

Opposition resents Saifur's remarks

By Staff Correspondent

The opposition in Parliament yesterday sharply reacted against a comment of Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman that opposition criticism of the budget was superficial and rhetorical.

Abdus Samad Azad, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, yesterday demanded withdrawal of the remark and suggested the minister stop preaching the art of politics to the opposition.

During his winding up speech on the budget Saifur Rahman told the House Sunday that the opposition criticisms were not based on statistics, rather they were rhetorical.

Referring especially to the criticism made by Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, who rejected the budget as a 'hoax and bluff', the Finance Minister had observed Hasina's comments were not becoming of the Leader of the Opposition.

"I am constrained to say that a sense of responsibility was lacking in her speech," the minister had said.

Referring to the speech of Samad Azad, who opposed the government's golden handshake programme, the Finance Minister had humorously told the House: "Although tunes of the past may still sound melodious today, yet old-style politics would not help develop the country, especially when the entire global scenario had changed so dramatically."

Samad Azad protested these remarks yesterday. The episode began yesterday morning when Abdul Awal Miah of the Awami League (AL) called the attention of the chair to the fact that neither the Finance Minister nor his State Minister was present in the House to hear the opposition's criticisms against the Finance Bill, 1993.

Colonel (Retd) Oli Ahmed, Minister for Communications, took the floor to assure the MP that notes on the discussion, being taken by Energy Minister Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain, would be handed over to the Finance Minister as soon as he stepped in to the House.

At this point Samad Azad took the floor to express his grievance against the Finance Minister's comments in the House the day before.

Plea to withdraw case against Mirza Azam MP

JAMALPUR, June 28: District Awami League at a rally here today (Monday) demanded withdrawal of a 'false case' against local MP Mirza Azam, filed by Anti-Corruption Bureau, reports UNB.

Speakers at the rally said the case was filed as part of a conspiracy against the Awami League MP for proposing a no-confidence motion against the government in parliament.

China, India to open 2nd border trading post

NEW DELHI, June 28: China and India ended here today four days of talks aimed at keeping the peace on their disputed frontier with an agreement to open a second border trading post, reports AFP.

Finance Bill

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The Finance Minister said the new fiscal proposals aimed at mobilising domestic resources to reduce dependence on foreign aid. The measures will also help strengthen tax collection machinery, correct loopholes in the revenue administration and curb tax evasion, he stated.

The Finance Minister said the government had reduced the rates of income tax from a maximum of 55 per cent to 25 per cent so that people would now feel encouraged to pay their taxes.

Saifur said he had counted on the support of the Awami League member Tofael Ahmed and Workers' Party member Rashed Khan Menon on some of the progressive measures undertaken in the Finance Bill but unfortunately those professedly progressive politicians did not lend their support to the Finance Bill.

Two amendments moved by treasury bench member A T M Alamgir were welcomed by the Finance Minister. After the opposition demand for circulating the bill for eliciting public opinion was rejected by voice vote, the House took up for consideration clause-wise amendments to the bill moved by the opposition members barring the exception of a solitary treasury member.

The opposition members had sought, among other things, abolition of the system of presumptive assessment of income by tax officials for the purpose of imposing taxes, reduction of the 15 per cent VAT to seven per cent; and declaration of movable and immovable property of the income tax officials.

"We will have to decide right now what sort of industries we need," he said. The ICSTED is one of the 20 centres for science and technology that are being set up in the Third World at the initiative of the Third World Academy of Science headed by Nobel Laureate Professor Abdus Salam.

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Jamaat-e-Islami brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting the US missile attack on Baghdad. — Star photo.

Jamaat condemns attack on Baghdad

Jamaat-e-Islami condemned the US missile attack on Baghdad, saying it is a "naked aggression as part of a deep conspiracy against the Muslim world," reports UNB.

A meeting of the central working committee of the party at its office yesterday accused the United States of launching military aggression against Iraq to divert world attention from the genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina where it was not taking any action to stop the killing of Muslims.

The meeting with acting party chief Abbas Ali Khan in the chair called upon peace-loving people of the world, particularly the Muslim Ummah, to resist the 'American aggression'.

It also appealed to all international fora, including the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Conference, to halt the 'American hegemony'.

