

Cabinet reshuffle next month

# Rao likely to drop two ministers

NEW DELHI, Dec 28: Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao will reshuffle his cabinet next month to drop two ministers tainted by an all-party report on the country's biggest financial scandal, political sources said today, reports Reuters.

Sources in the ruling Congress Party said it appeared very unlikely that Rao would sack Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, the architect of India's radical market-oriented reforms, who offered his resignation over the report.

Congress members of Parliament, top businessmen and newspapers have urged Rao to reject Singh's resignation, offered after a joint parliamentary committee strongly criticised his ministry over the billion-dollar scandal.

The sources said that unless Singh insisted on resigning, it was almost certain he would remain to present an annual budget in February expected to speed up the dismantling of government's grip on the economy.

There has been intense speculation about a reshuffle since Singh revealed on Friday he had offered his resignation. Some of it centres on the offer being accepted.

Some Congressmen say it is possible, although unlikely, that Rao might accept Singh's resignation and switch Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee to a post he makes little secret of coveting.

They say it is certain that former Commerce Minister P Chidambaram will return to the cabinet. He resigned after the scandal was uncovered in April 1992 because he had invested in a company involved in it.

The parliamentary report cleared Chidambaram, a respected advocate of rapid economic liberalisation, of any wrongdoing. Dropping or moving Singh would enable Rao to put Chidambaram back in his old job, the sources said.

They said it was certain that two casualties of the reshuffle would be B Shankaranand, Petroleum Minister when the scandal was uncovered and now Health Minister, and Rameshwar Thakur, a Deputy Finance Minister.

Both were criticised personally, unlike Singh, in the report on a scandal in which bankers and brokers were accused of colluding to syphon money illegally out of the inter-bank securities market to fuel a stock market boom.

## Troops kill six Nagas

NEW DELHI, Dec 28: Six Naga insurgents were killed and several others injured in a gunbattle with Indian troops in the far eastern state of Nagaland on Monday, the Press Trust of India reported today, says AFP.

## Two killed, one commits suicide in city

By DMCH Correspondent

Two persons were killed, one reportedly committed suicide and another was injured in separate incidents in and outside the city yesterday.

One person was killed when a speeding vehicle ran over him at Sayedabad area in the city at about 2:15 pm yesterday. The unidentified victim, 20, died on the spot.

In another road accident a minor girl was crushed under the wheels of a speeding minibus on the Dhaka-Narsingdi Highway at about 2:30 pm yesterday.

A youngman reportedly committed suicide at Nawabganj in the city yesterday morning.

The victim Shahed, 22, killed himself by setting fire to his body.

## China won't

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to Pakistan would continue on the principle that they be used only for self-defence and not to alter South Asia's military balance.

Pakistan Defence Minister Aftab Shaaban Meeran attended the meeting, but his Chinese counterpart, Chi Haotian, did not. Wu did not rule out a ministerial meeting during Bhutto's stay.

Wu was asked if Li had sought Bhutto's help in trying to ease North Korea back into the nuclear non-proliferation movement when she visits Pyongyang on Wednesday.

He said Pyongyang's alleged nuclear weapons programme was not discussed while other officials were in the room, but he did not say whether Li and Bhutto had raised the subject later.

The two prime ministers watched the signing of five pacts on economic and technological cooperation and border trade and transport.

Both had pronounced themselves satisfied with bilateral ties and said economic and trade relations in particular were improving, the Chinese spokesman said.

## UN executives

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for the meeting of the heads of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Food Programme (WFP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Dhaka.

Watanabe also told that two important conferences would be held in 1994 under the auspices of the UN conference on the International Cooperation on Population and Development will be held in Cairo while the fourth World Conference on Women will take place in Beijing.

The Resident Co-ordinator of the UN system in Bangladesh expressed the hope that the people of Bangladesh would continue to benefit from the support and cooperation of the UN agencies in all related endeavours.

Watanabe introduced the heads and representatives of different agencies now present in Dhaka who also spoke briefly on the occasion. Among those who were present were: Country Director of the UNIDO G L Narasimhan, Country Director of the UNFPA S K Alok, UNICEF Country Representative Rolf C Carrier, Resident Chief of World Bank Christopher R Willoughby, Director of Operations of the WFP Gaston Ebyen, Deputy Representative of the UNHCR G T Chaponada, Asst Representative of the FAO N Yoshikawa and Consultant of the WHO Prof M Y O Thwe.

