

Wood assures PM of full WB support for poverty alleviation

The visiting World Bank Vice President Joseph Wood said here yesterday that the World Bank would give total support to Bangladesh in its efforts for poverty alleviation, reports BSS.

The assurance came from the World Bank vice president when he called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office.

Wood deeply appreciated the steps taken by the government of Begum Zia for the improvement of different socio-economic sectors including health and family welfare, primary education and empowering the women community. He said the World Bank was totally behind Bangladesh in its efforts for attaining progress and prosperity.

Wood appreciated different projects for uplift taken up in Dhaka and Chittagong, which he visited. He assured all-out help of the World Bank in implementing the projects successfully.

The WB vice president also discussed different development issues including the gas sector, rural roads and other infrastructural development.

Wood said the WB would extend assistance for the Dhaka city infrastructural development to help cope with the needs of a growing city population which was increasing very rapidly.

He pointed out some of the sectors where the Bank would provide assistance, including construction of flyovers, wider roads and slum development.

During the talks, the Prime Minister sought the cooperation of the Bank in Bangladesh's efforts for development, especially in poverty alleviation which was the

cornerstone of her government's development policy. Begum Zia said her government gave top most priority to poverty alleviation which was a must for sustainable democracy.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, World Bank Alternative Director A M Syeed and World Bank Local Representative Christopher Willoughby were present during the meeting.

Noor Hossain Day

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against the autocratic rule of the Ershad government on this day in 1987.

The day was marked by a series of people-police clashes in the capital during the Awami League's attempt to stage a sit-in in front of the Bangladesh Secretariat. The AL programme, aimed at lodging protests against the BNP government's 'misrule', was announced in observance of the day.

The ruling BNP and the opposition Jamaat-e-Islami, Gano Forum, the alliance of 10 left parties including the CPB, JAGPA, Ganotantri Party, Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikya and other organisations organised discussions and rallies at different parts of the city and elsewhere in the country to mark the day.

Besides, wreaths were placed at the Noor Hossain Square, Quran Khwani was held and feteha offered at Hossain's grave in Jurain. The Shaheed Noor Hossain Parishad carried out programmes like hoisting black flag, wearing black badges and holding a milad maulid on the occasion.

Jordan ready to sign peace deal: Peres

JERUSALEM, Nov 10: Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said today that King Hussein of Jordan had concluded he would ultimately sign a peace deal with Israel, reports Reuter.

"I don't know what's holding him up," Peres said of the King. "There are still dozens of subjects that must be clarified and agreed upon but I think strategically the King has decided."

Peres dismissed speculation however that the King would join Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at a White House meeting on Friday with President Bill Clinton.

"This is one of those things that require more exacting preparations. Everything comes in its proper time, but that time has not come yet," Peres told Israeli radio.

Rabin on Thursday will begin an official trip to the United

States and Canada, mainly to discuss Arab-Israeli peace. Peres brushed aside an Israeli news report today that he and King Hussein had initialled a peace agreement during a rumoured secret meeting in Amman last week.

The newspaper Maariv said that under the agreement Israeli would cede parts of the Dead Sea and the Arava desert to Jordan, which would then lease them back at a nominal price.

"This is something for negotiation and I wouldn't jump to put the cart before the horse," Peres said.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat — Israel's partner in an accord on limited Palestinian self-rule — said on Tuesday that Jordan would sign a "friendly agreement" with Israel within days.

WB suggestion

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even after the introduction of its convertibility on current accounts.

Rahman, the sources said, also reportedly brushed aside the WB prescription to reduce the interest rates on various savings certificates. The Finance Minister told the WB official that the WB should better understand the reality of Bangladesh where the savings rate was still very low.

In support of his arguments, the Finance Minister said Bangladesh was now pursuing a right type of interest rates policies.

Rahman also rejected the WB's generalised prescription to further liberalise Bangladesh's trade regime and said, "We have done a lot. I think there are hardly anything left out for further liberalisation."

