



The Daily Star BUSINESS

DHAKA MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1993

First with the news,
The Daily Star
Best with the views

Saifur calls on SEC to set up legal framework to ensure accountability

Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman yesterday called on the newly formed Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to initiate the formation of legal framework to ensure accountability of the listed public companies in order to restore public confidence in the share market.

Addressing the formal opening of the SEC at the Jiban Bima Bhavan as a special guest, the Finance Minister also appealed to the opposition political parties to engage in 'sound and constructive politics.'

In a candid speech, delivered extempore, Rahman also touched on a number of issues, including the importance of developing the capital market for the growth of the private sector, the relationship between the securities market and the banking sector and problems in the financial sector in implementing economic reforms.

Emphasizing that the capital market can play a vital role in capital formation through better use of internal resources, the Finance Minister said SEC

By Staff Correspondent

"A joint partnership between the financial institutions and the securities market would be a healthy development."

The banks should also help the small investors to counter-balance the inherent fault of the capitalist system, which always looks after the rich and ignores the poor businessmen, he added.

The Finance Minister was sharply critical of the performance of the banking sector. "It should be improved. The investment shyness of the banks still persists. We are trying to remove it," he said.

Although the government has initiated deregulation in a number of areas Rahman pointed out that the implementation of policy changes continues to be a problem. "Even though we have initiated deregulation I am sorry to say that the mental regulation still remains among people who implement it."

He said the need is to remove the mental regulation, but it will take time as they have

been used to a protective regulatory regime for the past 40 years. "Deregulation has to be implemented both in words and in deeds."

The Minister was also sharply critical of the recent activities of some political parties to 'create deliberate problems in the country.'

Referring to the Awami League rule after independence, he said the government at that time had committed a blunder by unilaterally nationalising all industries, destroying the growth of the securities market and the private sector.

He also blamed the AL government for causing the worst famine of this country.

He lashed out at the nine-year misrule of the previous autocratic regime. "Those who have destroyed the banks are now agitating in the streets," he said.

Although the opposition political parties accuse the government of failures, he added, people outside feel that the country is economically moving in the right direction and the most healthy democracy in Asia

prevails in the country.

"We are trying to create an enterprise in partnership to develop the country," he said. "But they (the opposition) want to create deliberate problems in this regard."

In a conciliatory tone, he, however, appealed to the opposition parties to practise sound, constructive and responsible politics.

"Today's opposition is tomorrow's government and today's government is tomorrow's opposition and that is democracy."

He also urged the opposition to forsake harts for the sake of the country's development. "Hartal is national suicide and we cannot continue to commit national suicide."

The Finance Minister underlined the importance of improving the law and order situation to attract investments in the securities market.

Rahman went on to thank the Asian Development Bank for providing technical assistance to the SEC and further assistance for a comprehensive development of the country's capital market.

Minister follows Secretary

by S Y Bakht

The Finance Minister yesterday switched over to Bangladesh while addressing the inaugural function of SEC, after the finance secretary, who rarely uses Bangla in his public speeches decided to deliver his address in his mother-tongue for a change.

"I wanted to address this gathering in English but after the Finance Secretary spoke in Bangla, I have to follow him and also speak in Bangla," said Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, with a laugh, at the beginning of his address as special guest.

Earlier, Finance Secretary Nasimuddin Ahmed, perhaps for the first time delivered his address in well-versed Bangla.

However, he faltered initially when he forgot to use the feminine gender of the Bangla word 'honourable' before addressing the Prime Minister, who was seated on the dais.

None the less, his valiant attempt to speak in Bangla received immediate smiles of approval from the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the Finance Minister.

UN asked to give priority over science, technology for development

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 14 Science and technology for development should occupy a prominent place on the multi-lateral economic activities of the United Nations, a Chinese delegate said here Friday, reports Xinhua.

Speaking at the UN Second Committee (Economic and Financial), Chinese delegate Yang Yanli said the science and technology revolution is sweeping across the entire world with an unprecedented momentum and has become the most dynamic factor and the most important pillar in modern production.

She noted that at present there exists an enormous gap between the developing and developed countries in scientific and technological levels. How to help the developing countries keep pace with the new technological revolution has become an urgent demand of the times.

In promoting science and technology for development, she said, the UN has done some useful work but its work has yet to be intensified.

