

Dhaka to seek more World Bank funds

Bangladesh will plead for continuation and raise of concessional World Bank funds until the foreign and domestic private capital flows reach the required height, reports UNB.

The plea is expected to be made by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman at exclusive meetings with senior bank officials during his current visit in Washington.

The minister is now visiting the United States in connection with the annual meeting of World Bank and the IMF, scheduled for October 10-12.

Saifur, during his stay in the US capital until October 17, is due to meet with World Bank President James Wolfensohn and the Vice President of South Asian desk Joseph Wood to discuss the bank's programmes in Bangladesh.

Informed official sources here told the news agency the Finance Minister, while meeting the World Bank executives, is likely to point out that a staggeringly poor supply response to macro-economic achievements had exposed the country to continued need for concessional external funds.

Saifur would press for early disposal of the credits being negotiated. He might particularly stress quicker agreements on the US dollar 120 million credit for Dhaka City Transport Development, and the one on micro credit based poverty alleviation programme of a size between US dollar 100 million and 150 million.

Sources indicated that the World Bank is expected to raise before Saifur the issue of current stagnation in reform measures in Bangladesh, particularly in jute sector.

A seminar on investment opportunities in Bangladesh is also slated to precede the annual moot of the World Bank and IMF in the US capital today. The World Bank has sponsored the seminar as part of its programme to promote some poor countries which have performed well in macro-economic management.

Saifur Rahman will present a country paper at the seminar, titled: Bangladesh — A New Horizon for Investment. It will project the country's achievements in macro-economic management and advantages in investment in Bangladesh.

The World Bank has invited prospective investors from some developed countries to participate in the seminar.



Devotees offering prayers at the Buddhist temple in Kamalapur of the city on the occasion of Prabarana Purnima yesterday. — Star photo

KL limits entry points for foreign workers

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 8: Malaysia has limited the numbers of entry points for foreign workers with immediate effect to curb smuggling of illegal workers into the country, a local newspaper reported today, reports Reuter.

The entry points for Indonesian workers are the three international airport and four main sea ports along the west coast of peninsular Malaysia, while Bangladeshi workers are only allowed entry at Kuala Lumpur Airport.

"The move to limit the entry points was to check the practice of smuggling of illegal workers into the country using fake or doctored passports and work permits," Deputy Home Minister Megat Junid Megat Ayob was quoted as saying by the New Sunday Times newspaper.

The measure was among 11 conditions imposed by the cabinet committee on foreign workers after the government's move to stop the recruitment of foreign workers, except for domestic maids and shop helpers through agencies on August 2 after repeated complaints of mistreatment of foreign workers by the agencies.

The new regulations also stipulate that work passes be endorsed only at Malaysian entry points and that employers cannot deduct wages of their foreign workers to pay a third party.

Megat Junid said the rules were decided after talks with Indonesia and Bangladesh. A draft of the procedures has also been submitted to Philippine and Thai authorities, he said.

Labour sources say about two million foreigners work as construction hands, plantation workers, maids, shop helpers and petrol pump attendants in fast-growing Malaysia.

Only about 800,000 are registered with the government and many were believed to have been brought in illegally.

Indonesians, Bangladeshis and Filipinos make up the majority of foreign workers in the country.

The Midnight File

Security for Ramos to be increased

MANILA, Oct 8: Security for President Fidel Ramos will be increased following revelations that the alleged mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center Bombing in New York had made threats against him, officials said today, reports AFP.

Contact groups on Bosnia meet Oct 12

A joint ministerial level meeting of the OIC Contact Group and the International Contact Group on Bosnia-Herzegovina will be held in Rabat on October 12 to review the situation in the Balkans, reports UNB.

Bangladesh has also been invited to participate in the meeting, Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan said yesterday.

The five-member International Contact Group comprises the United States, United Kingdom, France, the Russian Federation and Germany.

The OIC Contact Group members are: Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan and Senegal.

Prisoner begins fast-into-death

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 8: An under-trial prisoner in the district jail began a fast-into-death from Friday demanding immediate appointment of a district judge, reports UNB.

Tutul, 27, of Ullapara thana has been detained in the district jail for a long period, awaiting trial in a murder case.

