

Cement Clinker factory now in private hands

By Staff Correspondent

The Chittagong Cement Clinker Grinding Company Limited (CCGC), which made a profit of Tk 25.10 crore in the last seven years, was handed over to private ownership yesterday.

Industries Secretary A M M Abdul Hye handed over the certificates of 51 per cent government share of the company to its buyer Mohammad Abu Tayab, Chairman of the TK Oil Refinery, Chittagong, at a function held at the auditorium of the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC). Abu Tayab bought the shares for a sum of approximately Tk 36 crore.

In 1986, 34 per cent shares of the company were sold among the people through the share market while the rest 15 per cent belonged to its staff. The function was attended, among others, by resident representative of the World Bank Christopher Willoughby, Additional Secretary of Industries Ministry Ataul Karim, Chairman of BCIC Waseq Al-Azad, Directors of the BCIC, Directors of the company and other high officials.

The Industries Secretary said the objective of the government was to expand the base of ownership through disinvestment of public enterprises. He said the government had adopted the policy not because of losses incurred by public enterprises but because

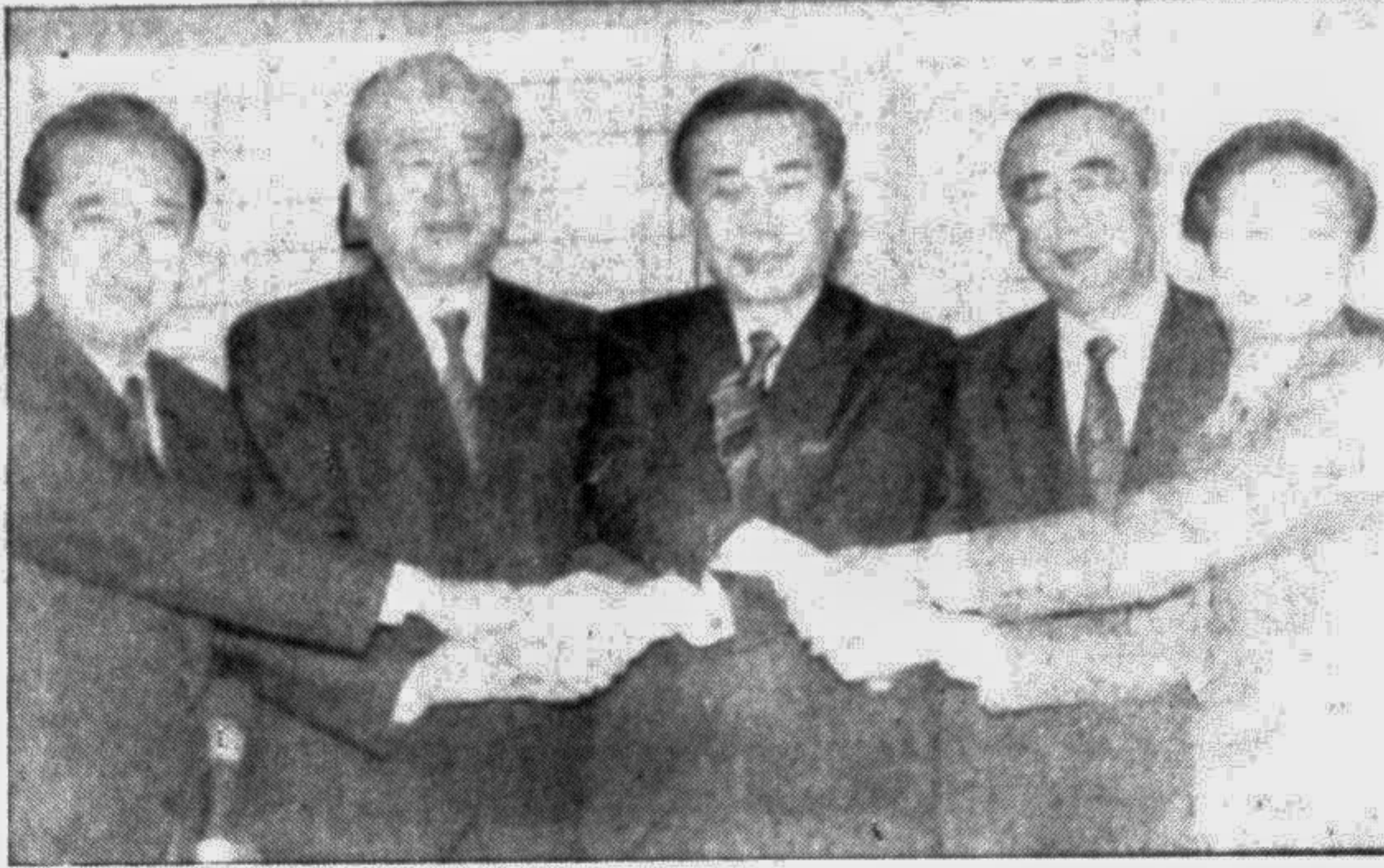
of an overriding need for rapid industrialisation.

