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Dhaka expects biggest aid package next fiscal

By Inam Ahmed

The foreign aid commitment for the country during the fiscal 1994-95 has been projected at 2200 million US dollars, according to Finance Ministry sources.

This amount is almost 200 million dollars higher than the current year's original commitment. However, this year's revised projection is almost at par with the next year's amount.

On the other hand, aid disbursement for the next year has been projected at 1883 million dollars.

For the current fiscal, the original target for disbursement was 1861.4 million dollars. But it has been reduced to 1772.3 million dollars against the projected original commitment of 2024.3 million dollars.

The commitment was also revised to 2233.5 million dollars.

The commitment for the next year includes food aid of 211.6 million dollars, commodity aid of 400.4 million dollars and project aid of 1588 million dollars.

This year's revised commitment includes 84.3 million dollar food aid, 474 million dollar commodity aid and 1674 million dollar project aid. On the other hand, this year's projected disbursement includes 151.8 million dollar in food aid, 457 million dollar in commodity aid and 1163 million dollar in project aid.

According to figures of the Flow of External Resources into Bangladesh prepared by the Economic Relations Division, next year's commitments and disbursement are projected to be the highest since independence.

In 1992-93, the commitment was 1274.5 million dollar and disbursement was 1675 million dollars. In 1991-92, the commitment stood at 1915.6 million and disbursement at 1611.5 million; in 1990-91, commitment 1370.3 million and disbursement 1732.6 million; in 1989-90 commitment 2175 million and disbursement 1809.6 million; in 1988-89 commitment 1873.4 million and disbursement 1668.5 million; in 1987-88 commitment 1529.8 million and disbursement 1640.4 million; in 1986-87 commitment 1603.3 million and dis-

Scrapping of Magura-2 results demanded 7-day AL deadline to EC

By Staff Correspondent



Sheikh Hasina at yesterday's press confce. — Star photo

The Awami League (AL) yesterday issued a seven-day ultimatum to the Election Commission to scrap the unofficial results of the by-election of Magura-2 constituency of the Jatiya Sangsad.

The AL alleged that the by-election held on March 20 was "massively rigged" by the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

If the EC failed to cancel the by-election and announce a fresh date for the polls within the stipulated time, the AL would lay siege to the Bangladesh Secretariat on April 7 in demand of the resignation of the government.

The announcement came from Sheikh Hasina at a crowded press conference held at her official Minto Road residence yesterday evening.

The AL chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament also told the newsmen that it would be difficult for her party to attend the sessions of Parliament where one of its members 'owed his membership to a rigged election'.

A two-page statement of the AL chief distributed among the members of the press said the people had already rejected the polls. She said the ruling party had hired armed hoodlums and identified killers to terrorise the voters prior to the polling.

She alleged that "armed men had resorted to assaulting AL activists, threatening the voters of the minority community not to cast their ballots."

BNP's victory shows people's consciousness: Salam

BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder yesterday congratulated the people of Magura for electing the BNP candidate in the by-election to the vacant seat of the Jatiya Sangsad there, reports BSS.

In a press statement Talukder said "the victory of the BNP nominee was the demonstration of the consciousness of the people of Magura."

He expressed the hope that the leaders of the Awami League would accept the results of the by-election, reposing their confidence in democratic values. "We do not think that there is any cogent reason to disturb the normal day-to-day activities of the people and their peace and destroy public property in the name of unnecessary hartal," he added.

The BNP Secretary General further said that the machination of Awami League leaders to mislead people through their false and fabricated propaganda would end in failure this time too as in the past.

Dismissing the charge of the Awami League leaders that the BNP had set miscreants free from the jails and engaged them to perpetuate in acts of terrorism, Talukder said newspapers had published reports that the Awami League

had appointed one Aziz Khan, an absconder accused of rape and loot, an agent of their candidate in one polling centre. The police arrested Aziz Khan from the centre, he added.

Abdus Salam said the Awami League leaders had delivered speeches accusing the BNP of indulging in terrorism. But the fact remains that the Awami League workers had set ablaze the BNP office at Magura and burnt down the shop of one Bishan Chandra Biswas, a BNP worker, they even pelted stones at the car of Agriculture Minister Majid-ul-Huq and wrongfully detained BNP MPs Fazlul-Huq and Mrs Bani Ashraf, he added.