He did not take anything till 7 pm today and his condition was critical, jail sources said.

AL threatens

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Mohiuddin Ahmed, Tofael Ahmed, Sajeda Chowdhury, Amir Hossain Amu, General Secretary Zillur Rahman, and some leaders of the party's city unit and front organisations.

"The country will be paralysed through tougher agitation programmes if the ruling party fails to fulfil the demand for holding general elections under a caretaker government headed by the Chief Justice even after the 96-hour hartal," said Abdus Samad Azad.

He said that the people, irrespective of political opinions, are now united under the banner of the Opposition to realise the demand. The BNP government lost its legitimacy long back, he claimed.

"Do not push the people towards confrontation," Samad Azad said.

Zillur Rahman congratulated the people for observing the 32-hour hartal in five divisional headquarters of the country. "We will march towards the prime minister's residence if our demands are not met," said Zillur.

Mohiuddin Ahmed said, "People know well how to force a government out of power."

Begum Sajeda Chowdhury said the "Constitution is for the people, the people are not for it."

Liquidity

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Meanwhile, the call money market witnessed an upswing in rates from between 1.5 and 2 a few months back to between 5.5 and 6 per cent recently. The central bank official attributed this rise to scheduled banks' high credit promise and bond subscription.

"As credit demand picked up and those few banks having excess cash were willing to part with it, the call money rate rose," the official pointed out.

Jatiya Party

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Ershad. The rally, chaired by M A Malek, JP city unit president, was also addressed among others by presidium members, Moudud Ahmed, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Shah Moazzem Hossain and secretary general Anwar Hossain Monju.

"We proposed a constitutional amendment for a caretaker government, but the government did not respond," alleged Moudud Ahmed. He also blamed the government for the deteriorating law and order situation in the country.

Reminding the government of the opposition ultimatum of Oct 15, Kazi Zafar Ahmed said, "Tougher action lies ahead... and the BNP leaders will not even get time to flee."

Anwar Hossain Monju said, the people are united over the demand for a caretaker government adding "there will be no election under this government."

Power Cell

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able with the temporary Power Cell.

"Moreover, many of the potential engineers of the Power Development Board, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority and Rural Electrification Board feel that they are already enjoying satisfactory positions at their respective organisations. Leaving their jobs for two years mean they would not be able to return to their respective desks. Plus, they are afraid of leaving government quarters for two years," he added.

"But we believe, the recruitment would be completed by this month," the sources added.

An office for the Power Cell was fixed at the BTMC Bhaban in Kawran Bazar, opposite to the Petrobangla office. However, the authorities are yet to approve the office site yet.

The Energy Ministry has signed ten MOUs with foreign private power developers from USA, UK, Canada, Singapore and other countries to generate over 2000 MW of electricity, involving around 2.50 billion US dollars.

According to the MOUs, the foreign companies and concerned government agencies like the PDB will have to reach an accord on power tariff and other factors within a year of the signing of the MOU. If this Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) is not made within a year, the MOUs would automatically lapse if not mutually extended.

Medal

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members of three defence services, listed on February 27, 1991, will be considered eligible for the medal.

Stating the serial position of this new medal, the gazette said it will be placed on the uniform next below the "constitution medal."

The hexagon sized medal with 35 mm diameter will be made by white mixed metal with the inscription of 'parliamentary election-1991' on the front side while on the back Bangladesh. The five-stripe ribbon will have three colours — white in the middle, golden colour both on the sides of white with deep red on both edges. Each stripe will be six mm.

Tk 15,500 looted from hotel at Mirpur

By Staff Correspondent

Tk 15,500 was looted from a hotel at Mirpur in the city yesterday. Two employees of the hotel received bomb injuries while resisting the looters.

Witnesses said, some six or seven youths after having their meal at Hotel Prince at the Mazar Cooperative Market, Mirpur Section No 1 exploded bombs and snatched the money from the cash box around 2 pm.

Local people, however, caught one of the looters red-handed and handed him over to police. Some Tk 2,100 was recovered from his possession.

The traders of the Mazar Cooperative Market later brought out a procession demanding immediate arrest of the culprits.

