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VOL III NO. 140 REGD. NO. DA 781

J AISTHA 29, 1400 BS,

DHAKA SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 1993

ZILHAJJ 20, 1413 HIJRI

12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 4.00

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NEWS BRIEFS

Khaleida greets Fidel V Ramos

Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia has congratulated Fidel V Ramos, President of the Republic of the Philippines on the occasion of his country's national day, reports UNB.

375 bottles of phensidyl seized

Police yesterday seized a huge quantity of Indian Phensidyl Syrup from Gabtali Bus Terminal from the possession of two young women. Police nabbed Zohura Begum (35) and Nurjahan Begum (32) with 375 bottles of Phensidyl from the terminal, reports UNB.

77 more held on various charges

Police rounded up 77 people from different parts of the city yesterday on various charges. A DMP press release said Thursday. The arrested include five wanted criminals, one accused of murder case, on in Arms Act, 10 under Narcotics Act, four each in burglary and stealing and one for robbery. All the arrested were produced before court, reports UNB.

BDR, BSF flag meet postponed

FENI, June 11: The two-day flag meeting between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) scheduled to begin today, was postponed at the request of the District Magistrate of South Tripura, reports UNB.

Sources here said the South Tripura District Magistrate sent a letter to Deputy Commissioner of Feni Delwar Hossain Thursday night saying that he would not be able to attend the meeting due to his urgent involvement with the tribal repatriation process.

Main task is to cut public sector losses : Saifur

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said the biggest task for the government now is to minimise losses in the public sector corporations.

Human development, poverty reduction through employment generation and education are the central areas of the government's development thrust in the proposed budget for 1993-94, he said.

He was addressing a crowded post-budget press conference in the committee room of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, Planning Minister Zahiruddin Khan and

secretaries of different ministries also attended. "The success of the budget would come from the effective implementation of the government's development thrust," Rahman said.

He stated that the inefficiency of the public sector is causing an economic haemorrhage and said, "those industries becoming irrelevant should be shut down and resources should be diverted to the relevant industries."

The minister also said there would be more reforms in trade and investment and added that

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Budget to provide growth impetus to economy: MCCI

By Staff Correspondent

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), in a statement yesterday, said that the general thrust of the budget is "to provide growth impetus to the economy by lowering tax rates, emphasising wages with productivity, orientation towards export expansion and commitment to privatisation."

It also described the efforts

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Govt strategy for industry unclear : DCCI

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), in a statement issued Friday, described the budget as "an ambitious one" and hoped it can be implemented and would generate internal funds for the development plans and growth of small industries.

The DCCI expressed its disappointment that despite the government's free market-export-led growth strategy, such

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Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, with Information Minister Nazmul Huda at his side, addressing the post-budget press conference at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday. —Star photo

Budget lacks direction : AL

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Awami League, the largest opposition party in the country, for the first time, has given its official comments on the proposed budget after what it called "in-depth studies" of the budget documents.

Some party leaders, however, had expressed their instant personal reactions about the 1993-94 budget Thursday night.

The Awami League (AL) had a joint meeting of the party's available advisory council and working committee members yesterday morning to decide its official position on the budget placed in parliament Thursday. The parliamentary party of the AL also met yesterday to decide the particular roles party MPs should play in presenting the party views individually in the House.

The senior leaders informed the MPs about the party advi-

sors' observations on the proposed budget. Members of the AL advisory committee who attended yesterday morning's meeting included S A M S Kibria, Dr A K Azad, Mafizur Rahman and S M Sadek.

The meeting observed that the Finance Minister had side-tracked the prevailing problems and crises in socio-economic sectors by using rhetoric.

The new budget fails to give the nation a specific direction in the present perspective of resource constraints, population, unemployment, illiteracy and acute poverty in the country, it felt.

A resolution of the emergency meeting of the party's central working committee questioned the Finance Minister's claim that the government's expenditure had decreased, the foreign exchange reserve increased and inflation

reduced. If this was true, then the government had failed to achieve the expected GDP, the resolution said.

The Finance Minister's budget speech claiming political stability and dynamism in the economy is just the opposite of the actual situation, the resolution said.

Quoting the government's statistics, the resolution said industrial production in the public sector has been reduced while production and investment in the private sector are frustrating.

The AL said the ADP allocation has also been slashed by Tk 500 crore. Only 46 per cent of the ADP was implemented in the last 9 months, it said.