He even wanted to know from the WB official the name of any specific item on which there was any restriction except a very few strategic items. Wood conceded that Bangladesh was now much ahead of her neighbouring countries with regard to reforms.

Rahman also expressed concern that the developed countries were still imposing quantitative restrictions on the exportables of the developing countries but reaping the maximum benefits of the painful reforms of the poor countries.

The Finance Minister reportedly said that the multilateral agencies also did not raise their voice against the devastating effects of the Farakka Barrage on the life and economy of Bangladesh. But now they are raising silly points in each and every bridge and river embankment project of

Bangladesh, he told the WB official.

Referring to the resettlement issue raised by the WB regarding the construction of the Jamuna Bridge, Rahman said the consultants of the WB did not quite take into consideration the realities of Bangladesh.

The WB executive highly commended the government for a lot of hold decisions, saying Bangladesh deserved congratulations for taking a number of very bold measures but the cost of business in this country was still high.

The Finance Minister told the WB official that the present government had been seeking only qualitative, not quantitative, aid. "We don't need heavy doses of technical assistance. We don't want it," he was quoted as having said.

Referring to the Paris agenda, Rahman assured Wood that the government would do much more by way of reforms than what it committed under the Paris agenda.

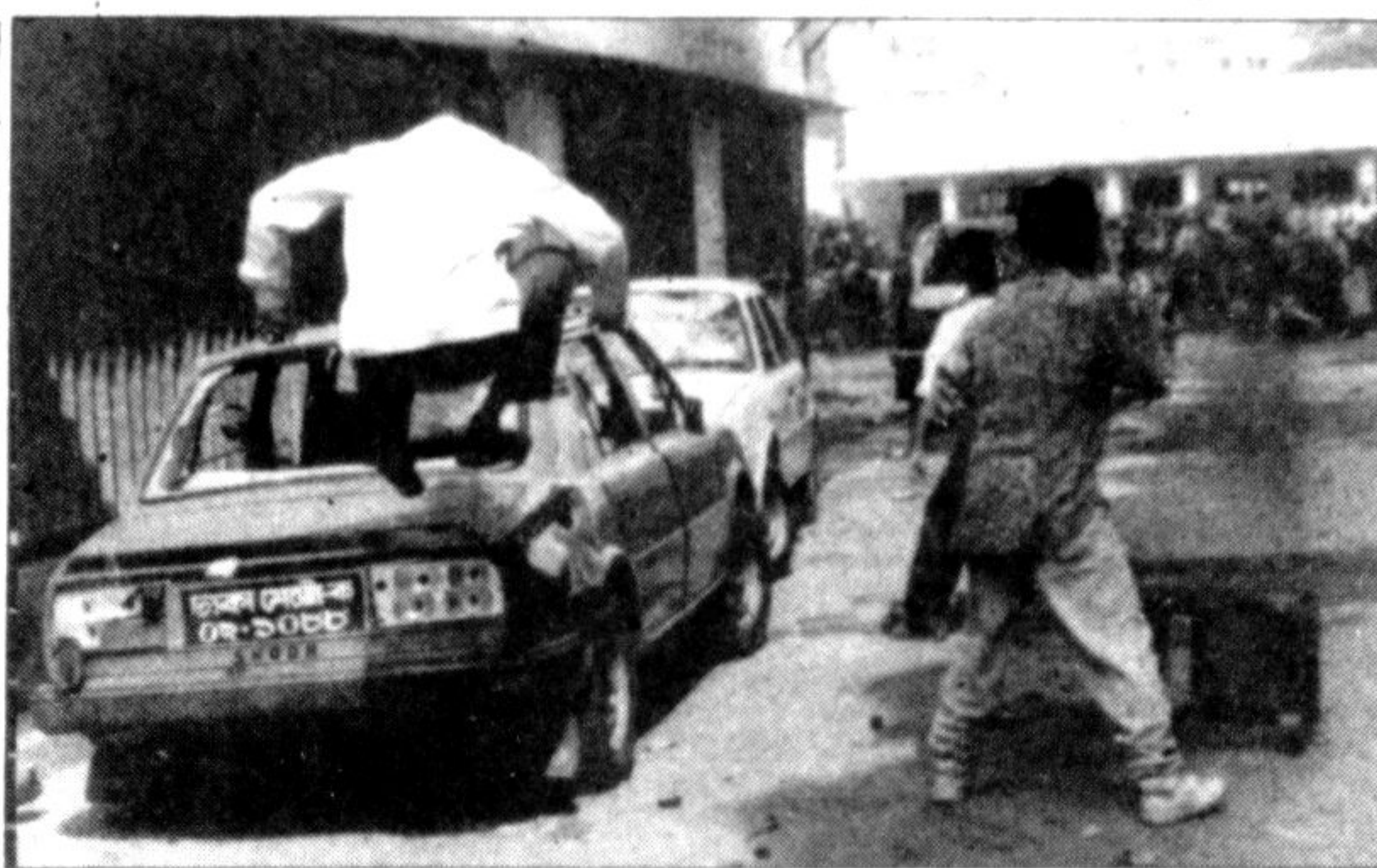
Wood said Bangladesh's success with macroeconomic stabilisation provided an opportunity to move forward with structural reforms to boost growth and investment. He said it should now be easier to encourage competitive private investment.