She proposed the following: — The UN should strengthen its dialogue and guidance over

its policies toward the enhancement of science and technology for development and encourage the developed countries to provide technology to the developing countries on favourable terms.

— The committee on science and technology should honour fully its responsibilities and obligations by actively putting forward proposals concerning science and technology for development, the committee and the commission on sustainable development should support each other in carrying out their respective functions.

— Efforts should be made to strengthen the evaluation, monitoring and projection functions of the agencies responsible for science and technology for development in the UN system.

— The International community the developed countries in particular, should increase their funds and contributions for the revitalisation of the UN fund for science and technology for development.

— Technical cooperation among developing countries should be emphasised and supported by the international community.

Clinton announces 3 more votes for NAFTA

MEMPHIS, Tennessee, Nov 14: President Bill Clinton announced three more votes for his free trade pact Saturday as time was running out for Wednesday's crucial vote, reports AFP.

"We're making some pretty good inroads now in places where I didn't know we could get some votes," said the President as he left the White House for a rally in Tennessee for the embattled North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The new endorsements came from three Democratic Members of the House of Representatives who understand "you can't put more people to work unless you've got more people to buy your goods," said Clinton.

Clinton was still short on votes for the pact which would eliminate nearly all trade barriers with Canada and Mexico

and the administration was working around the clock to secure the 218 votes needed for the November 17 vote.

Leading Democrats have protested the pact, charging it could cost US jobs and the White House is looking for support from Republicans.

The President said Friday he would protect any Republicans who vote for the trade pact against attacks from Democrats during next year's midterm elections.

"I don't believe any member of Congress should be defecated if they voted for NAFTA," Clinton said. "I will give it to them in writing. I will give it to them in public statements."

Labour unions meanwhile worked on undecided congressional members to oppose the pact, holding marches, rallies and writing campaigns across the country.

Vietnam heading for record oil output in '93

HANOI, Nov 14: Vietnam is heading for record oil output this year but will also post a higher trade deficit due to increased equipment imports, according to government figures published in state-owned newspapers today, reports Reuters.

The English language Vietnam news said the Vietsovpetro Oil Company had produced 5.1 million tonnes of crude this year by November 4 and was well on the way to achieving its target of 6.5 million tonnes for the full year.

Vietnam produced 5.7 million tonnes of crude oil in 1992,

according to revised figures. Nearly all its output is exported, with Japan the main buyer.

Vietsovpetro, a joint venture between Vietnam and Russia, operates the country's only producing offshore field in the South China Sea, Bach Ho (white tiger).

The company yesterday celebrated the pumping of its 20 millionth tonne of crude since production began in 1986, Vietnam news said.

Vietnam's imports for the first 10 months surged to 2.6 billion US dollar, 32 per cent higher than the 1992 period, the newspaper said.



A model shows a 100.36 carat diamond Saturday to be auctioned at the November 17 autumn auction of Sotheby's in Geneva. The diamond is valued at 14 million Swiss franc (over nine million US dollar). — AFP photo

Int'l trade fair begins in India

NEW DELHI, Nov 14: The India International Trade Fair, 1993 opened here today with environment and development as its main theme, reports Xinhua.

The fair also focused on machinery and technology for small and medium-sized enterprises, house building materials and technology.

A large number of companies from 22 countries and areas participated in the fair besides 41,000 Indian companies throughout the country.

A number of seminars and conferences will also be held during the 10-day fair.

Tata targets Europe

BOMBAY, Nov 14: India's largest software firm, Tata Consultancy Services, a member of the Tata group, has targeted Europe as part of an ambitious growth plan, TCS president Yash Sahni said here Saturday.

"Europe has become a major thrust area for us. A lot of opportunities are opening up there," Sahni told AFP at ICS headquarters in Bombay, India's commercial capital.

The Tata software firm recently opened an office in France. It already has offices in Britain, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

Sahni said the recession in Europe had opened up a lot of

opportunities for computer programming firms. "Businesses there are looking for competitive software solutions at top quality," he added.

"We believe we can offer them both. We have a team of 3,300 software professionals who can offer them both. We have a team of 3,300 software professionals who can provide software solutions and also crush schedules. We will get a big share of the emerging software market in Europe," he said.

