

Business

Moeen Qureshi claims

Reform package saves Pakistan from brink of bankruptcy

ISLAMABAD, Sept 3: Prime Minister Moeen Qureshi said his tough package of price rises and tax increases unveiled last month brought Pakistan back from the brink of bankruptcy, reports Reuter.

"Do you think we did this easily?" he said in an emotional speech to the senate. "Do you think I like the idea of increases in prices of basic necessities?"

The former World Bank Vice President said he found virtually no foreign reserves when he took office on July 18 after a six-month political crisis.

"The short-term debt was so large we had no way to meet

our liabilities over the next six months. We would have been declared a bankrupt and insol-

vent country."

Qureshi gave no details of the size of Pakistan's foreign debt, but officials said external debts amounted to 18.4 million billion last June.

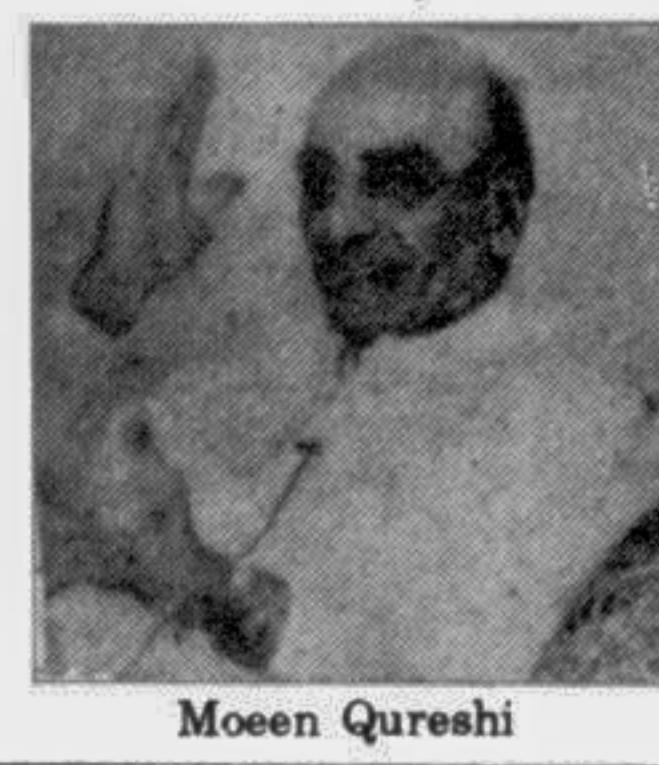
He said he gave no details of the economic crisis when he took over for fear of triggering a fresh flight of capital. Several hundred million dollar left the reserves during the political crisis as exports fell and economic confidence tumbled.

Foreign reserves were now two-and-a-half times the amount they were when he took over, Qureshi said. The state (central) bank of Pakistan said

reserves hit 507 million billion on August 26, compared with 189 million billion on July 12.

The crisis was so serious it could have entailed a stop on oil imports for lack of funds, Qureshi said. Pakistan produces 65,000 BPD with imports making up its needs for 250,000 BPD.

Defending his actions on a day when the business hub, Karachi, was paralysed by a strike to protest against the price rises, he said: "Without this the political and economic integrity of the nation would be in danger."



Moeen Qureshi

Privatisation of oil an option: Kuwaiti Minister

KUWAIT, Sept 3: Oil Minister Ali al-Baghi said Wednesday that Kuwait was holding contacts with foreign oil firms that could lead to the privatisation of many oil-related sectors of its economy, reports AP.

Al-Baghi was commenting on reports published in The Wall Street Journal Wednesday that the emirate's discussions with Western firms could soon lead to precedent-setting, production-sharing agreements.

Such agreements would mean the reversal of a 1975 nationalisation of Kuwait's oil fields. Kuwait had bought the shares of foreign firms in its national oil reserves during the oil-boom years.

However, the oil sector was severely ruined during Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait that began with the August 1990 invasion.

Since liberation in February 1991, the Kuwaitis have been struggling to rebuild the oil industry, the backbone of their economy.

Speaking to reporters on the fringes of a Parliament debate, al-Baghi said Wednesday: "Reports about discussion [of privatisation being] at an advanced stage are likely exaggerated."

"But all options for cooperation with companies are open," he said.