Talukder alleged that Awami League workers had beaten up the presiding officer of the Boroichara School centre and snatched away ballot boxes and other papers under the leadership of Awami League MPs Sheikh Harunur Rashid and Tajul Islam. Polling at the Kulia and Hatbaria centres had to be suspended because of terrorism of the Awami League, he complained.

The BNP Secretary General said in the by-election, the local people had frustrated the initiative of the Awami League



BCL (M-I) activists pelting stones at the office of the Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University yesterday demanding a shifting of the DUCSU and hall union polls date. The elections are scheduled for April 12. — Star photo



US actress Holly Hunter and actor Tom Hanks pose with their Oscars in Los Angeles on March 21 during the 66th Annual Academy Awards ceremony after winning the best actress and best actor awards respectively. — AFP photo



Spielberg wins Oscar for 'Schindler's List'

LOS ANGELES, Mar. 22: After 20 years of making Hollywood's biggest hits, Steven Spielberg finally got an Oscar, thanks to Oscar, reports AP.

"I actually have friends who have won this before, and I swear I have never held one before. This is the first time I've had one of these in my hands," he said after winning the best directing trophy for "Schindler's List," his stark portrait of heroism during the Holocaust.

Spielberg, 46, had never won an Oscar for directing though was nominated for

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"Close Encounters of the Third Kind," "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and "E.T. — the Extra-Terrestrial." He received an honorary Oscar in 1987.

"Schindler's List" chronicles German businessman Oscar Schindler's efforts to rescue Jews from Nazi concentration camps during World War II by employing them in a factory.

At a running time of three hours and filmed mostly in black and white, the movie was never expected to be a commercial hit. But Universal Pictures nonetheless said it

14574 babies born at Rohingya camps in two years

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 22: Birth rate at the Rohingya refugee camps has increased alarmingly due to polygamy and negative attitude towards family planning, reports UNB.

Some 14,574 babies were born at the Rohingya camps in last two years while 5,468 died during the period, official sources said here today.

But unofficial sources put the number of newborn babies at about 18,000.

There are at least 25 births every day in 17 Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban hill districts, officials said. But NGO sources claimed that the number is more than 37 a day.

According to sources, the Rohingyas appeared to be more interested in polygamy — most of them would like to have more than one wife and more children.

The Rohingyas tended to be reluctant in adopting family planning methods and they even avoid health workers and motivators approaching them to preach the methods.

Since the start of voluntary repatriation, some 53,189 Rohingyas refugees out of total 2,50 lakh have so far returned to Myanmar.

'Stronger move needed to explore Aussie market'

By Staff Correspondent

Australia is a big, open market and Bangladesh should take steps to promote exports to that country, an Australian trade representative said yesterday.

"Strong initiatives will be required to exploit the market," said Colin E. Hook, the visiting Australian Trade Commissioner for South Asia, based in New Delhi.

The Australian government, he told The Daily Star in an exclusive interview yesterday, would finance the participation of local businessmen in special trade shows in Australia. "But it has to be supported by your government, vis-a-vis selecting the local participants."

Australia is increasingly becoming more attractive because of low tariffs and Bangladesh can take the advantage to narrow the existing trade gap between the two countries. "Any item you export to Western markets can be exported to Australia."

The balance of trade between the two countries was against Bangladesh to the tune of about 63 million Australian dollars in 1992-93.

Australia exported to Bangladesh over 25 items worth 91 million dollars, including dairy animals and products, wheat and iron and steel products.

On the other hand, Bangladesh's exports to that country amounted to only 18 million dollars last year, down from 25 million in 1990-91.

The Australian High Commission in Dhaka and Aus-trade — the government's trade promotion office — "Hook said, would bring out a quarterly newsletter, 'Bangladesh Update', to inform Australian businessmen of the trade and investment opportunities in this country."



Colin Hook

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BCL activists attack DU VC's office

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday demonstrated before the office of the Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University demanding a shifting of the DUCSU polls date.

The BCL also submitted a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor Professor Emazuddin Ahmed demanding a fresh date for the polls and congenial atmosphere on the campus.

During the demonstration at about 1 pm, a group of angry students pelted stones at the VC's office, shattering some window panes.

