

# Investors can make 16-pt plan a success: Mannan

By Staff Correspondent

State Minister for Textiles, Maj (Retd) MA Mannan yesterday said the new 16-point plan for revamping the sector is a guiding principle and the initiative should come from the entrepreneurs.

The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank may also come up with some plans to fund this 16-point plan, the minister said. "If this comes through, the country would see a massive chain reaction of development," he added.

Mannan was speaking at a discussion on the 16-point textile plan organised by the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI). President of BCI, Subid Ali, while speaking on the occasion, said since the Parliamentary Standing Committee has approved the 16-point plan it has the backing of the people of the country.

"We must do everything to go ahead with it," he said and added that those quarters who oppose the country's development are also opposing this.

However, he cautioned that unless the bank rates are lowered, the plan would yield no results.

Earlier, the Textiles Minister said a major programme like the plan should have been taken up by the government soon after independence to meet the gap in different textiles sub-sectors.

"There is a big gap between the spinning and the garments sub-sectors which have prospered well," Mannan said. "However, the middle portion, the weaving and finishing sub-sectors, have suffered."

The minister said development of the textiles sector cannot be made without a concerted development of all the sub-sectors.

"It is not a daydream to achieve export earnings of Taka 1.6 lakh crore from the textiles sector alone," Mannan said. "The entire region of East Asia has been witnessing a surge in textiles exports. So, why can't we do the same?" the minister questioned.

"In fact, our estimate of Taka 1.6 lakh crore is a conservative one," he asserted.

Textiles Secretary Mofazzal Karim, speaking on the occasion, observed that the sector is

uncompetitive here because of high tax rates on raw materials. He also suggested that to combat smuggling of textiles readjusting the fiscal measures is the only solution.

Abdur Rauf, an Awami League MP present on the occasion, said the JS standing committee had supported the 16-point programme to uphold the greater interest of the nation.

BNP MP Tatyubur Rahman also urged all to make the 16-point plan a success. Abdul Alim Mirza, MP, said the nation would not allow the plan to be marred because of the vested interests of certain quarters.

## Osmany's 75th birth anniversary tomorrow

The 75th birth anniversary of the Commander-in-Chief of the Bangladesh Liberation Army Bangabir General Mohammad Ataul Ghani Osmany will be observed tomorrow, reports UNB.

Different organisations, including the Jatiya Janata Party — founded by Osmany — have planned programmes to observe the day.

The Janata Party will hold a discussion meeting at the National Book Centre at 4 pm. Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad will be the chief guest while Rashed Khan Menon, MP, Barrister Ishtiaq Ahmed and Advocate Gazul Haq will attend as special guests.

The programmes will include a seminar on the "Role of Osmany in materialising the objectives of the Liberation War and preserving parliamentary democracy" and a cultural function at the children's auditorium of the National Museum at 4 pm on the day.

Justice Kamaluddin Hossain, Dr Kamal Hossain, Shahjahan Siraj, MP, Suranjit Sen Gupta, MP, M Rafiqul Islam, BU and Gias Kamal Chowdhury will take part in the discussion.

The Bangabir Osmany Samajshaha-O-Gabeshana Sangsad will hold a milad mahfil at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at 3 pm. It will also place wreaths at the portrait of the leader on the day.

The Entertainment sub-committee headed by Mir Shawkat Ali, MP, also met at the party office.

A meeting of the Service sub-



BNP chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visited the venue for the opening session of the fourth national council meeting of the party at Manik Mia Avenue in the city yesterday. She was accompanied by several of her cabinet and party colleagues. —PID photo

# All set for BNP's council

From page 1 col 7  
party leaders, ministers and party Secretary General Barrister Salam Talukder were present during the Prime Minister's visit.

Meanwhile, all preparations have been completed to hold the council session. A huge canopy has been erected on the broad Manik Mia Avenue.

Some 3000 party workers and volunteers have been working round-the-clock to make the council a success, said the organisers.

Later Begum Zia went to the party's central office and discussed with senior leaders affairs relating to the council.