Meanwhile, the City Jamaat yesterday staged demonstration in the city against the US attack on Iraq and called it the most barbaric act in history.

Protesting the US missile raids, Jamaat organised a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram.

Speakers at the rally blasted the US for launching a totally unjust and illogical attack on Iraq, the most barbaric act in history.

Presided over by city unit Ameer A T M Azharul Islam, the rally was addressed, among others, by central Jamaat leaders Prof Yusuf Ali and Muhammad Kamaruzzaman.

Importance of bio-technology stressed

By Staff Correspondent
Twenty biotechnological industrial units will be set up in the country in the next seven years with support of the International Centre of Science, Technology and Environment for Densely Populated Regions (ICSTED).

This was disclosed by the ICSTED Chairman Professor Naseem Rahman at a press briefing at Hotel Sheraton in the capital yesterday.

Prof Rahman, who also heads the Trust Fund of the ICSTED, has urged the business community to upgrade its technological level and adapt technology suitable to the national context.

"Potential industrialists can gain by involving themselves with the ICSTED," he said. "Biotechnology is important worldwide and is an effective science for economic growth."

"It can help reduce population growth. Many countries in the world were developed through setting up such industries," Prof Rahman told journalists.

He said it was through the use of biotechnology that the birth control pill was manufactured, which proved so popular and effective worldwide. This technology could also help produce software computers at a relatively cheaper cost, he added.

Warning that by the year 2000 some parts of the globe would be highly underdeveloped, the ICSTED Chairman said: "It is high time for Bangladesh to select its technology for the economic growth."

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Opposition condemns

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The AL member from Khulna said the United States was pursuing a policy of double standard. It failed to stop genocide in Bosnia where Muslims are being killed and women raped.

Raising the issue soon after the House resumed yesterday morning, Jamaat parliamentary party leader Matiar Rahman Nizami said the "unprovoked" US attack on Baghdad stunned the whole world and hurt the sentiment of the Muslim Ummah.

He said the United States remained silent on the genocide in Bosnia but resorted to prompt military action against Iraq on a "lame excuse" of alleged plot to assassinate former US President George Bush when he visited Kuwait on April 12.

The Jamaat leader described the US action as "state terrorism" designed to please Israel.

He requested the chair to allow an elaborate discussion on the US "aggression" and adopt a resolution condemning

Clinton: Terrorism

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war commander Norman Schwarzkopf has been put under heavy guard because of Iraqi death threats, CNN said on Sunday, quoting an unnamed administration official.

But the Pentagon and police near his home outside Tampa, Florida could neither confirm nor deny the story.

Earlier, the United States on Sunday told the UN Security Council it launched Saturday's cruise missile attack on Baghdad in legitimate self-defense.

The US also displayed a series of photographs in the Security Council which it said proved the Iraqi secret service directed a plot to assassinate former President George Bush during a visit to Kuwait last April.

Iraq flatly denied any involvement in the conspiracy which it said had been fabricated by the Kuwaiti authorities.

Baghdad newspapers said today Iraq would never allow UN inspectors to put remote cameras on its weapons sites.

It was the first public airing

Tariff Schedule

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petition.

At the turn of the Eighties, except for items in a very narrowly defined 'positive' list, all items were subject to extensive quota restrictions and bans. This was replaced in 1985 by negative and restricted lists of importables.

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Royal rift formalised

LONDON, June 28: Britain's Duke and Duchess of York, Queen Elizabeth's second son Prince Andrew and the flame-haired Sarah Ferguson, formally separated today, reports Reuter.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman said the estranged couple, two of the Royal House of Windsor's most conspicuous socialites, had completed discussions with lawyers but no details of the arrangements would be made public.

"They are now formally separated and they will continue to lead their own lives," he added. "Their Royal Highnesses remain the closest of friends and in the interests of their children will spend as much time as practical together as a family."

The couple have two daughters, Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie, aged five and three.

The spokesman said the couple wished to end recent speculation of a reconciliation, describing such conjecture as "inappropriate."

Both were aged 28 when they married in 1986, with reports of strains in their relationship emerging within weeks due to the duke's long absences abroad as a British naval officer.

A helicopter pilot who served in the 1982 Falklands war Prince Andrew now commands his own warship.

