendices to audit reports for 1977-78 and 1982-83 and reports on appropriation accounts for three years from 1983-84, in respect of various ministries and departments, government and semi-government commercial organisations, foreign aided projects and Bangladesh missions abroad.

While receiving the audit reports from Comptroller and Auditor General KM Hossain, President Biswas advised him to try to update the reports gradually.

According to constitutional provision, these reports will be placed before the parliament in due course, an official hand-out said.

Rohingyas

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observed hartal in Teknaf and Ukhiya tomorrow (Wednesday) to press home their demand for quick return of the refugees.

Meanwhile, Ukhiya police today arrested one Rashid Ahmad from Jummapura transit camp on charge of instigating the refugees not to go back to their homeland.

Pak businessmen

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former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, as Finance Minister. Leghari was the first cabinet minister to be named by Mazari.

Mazari said at a press conference that his government would do 'all it can' to put an end to terrorism.

Mazari said the government had no plans to arrest his predecessor unless he was formally charged for crimes committed during his tenure or to stop his campaign to drum up support in the provinces against his dismissal.

The accountability we seek is free of any taint of political victimisation, Mazari said. It's a democratic country, he (Sharif) has the right to go wherever he wants.

Meanwhile, the Speaker of the dissolved National Assembly, Gohar Ayub Khan, said he would take the President to court to challenge the Sharif government's dismissal.

This is seeking the return of the government. The interim government is illegal and mala fide, said Ayub Khan, calling the 78-year-old President's appearance on television late Sunday to announce the sacking 'laughable'.

The petition would be heard at the Lahore High Court Wednesday, he said.

Nawaz Sharif, claiming he had the support of all Pakistanis, said Tuesday that Ishaq Khan had dismissed him for 'selfish motives' to the detriment of the national interest.

Sharif defended at a press conference his 29-month-old government's economic record, saying it had produced the fastest growing economy in South Asia before it was sacked by Ishaq Khan on Sunday.

"Ghulam Ishaq Khan is playing with the destiny of the nation... he's acted out of purely selfish motives," said Sharif, adding that he saw no reason why the National Assembly had to be dissolved.

Sharif, who plans to mobilise the people, said he would go on a train ride to Lahore on Wednesday stopping along the way to address crowds.

"The battle has started," he said in a reference to moves by Gohar Ayub Khan to bring Ishaq Khan to court to challenge the dismissal.

The Midnight File

Demirel may succeed Ozal

ANKARA, Apr 20: Turkish President Turgut Ozal's body lay in state today and newspapers said Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel was best-placed to become the next president. Ozal's weeping wife Semra, his three children and other relatives were the first to file past the coffin, draped in the red-and-white Turkish flag, in the parliament building, reports Reuter.

9 die in Pak blast

PESHAWAR (Pakistan), Apr 20: A landmine blew up pick-up truck in a border area in northwestern Pakistan, killing nine government militiamen and injuring four others, government officials said on Tuesday. They said they believed the incident in the Khyber tribal area on Monday evening was caused by saboteurs. Saboteurs had planted the mine on the road which blew up when the truck drove over it, reports Reuter.

Clinton to order probe into Cult incident

WASHINGTON, Apr 20: President Clinton will order an investigation into events leading up to the fiery end of the 51-day siege at David Koresh's compound, the White House said Tuesday. It was also announced Tuesday that the House of Representatives will open hearings on Friday into the government's handling of the event, which led to the deaths of 86 people. The FBI said cultists set the fires as an act of suicide after agents started smashing down the compound walls, reports AP. (Earlier story on Page 5)

Gunmen loot village in Bogra, kidnap girl

BOGRA, Apr 20: A teenage girl was kidnapped and all property of 41 families looted and destroyed in an armed attack by miscreants at Hatbarichar in Sariakandi thana early Monday, reports UNB.

Police said a gang with firearms attacked the Jamuna riverside locality, looted all valuables of the villagers and put fire to their houses. They also kidnapped Mojir, a 16-year daughter of late Amanat.

Seven people were also injured in the attack. They are Kal (25), Sandula (60), Deli (45), Maimana (45), Kashem (30), Chhunu (60) and Sattar (35).

The victims remained under the open sky. Separate cases were filed with Sariakandi thana.

