



'Talks with Delhi on for a just share of water'

Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister Major General (Retd) Majidul Huq told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that Bangladesh and India were in continuous negotiation at the highest level to evolve a just, coordinated and long-term water sharing system of all common rivers including the Ganges, reports BSS.

Replies to a question from a Khaleque Talukder (AL-Bagerhat), the minister said the unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges water since the commissioning of the Farakka Barrage in 1975 by India has caused serious adverse effect on Bangladesh.

He said the water flow of the Ganges in Bangladesh has been gradually decreasing in dry season resulting in adverse effect on agriculture, industry, fish-

eries, forest and public health of one-third areas of the country. He further told the House that ecological balance in the country's south and north-western areas has been threatened following increase in salinity and sharp fall in water table. As a result of unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges water in the upstream through Farakka Barrage, the situation, the minister said, has aggravated after the expiry of the water sharing accord between Bangladesh and India in May, 1988.

Dwelling at length on adverse effects of the Farakka Barrage in various sectors of the country's economy, the minister said the annual loss in agriculture sector alone would be about Taka 2,300 crore. The loss in fisheries sector, he said, was approximately Taka 400 crore during 1991.

Sangsad only violence-free area: Siraj

By Staff Correspondent

Opposition MP Shahjahan Siraj identified the Jatiya Sangsad as the only violence-free area in the country.

Taking part in the discussion on Friday's attack on the Ajker Kagoj newspaper office Siraj, who recently joined the Gano Forum from the JSD, said "violence is rampant everywhere except the Jatiya Sangsad."

He said "It is a sad experience for us that we are again discussing terrorism so soon after the debate on the Jahangirnagar University situation."

"We signed a memorandum after an all-party meeting with the Prime Minister but two students were killed at a college on the following day," he mentioned.

He also demanded a discussion on the role of police in the country.

9 posts of judges in HC vacant

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nothing to do with it till the concerned constitutional provision was in vogue," the Law Minister argued.

Besides, the ordinance was an excellent one upholding the dignity, honour and privileges of the Supreme Court judges," the Law Minister observed, arguing that the Opposition move to disapprove the ordinance would not increase their popularity.

The Opposition members at this point told the House that they did not oppose the contents of the ordinance. What they opposed was the government's tendency towards avoiding Parliament.

However, the resolution seeking disapproval of the ordinance was rejected by voice vote.

Financial sector reforms

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sure on the NCBs to improve their operations."

Indicating that the high interest rates are likely to have a restrictive influence on investment and economic growth, the report noted that the quality of the new loans are also somewhat suspect at the present lending rates.

The report, however, observed that the reform steps already taken in the financial sector do show potential benefits and advantages that are likely to come with the completion of the project.

"The starting conditions of the reform programme have been achieved," the report said and identified the steps taken as interest rate flexibility, accounting for bad debt, putting some monetary policy instruments in place and significantly reducing government intervention in the sector, while the central bank has strengthened its bank supervision efforts.

It also identified five critical areas which will determine the success of the FSPR including encouraging profit maximisation of the banks, evolving a system of reward and punishment for individuals in the banks, allowing the growth of non-banking institutions and developing the capital markets.

The report suggested further action in a number of areas which are of great importance including monetary policy, improvement in the management of NCBs and developing a private banking system.

We suggest that the current reform programme could benefit from more support for the private banking and less emphasis on the improvement of the NCBs," it said.

"Furthermore, the best path to increased private banking is probably not privatisation of the NCBs."

In its concluding remarks

the report added that correcting the banking system, at an enormous future burden to the taxpayers, is a political act and represents a decision by the national leadership to have a different kind of system where the people's savings are not misused. The complicated details of the financial sector reform are essentially an attempt to put into place this political decision."

Sonargaon staff

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in the city went on a wildcat strike and locked General Manager Andrew J McBurnie since 2:30 pm Saturday to demand 'target bonus' and a stop to payment of service charge to the staff of the owning company, Hotels International (HI).

However, the employees of the hotel were now attending their guests, wearing black badges, employees said.

Leaders of the Sonargaon Hotel Workers' and Employees' Union said they would stage a hunger strike at the reception lobby tomorrow, if their 'rightful' demands were not met.

They said the decision to suspend the programme was taken following the verbal assurance by the mediator A K M Nazrul Islam, labour-front leader of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Meanwhile, the Board of Directors of the Sonargaon Hotel held an emergency meeting yesterday afternoon to discuss the overall situation as well as the union's demands.

Details of the meeting were not available.

The union leaders were scheduled to meet Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury at his residence yesterday at 9 pm but the meeting had not taken place at the time of writing this report late last night.

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Clash in east London: 27 arrested

LONDON, Sept 19: Police arrested 27 people in east London on Sunday following scuffles between members of the British National Party (BNP) and anti-racism protesters, reports AP.

A BNP candidate was elected last week to a London borough council after campaigning for an all-white Britain. His election was condemned by mainstream political parties, church leaders and minority groups.

Scotland Yard said scuffles broke out Sunday morning when BNP workers started to distribute leaflets in Brick Lane, an area with a large Asian population.