Wood yesterday also discussed various issues with the Finance Minister, the Commerce Minister, the Industries Minister and State Minister for Planning over a lunch. Last night he also attended a dinner, hosted by the Finance Minister.

The visiting WB vice president will again call on the Finance Minister before this departure, ending a five-day trip to Bangladesh.

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A car under attack near the Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust building at Motijheel in the city during opposition programme yesterday. — Star photo

Sporadic clashes mark sit-in

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Secretariat, the central administrative seat of the government, from 7:30 am to prevent the agitators from approaching it.

Police did not allow any one to enter areas in and around the Secretariat from 7:30 am to 2:30 pm. The day before, the police advised the owners and drivers of buses, trucks and minibuses to avoid using the roads adjoining the Secretariat.

Police, wearing bullet-proof jackets and carrying plastic shields, resorted to lathicharge on the agitators at 11 am when AL activists, led by their party leaders, tried to break the police cordon at the Zero Point near the GPO. Police used batons and fired teargas to disperse the AL activists who had been trying to approach the Secretariat from the Gulistan side.

Several thousand AL supporters, in retaliation of the police action, started pelting stones at the policemen. The sound of several cocktail explosions were heard at the time in the area and a police constable — Habibur Rahman — received a shrapnel injury. The violence spread instantly throughout the central and older parts of the city.

Angry demonstrators fought pitched battles in the Gulistan, Motijheel, Purana Paltan, Nawabpur, English Road and Joykali Mandir areas. A BRTC bus — Dhaka Cha-1564 — was burned down by the agitators near the Joykali Mandir. Some private vehicles were also damaged in the area. An office of the Judo Dal, the ruling party's youth wing, at Kaptan Bazar was also set on fire.

A group of AL activists managed to come to the Baitul Mukarram mosque premises at around 12:30 pm where police were seen lobbing teargas shells to disperse the demonstrators chanting pro-AL slogans.

Earlier, the AL held a rally near the party's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue and Abdul Mannan, acting president of the party, announced a three-day country-wide agitation including a hartal on Sat-

urday. According to the programme, the party will stage demonstrations across the country today, a torch procession in the Dhaka City tomorrow and enforce a half-day hartal the day after.

Meanwhile, the JP activists assembled near the Shapla Square in Motijheel at around 10:30 am. They tried to proceed towards the Secretariat in a procession which was dispersed by police before reaching the Dainik Bangla crossing.

