

Bankers fete Saifur

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman last night said Bangladesh had great potential to turn itself into a developed country but unfortunately non-economic factors like hartals and strikes were hindering economic uplift, reports BSS.

"Definitely, Bangladesh has a very bright future. We have the brightest people, entrepreneurs, bankers, world-class personalities. If we can ensure good governance, accountability, transparency and the rule of law in the country along with a market-based democracy then the 112 million Bangladeshis can enjoy the living standards of a developed nation," Rahman said.

The Finance Minister was addressing a reception here at the Hotel Sheraton accorded to him by the chairmen and managing directors of all the banks and financial institutions of the country on his being elected the Chairman of the Joint Board of Governors of the WB-IMF for fiscal 1993-94 at its just concluded annual meeting at Washington.

Janata Bank Chairman Dr Abdullah Faruq, Arab Bank Bangladesh Branch Chairman M. M. Hossain and Sonali Bank Managing Director Ahsanul Haque spoke on behalf of the banking community and highly acclaimed the Finance Minister for his instrumental role in bringing back the national economy on the right track.

State Minister for Finance

Mojibur Rahman, Rupali Bank chairman Azizul Haq, MP, Sonali Bank Director Sakawat Hossain, MP, World Bank Resident Representative Christopher R Willoughby, IMF Resident Representative Saladin Khatun, ERD Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Sonali Bank Chairman and former Minister Dr Iqbal Mahmud, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry president and National Bank Chairman Mahbubur Rahman, secretaries, deputy governors of the Bangladesh Bank, and leading bankers of the country were present.

Rahman gave a resume of the discussions of the World Bank-IMF annual meeting and said both the Bretton Woods institutions had been advising the developed West for the last two years to initiate liberalisation and reform programmes to help the global economy come out of the prolonged recession.

Arab Bangladesh Bank Chairman M. M. Hossain and said that the entire nation, both the Treasury bench and Opposition bench in the Jatiya Sangsad, were unitedly behind the Finance Minister on economic policies.

"People of Bangladesh are now ready to go ahead. The country is now poised for foreign investment. But we want the Finance Minister's guidance," Khan added.

Proceedings against Ahmed Sharif stayed by HC

A High Court bench has directed the suspension of all activities in a case pending in the Gopalganj Magistrate's Court against Prof Ahmed Sharif, a former teacher of the Dhaka University, reports UNB.

A vacation bench of the High Court division of the Supreme Court, comprising Justice TM Ansar Uddin and Justice Mahmud Reza Chowdhury, yesterday issued the order on a petition filed by Prof Sharif.

The petition was moved on his behalf by Advocate Gazul Haque, Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan, Advocate Syed Golam Mostafa, Advocate Zahid Karim and others.

Several cases were filed against Prof Ahmed Sharif, a retired professor of Bengali, in various courts of the country

Varsity teachers' strike passes second day

By JU Correspondent

University teachers refrained from taking classes for the second consecutive day yesterday in observance of their three-day strike.

The Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) called the strike demanding immediate arrest of the culprits involved in the recent violence in the Islamic, Rajshahi and the Jahangirnagar universities.

On the last day of the strike today, the FBUTA will hold a press conference this afternoon at the Dhaka University Teachers' Club to moot the latest campus situation and action regarding its demands.

Benazir, Sharif accuse

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Karachi. ("Prime Minister") Moeen Qureshi has taken action against corruption," she said. "He should take notice of this."

Sharif retaliated with similar charges. "It has been confirmed that they (PPP) have tried to buy tribal members at the rate of 15 million rupees each (dollar 500,000) a Sharif spokesman said, adding that he had been informed by a member who spurned the offer. "This is a serious violation of election rules and the Code of Conduct."

Bhutto's spokesman said her PPP and its main ally, with 92 seats in the 217-seat National Assembly had won the support of several independents and smaller parties, raising their total to 106. They need 109 for a majority.

"We are confident we can now win over the FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Area) representatives," he said. The eight lower house members from the semi-autonomous tribal regions bordering Afghanistan traditionally throw in their lot with whichever party forms the government.

Bhutto, the Muslim world's first elected woman leader, said on Sunday she was confident of forming the government in Islamabad and in the two most populous provinces of Punjab and Sindh.

Bhutto, 40, was sacked from the Prime Ministership three years ago on allegations of misrule after just 20 months in office.

But her charisma and family name gave her a head start over rivals in last Wednesday's national elections.

