The Daily Star

Saifur urges bankers to change attitude

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said that the banks must change the traditional 'kabuliwala-type' (usurer) attitude of lending and adopt a participatory role to expedite the industrialisation of the country.

"There should not be any system of collateral, rather there should be a participatory system," he said.

The Finance Minister was addressing as chief guest the inaugural session of the seminar on "Investment Scenario: Problems and Remedies" held yesterday at the auditorium of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

Saifur Rahman said the government cannot force the banks to disburse loan for the entrepreneurs since it has adopted a policy of deregulating the banking system, thereby empowering the bank managements to do anything they feel best for the banks.

"I am no less frustrated than you are," the minister said addressing the entrepreneurs, who identified the banks as the 'number one enemy' of industrialisation of the country.

The Finance Minister, however, said the banks might have become shy in this regard because of a 'defaulter culture'. But, the new and genuine entrepreneurs should not suffer for the dishonest businessmen, he observed.

Referring to the performance of the private banks, he said he feels discouraged to permit more banks to operate especially after going through their books of accounts. Explaining, he said the private banks are practising a 'culture of *lootpaat*' (plunder and reckless profiteering), leading the banking sector towards anarchy.

Saifur Rahman was also critical of the defaulting bank loanees, saying that the example of Pakistan — where the names of loan defaulters have been published, preventing them from availing certain rights — should also be followed in Bangladesh.

The Finance Minister said the government would set up a venture capital of Tk one billion for the persons who would retire under the golden handshake programme, so that they can invest for setting up micro industries.

[Related story on Business Page]

He said the country has a very bright future and bright development potentials. The people would be able to achieve development miracles like the economic tigers of Asia if the resources of the country can be redirected to the innovative micro industries.

Referring to the deterioration in the law and order situation, he said the government would concentrate its attention towards some non-economic cultural and political factors, those which are considered to be the major constraints towards industrialisation of the country.

He said deterioration of the law and order situation, frequent strikes and hartals are the major non-economic factors. The legal system of the country is also not conducive for investment, Saifur said, adding that the government has set up a legal reforms committee to improve the situation.

The inaugural session of the seminar, presided over by the president of the DCCI A T M Waziullah, was addressed among others by Governor of the Bangladesh Bank Khorshed Alam and Syed Jamaluddin Haider, senior vice president of the DCCI while the working session was addressed by former Deputy Prime Minister Jamaluddin Ahmed, Railway Secretary Mashiur Rahman and Dr A F Dowla of the Independent University of Bangladesh.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina presiding over a party Central Working Committee meeting at her official residence in the city yesterday. Party general secretary Zillur Rahman is seen on her right while Presidium members Abdus Samad Azad and Abdul Mannan are seen on her left. — Star photo

Seminar on Farakka's impact

Counter barrage suggested

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a seminar in the capital yesterday called for immediate construction of a counter barrage inside the country to offset the disastrous impact of the Farakka Barrage.

They also strongly recommended that Bangladesh should demand compensation from India for the irrevocable environmental damage caused by the Farakka Barrage.

The speakers pointed out that the government should urgently chart a national water management policy to cope with the deteriorating situation.

The Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) organised the seminar on "Farakka Barrage — it's Effect on Bangladesh" at its Ramna head office Saturday evening in which the Indian barrage's impact on the country's economy, ecology, river system and international laws relating to the Ganges water sharing were discussed.

Former Chairman of the Bangladesh Water Development Board, Amjad Hossain Khan presented the keynote paper at the seminar, largely attended by a cross-section of people.

The paper, giving an overview of the hazards caused by the Farakka Barrage, said that the 40 years of history of water negotiation has been a frustrating matter for Bangladesh.

The Joint Declaration of the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh in May, 1974 expressed their determination that before the Farakka Barrage was commissioned, they would arrive at a 'mutually acceptable solution of water available during lean flow in the Ganges,' the paper said, adding that there has been no solution in 19 years.