TCS is India's largest software exporter. Its exports totalled 36 million US dollar in the first half of the financial year.

Rich nations urged not to fester environmental issues

Minister for Environment and Forests Akbar Hossain Sunday urged the developed nations not to fester the environmental issues but provide adequate financial and technological assistance to their developing counterparts for arresting the continued environmental degradation, reports BSS.

"Without these, all our attempts at having a cleaner habitat shall come to a cropper," he said adding, protection of and care for environment should be an innate attribute of the mankind in view of the deterioration of environment.

The Minister was inaugurating a day-long seminar on "Environment Pollution: International Perspective" at the BCS (Admin) academy. Director General of the Academy Fazlul Hasan Yusuf presided over the function. Establishment secretary Habibur Rahman spoke on the occasion as the special guest.

Akbar Hossain said most of the adverse impacts on environment were the results of human actions geared at achieving fast economic and material development forsaking the very vital cause of environment.

"Through their economic policies, man has declared war on nature and now nature is exacting an awful retribution," he said adding that the only planet for human settlement was in grave danger due to thinning of the stratospheric ozone layer, ill effects of climate change, global warming and rise in sea level.

The Environment Minister referred to Bangladesh's policies on environment protection and

said the present government under Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had demonstrated abiding commitment to address the environment issues and initiate a process of sustainable development based on poverty alleviation and protection of environment.

"As you know, poverty is a polluter of the worst kind. We believe that growth on the single matrix of exploitation of natural resources forsaking the environmental conditions would be far from having appropriate meaning," he said.

Akbar Hossain mentioned the 'Agenda 21' of the Rio earth summit and said it had charted out a large number of actions for implementation at national, regional and global levels.

"We are trying to pursue a policy of implementation of Rio commitments," he said adding that the National Environment Committee headed by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia would oversee the implementation of 'Agenda 21' in the country.

Call money rate ranges from 2 to 8pc

The money rates in the call money market during the week ended on November 11 ranged from two per cent to eight per cent, says a Bangladesh Bank press release.

During the same week interest rates offered by the Bank on Certificate of deposits varied from 5.50 per cent to 8.75 per cent. The bank rate, however, remained unchanged at 8.00 per cent, the press release added.

He also referred to the formulation of the National Environment Policy, 1992 and the preparation of the national conservation strategy which was now in its final shape.

Speaking about the massive tree plantation programme, the Environment Minister said Begum Khaleda Zia's call for planting one tree per head got an encouraging response all over the country.

"We have already planted about 100 million saplings and are endeavouring to turn this campaign into a social movement and integrate poverty alleviation measures into it," he said.

Akbar Hossain referred to the unilateral regulation of water of the transboundary rivers by the upper riparian country which caused severe ecological degradation in the lower riparian Bangladesh.

He also said it had generated a host of problems in the fields of bio-diversity, inland intrusion of salinity and soil degradation.

"The Agenda 21 has sought for cooperation among states in view of the need for equitable sharing of transboundary waters," Akbar Hossain said.

Bangladesh is a signatory to the Rio declaration and committed itself to its implementation in view of the deteriorating condition of its own environment, he also said.

The Environment Minister said the successful implementation of the 'Agenda 21' an action programme taking into account the daunting challenges of the 21st century, would largely depend on national initiatives.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়
গণপূর্ত ই/এম বিভাগ-১, ঢাকা

স্মারক নং-১৫-১০/৩১২৩ তারিখ: ১১-১১-৯৩
১৮-১১-৯৩০৬৭

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি
দরপত্র আহবানের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-৩৫/৯৩-৯৪

১। গণপূর্ত অধিদপ্তরের ই/এম কাজের জন্য ১৪/১১/৯৩ তারিখের নিয়মিত ই/এম টেন্ডার আহবানের এনিসি/বিসি সুপারভাইজারী ও টেকনিক্যালি সাইটসেপ প্রয়োজ্যে তাহাবানের নিকট হইতে নিম্নবর্ণিত কাজের জন্য বাংলাদেশ ফরম নং ২১১১-এ সীলমোহরকৃত ভাবে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাইতেছে।
দরপত্রসমূহ আগামী ১৫-১১-৯৩ ইং তারিখ বেলা ১২-০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময় গণপূর্ত ই/এম বিভাগ-১/২/৩/গণপূর্ত ইডেন ভবন বিভাগ, ঢাকায় প্রকৃত টেন্ডার বাস্তব গৃহীত হইবে এবং একই দিনে বেলা ১২-৩০ মিনিটে দরপত্র আহবানের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হইবে। দরপত্র খোলার দিনে কোন দরপত্র বিক্রি করা হইবে না। দরপত্র ক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ২৪-১১-৯৩ ইং।