"There are many alternatives available to Kuwait," he said. "We have not reached anything final."

For some Kuwaitis, foreign investment is a means of providing added security.

ROK youth team in city

A six-member South Korean Youth Volunteers team arrived in the city yesterday [Friday] under a recently signed agreement between the government of Bangladesh and Korea, says a Press release.

The team, comprising five women and a man volunteers will impart its expertise and knowledge in the fields of agriculture, food processing, water analysing, animal husbandry and dress making.

The team will play a positive and constructive role in promoting further the mutual understanding between the peoples of Bangladesh and Korea, reported Thursday.

Nubians to demand \$150b compensation from UK, US

KHARTOUM, Sept 3: Nubians are to demand 150 billion dollar from London and Washington in compensation for British colonial rule of Sudan and slavery reparations from the United States, a state-run newspaper reported Thursday, reports AFP.

The Supreme Council of Nubian people plans a march next week on the British and US embassies to demand some 60 billion pound (90 billion dollar) from London and 60 billion dollar from Washington, the Al Sudan Al Hadith newspaper quoted the Council's President as saying.

Tribal leader Abdul Bagi Ali Gurgi told the newspaper his council would hand in a memorandum outlining their demands, which would be sent to the organisation of African Unity and human rights groups.

The Nubians' grievances against Britain focus on the "closed areas" policy pursued by the British during the 1920s under which movement in and out of the southern part of Sudan was tightly controlled to prevent the development of Sudanese nationalism.

As part of the compensation, the council is demanding that Britain build roads and hospitals in the Nuba area, while they are expecting the United States to compensate Nubians for slavery.

The United States last month added Sudan to its list of nations sponsoring terrorism, cutting off trade and stopping all but humanitarian aid.

EC will help sponsor ME peace process, hopes Peres

BRUSSELS, Sept 3: Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres meets top EC officials yesterday in the hope that the EC will open its purse and help sponsor a Middle East peace deal, reports Reuter.

Israel and EC diplomats said Peres would ask the European Commission via its President Jacques Delors to be one of the financial underwriters to any peace agreement.

"One of the main issues on the agenda will be EC assistance economic and otherwise," an Israeli diplomat told Reuters.

Peres will also discuss EC aid with Foreign Affairs Commissioner Hans Van Den Broek.

Peres is due to meet Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes before leaving Brussels.

A commission source said no financial plans had yet been drawn up for Israel, but he said EC Development Commissioner

Manuel Marin would present a programme next Wednesday on the community's future Middle East relations.