A dacoity was also committed at the same village the previous night. Valuables and cattle worth about Tk 3 lakh were looted.

Another report from Magura adds: A young girl was

kidnapped and raped by a gang of armed miscreants in the municipal area on Sunday.

According to police, the miscreants entered the house of Champa at dead of night and took her to a nearby field forcibly and violated her one after another.

Local people recovered her from the field in an unconscious state and sent her to Sadar Hospital.

A case has been filed with the local thana.

Ajker Kagoj editor, reporter acquitted

The Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday relieved the Editor of daily Ajker Kagoj Kazi Shahed Ahmed and Staff Reporter Gazi Abu Bakar Siddiqi of a case filed by former MP Miah Abbasuddin, reports UNB.

Magistrate AKM Kamaluddin disposed of the case in view of the continued absence of the complainant.

Azam: Citizenship

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contention of the counsel for the petitioner that Act 5, although made with retrospective effect, could not reopen the closed case of Golam Azam.

Thereafter, Barrister Yusuf dealt with the delays and latches of the petitioner in filing the writ for the period from April 23, 1977 till November 08, 1978, the dates when the government refused to grant him citizenship and the day he applied for restoration of his citizenship after surrendering his Pakistani passport.

He argued that the petitioner could not move the High Court during the five long years of Emergency between December 1974 and December 1979, when, he added, the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution were suspended.

The principles of natural justice, Barrister Yusuf said, had also been violated in the case of the petitioner.

It was duty cast upon the authority that passed the order to abide by the principles of natural justice, he added. "And that duty is to hear the other side, otherwise any order passed in violation of the principles of natural justice renders the order void."

He noted that the impugne notification issued to the petitioner, on April 18, 1973, was passed without a hearing and issuance of a show cause notice and that the violation of the principles of natural justice rendered the order, he said, "a nullity in the eye of the law."

Barrister Yusuf also pointed out that all newspaper clippings and other papers produced by the State Council, depicting conduct of the petitioner, had only been for the April to December 1971 period.

Golam Azam obtained a Pakistani passport in 1972, he said, "under compulsive circumstances and out of extreme necessity" as there was no diplomatic relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh at the time and the same conditions prevailed during the petitioner's subsequent visit to Saudi Arabia.

The petitioner had to retain the Pakistani passport under compulsion, he said, and travelled to London April 1973.

"Immediately thereafter he (the petitioner) found that the government declared him to be disqualified to be deemed a citizen, so the doors of the Bangladesh High Commission

BIDS study on rural poverty

A section of poor saw better days in '90-92

By Staff Correspondent

The moderately poor of the country had seen a slight improvement in their condition during 1990-92.

However, the status of the extreme poor remained largely unchanged during the time.

These were revealed in a survey report of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) conducted by Hossain Zillur-Rahman and Binayak Sen. The report was made public at a seminar on rural poverty at the BIDS Tuesday.

The researchers summarised the period in the survey as "A time of hope and a time of despair."

They said that good weather resulting in good harvests and changes in the labour market situation mainly contributed to the improvements.

In the indicators of hope, the researchers reported that the proportion of households self-categorised as in deficit status had declined from 69 per cent to 56 per cent.

Average man-days of annual employment per rural household had increased by 18 per cent and there had been a shift from casual wage labour to contract labour.

Changes in rural housing conditions also showed net improvements for 19 per cent of all households. The proportion of rural population without access to minimum clothing had declined from 12 per cent to four per cent. The capacity of the poor to meet household contingencies from own resources also rose from 30 per cent to 40 per cent.

School enrollment rates of boys rose from 53 per cent to 63 per cent during the period while those of girls rose from 44 per cent to 59 per cent. There was also a noticeable trend towards full completion of the school cycle, the researchers found.

Access to emergency credit for the womenfolk had also increased from 55 per cent to 71 per cent, the report stated.

However, in the indicators of despair, Rahman and Sen said that the moderate poor had most of the benefits while the proportion of households in the extreme poor status had remained largely unchanged at 20 per cent during the period in survey.

The two researchers also mentioned that although an exceptionally good weather had caused lower incidence of natural disaster-related crisis during the period, the vulnerabilities arising from crisis remained very active.

Crisis factors accounted for 46 per cent of reported causes that explained deterioration in household status, the report said.