He also said that the public sector corporations like the BCIC would have to come forward to build new industrial units, operate them profitably and then transfer those to the private sector on the BOT (build, operate and transfer) concept.

Christopher Willoughby appreciated the government's implementation of the disinvestment policy and said it would help the country achieve rapid industrial growth.

The Chittagong Cement Clinker Grinding Company Limited, the only one of its kind in the country, with an annual production capacity of 2.50 lakh tonnes of cement, started commercial operation in 1974. Since its inception, the factory relied on clinker — the main raw material — from Malaysia. But with Malaysia going for its own cement production, the factory had to gradually diversify its sources for clinker and presently also imports it from Morocco.

Located on the bank of the river Karnaphuli, the factory was transferred to the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation in 1985-86. The factory made its maximum profit — Tk 9.05 crore — in 1988-89. In 1991-92 the company made a profit of Tk 7.35 crore.



Leaders of Japanese opposition parties shake hands yesterday in Tokyo prior to talks on cooperation in July 18 general elections and a coalition government after the elections. From left are: Democratic Socialist Party Chairman Keigo Ouchi, Social Democratic Party Chairman Sadao Yamahana, Shinseito Representative Tsutomu Hata, Komeito Chairman Koshiro Ishida and Social Democratic Federation Representative Satsuki Eda. — AFP photo

Petitions seeking Presidential clemency for Munir filed

By Staff Correspondent

Two separate petitions seeking Presidential clemency were filed Thursday on behalf of Munir Hossain alias Suruj, condemned to death for murdering his wife.

One prayer was filed by the parents of Munir to the President through the Home Ministry while the other was filed by the condemned himself and submitted to the prison authorities.

The parents of Munir Hossain were not available for comments.

However, lawyers of the condemned prisoner said that the petitions pleaded for mercy from the President on grounds of young age of Munir (now 33, according to his lawyers) and that he had already served four long years in the condemned cell.

Munir's application was now being scrutinised by the Home Ministry. A Full Bench of the Supreme Court on June 20 rejected Munir's review petition and upheld the death sentence passed by the District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka in 1990.

In Jordan, Crown Prince Hassan bin Talal expressed his 'bitterness and sadness' following the US raid.

Kuwaitis also hailed the US attack but an opposition MP, Abdel Mohsen Jamal, said the ideal solution would be to eliminate the Iraqi regime and its president Saddam Hussein.

Jamal warned that Iraq was bound to try and make propaganda gains out of the latest attack.

Turkey expressed support today for the US missile attack but said the fight against terrorism should be extended to help Muslims in Bosnia.

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Powell told CNN he regretted the "collateral damage" but it was "nothing compared with collateral damage Saddam Hussein was planning... to possibly kill a former President of

the United States." Clinton said the United States could not have let an assassination plot against Bush go unanswered.

"From the first days of our revolution, our security has depended on the clarity of this message: 'Don't tread on US,'" Clinton said in a television address.

"Saddam has repeatedly violated the will and conscience of the international community, but this attempt at revenge by a tyrant against the leader of the world coalition that defeated him in war is particularly loathsome and cowardly," he said.

Defence Secretary Les Aspin, justifying the unilateral use of force, said the United States had exercised its right of self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

"Tonight's unilateral action in no way diminished US support for coalition action or for the authority of the UN," he told a briefing at the Pentagon.

The United Nations was to meet later today for the UN reasons for the attack.

HC grants Raushan Ershad bail

A High Court Division Bench yesterday granted bail to Begum Raushan Ershad who was earlier convicted and sentenced by a special court to suffer simple imprisonment for seven years in a corruption case, reports BSS.

The bench comprising Justice Habibur Rahman Khan and Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim directed appellant-petitioner Raushan Ershad to furnish bail bond of taka seven lakh to the Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka.