The long-drawn talks on water sharing issue have gone more in India's favour and the history has so far proved that India never wanted to share the waters, the paper pointed out. The paper further said that the Ganges recorded its lowest flow of 9247 cusecs last March against a flow of 60,000 to 65,000 cusecs in the pre-diversion period.

The drastic reduction of water withdrawal in the Ganges has caused reduction in agricultural production due to soil moisture deficiency, the paper said.

The devastating effects of unilateral withdrawal of Ganges water by India has damaged the northern and western regions of Bangladesh, directly affecting 40 million people.

The barrage has dislocated the life cycle of the fish population, increased salinity in the Sundarban areas and helped spread diarrhoeal diseases in the coastal region.

Because of the barrage, the huge Ganges-Kobadak Irrigation Project now operates at only 60 per cent of its potential.

The Farakka Barrage has dislocated navigation routes and closed ferry services, the paper said.

It also added that, besides the Ganges, India is also withdrawing water from the Teesta, Manu, Muhuri, Khowai and many other smaller rivers and streams entering Bangladesh.

The paper suggested that Bangladesh has no alternative but to develop the water resources of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra.

Two barrages — one on the Ganges below the Hardinge Bridge and the other on the Brahmaputra at Bahadurabad — will cover more than 60 per cent arable area of the country, it suggests.

If Bangladesh has to give passage of flood flow from neighbouring countries, it must be compensated for any damages to Bangladesh by the upper riparian countries, it pointed out.

"Sacrifice cannot be a one-way affair. Let all of us sacrifice for larger benefit of all," the keynote paper suggested adding any future agreement for sharing should cover the whole 12 months, covering both the dry and wet seasons.

Engineers A N H Akhter Hossain and M Monirul Quader Mirza, in their papers on the environmental impact of Farakka, pointed out that Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Natore, Pabna, Kushtia, Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Jessore, Magura, Jhenidah, Narail, Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat districts of the country have fallen victims of the barrage.

Barrister A K H Morshed, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the International Institute of Strategic Studies (BIISS) said that the suggestion for demanding compensation was relevant to the principle of substantial damage.

In his paper on "International Law Governing Water-Sharing of Common Rivers and the Issue of the Ganges Water-Sharing", Barrister Morshed recommended that the country should immediately start costing water and give the damage caused by the Farakka Barrage to economy and environment a monetised expression.

The "big gap" in negotiation over water-sharing was a breach of international laws, he pointed out.

Dr Monowar Hossain of the BUET, in his paper on the impact on river system, said the Farakka Barrage has been causing siltation in the Ganges.

Because of large water withdrawal in the upstream of the Ganges, the winter flow of the Gorai now stood at only 0.15 per cent during the last three years.

The winter flow of the river, a distributary of the Ganges, was 10 to 12 per cent before the commissioning of the barrage in 1975, he added.

A former government Secretary, M Munir-Uz-Zaman pointed out that because of the withdrawal, income has declined among the non-farm sector people in the south-western region of the country.

Vice Chancellor of BUET, Dr M Shahjahan, in his speech, called for forging a national consensus on the Farakka issue "so that we could make our way out of the trap."

Noted journalist Sadeq Khan, engineers M F A Siddiqi and Aminur Rahman also took part in the discussion.

President of the IEB, Dr Jamilur Reza Choudhury presided over the seminar.

PM : tourism sector

From Page 1 Col 7

sector for the rapid expansion of tourism, she said and added, a national tourism policy had been announced for the first time in the country.

"We want to create a favourable and congenial investment climate for the growth of the tourism industry. I urge local and foreign investors to come forward to invest in this sector," the Prime Minister said.

Referring to Bangladesh's picturesque places, historical sites, natural beauty, forests, sea beaches, rich culture and colourful tribal life, Begum Zia said there exist enormous opportunities to introduce this country to foreign guests.