The health sector had seen

"very little" achievements during 1990-92, the report said, adding that the positive developments in immunization, access to fresh drinking water and sanitary toilets remained questionable at the point of qualitative changes.

It said that only 10 per cent of the rural sick had got government health care, a slight decline from the 1990 level.

Rahman and Sen in their report underlined the "unbroken series of good harvests," and "opportunities opened up by structural changes in rural labour markets as well as by the linkage effects of rural infrastructure creation," and to a small extent by targeted assistance that had intensified the average work-input of the poor by 18 per cent and by as much as 37 per cent in case of the extreme poor.

The report said that 26 per cent of reported causes of improvement were attributed to natural factors while another 41 per cent to various structural factors such as better economic opportunities.

Rahman and Sen in their conclusion said that, "The crucial task is to identify the growth variables that carry the most poverty reduction potential." They said "The most common weakness in the poverty agenda is to isolate the discussions of growth and that of poverty alleviation and thereby confer on the poverty issue a residual status beyond economic growth."

They said that as natural disasters, illness expenditure and insecurity erode the income of the poor, their capacity to cope with such calamities must be strengthened.

They also recommended balanced improvements in infrastructural and qualitative performance of social sector facilities like health and education. They also stressed the need to improve implementation of poverty alleviation activities.

Jagannath Hall raided, arms recovered

By DU Correspondent

Police raided the Jagannath Hall of the Dhaka University yesterday (Tuesday) morning.

During about half an hour search, the police recovered a sawed-off rifle, four bullets and two big choppers.

Nobody was arrested, police sources said.

According to sources, the police on an information raided the hall at about 8:00 am yesterday in a drive to recover illegal arms and ammunition.

The health sector had seen

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Nor'wester

From Page 1 Col 4

Nor'wester accompanied by hail-storm that lashed Lalmonirhat district early hours Tuesday damaged about 200 houses and standing crops on vast acres of land.

The nor'wester hit the district at 4 am and lasted for an hour. The officials recorded 18 mm rain during the time. The worst affected areas are Dooljor, Batrish Hazari, Khut-amara and Mogulhat in Sadar thana, Kalkina in Kaliganj thana, Durgapur and Velabari in Aditmara thana.

Agriculture Extension Department sources said Irriboro paddy and jute on 300 acres of land in Dooljor village were destroyed by the hail-storm.

Electric lines were cut-off and at least 200 kutcha houses were damaged rendering hundreds of people homeless.

Hard Rock project

From Page 1 Col 7

Bangladesh Railway is also desperately in need of the hard rock. Two of its development projects have been abandoned due to shortage of hard rock as India failed to supply the same.

Nizami asks Rafiqul Islam

'Where was the Constitution when Khaleda went to Azam'?

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Maulana Muttur Rahman Nizami yesterday blasted the government for keeping Golam Azam in detention as several thousand demonstrators marched the city streets demanding release of their leader, reports UNB.

Without Jamaat's support, it would not have been possible for BNP to form the government two years ago, he told a pre-march rally at the North Gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque in the afternoon, yesterday.

Refuting the Works Minister's statement that Golam Azam was detained according to Constitution, Nizami asked "where you kept the Constitution" when an emissary from BNP was sent to Jamaat chief seeking his help in forming the government.

The Jamaat leader said Begum Zia also went to Prof Golam Azam and sought his help in forming her government at that critical hour. It would have been very difficult for BNP to form the government, had Prof. Golam Azam not

agreed with the request, he added.

Nizami said the Golam Azam issue has been kept hanging 'for political reasons to suppress Islamic upsurge and appease the forces of aggression.'

Responding to the Works Minister's allegation branding Jamaat as 'fundamentalist', the Jamaat Secretary General said had his party been aggressive, police would not have been able to take away Prof Golam Azam without bloodshed.

Some psychopants are trying to mislead the Prime Minister about Jamaat, Nizami said and appealed to the "conscience of the Prime Minister" not to pay heed to these vested quarter.

Presided over by city Jamaat chief Azharul Islam, the brief rally was also addressed by city Jamaat General Secretary Maulana Jasmuddin.

After the rally, a militant procession was brought out. The processionists shouted anti-government slogans and demanded immediate release of Jamaat leader Golam Azam.



Jamaat-e-Islami brought out a procession in city yesterday demanding release of Golam Azam. — Star photo