Buckingham Palace announced their separation in March 1992. Five months later, many Britons were scandalised by photographs published in national newspapers showing an American male friend kissing the topless Duchess's toes while on holiday in the south of France.

SKOP-labour feds

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The nature and duration of the proposed programme was the sticking point during yesterday's talks between the SKOP and the jute-textile-yarn-sugar labour federations.

The SKOP central leaders reportedly were in favour of programmes such as strike, rail-road blockades, sieges and sit-ins. Most SKOP leaders were of the view that the fresh programme's duration should not exceed 48 hours.

The meeting which started at 10 yesterday morning, was adjourned at 7.15 pm to resume at 10 this morning.

The grouping of four federations of the jute-textile-yarn-sugar sectors workers' unions had deferred announcement of a 96-hour nationwide shutdown Saturday following an understanding with the SKOP that both sides would declare identical programmes tomorrow.

DU campus

From Page 1 Col 5
yesterday at about 11 am.

Later he was taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, sources said. Meanwhile, the BCL (M-I) brought out a procession and held a rally at the Teachers Students Centre (TSC) road crossing yesterday afternoon to protest the attack.

DMCH Correspondent adds: Ajoy Das, a second year student of Tejoan College was assaulted Monday by a group of unidentified youngmen on the DU campus.

Ajay, the Organisation Secretary of Pro-Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Bangladesh Chhatra League of Tejoan College was attacked in front of the Surja Sen Hall when he went there to attend a political convention.

He was later rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Bank employees

From Page 1 Col 8
president of the Sonali Bank Employees' Union (Rg No-1030) addressed the gathering at the official residence of Sheikh Hasina.

Hasina, while welcoming the new Sramik League members — followers of the jailed leader Jamaluddin — said the bank employees joining her party was a very significant development specially when the AL had rejected the 'anti-people' budget of the BNP government.

Hasina said the BNP government's inefficiency has frustrated the people. Describing activities of the BNP as undemocratic, she said this party now wants to stay in power by abusing power.

The Awami League chief said the ruling party is also trying to capture the CBAs by influencing elections of trade unions.

"Elections under the BNP government will not be neutral," she said, referring to parliamentary election in the Mirpur seat last February.

Hasina was critical of the government's retrenchment policy and selling out profitable industrial units at throw-away prices. She said while adequate incentives should be given to the private sector yet profitable public sector mills and factories should not be disinvested.

The Midnight File

ME talks enter final week

WASHINGTON, June 28: The United States has stepped up its role in the Israeli-Arab peace talks in a bid to see progress as the current session entered its final week today. Dennis Ross, the special US coordinator for the talks, is expected to travel to the Middle East in July to prepare the next round of talks, which have yet to bring any tangible results, an Israeli delegation member said. Ross has concentrated a lot of his energy on the Israeli-Palestinian talks, whose lack of progress is holding back the rest of the negotiations, said sources close to the Arab delegations, reports AFP.

40,000 Croats driven from homes

SARAJEVO, June 28: Around 40,000 Croat civilians have been driven from their homes in central Bosnia during fighting with Muslim forces, Croatian radio reported today. It quoted Croatian Defence Force officials as saying also that 40 Croats had been killed in the region last week in a struggle for territory between the former civil war allies. The heaviest recent fighting has taken place around the towns of Maglaj, Zavidovici and Zepe north of the Bosnian capital Sarajevo, reports Reuter.

Eritrea criticises OAU

CAIRO, June 28: African leaders stung by criticism of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) from its newest member, said today that some critiques were valid but the OAU overall did a good job for Africa. Eritrea's President Isayas Afewerki stunned the opening session of the OAU's 30th anniversary summit by saying the group had been an utter failure. The sad fact remains that the OAU has become a nominal organisation that has failed to deliver on its pronounced objectives and commitments," said Afewerki, whose country became the OAU's 52nd member after winning independence this year from Ethiopia following a 30-year civil war, reports Reuter.

One killed in Jhenidah gunfight

JHENIDAH, June 28: A Purba Bangla Communist Party member was killed and at least six were injured in a fierce gunfight with the rival Biplobi Communist Party men at Bejeemara village in Sadar thana Sunday night, reports UNB.