Chased by riot police, the JP activists resorted to the brickbattling and damaged some vehicles in the Motijheel areas. Three privately owned cars and a motorcycle were burnt down by the JP men in the area at about 11:30 am. A group of JP men assembled near the Jiban Bima Tower and damaged two cars.

Another group was demonstrating near the Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust building at the time and a small

procession, coming out of the Trust building, attacked the JP agitators and confined a JP activist Nadeem, inside the Trust building.

The JP activists attacked the building and damaged a few cars in the vicinity while police lobbed teargas shells to disperse the agitators.

Nadeem was later released by his captors and police sent him to the hospital.

Pitched battles between the JP activists and the riot police continued at Motijheel for over an hour, disrupting the normal activities of the busy commercial area.

No front-ranking JP leader was seen with their activists in the Motijheel area. However, the JP leaders later announced a follow-up programme identical to that of the AL, in the evening.

The JP will observe an additional half-day hartal at the former Upazila headquarters on November 23.



Agitators set on fire a BRTC bus near the 'Joykali Mandir' in the city yesterday. — Star photo

BNP isolated

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to realise the actual situation and the present political reality." Moudud said and added that was why the BNP was trying to repress the opposition.

The party called for a half-day hartal on Nov 13 and another half-day hartal in the former upazila head-quarters on Nov 23 to demand restoration of the upazila system.

The JP leaders denied any links with the Awami League's (AL) call for a similar hartal Saturday.

"The ruling party is trying to stay in power by resorting to terrorism," they said and accused the government of violating people's fundamental rights on after another.

They said, the police and BNP terrorists attacked JP workers at the Dainik Bangla crossing, the Adamee Court Building premises and near the Text Book Board Office

AL-CPC relations

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League president Sheikh Hasina, arrived here November 6 as guests of the CPC.

According to sources at the international liaison department of the CPC central committee, with the delegation's current visit, the CPC has established relations with all the main political parties in South Asia.

During the meeting Hu extended a welcome to the Bangladesh guests. He said the delegation is the first one from the Awami League to visit China, adding that through this visit the official friendly relations between the two parties have been set up on the basis of independence, equality, mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

He expressed his belief that the development of relations between the two parties will

further promote the friendship and mutual understanding between the two countries and peoples.

Hu noted that the CPC and the Chinese government will, as always, pay close attention to and develop friendly relations with neighbouring nations, including Bangladesh.

Hu also briefed the guests on China's reforms, opening to the outside world and establishing a socialist market economy.

Hasina said she was glad to have the chance to visit China and see its great changes with her own eyes. She said the delegation is conveying friendship and best wishes from the Awami League and the people of Bangladesh to the CPC and the Chinese people.

US approach on nuclear row positive, says Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Nov 10: Pakistan said today it had perceived a new positive approach from US President Bill Clinton's administration to solve a nuclear row between the two countries, reports Reuter.

This approach was "more apparent" when a senior US official visited Islamabad earlier this week, Foreign Secretary Shaharyar Mohammad Khan told reporters.

Ties between the two one-time close allies have soured since US military and economic aid was cut off in 1990 when President George Bush refused to certify to Congress that Pakistan did not possess nuclear weapons.

After talks with US Assistant Secretary of state Robin Raphel, new Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto told her cabinet

on Monday that a "new window of opportunity" had been opened for improved ties with Washington.

"We have perceived from the Clinton administration a new approach towards seeking a way out," Shaharyar said when asked if the deadlock over the nuclear issue continued.

"This very positive approach was apparent during the last meeting I had (with American officials in September) in Washington and it was certain, even more apparent, when Raphel came here a few days ago," he said. "Therefore a desire to overcome it is there."

Meanwhile, Bhutto said today her government would keep the brakes on Pakistan's nuclear programme, but would not reduce it.

AL denounces

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tions and processions in the city tomorrow.