The Prime Minister underlined the need for creating tourism awareness all around to make the visit of foreign tourists in Bangladesh a pleasant one.

Describing tourism as an effective medium for creating linkage between different countries and their citizens, the Prime Minister said tourism has now been recognised as a multi-dimensional industry throughout the world.

Begum Zia said tourism had been making valuable contributions to the economies of the SAARC members states. "It is our firm belief that this sector has enormous potentials in Bangladesh," she added.

Terming the development of domestic tourism as the basis of international tourism, the Prime Minister said proper development of domestic tourism could be a unique way for providing recreation and education.

Begum Zia said her government would take up programmes to popularise domestic tourism.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan, Secretary Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism Afzalur Rahman and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation Chairman Bazlul Gani Chowdhury spoke on the occasion.

Abdul Mannan presented a gift to the Prime Minister on the occasion of the 'Tourism Month.'

The inaugural ceremony of the 'tourism month' was also marked by a traditional transport rally and a cultural function.

Decorated bull-carts, which are known as traditional transport, passed through different city streets to the delight of the passersby and city dwellers.

A folk based dance drama 'Shehnai' was presented on the occasion of the inauguration of the 'Tourism Month'.

The Prime Minister also went round different stalls of a handicraft exhibition, organised on this occasion.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism has chalked out elaborate programmes in observance of the 'Tourism Month'. The programmes include tourism fair and handicrafts show, boat race, Bangladeshi food festival, cultural show, swimming competition, tribal cultural show, bicycle show, Dhaka city sightseeing tour at reduced rates, stick play, fashion show, seminar on 'Aids and Tourism Industry', river cruise, kite flying competition, flower show, Dhaka-Mongla-Sundarbans-Mongla-Dhaka package tour at a reduced rate, seafood festival and jamdani saree show.

JU classes

From Page 1 Col 8

October 26. Candidates from the merit list are asked to complete their admission by November 8.

The vacant seats of the first year honours classes will be filled from the waiting list by November 14.

Headed by the Acting Vice Chancellor of the institution Prof Abul Hossain, the Syndicate decided to open the residential dormitories on November 8.

The university was closed *sine die* and its residential halls were vacated on July 29 following an armed vandalism carried out by unruly students.

Of the 21 accused students, held responsible by the Syndicate for the violence, six were arrested under the Anti-Terrorism Act. The resumption of work by the JU employees is influenced by these arrests, one JU teacher said hoping arrests of the rest of the students against whom charges were levelled.

According to yesterday's resolution, schedule of the postponed examinations of Honours and Masters classes will be declared by a fortnight after class resumption.

Meanwhile, a seven-member body has been formed by the Syndicate to draft a code of conduct for the students and a recommendation for enhancing campus security measure. Dean of the Science Faculty has been appointed as the convenor of the body.

A proposed draft, prepared by the Provost Committee earlier, suggested a temporary ban on student politics, regularisation of hall residents, embargo on cultural programmes after sunset, closing down of the women's dormitories with the sunset and the authority's right to conduct search of students' dormitories.

Shahida murder case

Warrant for magistrate's arrest

By Staff Correspondent

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of Dhaka yesterday issued a warrant of arrest against Liaquat Ali Khan, a magistrate, and ordered attachment of his property.

Cantonment police yesterday referred the case to the Detective Branch (DB) for investigating into the murder of Shahida Chaudhury, a Magistrate of Mymensingh Sadar Thana.

Shahida was reportedly stabbed by Liaquat Ali Khan — a Magistrate of Sherpur Sadar — on October 8 and she died at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Friday last.

A source in the Dhaka Magistracy said Liaquat had already secured bail on October 12 after the Cantonment thana investigating officer (IO) failed to submit the medical report of Shahida in court.

Cantonment police arrested Liaquat from the residence of Squadron Leader Rezaul Karim, brother-in-law of Shahida, at the Air Force Officers' Quarters at Kurmitola on the day of the incident and he was later sent to the Dhaka Central Jail.

