

Saifur at CAs' confce

Political instability hinders investment

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman has said despite good perception about the country's economy, expected foreign investment is not taking place due to political instability.

Describing political problems as a major obstacle in economic development he said, "We had hartal on the day when the foundation stone of Jamuna Bridge was laid. We had hartal when a high powered business team came to Dhaka early this year and same was the case when a 27-member trade delegation came early this month."

The minister was speaking as chief guest at the concluding session of the two-day Fifth National Conference of Chartered Accountants yesterday at Hotel Sonargaon.

Presided over by Howlader Mahfel Huq, President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB), the function was also attended by State Minister for Planning Dr A Moyeen Khan as the special guest.

Referring to the 'challenges of market economy,' the main theme of the conference, Saifur said the only way to face the challenges in the changed global economic scenario is achieving competitiveness.

To facilitate achieving competitiveness, the macro economy needed to be stabilised and the government did so, Saifur said.

On the concluding day of the two-day conference, two technical sessions were held on 'Investment in an Environment of Market Economy' and 'Capital Market Development in Bangladesh - Problems and Prospects.'

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali attended the first session as the chief guest while the second session was attended by Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam as the chief guest. State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan attended the first session as special guest.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia paying homage to the martyred soldiers of the Liberation War at Shikha Anirban at Dhaka Cantonment on the Armed Forces Day yesterday. — PID photo

Armed Forces Day observed

Khaleda, Hasina at Senakunja

Star Report

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina attended a reception arranged yesterday evening at the Senakunja at Dhaka Cantonment on the occasion of Armed Forces Day.

The two leaders exchanged pleasantries briefly. They sat together for quite some time at the function held on the vast lawn of the Senakunja.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdu Samad Azad, AL leader Tofael Ahmed, Sajeda Chowdhury and others were beside the two leaders. Ministers, MPs, political leaders, high civil and military officials and elite of the city attended the reception hosted by the Prime Minister, who is also in charge of the Defence Ministry.

The Armed Forces Day was observed yesterday with due solemnity and enthusiasm, reports UNB.

The day's programme began with the offering of special prayers after the Fajr prayers in all mosques of army garrisons, naval ships and establishments, and airforce bases throughout the country.

In Dhaka, President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Abdur Rahman Biswas placed wreath at the Shikha Anirban (the Eternal Flame) in the morning.

He stood in solemn silence to pay homage to the members of the armed forces who had embraced martyrdom in the War of Liberation in 1971.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, who holds the charge of the Defence Ministry, also placed wreath at the Shikha Anirban in the morning to pay her respect to the martyrs.

On both occasions, Chiefs of Staff of the three services and other senior armed forces officers were present. A smart contingent drawn from the three services — Army, Navy and Air Force — presented arms salute while the buglers played the last post.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim, Bir Bikram, Chief of the Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Mohaiminul Islam and Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Altaf Hossain Chowdhury also placed wreaths separately at the Shikha Anirban.

A reception to the next of kin of the soldiers, who had received the highest gallantry award 'Bir Shreshtho', was held at the Prime Minister's Armed Forces Division office at Dhaka Cantonment.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia met the nearest ones of the seven 'Bir Shreshthos' — Shaheed Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir, Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Kamal, Shaheed Sepoy Hamidur Rahman, Shaheed Mohammad Ruhul Amin, Shaheed Flight Lieutenant M Mattur Rahman, Shaheed Lance Naik Munshi Abdur Rab and Shaheed Lance Naik Noor Mohammad Sheikh.

Begum Zia also presented some gifts to all of them.

Chiefs of Staff of the three services, Defence Secretary, Director General of Bangladesh Rifles and other senior armed forces officers, including Principal Staff Officers, were present on the occasion.

A reception was held at the Army HQ for the next of kin of the 'Bir Shreshthos' and retired army officers, JCOs and soldiers who had received the gallantry awards 'Bir Uttam,' 'Bir Bikram' and 'Bir Pratik.'