The dead, Marntaj, 35, was earlier kidnapped and left on the scene fatally injured after the three-hour-long fighting.

Police and villagers said the encounter between the two outlawed groups erupted after the Biplobi Communist Party gunmen kidnapped Moutaj while returning home last night.

Momtaj was found fatally wounded this morning due to merciless beating. He succumbed to his injuries at the Sadar Hospital soon after admission.

Some 400 rounds of shots were fired during the clash, villagers said. The injured were taken away by the members of the respective parties, they added.

BIWTC

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commented that the implementation of the project would lead to privatisation of the BIWTC.

The rate of interest on the World Bank's loan for the project is also rather high.

According to sources, the WB had stipulated that the lending interest rate of its loan would be 11 per cent which the BIWTC authorities consider very high and feel would prove a heavy burden on the corporation.

It has been estimated that the project would cost Taka 67 crore each year in interest alone.

BIWTC authorities feel that just at a time when the corporation was making up its losses and trying to become profitable, undertaking a project with such high interest rates would be self-defeating. In the first nine months of the current fiscal year, the corporation had increased its earnings by Taka seven crore over the income for the corresponding period last year.

Golam Azam

From Page 1 Col 4
zen-ship Order 1972 is applicable to determine the citizenship of Golam Azam.

Azam, he said, was disqualified for citizenship due to his conduct during and after the Liberation War and the notification disqualifying him as citizen of Bangladesh was justified. This aspect was not appreciated by the High Court, the appeal petition said.

It further said Golam Azam did not surrender his Pakistani passport while living in England to the Bangladesh High Commission. Even in 1978 when he came to Bangladesh, he registered as a citizen of Pakistan and subsequently extended his visa twice.

The petition said the conduct of Golam Azam outside and inside the country was anti-Bangladeshi which became an undisputed fact.

His activities during and after the Liberation War were prejudicial to the interest of the country and he showed allegiance to Pakistan, it added.

Golam Azam came to the court after a lapse of 20 years and as such he was guilty of laches and the High Court ought to have rejected his petition on this ground, the Attorney General said.

The court has asked the government to submit relevant documents of the case.

One shot in Khilgaon

By Staff Correspondent
A school student received a bullet wound as two factions of local bullies clashed for about thirty minutes at Khilgaon in the city Monday afternoon.

Shahadat Zaman Mintu, 15, a Class Ten student of the Khilgaon Staff High School, was hit by a bullet in his lower abdomen during a cross-fire among the warring factions.

Another case against Ershad

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption yesterday filed a case with Dhanmondi thana against former President H M Ershad for sustaining loss of Tk 81,80,990 to the government, reports UNB.

According to the case, Ershad abused his power in the allotment of a government house in Dhanmondi residential area to Janadal on September 4, 1984. This was done in gross violation of rules causing loss to the government.

Janadal was floated by Ershad which was later renamed as Jatiya Party.

The 63-year-old General Ershad is now serving 20 years in jail for keeping unauthorised arms and corruption.

Raushan

From Page 1 Col 5
of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, after hearing the stay prayer submitted by Attorney General Aminul Haq, asked "Why the appeal for a stay of the High Court order? Why should we interfere against the order of the High Court?" Justice Afzal was quoted as saying after hearing the petition.

The brief hearing took place in Justice Afzal's chamber as a matter of convention of the Appellate Division, court sources said.

The government still has the right to appeal before the Appellate Division against the order of the High Court, Attorney General's office sources said. But it is unlikely that such an appeal will be made.

Begum Raushan Ershad, along with her husband and 17 others, were convicted and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment by a special court on June 7 in a corruption case popularly known as the "Janata Tower Case."

Punjab Assembly

From Page 1 Col 5
Sharif told a news conference Sunday that his meeting with the President was positive and constructive.

But he said he expected to see 'practical steps' to end what he called 'violations of the constitution' by the provinces, which are ruled by men loyal to the President.

A presidential spokesman also said the meeting was "good and the approach on both sides was positive and constructive."

Analysts said although the meeting ended a communication gap between the two, but Sharif apparently received no assurances that the president was ready to ditch his supporters in the provinces.

"It told the president that no provincial government should be allowed to go beyond its Constitutional role," Sharif said.