She said she would be able to prove her parliamentary strength when the new National Assembly votes for a house leader on October 19.

Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML) gained 72 seats and was warring smaller, independent parties.

Sharif, who won in a third province in Saturday's closely contested elections, called a meeting of his newly elected members of parliament in Islamabad and was in fighting mood.

"We are as strong as anyone else," he said. "We are as powerful as any other party."

With large opposition par-

ties in the two provinces that Bhutto won, Sharif looked certain to prove a tough opponent in Pakistan's highly personalised and Machiavellian politics.

As opposition leader, Bhutto launched a campaign to topple Sharif and, allied with former enemies, finally forced his resignation in July. Sharif himself had been chiefly responsible for Bhutto's fall from office in 1990.

The biggest Islamic party in parliament, the fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami, said both sides had asked for the support of its three members in the house leadership vote.

"We have not decided whether to vote for anyone or to abstain," a spokesman said by telephone from Lahore.

Sharif's party maintains that the Punjab result was still in the balance, giving a hung provincial parliament.

'Population to double in 30 years'

By Staff Correspondent

Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf yesterday emphasised strengthening of family planning information, education and communication (IEC) to increase the contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR).

The minister, while addressing the inaugural session of the workshop preparing the draft national family planning (FP) mother-child health (MCH) IEC strategy for Bangladesh, as chief guest, said that with the present annual population growth rate of 2.2 per cent the country's population would double within the next 30 years.

Organised by the national FP-MCH IEC Strategy Committee, the programme was addressed, among others, by Health Secretary Syed Shamim Ahsan, Director General of the Family Planning Directorate A K M Rafiqulzaman and Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) William R Goldman.

Additional Secretary of the IEC Strategy Committee M Fazur Rahman addressed as the chairperson while country representative of the Johns Hopkins University Edson E. Whitney presented the welcome address.

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at a rally in the city organised by the Ministry of Social Welfare marking the conclusion of the World Children's Day and the Children's Rights Week yesterday. State Minister for Women's Affairs Sarwar Rahman is seen on her right.

Int'l seminar on Farakka held in USA

Water-sharing between co-riparians for permanent solution stressed

NEW YORK, Oct 11: Stress was laid on a permanent solution to the Ganges water-sharing between the co-riparians at an international seminar held here yesterday at the Columbia University.

Speakers at the seminar unanimously called upon the international community and the leaders of the countries concerned to work out an immediate solution to the problems arising out of the Farakka Barrage and the unilateral withdrawal of water from the international river Ganges by India, reports BSS. Special Correspondent Gias Kamal Chowdhury.

Participants at the seminar, arranged by the Bangladesh-American Public Affairs Front (BAPAF) on "Farakka Barrage and its effect in Bangladesh," hailed Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for her recent address at the UN General Assembly highlighting the problems before the international community.

The participants were of the opinion that the Prime Minister's address at the UN truly reflected the plight of the people of Bangladesh and the concern of her democratic government to retrieve this situation.

Prof Daryl B Simons, a former member of the World Bank Flood Control Group, Prof E V Richardson, an engineer on river mechanics, Dr Cesar Mendoza, a Professor of Engineering in the Columbia University, Dr David Alexander, Professor of Geology, University of Massachusetts, Dr Robert Hyton, Professor Emeritus of

the City University, New York, Prof Alvin Goodman of the Polytechnic University of New York, Dr V J Galay, Director, International Operations, Northwest Hydraulic Consultants, Canada, Dr Syed Mainuddin Hussain, an internationally reputed legal expert on international river laws, Khalequzzaman of the University of Delaware, S A Karim, a former Bangladesh permanent representative to the UN and Ma Bushra Zafar, a legal scholar participated in the seminar. Journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury, who was present on the occasion, also spoke.

M Asafuddin, Secretary, Ministry of Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control, spoke as a special guest. Dr Sufian Khondaker, a hydraulic expert, presented the overview of the Farakka Barrage and the related problems being faced by Bangladesh.

Atiqur Rahman Salu, chairman of the Farakka Seminar Committee, presided over the day-long deliberations, attended by leading members of the Bangladesh community in North America including educationists, jurists, geologists, ecologists, physicians, pharmacists, chemists, dentists, mediamen and representatives of various Bangladeshi resident organisations.

A R Salu, in his opening statement, recalled the Farakka march led by late Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani in 1976 for realising the legitimate share of waters from India.