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim BB, met the father of Shaheed Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Bir Shreshtho, father and daughter-in-law of Shaheed Sepoy Mostafa Kamal Bir Shreshtho and mother of Shaheed Sepoy Hamidur Rahman Bir Shreshtho on the occasion.

The three services chiefs also called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her Armed Forces Division office. Defence Secretary Hasinur Rahman and PSO to Prime Minister Major General MSA Bhuiyan were present.

In the evening, as part of the day's programme, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia hosted a reception at the 'Sena Kunja' at the Dhaka Cantonment.

PM: Armed Forces

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Kuwait.

She congratulated the members of the armed forces for glorifying the country's image abroad.

The Prime Minister referred to the hard-earned democracy and said a democratic system can only ensure speedy development of the country.

The people have started reaping the benefits of the steps taken by the present government, she said, "If we all do our respective work sincerely, the hard-earned independence, sovereignty and democracy will be further strengthened and the country's development will be accelerated."

The Prime Minister expressed her confidence that members of the armed forces would always be ready for any sacrifice to safeguard the country's independence and sovereignty.

On arrival at Senakunja, Begum Zia was received by Chief of the three services, Lt Gen Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim, Rear Admiral Mohammad Mohaiminul Islam and Air Vice Marshal Altaf Hossain Chowdhury.

Next programme

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They also criticised Sir Ninian for certain remarks he made in his press statement on Sunday.

Abdus Samad Azad said the opposition's proposal contained the test of neutrality to ensure free and fair election while the government proposal was unworkable and devoid of neutrality.

He said the opposition is planning fresh action programmes apart from the declared ones which include a 48-hour hartal on December 7-8.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed said the opposition wanted a peaceful solution through dialogue but now there is no alternative to a strong movement.

He said Sir Ninian as a "facilitator" cannot make the impertinent remarks, he made to press on Sunday.

Matu Rahman Nizami said the government which is pushing the country towards constitutional crisis will have to bear the responsibility of all the consequences.

Salauddin Qader Chowdhury accused the government of making the constitutional process susceptible and vulnerable.

Presided over by Abdus Samad Azad, the meeting was attended by, among others, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofael Ahmed, Begum Motia Chowdhury, Rahman Ali and AKM Jahangir of Awami League, Anwar Hossain Manju of Jatiya Party, Matu Rahman Nizami of Jamaat and Salauddin Qader Chowdhury of the NDP.

Student bodies condemn killing of JCD activists

By DU Correspondent

Several student organisations yesterday protested and condemned the killing of the two Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists in the Chittagong Polytechnic Institute Sunday.

The student bodies - JCD, pro Awami League Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-P) and Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) - in separate rallies on the Dhaka University campus in the morning demanded arrest and trial of the killers immediately.

Addressing a rally on the Dhaka University campus the leaders of the student front of the ruling BNP also asked the JCD activists to resist the "anti-liberation" elements.

The JCD central committee held the protest rally in front of 'Aparajeo Bangla' at 11:30 demanding arrest and trial of the killers of Jamiruddin and Jahangir Farid.

The two JCD leaders were gunned down at the Chittagong Polytechnic Institute allegedly by a group of Shibir activists.

JCD President Fazlul Haq Milan gave the Home Ministry 24 hours to arrest the 'killers' along with arms. "Otherwise, the authorities will be responsible for any circumstances," he warned.

The BCL (S-P) in a rally in front of the Madhu's canteen on the DU campus yesterday alleged that the Jamaat-Shibir forces were involved in continued terrorist activities all over the country.



Queen wins £10 to be shared with 20 others

LONDON, Nov 21: Queen Elizabeth was among the winners in the first draw of Britain's new National Lottery. Today newspaper reported in its Monday editions, says Reuters.

Britain's richest woman won 10 pounds but she will have to share it with the other members of a 20-strong royal syndicate including her husband Prince Philip, and the queen mother, it said. They will each get 50 pence.

The royal punters were among 1.1 million Britons who won the minimum prize in the lottery by picking three of the six numbers drawn on Saturday evening.

The queen sat alone in Windsor Castle watching the draw live, on television, today said.

She loves a flutter, a royal source told the newspaper. "She gets very excited when something she has bet on comes in even second or third."