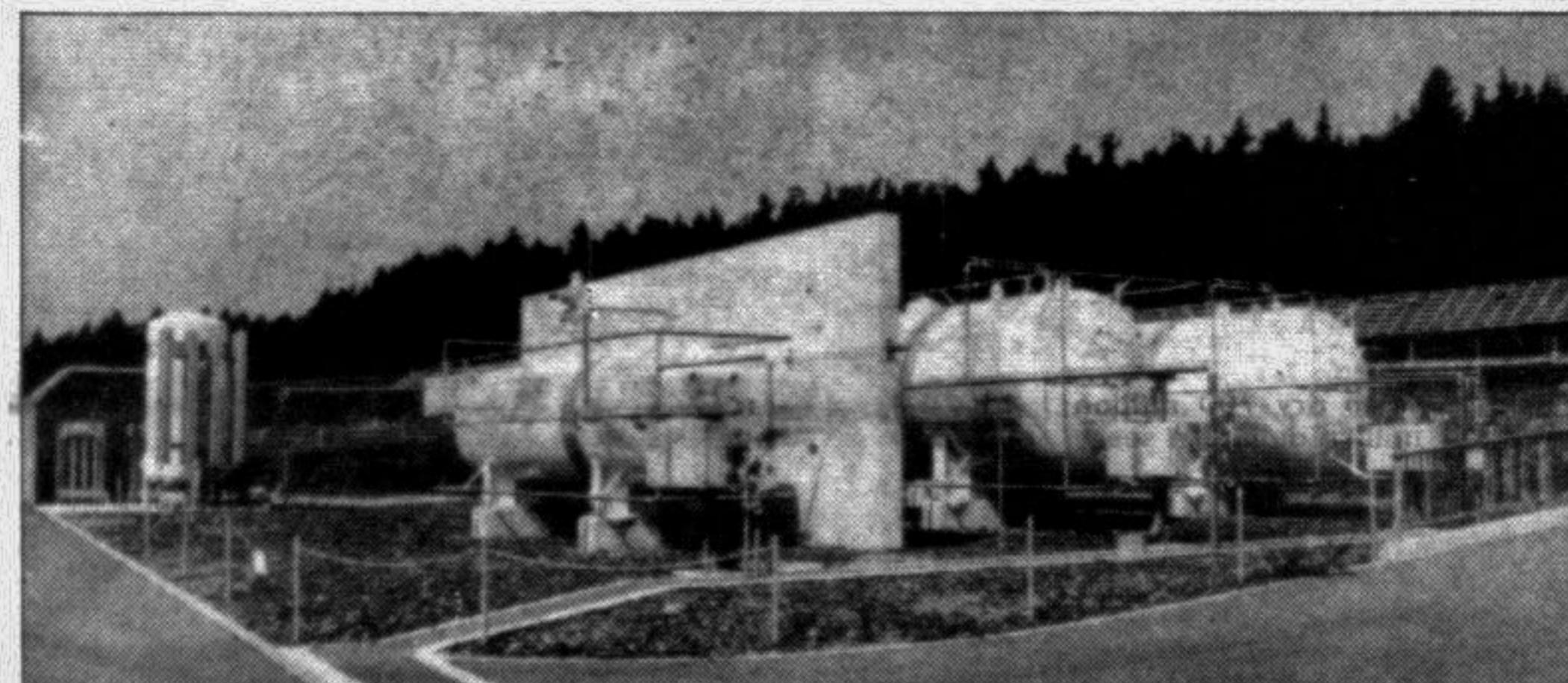
The EC know it will have to make supplementary efforts for the Middle East peace process, but it is too early to attach a figure to this," he said.

The EC has applauded what it called a historic agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The agreement, under discussion at peace talks in Washington, will give self-government to Palestinians in the Gaza strip and on the West Bank, to be given over two to four years.

Aside from seeking funding, Israel is also looking to negotiate a new trade agreement with the EC.

EC countries together are Israel's main trading partner but attempts to re-negotiate a preferential trade agreement signed in 1975 have been stalled for years over political differences and Israel's human rights record.



In a pilot project in Neunburg vorm Wald, experiments with solar-hydrogen technology have been going on for some time. The operating firm is Sola-Wasserstoff-Bayern GmbH, in which the Bayenwerk has a share of 60 per cent, and BMW, Linde, MBB and Siemens 10 per cent each.

— IN photo

Chinese army's money march halted

By Yojana Sharma

Hong Kong: On display at a recent exhibition here on civilian uses of military technology was a mole remover.

Not, as one might think, a machine to root out spies within the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Rather, it was a hand-held device for eliminating skin blemishes that was invented by PLA physician Zhao Xinhua using technology developed at the Fourth Military Medical College Hospital's cosmetology department.

The team will play a positive and constructive role in promoting further the mutual understanding between the peoples of Bangladesh and Korea, reported Thursday.

Technology firms are just a few of the burgeoning private enterprises launched by the PLA in response to China's economic reforms and to bolster its declining military budget.

But those days may now be over. Worried by an overheating economy and rampant corruption, the Central Military Commission (CMC) in July clamped down on PLA private enterprise that had become almost a separate economy within the Chinese economy.

Indeed, growing corruption in the PLA has become a major concern and threatens to destabilise the army, widely regarded as vital to keep the aging communist leadership in power.

Even as China tries to control its increasingly capitalistic economy with outdated tax and auditing laws, "PLA businesses seem to be beyond the pale of Beijing's rudimentary watchdog apparatus," says Hong Kong-based China expert Willy Lam.

Analysts say corruption is inevitable if the army gets into money-making ventures. The navy is believed to be involved in the smuggling of luxury cars along the China coast. Other reports say recruits are using army vehicles in smuggling rackets. Military licence plates protect vehicles from random police checks.

While even official organs

like the PLA daily have hinted at growing corruption within military companies, they are outside the jurisdiction of the courts or procurators, he says.

For almost six months, the official PLA newspaper, Liberation Army Daily, has been warning against consumerism, greed and "trading human relationships for material returns," which it said were eating into combat-readiness.