Dr M Billah, president of the BAPAF, welcomed the resource persons, experts and partici-

pants at the seminar saying that their contributions would definitely go down as a landmark in the course of the struggle being carried out by the valiant Bangladeshis for realising the water-share, whether they are in Bangladesh or abroad.

Dr V J Galay laid stress on a tripartite solution suggesting that the Koshi Barrage in Nepal might augment the down flow during the lean period.

Prof Daryl Simons said the Farakka Barrage's geomorphological impact has led to a deterioration of the conditions in lower-riparian Bangladesh.

Prof Richardson said tectonic activities had affected the river draining in the past. These facts need to be kept in mind when man-made changes are proposed in diverting water from the rivers.

Dr Syed Mainuddin Hussain called for immediate attention from the Bangladesh authorities to forestall a possible adoption of a law by the UN being proposed by the legal committee (Committee No. 6) to the complete detriment of the cause of lower riparian countries.

He said if passed, the proposed law would totally undermine the rights of the lower riparian which were so far protected by general international river laws.

Ms V Mitra, and Indian diplomat present on the occasion, when allowed to submit her viewpoint, appeared unsympathetic to Bangladesh's effort for solving the Farakka issue through international arbitration.

Children policy

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for them. She called upon all to ensure equal facilities in all cases to the disabled.

Begum Zia assured that by next year construction of Shishu Academy would be completed in 44 districts as part of the programme to set up the academy in every district of the country.

Deputy Leader of Parliament Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, State Minister for Planning Dr Moyn Khan, UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh Rolf C. Carriere, Social Welfare Secretary Prof KM Fariduddin and DG of the Social Welfare Directorate ATM Giasuddin also addressed the function.

Little Faria Tilt Loba spoke on behalf of her fellow children at the function, presided over by State Minister for Social Welfare Fazlur Rahman.

The function over, Begum Zia joined the tiny tots in a children's rally brought out from the Hall premises which paraded the streets and ended up at the Shishu Academy.



Dr John Clark.

Farakka serious man-made threat: US expert

An American environmentalist yesterday said India and Bangladesh should devise together ways of solving the problems arising out of the Farakka barrage which he considered as a serious man-made threat to environment, reports UNB.

Dr John Clark, addressing a reception accorded by the Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB), observed the largest mangrove forest of the world, the Sundarbans, had been affected by the adverse impact of the dam.

He termed the Farakka barrage one of the greatest man-made environmental problem and said Bangladesh should take up her own water management plans to solve its water problem.

A planner of coastal regions, wetland and use of water resources in other areas, Dr Clark observed that population concentration is the largest in the coastal Bangladesh compared to other coastal areas in the world.

"Poverty drove the people of Bangladesh to the inhabitable coastal land," he said and emphasised the need for close coordination and cooperation among the various concerned agencies to solve the problems of food, shelter and security faced by the people residing in the coastal areas.

He also stressed the need for democratisation and joint planning in this regard.

The function was chaired by FEJB President Ahmed Nure Alam and addressed by Mainuddin Naser, General Secretary of the FEJB.

BADC

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An inter-ministerial committee will identify the core functions of the state-run corporation and subsequently a task force will implement the reorganisation process of BADC.

The cabinet also approved, in principle, another proposal for amendment to the Post Office Act 1988.

The Midnight File

Two police officers killed in Egypt

ASSIUT (Egypt), Oct 11: Suspected Muslim extremists killed a police officer in renewed attacks on security forces in southern Egypt on Monday, while in Cairo, another officer and a fugitive extremist died in a shootout. The attack in Egypt's south was the first in 10 days, following what militants had said was a break in their activities while the media focused on last Wednesday's presidential election, reports AP.

Nine killed in Kashmir violence

SRINAGAR (India), Oct 11: An Indian soldier and eight Muslim rebels were killed today in Kashmir as a strike called by guerrillas to protest against a raid on a Muslim shrine crippled this city. At least 13 others, including a border guard and 10 militants, were also killed in a sudden outbreak of violence in the Indian state late Sunday, officials and the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, says AFP.

Delhi reacts sharply

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discussions. "When Bangladesh confirms its interest in a meaningful dialogue on these principles and is able to overcome the temptation to play politics with the important River Waters issue, it should be possible to conclude a mutually acceptable agreement. India continues to be ready for a constructive dialogue with Bangladesh on the subject," the statement concluded.

However, according to the official text of the Prime Minister's address at the UNGA, she mentioned that, "The pledges made by India at the time of commissioning the Farakka Barrage remain unfulfilled to date."