The BNP Central Office at Naya Paltan wore a festive look with thousands of party leaders and workers assembled there. The office has been decorated with bunting and festoons.

Thousands of workers were seen assembled in front of the office discussing the forthcoming council. Because of space shortage, hundreds of party workers were seen standing outside the office.

Earlier, a meeting of the Management sub-committee headed by Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman visited the canopy at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and expressed satisfaction at the preparations.

The Entertainment sub-committee headed by Mir Shawkat Ali, MP, also met at the party office.

A meeting of the Service sub-

committee headed by Mayor Mirza Abbas also held a meeting. Members of the volunteer squad were also present at the meeting. The Service sub-committee will meet again today at the Manik Mia Avenue at 3:30 pm.

A meeting of the Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal at the BNP Central Office requested the presidents and secretaries of all district units to attend the party's council session. It was presided by Mirza Alamgir.

The Jatiyatabadi Tanti Dal also held a meeting at the MP Hostel.

Several thousand activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of the BNP, marched through the city streets yesterday evening in a colourful procession carrying banners and portraits of late President Zia and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

The JCD also brought out a rally from the Aparajeyo Bangla on the Dhaka University campus at 11 am which terminated at the BNP central office.

According to party sources, the fourth council will be the turning point for the BNP and it will also have an impact on national politics. The ruling party is expected to give a call to the opposition parties to consolidate the nascent democracy in the country.

Sources also said, the ruling party leaders will discuss organisational matters and chart a strategy for the next elections.

The first council of the BNP was held in 1980 and the second in 1981. The last council was held in 1989.

Talukder's request  
Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder has requested the party leaders and workers to be present at Manik Mia Avenue by 8 am tomorrow to join the inaugural session of the fourth national council.

In a statement yesterday, Talukder requested the presidents of all district units to take position in front of their respective flag stands by 8:30 am

to participate in the flag hoisting ceremony.

The BNP Secretary General also asked the councillors to collect their entry passes before entering the council stage at Sugandha to take part in the business sessions.

Meanwhile, the party has instructed all leaders and workers not to crowd the mazar of late President Ziaur Rahman before the inaugural function.

Only the Standing Committee members will visit the mazar at 8 am tomorrow and place wreaths there on the occasion of the party's 15th founding anniversary, said a press release.

Others have been advised to visit the mazar in the afternoon or later in the day, the press release added.

## Two to die for killing Jubadal leader

FARIDPUR, Aug 30: Two people were sentenced to death and four others given life term here today for killing a Jubadal leader, reports UNB.

Firoz, 22, a local Jubadal leader, was shot dead at his home in Alipur area of the town on April 15 last year.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Abul Mansur pronounced the judgement acquitting 11 others of the murder charge.

Babu Kasha and Hiru were awarded death penalty by hanging while Ohid, Shaid, Milon and Mintu were given life term in jail.

Kotwali police had submitted a charge-sheet to the court against 17 people.

## 400 feared killed in dam burst

BEIJING, Aug 30: More than 400 people were feared dead after a dam burst in China's remote western province of Qinghai sending torrents of water crashing down on nearby villages, officials said today, reports Reuter.

## More foreign delegates arrive

Secretary General of the Shri Lanka's ruling United National Party BS Cooray will attend the opening ceremony of the national council of the BNP to be held tomorrow, reports UNB.

Cooray, also the Minister for Housing and Construction of Shri Lanka, arrives here today, Shri Lanka High Commission sources said.

During his stay here, Cooray will also study Bangladesh's housing programmes, urban settlement, flood prevention and disaster preparedness measures and visit the Grameen Bank.

Some 22 foreign dignitaries are expected to attend the opening ceremony of the BNP council.

Leaders of both the ruling and opposition parties of different countries including China, France, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Japan and Indonesia will also attend.

Meanwhile, convener of the council preparatory committee Chowdhury Tanbir Ahmad Siddiky yesterday received two delegations from Pakistan and Nepal at the Zia International Airport.