২। কাজের নাম : ঢাকায় ইন্ডিয়ান গার্ডেনস অফিসার্স হোস্টেল ও নিউ সার্ভিস হাউসিং ১৫০ কেডিএ বৈদ্যুতিক উপ-কেন্দ্রের অকেজো এইচটি ক্যাবল পরিবর্তনকরণ।

৩। প্রাকৃতিক মূল্য : ২,৩৫,৫৫৫/- টাকা মাত্র।

৪। কার্য সম্পাদনের সময় : ২১ দিন।

৫। জামানতের টাকা প্রাকৃতিক মূল্যের ২% (দুই) শতাংশ হারে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পিও/সিডি আকারে বাংলাদেশের যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংক হইতে নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, গণপূর্ত ই/এম বিভাগ-১, ঢাকা-এর অনুকূলে দরপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হইবে।

৬। টেন্ডার ফরম, আইডেমের তফসিল, স্পেসিফিকেশন, শর্ত ও নিয়মাবলী ইত্যাদি নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, গণপূর্ত ই/এম বিভাগ-১/২/৩/গণপূর্ত ইডেন ভবন বিভাগ, ঢাকায় অফিসসমূহে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে প্রাপ্তি নন্দমূল্য প্রদানপূর্বক (অফেরতযোগ্য) দরপত্র ক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ পর্যন্ত দেখিতে এবং ক্রয় করিতে পারা যাইবে। টেন্ডার ফরম টিকাদার নিজে অথবা তাহার নিজস্ব প্রতিনিধি (টিকাদার কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত পদ বহনকারী প্রতিনিধি) প্রকৌশলীর বইসহ প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্র দেখাইয়া দরপত্র ক্রয় করিতে পারিবেন।

মোঃ নাসীম
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী
গণপূর্ত ই/এম বিভাগ-১, ঢাকা।
ফোন ৪২৯৪২০।

ডিএফপি(জি) ১৮৫০১-১০/১১
জি-১৫৫৯

World commodity markets

Demand for tea selective, coffee price falls in London

LONDON, Nov 14: The demand for tea was selective at the weekly London sales while the price of coffee fell on the commodity markets, reports AFP.

Tea: Uneven. Demand was selective at the weekly London sales, where prices were unchanged at 200 pence/kilo for high grade tea, fell to 115 from 112 pence/kilo for middle grade tea, and dropped to 100 from 103 pence/kilo for lower grade tea.

The London commodities paper Public Ledger, quoting sources at the London tea office, said India exported 104.59 million kilos of tea in the first eight months of the fiscal year, against 85.1 million in the same period last year.

India exported 173 million tonnes in the whole of last year against 200 million the year before.

Exporters have been looking for new markets following the breakup of the Soviet Union, once the main market for Indian tea. India aims to increase production to 740 million kilos this year from 704 million last year.

Coffee: Weak. The price of coffee was hit after the Brazilian government failed to make the purchases it had agreed to in signing up for the Association of Coffee Producing Countries' stock-withholding scheme.

Under the scheme, the government of the 28-member countries agreed to buy up 20 per cent of their countries' coffee exports to drive up prices.

By the close of the London market Friday, however, Brazil had bought just 25,250 of the 60 kilogram bags of coffee against a target for October of 200,000 bags, due to be bought before November 15.

Grain: Higher. The prices of wheat and barley rose, boosted by the rise on the Chicago market, after USDA estimates of US grain production were lower than expected.

Cotton: Higher. The indicator price of cotton rose on the Liverpool market, boosted by estimates from the USDA that the US cotton harvest would fall to 16.3 million bales (at 480 pounds each) this year, down from an initial estimate of 17.01 million.

Rubber: Firm. Trade demand for natural rubber rose this week, particularly from the car sector, where rubber is used for tyre manufacture.