## Nomination

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All the major political parties have, meantime, finalised their nominations for the mayoral posts. Incumbent mayor of the DCC Mirza Abbas of the BNP, Mohammad Hanif of the Awami League, Col (Retd) Abdul Malek of the Jatiya Party, A T M Azharul Islam of the Jamaat-e-Islami and Manzurul Ahsan Khan of the 10-Left party alliance are expected to submit their papers today.

The AL General Secretary, Zillur Rahman, announced the names of candidates for 87 city wards at the party central office last evening. However, candidates for the remaining three wards would be announced today.

Meanwhile the central Five-Party Alliance, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Bangladesh Sammyabadi Dal (M-I) have jointly nominated Manjurul Ahsan Khan of CPB as the mayor candidate in the coming Dhaka City Corporation election, a press release of the alliance said last night.

The Five-Party Alliance and the other two parties took the decision at a meeting yesterday with general secretary of Srantik Krishak Samajbadi Dal Nirmal Sen in the chair.

The ruling BNP could not announce the names of its commissioner candidates till the writing of this report at 9 last night. The party leaders were discussing the issue with the BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her Sugandha office. However, party sources assured, the list of the candidates would be finalised by Tuesday night.

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The visiting Indian Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. — PID photo

# Dhaka proposes joint forum

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salinity intrusion, flood control, use of common rivers, augmentation of dry season flows. These, he said, can be effectively addressed through bilateral initiatives.

Referring to the recent initiatives for regional cooperation, he said it has assumed greater importance with the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of trade talks (GATT).

The Foreign Minister said that the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is keen to further strengthen bilateral ties with India and added that the goodwill generated through her visit to New Delhi in May last year helped to resolve issues like 'Tin Bigha'.

He stressed the need for removing other irritants between the two neighbouring countries.

Referring to the widening trade imbalance between the two nations, Rahman said it is a cause of serious concern for Bangladesh as its cumulative trade imbalance with India stands at Tk 44 billion and is progressively increasing.

The trade deficit situation needs to be urgently dealt with, the Foreign Minister stressed. Rahman welcomed the eagerness of the private sectors of the two countries to increase their cooperation and said the governments should do everything possible to advance such cooperation.

He also urged for increased cooperation in cultural and

technological fields to provide the necessary impetus to further expand bilateral relations.

The Indian Commerce Minister said that India gives high priority to its ties with Bangladesh and the fourth JEC meeting demonstrates the firm resolve of the two governments to further strengthen cooperation.

Referring to the growing adverse trade imbalance against Bangladesh, Mukherjee assured that his country would address the issue with a blend of 'creativity and sincerity'. He said India would favourably consider Dhaka's request to reduce the import duty on local jute carpets.

He suggested that Bangladesh consider the Indian proposal for granting bimodal transit facility for shipment of Indian cargo through coastal shipping from Calcutta to Chittagong and its further freight by Bangladesh Railway and the road networks through Akhaura to Agartala in Tripura and to Karimganj in Assam.

"This will not only help alleviate the existing conditions of poor economic development in our north-eastern states, but it would also earn the government of Bangladesh a high volume of revenue," he said, "and such creative measures will assist the two countries redress the imbalance in their balance of payments."

He also offered India's help to further develop the Chit-

tagong Port and its ancillary facilities.

"We are of the view that Bangladesh's needs for transit facilities should be given due consideration," he added.

He did not elaborate, but Bangladesh is learnt to have sought transit facilities to Nepal and Bhutan.

The Indian minister also suggested the negotiation and implementation of a border trade agreement between the two countries as the most effective way to curb illegal trading activities.

"I would suggest that this meeting may closely look at the possibilities of negotiating a border trade agreement. This, we hope, will not only be mutually beneficial in curbing illegal trading but also, through regularised imports and exports, it will help in levelling the price distortions which lead to illegal commercial activities," he said.

Mukherjee also suggested concluding a motor vehicles agreement between the two countries to facilitate the two-way flow of goods and exploring the possibility of establishing a passenger bus service between Dhaka and Calcutta and between Agartala and Calcutta through Bangladesh.

He urged for an early notification of the convention on the avoidance of double taxation, which both countries have already signed, and its ratification by the Bangladesh government.



A group of doctors of the Bangladesh Medical Association staging a sit-in yesterday at the front gate of the Health Directorate for implementation of their demands. — Star photo

## Doctors

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and autonomy in all the medical college hospitals of the country. Yesterday's sit-in programme was participated by among others, the central leaders of BMA. They included, Dr M A Mazed, Dr Gazi Abdul Haq, Dr A B Bhuyan, Dr M A Hadl, Dr Moshataque Hossain, Dr Moinul Hasan Sadek, Dr Rafiq Chowdhury and Dr Azizul Haq.