Presided over by Mannan, the rally was also addressed, among others, by AL central leader Zillur Rahman, Tofael Ahmed MP, Mohammad Nasim MP, Abdur Razzak MP, Begum Matia Chowdhury MP, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury MP, Rahman Ali MP, Ivy Rahman, Obaidul Kader and others.

They urged the people to intensify agitations to oust the government and said, "Election under this government are not acceptable to us. We have seen the BNP had resorted to unfair means in the previous polls."

Abdul Mannan said, "Peaceful hartals and demonstrations are our fundamental rights. In spite of the police attack the AL demonstrators remained non-violent."

"We have reports that some people have damaged a few cars," he said and added, "we believe it was done by government agents to brand us as a violent force."

Mannan said, "The police had launched the attack on us without any provocation. We were going to the Noor Hossain Square only to pay our homage."

Justifying the hartal call, the acting AL president said, "we have called the hartal because the government would not listen to any other language of protest."

"Democracy and black laws cannot go together," Mannan said. "And democracy and fundamentalism cannot go together either. So, let us unseat this government."

"The Prime Minister says, she wants to solve all problems in Parliament," Tofael said. "But she does not attend Parliament herself."

Abdur Razzak said: "Khaleda recently said the we only speak lies in Parliament, which means she undermines the Sangsad, and has no respect for democracy."

Mohammad Nasim said: "Ershad's Home Minister Dr Matin killed Noor Hossain in 1987 during an agitation on this day; now Khaleda's Matin has unleashed his brute force to bring us down."

The AL leaders said at least 40 of their leaders were beaten up by police and 100 others had been given first-aid. The rally, held at 12:25 pm, was organised on a make-shift basis because earlier the police broke down the stage the AL had set up on the avenue. Sounds of cocktail blasts were heard around the area during the rally.

AL MP

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centres.

Former Chittagong City mayor and Jatiya Party leader Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury filed the case with the Election Tribunal accusing Sultanul Kabir and 8 others of adopting unfair means during the polls. The accused were prosecuted under Section 49(2) of the People's Representation Order 1972.

The petitioner produced one witness while the defendants six.

Advocate Mozammel Hossain and AKM Shamsul Huda stood for the petitioner while Advocate Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury, Abdus Sabur and Jamuddin Ahmed Khan for the defendants.

The Midnight File

13 parties qualify for Russian elections

MOSCOW, Nov 10: Thirteen parties, ranging from communists to free-market reformists to environmentalists, will appear on the ballot in Russia's December 12 parliamentary elections, officials said Wednesday. They are what remain of 35 parties and blocs that originally registered for the vote. Twenty-one met the weekend deadline for submitting 100,000 or more signatures to qualify for the ballot for the State Duma, the lower chamber of the new bicameral Russian Parliament, reports AP.

Douglas Hurd to visit India

LONDON, Nov 10: Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd will visit India for two days next week and have talks with Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, the Foreign Office said Wednesday. Hurd, who leaves for Delhi on Monday, also will take part in Indo-British Week, a Bombay seminar organised by the British Department of Trade and Industry to foster trade and investment between the two countries, reports UNB.

150 Serbs allowed to leave Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, Nov 10: Bosnia's government began allowing 150 Serb civilians to leave Sarajevo on Wednesday after postponing the evacuation in a dispute over two Croats abducted by Serb fighters. The refugees were boarding two buses that were expected to depart for Serb territory. As they prepared to leave, one person was reported killed and at least five wounded by a shell in western Sarajevo. A mortar attack on a school in that part of the city took nine lives Tuesday, the government said, reports AP.

Gold haul at airport

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bags out of the bus window in the direction of a microbus parked nearby.

Sensing mischief, Moslem rushed towards the microbus—driven by Majid—which by now was ready to head out of the area. Moslem flung himself at the fleeing vehicle and managed to hang on to it from one of the rear windows. After driving for nearly 200 yards Majid stopped and Moslem immediately

sought help over his walkie-talkie. Soon airport security personnel rushed to his aid and cordoned off the area and Majid was trapped. They recovered 497 gold bars from the two bags.