A police source said Shahida, wife of Dr S M Bulbul, a teacher of the Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh, was murdered following an extra-marital affair with Liaquat.

According to the Cantonment police officer who was previously in change of the investigations, Shahida had reportedly told him from her CMH death bed that Liaquat had stabbed her after she refused his proposal for marriage.

Japanese doctors arrive Oct 20

By SSMCH correspondent

A team of plastic and orthopaedic surgeons from Japan is scheduled to visit Dhaka from October 20 on a week-long programme. The team will operate on patients who are congenitally disabled free of cost at the Mitford Hospital.

Bangladesh Society of Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Congenitally Disabled will arrange the programme. The Japanese surgeons will choose suitable cases for operation at 8:00 pm on October 21 at the Casualty Department of the Mitford Hospital.

A similar team visited Bangladesh last year

New Islamic organisation

By Staff Correspondent

A new Islamic organisation — Bangladesh Muslim Oikya Front — has been formed. An announcement to this effect would be made at a public rally in the capital October 20.

This was disclosed yesterday at a press conference in the city by Alhaj Syed Nazibul Bashar Maizbhandari, an MP of the Awami League.

Aims and objectives and detailed programmes of the new organisation would be announced at the rally.

Agriculture and Irrigation Minister M Majid-ul-Huq speaking as chief guest at a discussion meeting and seminar jointly organised by the Agriculture Ministry and the FAO local office on the occasion of World Food Day at BARC auditorium in the city yesterday. — PID photo

3 newsmen face libel charge

Three newsmen, including the editor of the Weekly Dhaka Courier, were summoned to appear before the court of the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on December 12, 1993, following a petition filed by Abdul Wadud Khandker for publishing a "false and malicious" reports to defame the petitioner, reports BSS.

Mohammad Nazrul Islam, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, while taking cognizance of the petition under Section 500/501 of the Penal Code, asked Enayetullah Khan, Editor, Sabir Mustafa, Associate Editor and Mahmud Al- Faisal, contributor, of the Dhaka Courier to appear in the court on the above mentioned date.

Khandker, the Additional Attorney General, in his prayer, alleged that the weekly, in its report published on 17.9.93, besides reproducing the contents of Banglar Baani dated 3.9.93, also made comments which were 'defamatory in nature and designed to malign and defame" him.

In his petition, Khandker mentioned that he had already filed complaint against Banglar Baani for publishing a "maliciously false, concocted and motivated report" against him for which the court had issued a warrant of arrest against the concerned Banglar Baani reporter.

Syed Ali Azam, Advocate, moved the case on behalf of the petitioner

RU reopens after 27 days

RAJSHAHI, Oct 16: The Rajshahi University reopened today after an unscheduled closure for 27 days following campus violence in which a student was killed, reports UNB

Most of the classes were not held due to the strike called by the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association. However, some classes were conducted by teachers branded as pro-BNP-Jamaat. But attendance was thin.

The Rajshahi University Teachers' Association continued their strike to press home the demands including security of the teachers and employees of the university.

Police on Friday and today arrested three student leaders for maintaining peace on the campus. They are Chhatra Dal leader Sirajul Islam, Chhatra League (B-K) University President Karim Sikder and Chhatra Union leader Alamgir Hossain.

Meanwhile, authorities appointed Dr Sadequl Islam as provost of Habibur Rahman Hall and Dr Shah Alam provost of Sher-e-Bangla hall following acceptance of resignation of Prof Rafiqul Islam and Prof Mostafizur Rahman as provosts of the two halls.

Mrinal Sen due today

By Staff Correspondent

Noted Indian film-maker, Mrinal Sen arrives in Dhaka today on a three-day visit.