UNB adds: All doctors of the government hospitals and health complexes in Jamalpur tendered resignation to the local BMA leader as part of their mass resignation programme demanding 'democratisation' of the administration.

A total of 60 doctors from seven hospitals and health complexes, led by the district Civil Surgeon Dr Ahsan Ali, submitted their resignation letters to Dr S K Roy, general secretary of the district unit of the Bangladesh Medical Association, this (Tuesday) morning.

They also staged an eight-hour token hunger strike from 9 am to 5 pm today (Tuesday) for the realisation of their 21-point demands.

## Film-maker dead

Noted film-maker Abdul Jabbar Khan died of heart attack at his Kamalapur residence just after midnight last night. He was 75, reports UNB.

Jabbar Khan produced the country's first full-length feature film, 'Mukh-O-Mukhosh', in 1957.

# Delhi to buy fertiliser

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He, however, said the volume of trade was important rather than the matter of deficit or surplus. In this context he said that India always suffered a trade deficit internationally except for the year 1976-77. He also said that the increase of trade depends on the efforts of private entrepreneurs under the present rules pursued by the two countries.

The visiting Indian Commerce Minister was carefully evasive about questions relating to political issues. Responding to a volley of questions on bilateral irritants, he replied: "Our talks were confined to discussing matters of joint economic interest."

Pressed further if the issues of Farakka, water-sharing, the question in India and other bilateral irritants were discussed during his stay here, Mukherjee replied vaguely: "Any problem can be solved through bilateral discussions."

Continuing, he said, "I came primarily to represent India in the JEC meet. In addition, I wanted to have inter-action and discussions with senior leaders of the country, including the Bangladesh Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Commerce Minister."

Asked about the likely date for a visit by Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, Mukherjee replied: "He will visit soon, but the date has not yet

been fixed."

Regarding his talks with the Bangladesh Prime Minister, Mukherjee said he had had the privilege of discussing the issue of poverty alleviation, which was a crucial thrust for the SAARC nations.

He said he has conveyed a message of goodwill of the people and Prime Minister of India to the Bangladesh Prime Minister, adding that the message was conveyed verbally; no written message was delivered.

Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman also present at the late night briefing, expressed his satisfaction about the outcome of the JEC meeting and said, "It would be a stepping stone for the next meeting."

UNB adds: The Indo-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission ended its meeting here Tuesday without agreement on any substantive issues affecting the people.

A statement issued at midnight after the day-long meeting said, "the two sides agreed on the need for greater economic interaction to strengthen their economies and integrate these with the world economy."

It said both sides discussed in detail issues of economic and financial cooperation, trade fairs and other trade promotional measures, industrial and technical cooperation, education and cultural cooperation and cooperation in services sectors.

## Khaleda goes to Khulna today

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 28: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia arrives in Khulna tomorrow to attend the first convocation of the Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT).

The Khulna Engineering College which started functioning in 1974, was renamed BIT in 1986. The BIT Khulna is the only institution in the country that experienced no session jam.

Since 1974, 714 students in 8 batches from then Khulna Engineering College and 2099 students in 7 batches from the BIT had got B Sc engineering degrees.

About 454 students are expected to receive degrees in tomorrow's convocation. 20 students will receive gold medals for their extraordinary results.

Meanwhile, ten students will be admitted into the M Sc, engineering class in the current session.

Professor Dr. M Shajahan, Vice-Chairman of the council of BIT disclosed this today at the BIT conference hall. The government has been requested to accord university status to the BIT, he added.

Professor M A Naser, chairman, Board of Governors, Professor Dr. Golam Rahman, Professor M A Hannan, Director, BIT, Giasuddin, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education and some other members of the teaching staff were present.

## Foundation of hospital in Mirpur laid

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday laid the foundation stone of a 100-bed modern hospital to be built in Mirpur at a cost of Tk 13.20 crore, reports UNB.

The ruling BNP had pledged to set up a modern hospital in the area ahead of parliamentary election in that constituency. The foundation stone was laid near the Dental College Hospital at Mirpur Section-14.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said the BNP government is pledged to ensure healthcare facilities for the common people.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the population of Dhaka city was increasing alarmingly and it had already crossed 70 lakh. "It is not an easy task to ensure health facilities and civic amenities for this vast number of people."

Begum Zia said there are 13 hospitals in the city having 3,800 beds which are too inadequate as compared to the demand and "we're establishing this hospital at Mirpur to meet the growing demands of the people."

The Prime Minister said more development works were under way in Mirpur and it will be soon turned into an area with modern civic amenities.