She further stated that, "India could have played an important role in strengthening mutual trust between the two countries if they had lived up to the pledges on the question of water sharing," and went on to add, "We feel that this is still possible."

No official comment on the reported remarks of the Indian spokesman was available from government sources or the Foreign Ministry.

Foreign Secretary Naaz Rahman was unavailable over telephone till midnight.

The DG of External Publicity at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, no official text has been communicated to the Foreign Ministry and therefore, comment could be made at this stage.

Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Secretary M Asafuddin is

EC will help

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Belgium on his way back home after attending the 48th UNGA session which began on September 21. He returned home Monday night.

He told newsmen yesterday morning that his meeting with the EC officials had covered all possible cooperations between the two regional groupings.

There is a wide scope for developing a broad-based cooperation in the field of science and technology between the SAARC and the EC.

The Foreign Minister said the EC officials had expressed satisfaction at the SAARC programmes.

Mostafiz said the EC proposals would be discussed in the next meeting of the Council of Ministers due in Dhaka by year-end.

Optical fibre

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country papers at the seminar.

The proceedings of the workshop will be reported at the third ministerial meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) on telecommunication, to be held in Tehran, Iran on November 17-19.

Chaired by Dr A M Patwari, Director General of the ICTVTR, the inaugural function was addressed, among others, by C Petrini of ITU, Dr Salauddin Ahmed and M Hassan Siddik of the ICTVTR and the Telecommunications Secretary.

Tariqul Islam said most of the developing countries including Bangladesh are in a position to make full use of the facilities available in the world because of outstanding progress made in the telecommunication network.

The country should adopt the modern telecommunication technology to meet the growing demand and requirement of the consumers.

He said that interconnection of the new exchanges will be made by optical fibre of 140 megabyte per second stream.

In all, 22 experts from 13 OIC member states are taking part in the seminar. The participating countries are: Benin, the Comoros, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Iran, the Maldives, Mali, Oman, Sierra Leone, Turkey, Uganda, Djibouti and host Bangladesh.

Yeltsin in Tokyo

TOKYO, Oct 11: Russian President Boris Yeltsin arrived in Tokyo for a three-day state visit Monday, leaving Moscow just one week after troops attacked the Parliament building to end a rebellion by hard-line lawmakers and their backers, reports AP.

4 BCL activists held in B'baria for attack on Gano Forum rally

By Staff Correspondent

Brahmanbaria police Sunday arrested four persons in connection with the bomb attack on a Gano Forum-sponsored rally that left Misanur Rahman, a student, killed the day before.

Shahabuddin Ahmed, a sub-inspector (SI) of the Brahmanbaria police station, while talking to The Daily Star last night, disclosed that all the four arrested persons belong to the local unit of the Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

They were produced in court yesterday, the SI added.

Meanwhile, GF sources in the city, while talking to this correspondent late last night, claimed that the BCL activists had given a confessional statement to the Brahmanbaria police and admitted their involvement in the terrorist incident.

SI Shahabuddin, however, expressed his ignorance about the confessional statement saying, the concerned duty officer was not available right at that moment.

Somalia

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mainly Nomadic people, Oakley could get a better hearing from the armed militia leaders around Aided.

Somali sources said Oakley had met only journalists from local newspapers to brief them on his mission and that he had told them a UN resolution calling for the arrest of those who killed UN peacekeepers was still in force.

There was no confirmation of what Oakley's brief is, but Washington officials have said Aided will be offered assurances the military hunt for him would stop in return for a cessation of hostilities.

White House spokesman Mark Gearan told reporters in Washington the United States has not ruled out capturing Aided, but the focus of policy will be on humanitarian aid and shaping a political solution.

Export growth

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earning stood at 25.03 million dollars.

Earnings from raw jute plummeted by 0.97 million dollars from last year's corresponding period to 11.75 million dollars. In the jute goods sub-sector, the earnings fell by 5.24 million and stood at 53.17 million dollars.

The readymade garments sector witnessed a boom of 16.15 per cent growth over last year and the earnings stood at 253.69 million dollars.

The USA remained the top importer of Bangladesh goods with a share of 35.30 per cent of the country's total exports. The second, third, fourth and fifth ranking countries are Germany (9.95 per cent of total export), the UK (7.69 per cent), France (6.24 per cent) and Italy (5.6 per cent).

During the period, Bangladesh exported to 76 countries around the globe.