Dealers said, however, that the main reason for the rapid buying was the fear that the International Natural Rubber Organisation (INRO) was going to intervene on the market to push prices higher and that the demand from end consumers was still weak.

Gold: Steady. Gold prices

stood above 375 dollar per ounce, the level reached the previous week following a sharp fall on the world's main stock exchanges.

Meanwhile, Mark Nathanson, Chairman of the Toronto-based mining group lamgod, said the group would start operations at a major new gold mine at Sadiola, Mali, in early 1996.

Silver: Higher. Silver prices rose thanks to an increase in demand from India and Saudi Arabia. An analyst said Riyadh had boosted demand because of fears of a devaluation of its currency. The amount of silver demanded rose because of the lifting of some restrictions on silver imports.

Platinum: Idle. Platinum fell slightly, depressed by the weak state of the European car market where Britain is the only sector showing any growth in demand.

The main industrial use for platinum is the manufacture of catalytic converters.

Copper: Slightly lower. The copper price fell slightly in trading on the LME this week, slipping back after rising on short-covering in the previous week.

However, the fall was limited by a drop in stocks in London and by a report from brokers GNI that the US economic recovery, seen gathering pace in recent weeks, had led to a fall in

stocks on the Comex Metals Exchange in New York.

Lead: Uneven. Lead traded unsteadily all week, unable to settle into any particular pattern in the absence of any new information on lead demand and supply, dealers said.

On the LIME, lead stocks fell by 925 tonnes to 298,625 tonnes.

Zinc: Almost unchanged. Zinc was quieter than lead, finishing the week almost unchanged after falling at the start when short-covering ran out.

Zinc gained ground later in the week despite the fact that rumours of production cut-backs at Spanish zinc group Asturiana de Zinc SA had not been confirmed.

Aluminium: Recovery after poor start. Aluminium prices fell back at the start of the week as the rally seen during the previous week fizzled out.

Angus Macmillan at Billiton-Enthoven Metals said that "a period of consolidation" might be needed before the next major move in aluminium prices would emerge.

Prices rose later in the week, however, after EC foreign ministers meeting in Brussels instructed the European Commission to negotiate a reduction in aluminium imports from Russia, Ukraine, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan.

Nickel: Lower. Nickel prices

fell, affected by technical selling and by news of an agreement reached between Canadian producer Inco and the groups unions on procedures in closing mines.

Later in the week, mixed news emerged, with Sumitomo's metal mining company cutting nickel production to 16,900 tonnes for the second half of the fiscal year and Western Mining Corp saying that its smelter at Kalgoorie in western Australia would resume production nine days ahead of schedule on November 17.

Tin: Lower. Tin prices fell, worried by the fall in nickel prices, despite a fall in tin stocks on the LME.

LME stocks of tin fell below 20,000 tonnes for the first time since June, dropping 520 tonnes to 19,645 tonnes.

Sugar: Lower. The price of sugar fell in London and New York, affected by investment fund selling and signs that 500,000 tonnes of sugar from the Philippines will be put on sale soon.

Brokers GNI said that the restriction of supplies would be worsened by a fall in the 1993/94 harvest from Cuba, but that it would not affect sentiment before next year.

World raw sugar production is likely to reach 112.4 million

tonnes in 1993/94, up slightly from 112 million tonnes last season but down from 116.3 million in 1991/92, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said.

Vegetable oils: Higher. The price of vegetable oils rose strongly on the Rotterdam market, in line with Chicago, after the downward revision of the USDA's estimate of the US soybean harvest in 1993/94.

The USDA said it expected the harvest to amount to 49.91 million tonnes next year, the lowest level for five years, against a previous prediction of 51.46 million tonnes, and the 59.55 million harvested last year.

Crude oil: Recovery after sharp fall. The price of Brent North Sea crude oil fell to 15.21 dollar a barrel, its lowest level since February 1989, before recovering after indications that Saudi Arabia would not exclude a cut in OPEC output at its meeting in Vienna on November 23.

However, it is not clear if Riyadh would accept a reduction in its own quota of eight million barrels a day.

OPEC has agreed a limit for its total output of 24.5 million barrels a day for the six months from October 1, but its recent production has run at around 24.7 million barrels daily, analysts said.