Students block Dhaka-Aricha highway

MANIKGANJ, Nov 21: Some students of the Devendra Government College in Manikganj today blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway for about two hours to protest kidnapping of a student by the workers of a bus service, reports UNB.

Workers of the Nabinbaran bus service held a 2nd year student of the college, Anwarul Islam, from a procession near Uchatia on the highway. Later they released the student at Barbaria.

The angry students also damaged at least seven vehicles on the highway during the blockade from 11:30 am, police said.

Local buses were not plying following the clash, sources here said.

PM goes to Maldives tomorrow

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will leave her tomorrow for Male on a two-day official visit to the Maldives, reports UNB.

Her 35-member entourage will include Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Shaheda Sarkar MP, MA Mattin MP, Principal Secretary to the PM ANM Eusuf, Additional Foreign Secretary Kazi Anwarul Masud and Director General (SAARC) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ashfaqur Rahman.

A 10 member media team will accompany the Premier.

During her stay in Male, Begum Zia will have talks with President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, covering bilateral matters and regional and international issues of common concern.

The SAARC chairperson will also discuss the progress and future action programmes of the seven-nation regional association.

Officials here said yesterday during the upcoming visit, the two SAARC countries are expected to sign a mailing agreement facilitating Bangladeshis working in the islands to remit money.

About 3,000 Bangladeshi workers are employed in garments factories in the Maldives, a chain of nearly 1,800 small coral islands and sandbeaches grouped in clusters. Some Bangladeshi doctors are also working there.

The leaders will also discuss promotion of relations between the two countries in the fields of trade, economic cooperation and banking.

Students' attendance registers taken away from DU History Dept

By DU Correspondent

A group of unidentified armed youths took away five students' attendance registers from the History department of the Dhaka University at gunpoint early yesterday.

Sources concerned alleged that the attendance registers were snatched because of shortage of percentage of attendance of some students in the classes.

The university authorities have instructed all the departments that the students who would not attend 75 per cent of the classes would not be eligible to appear at the Honours and Master's degree examinations.

The armed youths fired three rounds at about 2.30am and snatched the key of the main gate from the guard on duty at the Arts faculty building.

Then, they entered the building and broke the locks of the rooms of some teachers and took away five attendance registers.

The raid did not even touch any other things in those rooms, sources said.

The Chairman of the Department told this correspondent the offices of the Vice Chancellor and the Proctor have been informed of the incident.

Some 22 students of History department could not appear at the examinations for shortage of per centage of attendance.

The Academic committee of the department will meet today to discuss the situation and take decisions.

Young man murdered

By Staff Correspondent

A young man Chunnu Mia was found dead near his house at Jurain, Demra, in the city early yesterday morning.

Chunnu, 30, went out of his home at eight in the morning Sunday and was found dead around 4 am yesterday at Haji Khorsheed Ali Road Chunnu's body carried several bruises and stab marks.

Chunnu's father, Habibur Rahman lodged a murder case with the Demra police.

Income tax

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amount is even Taka 20 crore less than the amount collected as income tax revenue during the corresponding period of the last year.

The finance minister expressed dissatisfaction at the poor tax collection and said in the back drop of Uruguay Round of talks and the GATT agreement we have to undergo further trade liberalisation and removal of tariff barriers. He said in future customs revenue is most likely to fall further.

Lawyers' demand day Nov 28

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of the Jatiya Ainjibi Samity yesterday announced the formation of an action council to realise their seven-point charter of demands.

They have also decided to observe demand day on November 28.

Speaking at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka, the leaders demanded immediate separation of the judiciary from the administration and an independent Law Commission.

They said the process of separating the judiciary from the administration has long been stalled despite continued demands by the lawyers.

President of the Samity Khandkar Mahbubuddin Ahmed said the demand for independent judiciary should be implemented in light of the 1972 Constitution which will subsequently help improve law and order situation in the country.

Promotion and transfer of judges of the lower court should be under section 109 and 116 of the constitution and this power should be vested in the Supreme Court, he said.