Zia Isaphani, a representative of the Pakistan People's Party chief Benazir Bhutto, arrived here last evening by an Emirates flight.

A four-member Nepalese delegation led by Basudev Risel, Joint Secretary of the ruling Nepali Congress and Leader of the Upper House, arrived yesterday afternoon.

## Talukdar doubts

From Page 1 Col 8  
Minister termed the Gano Forum a "rainbow coalition" where, he said, the political equations were "remarkable".

Responding to a question, Barrister Talukder, however, said in a democratic society anybody could create a party of his choice.

## Mahathir

From Page 1 Col 8  
cratic. After the Soviets replaced communism with democracy, the West refused to help, watching from the sideline as the former Soviet states collapsed economically, he charged.

He said the Western powers wanted Malaysia to remain backward and unable to compete with them. Then they would be able to say that Malaysians were incapable of handling independence, and would administer the country themselves, he added.

Mahathir also said that absolute individual freedom was not democracy, but anarchy. "Freedom should have its limits, as absolute freedom will threaten society," he said.

## JCD, BCL clash in Natore

From Our Correspondent  
NATORE, Aug 30: At least 25 students were injured today when the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists clashed at the Abdulpur College in Lalpur thana of the district.

Four of the critically wounded students have been admitted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

## Accord on Palestine

From Page 1 Col 5  
violence and a daring attempt to coexist with our closest neighbour," he added.

Today is the Moulid, the birthday of the Prophet Mohammad (SM). I hope it will also mark a new birth for the Palestinians," said Bassam Abu Sharif, a political adviser to PLO chairman Yasser Arafat.

Opponents of an agreement, also on both sides of the long conflict, dug in to fight a rear-guard action and there was even a death threat made by a Palestinian guerrilla leader against Arafat.

Palestinian hardliners said the PLO was abandoning aspirations to an independent state. Israeli rightwingers said Rabin was doing quite the opposite — opening the door to a hostile state in the areas they call Judaea and Samria.

The PLO official said the draft agreement proposed complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho.

According to details made available in Israel, the agreement also proposes "early empowerment" — giving the Palestinians limited authority in other parts of the West Bank immediately.

Both strands of the agreement could take effect within weeks if Israel and the Palestinians sign it in Washington.

The agreement is a framework on the general principles of the interim settlement. It deals with the transfer of power to an elected Palestinian authority in all Palestinian occupied territories... and includes a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank area of Jericho, said the PLO official, who asked not to be named.

Palestinian sources said the package had been worked out in secret contacts between PLO

# The Midnight File

## Lankan envoy to Pakistan dies

ISLAMABAD, Aug 30: The Shri Lanka High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dickman De Alwis, died at the age of 51 today after a brief illness, family members said. The ambassador, who had been in Pakistan for two years, died at a military hospital at Rawalpindi, near Islamabad, where he was admitted two days ago, they said. The body would be taken to Colombo on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

## Abiola calls for UN sanctions

WASHINGTON, Aug 30: The presumed winner of Nigeria's annulled presidential elections called today for UN sanctions to be imposed on the interim Nigerian government and said he had postponed his return home because of fears the country would be plunged into chaos. "I still intend to return, but I've ceased to give it a time limit. I hope to return as soon as possible," Moshood Abiola told a news conference in Washington. "There's no way I can go back in that situation," reports AFP.

## Talks delayed for a day

## No sign of accord on Bosnia in sight

GENEVA, Aug 30: Talks between the leaders of Bosnia's warring factions, set to resume Monday, were postponed for a day because Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic could not arrive in time, a conference spokesman said, reports AP.

Bosnia's Muslim, Croat and Serb leaders return to the negotiations with no sign that an agreement on the three-way ethnic division of the war-torn state was in sight.

Mediators Lord Owen of the European Community and Thorvald Stoltenberg of the United Nations set Monday as the deadline for accepting their compromise proposal, which gives the Muslim-led govern-

ment 31 per cent of Bosnia. But because Izetbegovic's difficult transport arrangements from the besieged Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, the talks were postponed for Tuesday at 10 am (0800 GMT), the spokesman John Mills said.