One security official told this correspondent that Majid was not on duty yesterday. He had taken the vehicle, allotted to one Adbur Rashid, without authorisation and went to the arrival area on the tarmac.

Majid admitted that he had taken the vehicle without any permission and started the microbus with a coin since he did not have the key. But he denied his involvement in the smuggling attempt.

Majid, who joined Biman Bangladesh Airlines as a driver in 1982, was sent to the Cantonment police station last night.

Gas project

From Page 1 Col 8
delegation of the country's present position and future demand of gas. He also outlined various development projects designed to cope with the increasing demand of gas up to the year 2000 and sought continued help from the Bank.

Joseph Wood expressed his deep satisfaction over the development in the gas sector and assured continued WB help in future. He suggested necessary reforms in the power sector and underlined the need for improving management efficiency and performance to make the sector more viable.

case was registered but the investigations would be assigned to the Detective Branch (DB) today.

Meanwhile, the Biman management has decided to award Tk 5,000 to Moslem Ali for his courage and sense of responsibility, according to a Biman press release.

This was the third largest gold haul at the Zia International Airport.

The seizure of nearly two mounds (80 kgs) from a diplomatic consignment at the air-freight godown on January 25 this year was the biggest haul. A former Russian diplomat Vladimir I. Lankin was arrested for involvement in that incident.

Sixty-five kilos of the precious metal were recovered from a personal consignment at the air-freight godown on October 17 last year.

An Assistant Commissioner of DB police was put in charge of the investigations but he is yet to make any headway.

Saifur

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The Finance Minister directed the Chairman of the Board of Revenue to take action against the concerned VAT official and sack him from his job.

He also asked for filling a case with the Bureau of Anticorruption against the concerned officials to realise the loss that the government had suffered.

The Finance Minister also urged the consumers to receive proper receipt of VAT while buying things or services under VAT.

The Finance Minister also asked the officials of the Board of Revenue to take legal measures against the multinational company which had paid only Taka four crore as VAT in place of Taka 18 crore last year. He also asked them to take action against those officials who were involved in it.



BCIC International Re-Tender Notice

বিসিআইসি'র পণ্য শিল্পায়নে জাতীয় অগ্রগতির প্রতীক

Supply and Construction of Ammonia-Urea Fertilizer Complex (Shahjalal Fertilizer Project) at NGFF premises.

Sealed tenders are hereby invited by BCIC for selection of a General Contractor on a Lump Sum Turn-Key basis for constructing an Ammonia-Urea Complex at Natural Gas Fertilizer Factory, Fenchuganj, premises with an annual capacity of 330,000 M. Tons of Urea. The General Contractor shall be responsible for basic & detailed engineering, supply, construction, erection, commissioning, trial-run and guarantee test of the complex.

General Contractor shall be required to arrange fund equivalent to the Lump Sum Turn-Key (LSTK) price (Total foreign currency and part of local currency) of the Contract covering bidder's scope of work (excluding duties and taxes leviable in Bangladesh) through supplier's credit, or soft loan or equity participation or a combination of such arrangements.

Project brief can be obtained free of cost from the Senior General Manager, FPIRP Division, BCIC during office hours.

Tender documents can be purchased during office hours from the Controller of Accounts, BCIC Bhaban, 6th Floor, 30-31, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka on payment of Tk. 20,000/- (Twenty thousand) only or US\$ 500 (Five hundred) non-refundable. Tender documents purchased earlier will remain valid for submission of fresh bids.

Tender shall be received by Director (Planning & Implementation) BANGLADESH CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES CORPORATION, BCIC Bhaban, 30-31, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000 up to 11 AM on 29-12-93 and shall be opened (technical bids only) immediately thereafter.

BCIC 1102/911

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