Soldiers, especially cadets who will one day lead the troops, must never fall prey to opportunism," it said in a recent article. It added priorities had already become askew at some military installations where soldiers are "forgetting to take care of their weapons."

Civilian production accounted for 70 per cent of total output of defence and defence-related industries, earning more than 30 billion yuan last year, and is expected to rise to 90 per cent.

Western military analysts say morale has plummeted as recruits watch fellow soldiers and superiors making money while the rank and file struggle to live on their meagre salaries.

More alarming for the PLA leadership is the decline in participation political study sessions aimed at maintaining recruits' ideological purity and party loyalty as the money-making craze sweeps China.

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"As we open up to outside world, and learn from modern science, technology and capitalist management styles, we must not allow corruption and greed

to defeat us," the generals said.

The country's top military body seeks to stem speculation and financial malpractices by PLA members, particularly in China's fledgling stockmarkets and in real estate.

The order was also to ensure the army does not escape the strictures of Beijing's recently launched austerity programme aimed at cooling the national economy.

The PLA has investments in luxury holiday resorts, high-class office blocks and hotels in both China and Hong Kong, and military factories use excess capacity to churn out goods like refrigerators and TV sets for China's huge, insatiable market.

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Iran opens 7th refinery

TEHRAN, Sept 3: Iran yesterday opened its seventh refinery which is expected to sharply reduce the country's dependence on foreign fuel, state-run Radio said, reports AFP.

Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who inaugurated the first phase of the complex in the central city of Arak 200 kilometers (120 miles) south of Tehran, said the project would contribute to Iran's independence and the people's standard of living.

Iran began work on the first phase of the complex in 1989 to ease its reliance on imports and eliminate fuel shortages which began hitting the country during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

Shipping Intelligence

CHITTAGONG PORT

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 29.9.93

Berth No. Name of Vessels Cargo L Port Local Agent Date of Leaving Call Arrival

J/2	Banglar Sampad	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	7/9
J/3	Banglar Kiron	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	7/9
J/4	Samudra Samrat	Salt	Kawd	SSL	25/8	7/9
J/5	Tanary Star	Cement	Sing	PSAL	R/A	5/9
J/6	Sca Nymph	Cement	Sing	USTC	2/8	7/9
J/7	Bintang Harapan	Gl	Viza	Prog	31/8	6/9
J/8	Chrysanthi	Urea	Sing	RRSA	19/8	7/9
J/9	Mukachevo	Urea	Mong	RRSA	15/8	4/9
J/10	Ingenuity	Cont	Col	BTSA	1/9	3/9
J/11	Banglar Doot	Repair	Mong	BSC	28/8	12/9
J/12	Banglar Urmi	Gl	Mald	BSC	28/8	2/9
J/13	Aspasia-L	Gl	Suez	Lutful	30/8	3/9
MPB/1	Banglar Kallol	Cont	Mong	BSC	1/9	3/9
MPB/2	Imke Wehr	Cont	Sing	ULA	1/9	3/9
CCJ	Banglar Baant	C Link	Vish	BSC	8/8	5/9
GSJ	Dolores	-	-	Seacom	R/A	10/9
TSP	Arnoula	R Phos	Anaba	TSLL	29/8	8/9
DOJ	Banglar Jyoti	C Oil	-	BSC	R/A	2/9
DD	Marine Three	Repair	-	BML	R/A	5/9
J/12	Banglar Asha	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	7/9
CUFJ	Mandalay	Urea	Yang	MTA	25/8	4/9

VESSELS DUE AT OUTER ANCHORAGE

Name of Vessels	Date of Arrival	Last Port Call	Local Agent	Cargo	Loading Port
Fong Shin	2.9.93	Sing	BDShip	Cont	Sing
Han Cheong	2.9.93	Sing	Aeka	Cement	Sing
Yong Ning	3.9.93	Sing	Prog	Gl	Sing
Ji Lin	3.9.93	Xing	Prog	Gl	Japa Chin
State of Nagaland	3.9.93	Mad	SSL	Gl	Japa Chin
Optima	3.9.93	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Green Island	9.9.93	-	Karma	Gl	Sing
Banglar Mont	4.9.93	Sing	BSC	Cont	-