A permanent Law Commission with adequate powers should be established, he said and also demanded revision power of the district judges against order of lower court under section 115 of Civil Procedure Code (CPC).

Secretary General of the association Syed Rezaur Rahman and other leaders, including Aftabuddin Bhuiyan, MA Khalek, M Enayetur Rahim, Fazlul Haq Chowdhury, Mirza Hossain Haider, Md Bashir and Md Jahangir, were present.

Selim, Iqbal new Juba League chairman, secy

A new executive committee of the Bangladesh Awami Juba League was formed yesterday with Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim as its Chairman and Advocate Kazi Iqbal Hossain as General Secretary, reports UNB.

Presidium members of the committee are: Sultanul Kabir Chowdhury MP, Nurul Majid Humaun, Abdus Shaheed MP, Dr Mizanur Rahman, Advocate Mufiqur Rahman, Bir Bahdur MP, Shamsul Abedin, Qudrat-Elahi Panir, Manjurul Kader Qureshi, Prof Fazlul Huq, Advocate Satya Bhakta and Advocate Parvez Alam Khan.

Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Advocate Saïdur Rahman were made Joint Secretaries and Mirza Azam MP Organising Secretary of the executive committee that includes 19 members.

The Juba League, the youth wing of the Awami League, also formed a 47-member central committee.

Partial hartal in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 21: A half-day hartal called by the Islamic Chhatra Shibir was observed partial here today.

The pro-Jamaat Shibir called the hartal demanding reopening of Chittagong University and hostel of Chittagong Polytechnic Institute, freeing the institute from terrorism, immediate arrest of killers and in protest against growing campus violence here.

Barring stray picketings, no untoward incident was reported. Most of the vehicles stayed off the roads while rickshaws plied.

Railway sources said train service ran normally between Chittagong and other parts of the country. Biman flights also operated as per schedule. Except some places like Andersonkill, Jamal Khan, Sirajuddallah Road and Dewan Bazar area life was almost normal in the city, sources said.

Most Offices both public and private functioned behind closed doors but shops remained closed in those places, witnesses said.

Cargo handling at Chittagong port jetties was normal but delivery of goods to and from the port was hampered during hartal hours, port sources said.

Police were deployed at important places of the city to prevent any outbreak of violence.

Dhaka asks UN

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are Permanent Members of the Security Council on Sunday and apprised them of the latest situation in the embattled enclave.

Acting Foreign Secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed also met a number of ambassadors in Dhaka yesterday and maintained the diplomatic pressure.

A high-level committee, under the chairmanship of Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, is expected to meet again today to review the situation in Bhac.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry said all members of the Bangladesh contingent in Bhac were safe and well.

According to the latest information, said the spokesman, all members of the Bangladesh contingent assigned in the Unprofor are safe and well and their morale is high.

He said the government was constantly reviewing the situation prevailing in Bhac and the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry and the Armed Forces headquarters were in constant touch with the Unprofor headquarters in New York and the Bangladesh contingent in Bhac.

Gen Shankar Roy new Indian army chief

NEW DELHI, Nov 21: Shankar Roy Choudhary, the most senior General in India's million-strong army, was named Army Chief of Staff today, replacing General Bipin Chandra Joshi, who died of a heart attack last week, reports APP.

Lieutenant General Roy Choudhary, 57, an armoured corps officer and veteran of the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pakistani conflicts, currently heads the army training command in the northern hill town of Simla.

The Midnight File

DPRK won't send team to Japan

TOKYO, Nov 21: North Korea has abruptly scrapped plans to send a delegation to Japan for exploratory talks on normalising relations between the two nations, an official from Japan's ruling Socialist Party told reporters today. The Kyodo news agency quoted the Socialist official as saying the (North) Korean committee for cultural relations with foreign countries dropped plans to send a delegation to visit Tokyo from Thursday through December 4, reports Reuters.

3 more gunned down in Karachi

KARACHI, Nov 21: Three more people, including two policemen, were gunned down in this southern port city today as clashes continued between rival factions of the ethnic-based Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), police said. Unidentified gunmen shot dead one policeman who was travelling to work, and another policeman was killed, along with his nephew, at home, the authorities said. They added that an investigation into the shootings was continuing, reports AFP.