The party distributes leaflets there every week. Anticipating trouble, police set up metal barriers early Sunday to try to keep the two sides apart.

Extra police in vans and on horseback were called in when the two sides broke through the barricades and started attacking one another. Ten police officers were injured.

Youth Against Racism in Europe said in a statement that 200 of its supporters occupied the site in Brick Lane normally used by the BNP to distribute leaflets and sell its newspaper.

It said the crowd later grew to 500 people, but police said there were about 200 people in the area at any given time.

British National Party candidate Derek Beacock, a former bus driver, was elected Thursday to the 50-member Tower Hamlets Borough Council.

Tower Hamlets is among the poorest districts in Britain. At least one-third of the residents are immigrants or the children of immigrants, mainly from Bangladesh.

Racial feeling is rising in the East End, which for centuries has attracted immigrants, and Beacock's victory was fuelled by resentment among whites at public housing allocations for Asians.

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remained below productive potential and price pressures eased in world oil markets. In the industrial countries, consumer price inflation declined to 3.75 per cent while the average rate of inflation in the developing countries remained below 40 per cent; in half of the countries of this group the rate declined to below nine per cent," the report said.

The IMF continued to play a key role in the massive undertaking of supporting the transformation of the former centrally planned economies into market-based systems.

In recognition of the unique challenges facing the economies in transition, the IMF established a temporary systemic transformation facility (STF)," the report pointed out.

The STF facility is designed to provide financing to members facing balance of payments difficulties arising from severe disruption in their trade and payments arrangements owing to a shift from major reliance on trading at non-market prices to multilateral, market-based trade," it said.

Meanwhile, talking to this correspondent over telephone, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Matir Rahaman claimed that around 150 lawyers attended his court today defying the boycott and moved cases. He admitted a small number of lawyers also stayed away.

Today's move for breaking the boycott was initiated by some 14 lawyers who also issued a statement to the press terming the programme a conspiracy by a section of lawyers to serve political interests.

These 14 lawyers protested the boycott and attended the court today aided by some more lawyers, sources said.

The 14 signatories to the statement were Kafil Uddin, Sheikh Jamal Uddin, K M Abu Zafar, Kazi Khairul Bashar, Ehsan Baki, Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Fawzul Amin Chowdhury, Tarif Ahmed, Ehsanul Haque, Delwar

Chakmas

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observing the situation in the hill districts in a bid to identify if there is any obstacle on the way to returning the landed property of the tribal refugees after their repatriation.

Sources said the delegation members would visit seven locations in Khagrachari district and exchange views with the local tribal leaders.

On the first leg of their visit today, the delegation members have gone to the Tabalchhari area accompanied by Bangladesh officials and MPs including Rashed Khan Menon, Kalparajan Chakma, Mostaque Ahmed, Shahjahan Chowdhury and Md. Shahjahan, sources added.

However, the employees of the hotel were now attending their guests, wearing black badges, employees said.

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Some ecstatic Mohammedan players rejoice after their side ensured this year's Star Premier Division championship with a 2-0 triumph over PWD at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. Mohammedans, who play their arch-rivals Abahani Krira Chakra on September 23 in their last league engagement, regained the title after two years. — Star photo

Ctg lawyers split over court boycott

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 19: Lawyers of Chittagong court became sharply divided today over their 68-day-long boycott of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court.

Some lawyers reportedly attended the court today while others stuck to the boycott called by the Chittagong Bar Association and even made futile attempts to resist their rivals from attending the court, sources said.

Tension was prevailing and a large contingent of police was deployed in the court premises to prevent any untoward incident.

The Bar Association also held a protest meeting today with its president Mahbub Uddin in the chair.

Among the lawyers who addressed the meeting were Shaful Alam, Khorshed Alam Chowdhury, Shamsul Huda Chowdhury and Azizul Hoque.

Earlier, the lawyers on Saturday boycotted all the courts in Chittagong to press home their demand for removal of the CMM.

The Bar Association also held a protest meeting today defying the boycott called by the CMM and protesting the eviction drive launched by riot police on July 11 last against the lawyers occupying the disputed room.

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The Forum members also called upon all political parties, professional and social groups to forge a consensus on the proposed Zila government.

Meanwhile, talking to this correspondent over telephone, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Matir Rahaman claimed that around 150 lawyers attended his court today defying the boycott and moved cases. He admitted a small number of lawyers also stayed away.

Today's move for breaking the boycott was initiated by some 14 lawyers who also issued a statement to the press terming the programme a conspiracy by a section of lawyers to serve political interests.

These 14 lawyers protested the boycott and attended the court today aided by some more lawyers, sources said.

The 14 signatories to the statement were Kafil Uddin, Sheikh Jamal Uddin, K M Abu Zafar, Kazi Khairul Bashar, Ehsan Baki, Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Fawzul Amin Chowdhury, Tarif Ahmed, Ehsanul Haque, Delwar

Gano Forum

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Rahman and Mostafa Mohsin Montu.

The Gano Forum, while making the proposal for a Zila government suggested its tenure should be for five years. It also suggested holding of elections simultaneously to the Zila Government, the Union Parishad or Municipal Parishad.

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Gano Forum

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