Mrinal Sen will attend a reception to be hosted by the Bangladesh Film Federation in the city this evening. He will be the guest of honour at the Mrinal Sen retrospective being organised jointly by the Federation and the Indian High Commission tomorrow.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs, Prof Jahanara Begum will open the retrospective at the National Museum auditorium as the chief guest while the Indian High Commissioner K Raghunath will be the special guest on the occasion.

World Food Day observed

The World Food Day was observed in the country yesterday as elsewhere round the globe focusing the need for harvesting nature's bounties to ensure food and nutrition for all, reports UNB.

"Harvesting Nature's Diversity" was chosen by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations as the theme for the day this year to focus specially on bio-diversity and its contribution to humanity and food security.

The aim of the occasion was to increase awareness about the threat to bio-diversity and to mobilise action to conserve the heritage and use it sustainably and equitably for present and future generations.

World Food Day, which marks the anniversary of FAO's founding on October 16, 1945, provides a timely reminder of the continuing fight against hunger, malnutrition and poverty.

Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister M Majid-ul Haq inaugurated the day's opening function held at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) auditorium under the joint auspices of the government and FAO.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman and Food Minister Meer Shawkat Ali attended it as special guests.

The Midnight File

Anti-racist protesters clash with police in London

LONDON, Oct 16 : Street violence erupted Saturday in southeast London as helmeted police fought to keep more than 15,000 anti-racist protesters from marching on the offices of an extremist political party. Three officers have reported injured, one seriously, by thrown bricks and bottles, and several protesters spilled out of the melee bearing bloodied faces from flying debris and police batons during the two-hour standoff, reports AP.

Sudan's ruling council dissolved

KHARTOUM, Oct 16: Sudan's ruling military junta disbanded itself Saturday and appointed Lt Gen Omar Hassan el-Bashir as president of this northeast African country. Before naming its leader as chief of state, junta members issued a decree specifying Islamic laws as the basis of the Sudanese political system but guaranteeing freedom of religion. El-Bashir had headed the Revolution Command Council since he spearheaded a bloodless June 30, 1989, coup that ousted a civilian government, reports AP.

Serbs pound Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, Oct 16: Serbs pounded Sarajevo with artillery today in the worst shelling of the capital for weeks as fighting worsened across Bosnia, reports Reuter.

The Bosnian government army said it retook the town of Cazin in the breakaway Muslim enclave of Bihac after rebel Muslims captured it without a fight on Friday. The rebels conceded their loss but said they would keep fighting.

The artillery barrage on Sarajevo started early this morning and went on until late afternoon, together with sniper and machinegun fire, a Reuter journalist reported.

The UN controlled Sarajevo airport was closed for four hours because of the attack, United Nations officials said.

Sarajevo radio reported intense artillery and infantry attacks by Serbs and Croats against the besieged north-central Bosnian town of Maglaj. Croatian radio said it was the Muslims who were attacking.

Sarajevo radio reported heavy shelling of Zvornik in eastern Bosnia, of Gradacac in the north and of Gornji Vakuf in western Bosnia, which the UN confirmed. Occasional shelling of Goradze in the southeast was also reported.

Iranian minister arrives today

Iranian Minister for Labour and Social Welfare Hossein Kamali arrives here today to discuss with government leaders expansion of bilateral cooperation, particularly recruitment of professionals, reports UNB.

During his four-day stay in the city, Kamali will hold two rounds of talks with his Bangladeshi counterpart Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

Besides, he will meet Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Minister for Commerce Shamsul Islam and Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury.

The Iranian Minister will visit ICTVTR at Gazipur and the Manpower and Employment Bureau at Kakrail.

US wants Ghali to call off Somalia visit

WASHINGTON, Oct 16: The US government is trying to persuade UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to call off a planned visit to Somalia, saying it could thwart peace efforts underway there, a US official said, reports AFP.

"We have strongly suggested his trip there would not be helpful in trying to recreate in political dialogue" among the Somalia clan chiefs, the official said late Friday.