After delivery of the order, petitioner's counsel Moudud Ahmed stood up and prayed for an advance bail order to release Raushan Ershad. The court, however, refused Moudud's prayer.

Thereafter Attorney General Aminul Haq stood up and prayed for staying the execution of the bail order passed yesterday for two weeks to enable the government to file provisional application for leave to appeal (stay petition) before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. But the court rejected his appeal.

In the corruption case, better known as the Janata Tower Case, Raushan Ershad, her husband H M Ershad and 17 others were convicted by the Special Judge, Dhaka on June 7 on charges of corruption and abuse of power. Begum Raushan Ershad filed an appeal along with a bail prayer before the High Court Division against the judgement.

Tk 11.16 cr JU budget

By JU Correspondent

With the deficit of Tk 38.6 lakh, a total of Tk 11 crore 16 lakh budget for 1993-94 of the Jahangirnagar University was announced at its annual senate meeting yesterday.

World Bank (WB), the Finance Minister said, "There is nothing wrong in taking good suggestions from the World Bank." He added that the WB was a collective bank belonging to many countries, including Bangladesh.

He, however, informed the House that the government never accepted any WB suggestion which the cabinet felt would be detrimental to the national interests. "We refused to go by the WB suggestions in operating a few projects, especially in the energy and power sectors."

Refuting the allegation that there was no investment under BNP rule, the Finance Minister said, Tk 508 crore investment sanction had been made between July 1992 and May this year, while Tk 293 crore had already been disbursed among the investors.

The minister, in this connection, told the House that there was a minus investment of Tk 400 crore in the 1988-89 fiscal and minus Tk 610 crore in 1989-90. Quoting Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, Saifur said that contribution of domestic resources to the Annual Development Programme (ADP) was one per cent while it was 25 per cent in the current fiscal. "Even then, as a responsible government, the BNP cannot go for spurious investment, as was done during the Ershad regime," Saifur affirmed.

Saifur Rahman added: "We cannot gamble with public money."

Referring to the opposition criticism of the "golden handshake" programme, the Finance Minister said that the nation could no longer afford to keep the wheels of the sick and unprofitable trades and industries running at the cost of the tax-payer's money.

On sick industries, the

Finance Minister said the government was aware of its responsibility to rehabilitate the sick industries.

"We would not, however, take responsibility for those units that deliberately want to remain sick," the minister said adding the government would be supporting only those units which could be made viable.

He informed the House that 515 applications had been received from sick units, of which 128 had already been rehabilitated at a cost of Tk 260 crore.

Saifur Rahman informed the Jatiya Sangsad that the government had succeeded in realising 400 crore out of a total Tk 738 crore in outstanding loans to 100 big defaulters.

Replying to an opposition grievance relating to the poor performance in ADP implementation, the Finance Minister assured the House that the implementation machinery had been geared up to ensure better utilisation of funds in future.

Defending the defence budget, the Finance Minister said the country's defence needs to be strengthened. One should remember that no friend or foe is permanent.

Referring to the criticisms of the budget by the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, who rejected the budget as a "hoax and bluff", the Finance Minister said: "It was not in conformity with the dignity of the Leader of the Opposition."

"I'm constrained to say that consciousness of responsibility was lacking in her speech."

Saifur regretted that the Leader of the Opposition and some other members had turned a Nelson's eye to the good things of the new budget and said he was undone if they had turned a blind eye to the visions, political philosophy and steps and measures undertaken in this budget."

Sharif meets Ishaq

ISLAMABAD, June 27:

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called on President Ghulam Ishaq Khan here today in a bid to solve the country's political crisis, official sources said, reports AFP.

It was the first meeting between the two men since the president dissolved the National Assembly and sacked Sharif on April 18, moves which were later reversed by the country's Supreme Court.

There was no immediate comment from either side on the talks.

Corruption case filed against Anwar Hossain, MP

By Staff Correspondent

A case has been filed against former Communications Minister and a Jatiya Party leader Anwar Hossain Manju, MP on charge of corruption, police said.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption yesterday filed the case with Ramna police accusing Anwar Hossain and Fazlur Rahman, Chief Engineer of Roads and Highways Division, of misappropriating Tk 6,60,23,000 from the Barisal-Jhalakathi-Rajbari-Bhandaria road construction project during the Ershad regime.

The case was lodged under Section 5 (2) of the Anti-Corruption Act.

JS committee

From Page 1 Col 4

1993 was on. Speaker Ali, who took the chair at 8.55, announced the decision, hailed by many MPs as an 'historic decision'.