## DV-1 lottery

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said he would work as a lawyer to prepare the entry papers for the applicants. He said, the US State Department, for the first time, included Bangladesh in the DV-1 programme. Earlier, Bangladesh was included in the OP-1 programme. The DV-1 lottery will be held for the fourth consecutive year in 1994.

Through this green card lottery, the US State Department would issue 55,000 green cards and a single country would not get more than 3,850, said the lawyer.

He said 20 countries, including China, Mexico, and India had been excluded from the DV-1 1994 programme.

David said he was also working for the participants from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Australia and Bulgaria.

In reply to a question about collecting foreign currency from Bangladesh participants, he said he had talks with a senior Bangladesh Bank official on Monday but the matter was yet to be settled.

He had also talks with two US Embassy officials in Dhaka and they did not object to his work for the Bangladeshi participants, he said.

His two local agents, Farhad Hossain and A K M Abdullah Faruq, Advocate, were also present at the press conference.

## Sylhet

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Rahman Chowdhury MP, ex-minister Dewan Farid Gazi, ex-MP Prasun Kanti Roy (Barun Roy), Amir Hussain, Advocate Zainal Abedin, Golam Rabbani and M A Rakib, Syed Abu Nosor Advocate, convenor of the organisation, presided.

The speakers at the rally urged the people to hoist black flags atop all private houses and commercial establishments from January 15 to January 30, hold demonstrations in front of the offices of the Deputy Commissioners of Sylhet, Moulvi Bazar, Sunamganj and Habiganj on January 1, a rally at the gateway to greater Sylhet at Madhabpur thana on January 25 and a 48-hour hartal on February 2 and February 3 in the Greater Sylhet region.

# The Midnight File

## Rabin apologises to Norway

KYRIAT SHMONA (Israel), Dec 28: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin publicly apologized to Norway today after Israeli tankfire killed a Norwegian UN soldier in southern Lebanon. "We send our expression of regret and sorrow to the Norwegian government," Rabin told reporters in English during a tour of the "security zone" Israel occupies in south Lebanon, reports AFP.

## Russia exports arms worth \$ 1.2b

MOSCOW, Dec 28: Russia has the capacity to double its arms exports in 1994. ITAR-Tass news agency today quoted Foreign Trade Minister Oleg Davydov as saying, Russia exported dollar 1.2 billion worth of weapons in 1993. "For political reasons we have stopped supplies of weapons to countries at war — Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia and some others," Davydov told Tass in an interview, reports Reuter.

## Ukrainian marines seize 2 offices of Black Sea Fleet

MOSCOW, Dec 28: Ukrainian marines armed with submachine-guns seized two offices of the disputed Black Sea Fleet, shared with Russia, a duty officer in Sevastopol said today. The officer, contacted by telephone, said Ukrainian servicemen occupied offices of military engineering units in the Black Sea cities of Odessa and Ismail, and prevented officers from entering. Russia and Ukraine are at loggerheads over the fate of the former Soviet fleet, reports Reuter.

## Workers' rally

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demands ahead of today's rally. During the meetings, the Industries Minister, M. Zahuruddin Khan, and the State Minister for Textiles, Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan also requested the labour leaders to call off the rally.

The labour leaders alleged that a false news was broadcast on television claiming that the December 29 rally was called off following the Industries Minister's meet with the Steel and Engineering Corporation workers' leaders.

The July accord was signed between the government and the labour bodies in the face of a threatened three-day country-wide hartal by the industrial workers.

Today's agitation follows a series of protest programmes in various parts of the country demanding full implementation of the July accord.

## Tk 275 crore bonds

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"The floating of bonds has drawn special attention of the banks because they are now staggering with excess liquidity and whatever interest they will get from the bonds will be higher than the interests on securities," a source said.

Currently, banks are even forced to manage their excess liquidity through inter-bank transactions at lower cost.

"With new bonds in the market, the situation will improve, though marginally," bankers observed.

## Saifur urges ADB to expedite JMB loan disbursement

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday urged the Asian Development Bank to step up the process of releasing its share of loan for the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge project, reports UNB.

The Minister said this at a meeting with the visiting ADB delegation, led by its Director Naritadto Marito, at his office yesterday.

The delegation discussed various ADB-financed projects in the country with particular reference to the JMB project.

The ADB is financing 200 million dollar of the 700 million US dollar JMB project.

Japan and the World Bank will provide 200 million dollar each. The rest 100 million will be provided by the Bangladesh government.

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**Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation**

BCIC Bhaban, 30-31, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka

**Time Extension Notice**

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

Time for submission of bids against above Re-tender has been extended up to March '94. The revised date of submission of tenders is now 31.3.94 up to 1100 hours.

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