The party also rejected the Finance Minister's claim that national production was increased by 5 per cent and pointed out that the govern-

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Prices remain unchanged in city markets

By Staff Correspondent

Prices of essentials in the city's markets had not changed much yesterday despite large-scale speculative stocking of commodities before the budget in apprehension of new taxes.

Many shopowners and wholesalers of the city welcomed the current budget calling it "A good one because almost no new taxes had been imposed on essentials."

On the contrary, many buyers observed that prices of some essentials which should normally go down as a result of the withdrawal or reduction of VAT charges never do so.

Aziz Ahmed, a banker by profession, told this correspondent at the New Market yesterday, "Although the VAT charges on sweetmeat has been withdrawn, the sweetmeat shops have not revised their price

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Mogadishu Airport closed Strike against Somali warlord imminent

WASHINGTON, June 11: The US aircraft carrier WASP and three other ships with 2,200 marines aboard have been ordered to leave the Gulf and stand by in the Strait of Hormuz for possible movement to Somalia, the Pentagon said today, reports Reuter.

The United States has already sent four powerful AC-130 attack aircraft to Somalia, where they could be used to retaliate for the killing of 23 UN peacekeepers last week.

A UN military spokesman in Mogadishu said today that the Mogadishu Airport will close at midnight local time (2100 GMT) to all non-United Nations traffic. It was the clearest sign that the UN was gearing up for a military strike against Somali gunmen held accountable for slaying 23 peacekeepers.

"From midnight, we are closing the airport to non-UNOSOM (United Nations Operation in Somalia) aircraft," US army major David Stockwell told reporters, "it will remain closed until further notice."

The US Defence Department said today the Wasp and three navy landing ships were breaking away from a joint ex-

ercise with Kuwaiti forces and had been told to await further orders in the Strait of Hormuz at the entrance to the Gulf.

"They are being moved due to the increased tension in Mogadishu," said Navy Commander Joe Gradisher, a Pentagon spokesman. He said the Wasp and the amphibious ships Nashville, Barnstable and El Paso carried 2,200 US marines.

The Defence Department has said Washington is also considering UN requests to send armoured personnel carriers to Somalia after an apparent ambush on Saturday, believed to have been carried out by forces of Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideded, that killed the Pakistani peacekeepers.

AFP adds from Mogadishu: Mohamed Farah Aideded today said women and children would be massacred if the United Nations retaliates for the killings of 23 Pakistani peacekeeping troops.

UN forces are poised to strike Aideded's arms depots and compounds in Somalia's shattered capital, UN sources said.

The world body is investigating the

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Jamuna Bridge to cost \$ 100m more

By Staff Correspondent

The government will have to spend an additional 100 million US dollars (Taka 400 crore) for delay in the implementation of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project (JMBP), according to official sources.

The delay in launching the project was mainly because of the World Bank's initial reservations about its financial viability.

The cost of implementing the JMB project has been estimated at 625 million US dollars (Taka 2500 crore) against the earlier estimated cost of 528 million dollars (Taka 2112 crore), the sources said.

The WB, after reassessing the financial analysis of the project approved its implementation only in January, 1992.

According to the sources, the government had to spend an

additional amount of Taka 10 crore 68 lakh for re-examining its feasibility which, along with the rise in the prices of construction materials, had contributed to the increase in the cost of the implementation of the JMB project.

The government had to spend a total of Taka 64 crore 83 lakh for feasibility study against its earlier estimated cost of Taka 54 crore 15 lakh.

Meanwhile, the government has reportedly removed all the constraints that had caused an unexpected increase in the project cost by raising the bid amount to 82 per cent of the estimated cost of the river training component of the project.

This cost earlier was estimated at 200 million US dollars. But the lowest bid among

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FM in Calcutta 'Communication gap may have delayed Chakmas' return'

CALCUTTA, June 11: Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman left Calcutta for New Delhi this afternoon, reports BSS.

He was carrying with him a letter from the Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia for Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao and expected to hand over the letter tomorrow.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister will also meet his Indian counterpart M Dinesh Singh during his stay in New Delhi.

In response to a query from newsmen at the Calcutta Airport on the delay in repatriation of Chakma refugees, the Foreign Minister said that the delay might have been caused due to gap in communications.

He expressed the hope that the loose ends could be tied up soon to facilitate repatriation of the refugees. When his attention was drawn to the issue of sharing of Ganges water, he categorically said that the matter would be taken up with the Indian authorities by the Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Ministry of Bangladesh.

The Foreign Minister left Dhaka for New Delhi enroute to Vienna to attend the second World Conference on Human Rights.