He said that under Article 55 of the Constitution the ministers are accountable to Parliament. The accountability of the government would be proved by such a committee which would also help in the institutionalisation of democracy, the Speaker observed.

The Irrigation Minister was not present in the House during the announcement but Tofael Ahmed was there. Neither the Leader of the House Prime Minister Khaleda Zia nor Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina were present.

The opposition Chief Whip, taking the floor, said he would submit eight names today and proposed that the Speaker be the chairman of the committee.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury also thanked the Speaker for taking such a bold decision and assured cooperation of his party.

Local Government Minister and BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder and Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah also thanked the Speaker for the decision, while from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, Suranjit Sen Gupta and Rashed Khan Menon thanked the Speaker for the decision, unprecedented in the country's parliamentary history.

From Page 1 Col 5

Statutory Revenue Order (SRO). Such a tactic, was adopted by the Finance Minister to enhance his image before the people, she added.

Hasina said the economy had stagnated, investment sagged, and production slowed down as the government failed to create a favourable climate and confidence to let the economy move because of its inefficiency and mismanagement.

In her 75-minute deliberation, the opposition leader portrayed a dismal picture on the important fronts of socio-economic life and blamed the ruling BNP for failing to meet people's basic needs as well as reviving the economy.

She demanded that prices of fertilizer, seeds and pesticides be slashed to half, diesel price be refixed at Tk 7 per litre and the ceiling of land brought down to the previous 2 and a half acres from the proposed 5 acres so that small and marginal farmers could get agri-credit at ease.

Turning to the industrial sector, Hasina rebuked the ruling party for its failure to set up new industries and rehabilitate the sick units in the last three years. On the contrary, she said, the government has planned retrenchment of industrial workers and sale of mills and factories worth about Tk 100 to 200 crore at a price of only Tk 4 to 5 crore.

On the condition of jute sector, the opposition leader said once Bangladesh used to export 2.5 crore bales of the golden fibre and control the international jute market. But wrong policy of the government and prescription of the World Bank and IMF are destroying the jute sector in a planned way to allow India and Pakistan to dominate the international market.

Referring to the resignation of State Minister for Establishment Nurul Huda following charges of corruption, Hasina said the Prime Minister herself is in charge of that ministry. "If Nurul Huda is sacked for corruption, why the Prime Minister also not be brought under similar charges," she questioned.

The opposition leader also criticised the absence of the Leader of the House Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia from the House yesterday and her reticence to opposition queries about the government.

The Midnight File

Two US soldiers shot in Somalia

MOGADISHU, June 27: Two American soldiers with the United Nations forces in Somalia were shot and wounded in the capital Mogadishu this afternoon. One of the wounded men told reporters from his field hospital bed that they had been clearing a roadblock in the south Mogadishu stronghold of fugitive warlord Mohamed Farah Aidede when they came under fire, reports AFP.

Opposition plans to unseat Japanese ruling party

TOKYO, June 27: Five Japanese opposition parties agreed today to coordinate their fight to unseat the Liberal Democratic Party in July 18 elections, and to form a coalition government if they won. The accord was reached at a meeting held by the top leaders of the main opposition Social Democratic Party, Komeito Democratic Socialist Party, United Social Democratic Party and Shinseito, reports AFP.

Sant Sammelan demand worries Babri Masjid Movement body

NEW DELHI, June 27: The Babri Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) today expressed concern over the demand by "Sant Sammelan" at Hardwar that the disputed site in Ayodhya be handed over by Vijay Dashami for construction of Ram Temple. In a statement the committee convenor Syed Shahabuddin alleged that the Sammelan was "pre-chaired by the leaders at large of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad" and also drew the attention of the government to the Sangh Parivar's "threat to open new fronts" in Mathura and Varanasi, reports PTI.

Dr Kamal depllores

From Page 1 Col 8

Dr Kamal said a group of 40 to 50 miscreants, led by Faridpur district Awami League leaders and workers in a lightning attack looted the meeting. The attackers armed with bricks, lathis, iron rods and other lethal weapons ransacked the bar association building.

In a written statement Dr Kamal said at least three persons including Engineer Abul Kasem, Advocate Arzoo and correspondent of Bangla daily 'Samachar' Amir Ali were injured during the incident. The written statement was read out by senior Forum leader Barrister Amrul Islam.