25-pt proposal only solution to crisis: LDF

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) yesterday described the prevailing political situation and socio-economic condition of the people as 'extremely unstable.'

The ruling BNP, although speaks of democracy has not yet changed the autocratic system of governance, said a declaration of the LDF, and alliance of eight left-leaning parties.

The declaration was adopted by a LDF rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday afternoon. The rally was organised as part of the Front's agitation to press home its seven-point demand including a caretaker government to conduct general elections.

The declaration was read out by LDF coordinator Khe-quzuman.

The current political impasse could only be solved in the light of a 25-point proposal put forward by the LDF earlier and implementing the front's seven-point demand, declaration said.

Front leaders including Nirmal Sen, Haider Akbar Khan Rono, Bimol Biswas, Moshier Ali, Abu Sayeed Khan and Saidul Islam were present at the rally.

Uneasy calm prevails on JU campus

By JU Correspondent

An uneasy calm prevailed on the Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus until yesterday following the attack on two student leaders last Tuesday.

Few classes were held with a handful of students attending.

All five residential halls were being guarded by the armed activists of the two factions of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

Meanwhile, the leaders of all the JU student organisations met the Vice Chancellor to discuss the present situation on the campus.

The students urged the VC to take effective steps against the terrorists.

The student leaders also called upon the VC to keep the university open.

Some 30 students brought out a procession under the banner of the 'general students' Sunday morning protesting the arrest of four 'non-local' JCD leaders. They also threatened violent agitation if their demand was not met immediately.

NATO

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Boris Yeltsin backed the UN Security Council's decision that allowed the NATO strike.

Speaking to reporters, he said: "Serbs (in Croatia) to some extent violated international agreements and launched air raids which is inadmissible."

Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic welcomed the raid, saying such action was "never too late."

But in Sarajevo, there was an indication of angry Serb reaction to come. Sniper fire killed a man on the city's main street shortly after the raid, eyewitnesses said.

NATO has been ready to unleash its airpower against Serb forces in Croatia since the UN Security Council granted it new powers to hit targets outside Bosnia used by Serb nationalists for the attacks on BiHac.

Heavy fighting was reported in BiHac today, with UN peacekeeping troops there coming under fire on three occasions.

The mainly Muslim Bosnia government army was fighting off Serbs from Bosnia and Croatia as well as a rebel Muslim faction led by local warlord Fikret Abdic.

Dhaka asks UN

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The meeting said since the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975 power monger individuals have repeatedly thrown the nation into crisis. "Once again we see the repetition of that situation."

The Opposition proposal to resolve the current political crisis is very much clear, observed the AL working committee. "We want a non-party caretaker government to be formed before the next Parliament election, which will not help any particular party to win the election."

The Awami League said the BNP wants the incumbent Prime Minister to head the interim government with the intention that she would exercise her power as the head of the caretaker government without consulting the Cabinet members.

The meeting urged the people to make the party's current agitation programmes a success to force the corrupt BNP government to step down, realise the demand for neutral caretaker government to conduct elections and ensure people's rights to food and vote.

The programmes are: Mass contact from November 17-23, processions at district headquarters on November 24, countrywide rail-and-road blockade on November 29, public meeting at Panthapath on December 6 and 48-hour hartal on December 7-8.

The meeting in a resolution expressed deep shock at the death of renowned film director S M Shaif and Vice-president of Dhara thana Awami League Mahtabur Rahman.

Ninian

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Ninian, accompanied by Lady Ninian met Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at 9.30 am at her Tejgaon office. Sources said, Sir Ninian had an exclusive meeting with the Prime Minister.

Sir Ninian also met Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her official residence at Minto Road at 11 am. He was accompanied by his aide Dr Moses Anafu.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdu Samad Azad, Political Adviser SAMS Kibria and Abul Hasan Chowdhury, MP, were present during the hour-long meeting with Sheikh Hasina.

Dr Anafu also left for London yesterday evening.