Fahd pledges to help rebuild Afghanistan

RIYADH, Oct 16: Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, on a visit to Saudi Arabia, was quoted Saturday as saying King Fahd pledged to urge Islamic countries to help rebuild war-ravaged Afghanistan, reports AP.

Rabbani told the Riyadh daily Okaz that Fahd pledged "He will personally make contacts with Islamic and friendly countries to give consideration to Afghanistan in its stage of rehabilitation."

Chanpa Murder Case:

Trial begins, 3 PWs examined

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Oct 16: Three witnesses were examined on the first day of the trial of the sensational Fauzia Rahman Chanpa murder case today.

The trial, that drew attention of hundreds of curious spectators, began at the court of the District and Sessions Judge Md Hamidul Haq.

Out of 45 witnesses to be examined, the three examined so far were CID inspector Bimal Kumar Das, Matiur Rahman father of the victim, and her neighbour Advocate Mukhlesur Rahman.

Public Prosecutors Majid Munshi and Mukhlesur Rahman moved for the plaintiff while Advocate Sirajul Islam and Advocate Mahbub Hossain acted as defence lawyers.

The hearing resumed after 1044 days of suspension by a court order. Chanpa was found dead in her bedroom at her father-in law's residence in Barisal town on October 18, 1989. The CID police brought charges against six of Chanpa's in-laws for the alleged murder.

Money market

From Page 1 Col 8

change rates of the pound rose to Tk 61.07 from the earlier position of Tk 59.85 in the inter-bank money market.

However, the country's interbank call money rates remained slumped during the week because of a sluggish demand for the dollar in the market. Sources said the banks' high excess liquidity position also contributed to the slump.

The call money rates ranged between 2.5 and six per cent during the week which was almost the same as the week before.

The week also witnessed and almost static exchange rate for the dollar due to the lesser appetite in the market. The commercial banks transacted dollars at between Tk 39.76 and Tk 39.77 between themselves.

Despite the low inter-bank dollar rates, there was no reduction on the customers' rates, sources said.

Cost of one dollar from the banks' counters for the clients remained at between Tk 39.95 and Tk 40. The rate of cash US dollar in the brokers' market ranged between Tk 41.20 and 41.40.

Momtazuddin

From Page 1 Col 8

Banani and his Toyota Corolla car (Dhaka Ka-032922) to be confiscated to the government.

The top defence officer, who was retired shortly after the 1991 cyclone that caused a colossal damage to more than 40 unprotected Air Force planes, was also fined Tk 15,000 or suffer another 7 months' simple imprisonment in default.

According to the prosecution, on August 18 in 1991, the Bureau of Anti-Corruption directed the retired Air Vice Marshal to submit proper accounts of all movable and immovable property owned by him within 30 days.

Accordingly, on September 16, 1991, the accused submitted his statement which later revealed that he did not disclose all his property — possessed either by himself on his family members.

On enquiry, the bureau found Momtazuddin Ahmed owned huge money and landed property disproportionate to known sources of his income and filed an FIR against him.

Public Prosecutor Abdur Razzaque Khan appeared for the state while senior advocate Abdul Malek defended the accused.

BSS adds: In all 21 witnesses, including four from the defence side, made their depositions. The defence witnesses included Ahmed's wife and two brothers.

Momtazuddin Ahmed, who joined the Pakistan Air Force in 1959, was asked to go on retirement in June, 1991, following an enquiry into the causes of damage to the Bangladesh Air Force in the devastating cyclone of April, 1991. He was made Air Chief on July 23, 1987.

Father of a son and a daughter, Ahmed, 49, plans to appeal to the High Court against the Special Tribunal's verdict.

Earlier, the judge rejected an appeal for the stay of the confiscation of his property and the car till October 30. She, however, recommended the authorities give the former air chief division in the jail.

Tribunal Judge Zinat Ara, who only read out the order portion of the 29-page judgement, found Momtazuddin guilty of the charges under the Anti-Corruption Act, 1959.

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