However, police cordoned off the office and brought the situation under control within a short time.

Later, at a rally in front of the VC's office, the Chhatra League leaders demanded the resignation of the VC, accusing

Protests mark Raphael's arrival in New Delhi

NEW DELHI, Mar 22: US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Robin Raphael arrived here Tuesday to scattered protests by Indian groups upset by her remarks on the status of the strife-torn Indian state of Kashmir, reports AFP.

More than two dozen members of the Hindu fundamentalist Shiv Sena (Shiva's army) chanted "Raphel, go back, go back" and waved black and saffron flags at a demonstration staged near Indira Gandhi Airport, witnesses said.

About 30 university students held a protest near the US embassy displaying a banner reading "Kashmir is an integral part of India," they said. The students also set fire to a crude effigy of the State Department official.

Security was tight and police did not allow either group to approach the US Assistant Secretary of State.

Raphael, a former political

1 to die, 10 jailed for killing poura commissioner

MYMENSINGH, Mar 22: A 32-year-old man was awarded death penalty and 10 others were sentenced to 10 years rigorous imprisonment today for killing a poura (municipal) commissioner of Muktagachha in 1988, reports UNB.

The District and Sessions Judge, Nazrul Islam Khan, in his verdict also fined the 10 convicted accused Tk 5,000 each, in default to suffer another one year's rigorous imprisonment.

Two of the 13 accused in the murder case were acquitted of the charge. They are: Keramat Ali Talukder, the local MP, and Zahiruddin Akand.

The man sentenced to death was identified as Tota.

Of the 10 accused who received prison terms Bazlur Rahman Chanu was absconding and tried in absentia. Others are: Farhad, Iqbal, Saffur, Mohan, Nuru Aziz, Monsur Rezwana Rizu, Kazi Farhad and Mirza Abul Kalam.

According to the prosecution, municipal commissioner Saleem was stabbed to death by a group of miscreants at Napat Khola Square in Muktagachha town on March 14, 1988, while he was returning home along with his two sons and two sisters-in-law.

Sagir sent to jail

By Staff Correspondent

Sagir Ahmed alias Liton, a key suspect in the murder of the police sergeant, was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday after the end of his remand.

Sagir was arrested from Dhanmondi on March 10 for his alleged involvement in the murder of Abu Nasim Mohammad Hasanul Farhad, a sergeant of Kotwali police station.

Hasanul Farhad was killed on March 5 in a cross-fire between two factions of students on the Jagannath University College campus.

After the arrest, Sagir was taken to the city's Detective Branch office at Minto Road for interrogation.

A police source said that during interrogation, Sagir denied his involvement in the murder of the police sergeant.

Yesterday, Sagir was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court from where he was sent to jail.

NEWS BRIEFS

Hanif's tribute to Mahathero

Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Hanif placed wreath on the body of reverend Bisuddhananda Mahathero when it was brought to the Kamalapur Bouddha Bihar from Chittagong yesterday. He also signed the condolence book, reports BSS.

2 killed in Savar road mishaps

SAVAR, Mar 22: Two people, including an employee of the Roads and Highways Department (R&H), were killed in separate road accidents on the Dhaka-Aricha highway today. Witnesses said Nurul Islam, the R&H employee, was run over by a Dhaka-bound minibus at Nayarhat in Dhanrai thana while he was working on the road at about 10 am. A pedestrian named Tofazzal, 28, was crushed under the wheels of a running truck near C&B Station in Savar thana on the road at about 1:30 pm, witnesses said, reports UNB.

RU admission test results published

RAJSHAHI, Mar 22: Results of the admission test in first year honours classes of Commerce faculty of the Rajshahi University were announced today. A total of 500 students out of some 3,842 were listed for admission in various departments of the faculty, campus sources said. The listed students have been asked to get admitted from March 27 to April 4, reports UNB.

Two electrocuted in Barisal

BARISAL, Mar 22: Two employees of a contractor of the Rural Electrification Board (REB) were electrocuted and five others injured as they came in contact with a live wire in Betagi thana of the Borguna district on Monday. The dead are Rafiq, 26, and Bacchu, 23. Witnesses said the employees fell victims while they were connecting stringing lines with 11 kv lines, reports UNB.