ARP adds: Izetbegovic believes that Geneva plans for a settlement to the Bosnian conflict are 'worse than war,' the French Defence Minister said today after meeting the Bosnian leader.

Francois Leotard quoted Izetbegovic as saying 'the proposal (to split Bosnia-Herzegovina into three ethnic mini-states) is worse than the war.'

He said he found the President very pessimistic about the Geneva talks due to resume tomorrow.

## Big blaze in city factory

By Staff Correspondent  
A fire broke out at a chemical-cum-cosmetics industry at Swambag in the city early yesterday morning destroying property estimated at Tk 20 lakh.

However, the Fire Service said the extent of damage was subject to investigation. The fire started from an electric short-circuit on the third floor of the four-storied building of the Pabna Homoeo Chemical Research Laboratory at about 7.47 am yesterday.

## Miladunnabi

From Page 1 Col 8  
the city. On this day 1423 years ago, Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (S) was born on the desert of Arab peninsula with divine guidings to preach Islam. Muhammad, this noble name has been on the lips of countless millions of men since then. His demise was also on the same date.

In a message on the eve of Miladunnabi, President Abdur Rahman Biswas has called for building a happy and prosperous Bangladesh being imbued with the spirit of greater unity and brotherhood, the teachings of the holy occasion.

Describing Prophet (S) as the greatest man of all times, the President also called for practising his ideals in our individual, social and public life to attain salvation in the world and the world hereafter.

In a separate message, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia made a call for all to serve the nation and the people unitedly imbuing the teachings and ideals of Prophet (S).

"The Quran is the basis of the code of life the Prophet wanted to establish," said the Prime Minister in the message.

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina felicitated Muslims all over the world on the occasion.

In a message, Hasina said the Prophet preached the message of peace, truth, justice, forgiveness, social justice and equal rights for humanity.

The day has been declared public holiday. Radio and television will put up special programmes highlighting the significance of the day. National dailies will bring out special supplements.

## Mirpur Sec-14

From Page 1 Col 8  
groups, went to the DESA office demanding restoration of power supply. "The DESA people did not like the way we placed our demand and began calling us names," they said. They added that the DESA employees even locked up nine demonstrators and beat them up.

Handing them before to the police, DESA also filed cases against them under the Anti-Terrorist Act.

Following the incident, the local DESA employees, have been afraid to go out of their office to change the damaged transformer.

A local person of influence, meanwhile, contacted the DESA authority to defuse the tension.

## Khaleda greets Mahathir

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has felicitated Dato Seri Dr Mahathir Bin Mohammad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, and Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, on the occasion of national days of the two countries, reports UNB.

In separate messages, Begum Zia wished progress and prosperity for the peoples of Malaysia and Trinidad and Tobago.

He added that the government has sanctioned Taka 60 crore for the retrenchment benefits and more would be forthcoming.

In his letter to the World Bank the Finance Minister also outlined setting up a 'social safety-net programme' for the retrenched employees under which they would be offered re-training opportunities.

On rescheduling of the Taka 4,000 crore outstanding debts of both the public and private sector mills one-third of the amount would be written-off by the individual banks while the rest of the amount would be re-amortised for a period of 15 years.

On privatising the 36 BJMC mills, the source said, the BJMC would retain about 25 per cent of the mills and the rest would be privatised by 1996.

Moreover, re-training of the managers and workers of the retained mills would be started immediately to increase the production efficiency of the units.

The Finance Minister, in his letter to the WB, also pledged to reform the wage policy of the jute industry, linking wages with productivity based on the recommendations of the tripartite consultative committee, and eliminating government intervention in the sector and allowing it to function on a purely commercial basis.

Pakistan's caretaker government, appointed in July to oversee elections, has laid down a code of conduct, vowing to disqualify loan defaulters and drug barons and enlisted the military to check election violence.