Dr Kamal Hossain said this unfortunate incident in Faridpur is a matter of deep concern for future of democracy in the country, particularly because of absence of democratic values and practice on the part of a political party like Awami League. He said the way a section of its leadership is seeking to make politics and the people hostage to illegal money and weapons cannot be supported by any conscientious citizen. Such incident can bring about a deep crisis in the life of the nation, he said.

The Forum leader demanded immediate arrest of the "known culprits" of the incident and their punishment under law.

He said the attackers, who later held a "protest meeting", presided over by district Awami League General-Secretary Bipul Ghos and addressed, among others, by Habibur Rahman Habib, Mohammad Faruq, Ziaul Hassan Mithu and Animesh Roy, should not be spared under any pretext by the administration and the law enforcing agencies.

Describing the attack on a bar association hall as "unprecedented and alarming", Dr Kamal said that despite the Saturday's attack proved that despite being a big party Awami League was "suffering from serious ailments".

Asked, still as an Awami League, whether he would lodge complaints with the party chief Sheikh Hasina about the incident, Dr Kamal requested the correspondents to draw their own conclusion and said such an incident was unheard of.

He declared that despite the attack on the Forum, their activities would continue and the national conference would be held in due course. But he said he would be out of the country, to preside over a Commonwealth human rights consultative advisory committee meeting in Cyprus from July 1 to 5.

Replying to questions, he stated that he was earnestly trying to minimise his foreign trips with a view to giving more time to the Forum's activities.

In reply to a question on certain newspaper's report of his recent meeting with the Prime Minister, Dr Kamal said that he went to meet the Prime Minister at Sugandha in connection with an urgent demand of the Bar Association. He said he was persuaded by the concerned quarters to meet the Prime Minister to explain the demands.

Interview

From Page 1 Col 5

loan cases, the Janata Bank 160 and Agrani Bank 150 decrees. Rahman claimed and added that the Krishi Bank has disposed of 15,000 certificate cases after the BNP's coming to power.

Commenting on the non-mention of the sick industries issue in the budget, Rahman said the sick units are to be financed by the banks and not by the government itself.

"The banks will examine their viability and the chances of getting back the loans before taking any decision," Mujibur Rahman said.

"The government will not order any bank to give a loan; the banks will exercise their own discretion. But I want to say that I have not yet received any complaints from any potentially viable sick industry owner who had been refused loans by the banks," he stated categorically.

When asked about the logic behind imposing duty on book imports, Rahman said this was done to discourage unnecessary imports as well as to develop the country's own publishing industry.

Touching on the agriculture sector, the minister observed that the country's agriculture cannot remain dependent on subsidy for ever.

"We have taken steps to ensure cheap and timely supply of loans and inputs to the farmers," Rahman stated and said the government had already lowered the price of fertiliser by Tk 500 per ton.

He also said there was a "gulf of difference" between the economists' and farmers' estimates of production cost of crops.

He also claimed that the government's policy on agriculture had resulted in bumper production and Bangladesh has now become self-sufficient in food.

"Despite many natural disasters the farmers proved to be efficient with the help of our inputs and financial supports," he maintained.

Mujibur Rahman said the budget has been directed at making the country's economy export-oriented for a quick growth.

"For this we allowed convertibility of the taka on trade accounts," Rahman pointed out without mentioning from when the convertibility would come into effect.

US allies support raid

From Page 1 Col 7

the legality of the attack. "We believe that where necessary, any action against Iraq should be governed strictly by decision of the United Nations," he said.

The Austrian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that 'Austria hopes the US action will be seen as a clear sign in the fight against international terrorism.'

France voiced cautious support for the attack with a Foreign Ministry statement saying, 'France understands the reaction of the United States, but does not know, at present, the effects of the operations.'

Israeli Housing Minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer said he expects Iraq's reaction 'if there is one, to be limited.'

Kuwaitis also hailed the US attack but an opposition MP, Abdel Mohsen Jamal, said the ideal solution would be to eliminate the Iraqi regime and its president Saddam Hussein.

Jamal warned that Iraq was bound to try and make propaganda gains out of the latest attack.

Turkey expressed support today for the US missile attack but said the fight against terrorism should be extended to help Muslims in Bosnia.

The Foreign Ministry said Clinton telephoned Turkish counterpart Suleyman Demirel and Prime Minister Tansu Ciller on Saturday to tell them of the retaliation plan.

Egypt today adopted a critical stand on the issue wondering why Washington doesn't adopt a similar attitude in dealing with the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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