The two-week-long conference will begin in the Austrian capital on Monday. The first conference of its kind was held in Tehran in 1968.

WB, IMF-dictated budget, says CPB

By Staff Correspondent

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) brought out a procession in the city Friday, protesting the proposed national budget, which, it claimed, was prescribed by the World Bank and IMF.

The CPB activists chanted slogans demanding protection for local industries, control over the import of foreign goods and fair price for agricultural products.

Earlier, a workers' meeting of the party was held at its office, which was addressed, among others, by Mujahidul Islam Selim, Shahidullah Chowdhury, Dibalok Singha, Abdul Malek, Mahbub Alam, Ashraf Hossain, Amir Hossain and Gaura Govinda, with Sunil Roy presiding.

Speakers at the meeting pledged to uphold the ideals of socialism and struggle for the emancipation of the exploited class.



The Environment Council yesterday brought out a colourful procession in the city marking the World Environment Day on June 5. —Star photo

Taka to be made convertible

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday categorically said that the Taka would be made fully convertible on trade accounts this year.

"Actions needed to this end are underway," he said while addressing a post-budget press conference in the afternoon at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"This will be a big leap forward to bringing the economy further to a competitive environment," Saifur said.

He said the Governor of Bangladesh Bank had already been sent abroad to get an in-depth idea about the convertibility mechanism.

Full convertibility of the Taka was a long, pressing demand of the country's business and industrial circles. Until the budget for 1993-94, the Finance Minister had shown little interest in considering the matter seriously.

Saifur Rahman, talking to the pressmen, said the decision for convertibility also shows the government's firm intention for a vibrant free market economy.

Farmers can buy fertilisers from factory directly

By Staff Correspondent

Fertiliser from the factories would be distributed directly to the small farmers once a week from July 1 to avoid monopolisation by the big traders.

This was stated by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman while addressing a post-budget press conference at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

"If it works out fine, we may even extend the distribution to twice a week," Rahman said. He said this new distribution

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30 elected CPP members resign Hun Sen's men attack UNTAC headquarters

SVAY RIENG, June 11: Pro-ruling party mobs damaged some 20 UN vehicles here as protests grew in East Cambodian provincial capitals today, one day after the Royalist party was announced winner in UN-run elections, reports AFP.

In Prey Veng, some 600 people demonstrated peacefully in the morning in front of the provincial headquarters of the United Nations Transitional Authority on Cambodia (UNTAC) — the body which ran the elections — demanding that

Prince Norodom Sihanouk be given power.

But the demonstrations turned violent here in Svay Rieng, where around 100 demonstrators attacked the UN Police Headquarters and UNTAC Headquarters.

The crowd stoned UN vehicles, breaking all their windows.

They also attacked and sacked an office belonging to FUNCINPEC, the Royalist party which won the elections. The crowd demanded the departure

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JP leader arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested Prof Delwar Hossain, labour secretary of the Jatiya Party, Thursday evening from his residence.

Acting President of the Jatiya Party Mizan Chowdhury confirmed the arrest.

Sources said, Prof Delwar was given one month's detention and sent to the Dhaka Central Jail. Meanwhile, police in plain clothes carried out a raid at the Gulshan residence of Saifur Rahman, president of the Jatiya Juba Sanghati—a front organisation of the Jatiya Party—early Friday.

He was released later after interrogation, sources said.

এন্টিবায়োটিকের প্রথম উৎপাদনের চতুর্থ বর্ষ পূর্তি

বাংলাদেশে প্রথম আন্তর্জাতিক গুণগত মানসম্পন্ন এন্টিবায়োটিক কাঁচামাল উৎপাদনকারী গণস্বাস্থ্য ফার্মাসিউটিকেলস্—

এন্টিবায়োটিক ডিভিশনের চতুর্থ বর্ষ পূর্তি

উপলক্ষে আমরা বাংলাদেশের সকল গৃহস্থ প্রত্নতকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান ও আমাদের সমানিত গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীদেরকে জানাই আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও ধন্যবাদ।

আপনাদের সার্বিক সহযোগিতায় আমাদের এন্টিবায়োটিক ডিভিশনের সম্ভারণ ও সংযোজন কাজ দ্রুত এগিয়ে চলেছে।

গণস্বাস্থ্য ফার্মাসিউটিকেলস্ এন্টিবায়োটিক ডিভিশন

নয়ারহাট, ঢাকা-১৩৫০

গণ প্রচারণ