The caretaker government

## Over 2000 to run for Pak polls

ISLAMABAD, Aug 30: More than 2,000 candidates have signed up to run for office in Pakistan's general elections this October, considered the country's best chance at free and fair polls in its 47-year history, reports AP.

Khaliq Rehman, an election commission official, gave that figure Monday after nominations for the 217-seat National Assembly or lawmaking lower house of parliament had closed.

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## Talukder's request

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Leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Benazir Bhutto chats with the District and Sessions Judge in Larkana on Saturday after submitting her nomination papers for the National Assembly elections. —AFP photo

was appointed following the simultaneous resignations of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his foe, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan.

The two mainstream parties contesting the elections are former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's left-leaning Pakistan People's Party and Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League.

A third-alternative is the Pakistan Islamic Front, a collection of three religious parties, including the small but well-organized Jamaat-e-Islami.

Nominations for the four provincial legislatures close Monday.

The decision to disqualify Pakistanis linked to the lucrative drug trade apparently

stopped Ayub Afridi, a powerful tribal chief under indictment on drug charges in the United States, from running. Officials said he did not submit his name before nominations closed.

Afridi, who is wanted for extradition to the United States, was elected to the National Assembly in the 1990 elections.

At least 11 chiefs, or maliks, in the Khyber tribal agency and a few more in other agencies in the tribal belt bordering Afghanistan were barred, a senior government official said.

The official said no formal charges had been made against the chiefs and their names had not been disclosed.

## Jute sector reforms

From page 1 Col 7  
ment intervention in the sector. A large number of the public sector jute mills under the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) would also be privatised by the end of the programme in 1996, the source added.

As part of the overall restructuring process, the winding up of the Bangladesh Jute Corporation has already been authorised.

The jute sector restructuring project (JSRP) was earlier scheduled to start last July but negotiations got bogged down because the government sought more money than the US 150 million dollar offered initially by the bank.

At the same time, the WB asked the government to devise a mechanism to reschedule the staggering outstanding debts — about Taka 4,000 crore — of both the private and public sector jute mills.

Moreover, the Jute Ministry source pointed out, the unilateral raise in wages for the workers announced by the government earlier this year also increased the cost.

"The wage hikes required a revision of the project cost estimates because the estimated retrenchment benefits for the workers increased," he explained.

Continued negotiations, however, enabled both sides to resolve the issues and the WB submitted a revised legal document on the project and the credit to the government on August 11, the ministry source added.

The JSRP is based on the recommendations of the European Community-funded jute sector manufacturing study completed last year, but with some modifications. The study strongly suggested downsizing the production capacity of the existing jute mills by 34 per cent with the immediate closure of 12 worst performing jute mills, one of which is in the private sector.

The study also recommended the immediate retrenchment of about 50,700 mill employees, including 38,500 of the production workers out of a total 1,36,780 and about 12,200 officers and staff out of a total 24,300.

The study estimated the compensation cost for the retrenchment process at about

Taka 2.45 billion at the rate of Taka 50,000 per retrenched worker. There are 65 jute mills in operation in the country, including 36 under the BJMC and 29 in the private sector.

Earlier this month, the Jute ministry source said, the Finance Minister outlined the objectives of the project in a letter to the WB while accepting the IDA credit.

Of the nine BJMC jute mills to be closed under the project, the source added, four have already been shut down, including the Mymensingh Jute Mills, the Bawa in Dhaka, the Monowar in Khulna and the Purbachal in Jessore.

However, he could not provide any specific figures as to how any workers would be retrenched under the JSRP but said the process would be conducted "discreetly" with the workers being offered similar benefits to early retirement options.

He added that the government has sanctioned Taka 60 crore for the retrenchment benefits and more would be forthcoming.

In his letter to the World Bank the Finance Minister also outlined setting up a 'social safety-net programme' for the retrenched employees under which they would be offered re-training opportunities.

On rescheduling of the Taka 4,000 crore outstanding debts of both the public and private sector mills one-third of the amount would be written-off by the individual banks while the rest of the amount would be re-amortised for a period of 15 years.

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