Anti-terrorism rally at N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Oct 8: An anti-terrorism rally held by a civic committee here today vowed to arrest the deteriorating law and order situation in the port town.

The rally at the Joy Govinda High School compound resolved to form citizens' committees at the ward level to build up resistance against terrorists and drug addicts.

The Paikpara Panchayet Committee organised the rally, was addressed by a number of former ward commissioners. It was chaired by the committee president, Siraj Sarder.

Many people attended the rally to express their deep concern over the deteriorating law and order situation. They urged the law enforcing agencies to protect the life of the innocent people.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a huge public meeting at Nasirnagar in Brahmanbaria yesterday. —PID photo

Sit-in protesting move to relocate Aricha Ghat today

MANIKGANJ, Oct 8: Aricha Ghat Relocation Resistance Committee will stage a sit-in here tomorrow protesting the government move to relocate the Ghat to Paturia in Satoria thana, reports UNB.

The committee took the decision as the talks between the committee and the district administration today failed to find out an amicable solution to the problem.

Diarrhoea

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Noka village in Raiganj thana yesterday.

Our Gaibandha Correspondent reports that the flood situation in Gobindaganj, Palashbari Shaghata and Sadullapur improved further but the Bonarpara-Santahar rail link remained snapped yesterday.

Two persons died of diarrhoea in the district but they could not be identified.

UNB reports from Sirajganj said that diarrhoea claimed four lives and attacked more than one hundred people in four unions of flood-hit Ashasuni thana.

Hospital sources said three children and an old woman died of water borne diseases in last two days. The dead were identified as Abdul Bari, (6), Shaheen (8), Gopal Ghosh (11) and Anju Das (62). About 50 diarrhoea patients were admitted to the thana health complex.

Number of voters

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The EC official could not confirm whether the process started in any part of the country yesterday. "We have not heard anything so far regarding the commencement of the work," he said.

In a notification regarding the preparation and distribution of laminated ID cards, the EC has appealed to the voters to be present at selected points with the third part of the registration form.

Over 86,000 camps are scheduled to be opened throughout the country to cover every 'voters' locality' within the 10-week period from October 8 to December 16. On an average, one camp would deliver cards to 647 voters.

The camps would remain open for three days from 8 am to 8 pm for preparing and distributing the ID cards.

60 injured as villagers clash in Chouddagram

COMILLA, Oct 8: Some 60 people were injured, three seriously, in a series of clashes on Saturday-Sunday between the villagers of Kashinagar and Olipur in Chouddagram thana of the district, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said property worth about Tk 10 lakh were damaged during clashes between the feuding groups who ransacked and looted 10 shops, and set fire to another shop at Kashinagar bazar today.

The three seriously injured, including Monir, 25, were admitted to Chouddagram thana health complex.

Kashmir

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mediate talks between India and Pakistan.

"Now the ball is in the court of the US to pressure India to come to the negotiating table," Aseff Ali said.

India and Pakistan have been at odds over the Kashmir region since the territory was divided between the two countries at the end of British rule in 1947.

Despite repeated efforts and offers from the United Nations for mediation, neither India nor Pakistan has been able to agree to meet to discuss the growing rift over Kashmir.

PM: Opposition agitation

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Ahmed, as Vice President." Then the autocratic President handed over power to the Vice President.

"This was done under the constitutional framework, but now there is no such way open in our Constitution as we unitedly switched over to parliamentary system through the 12th Constitution Amendment which clearly provides that only an elected person with majority support in Parliament can be the Prime Minister."

"We have unitedly switched over to parliamentary system. So, I cannot go beyond the bounds of the Constitution, because the countrymen have not given me mandate to violate the Constitution," she argued.

Reaffirming her unflinching commitment to continue the constitutional process, the Prime Minister said: "The people voted me to power to run the country and government as per the Constitution. They (people) didn't vest power in me to do anything in contravention of the Constitution."

Mentioning her government's repeated call for dialogue to resolve the current political crisis she said created by the Opposition, Begum Zia said her party had urged the Opposition time and again to find ways and means through dialogue. But the Opposition was yet to come forward.

Presided over by thana BNP president Advocate Siraj

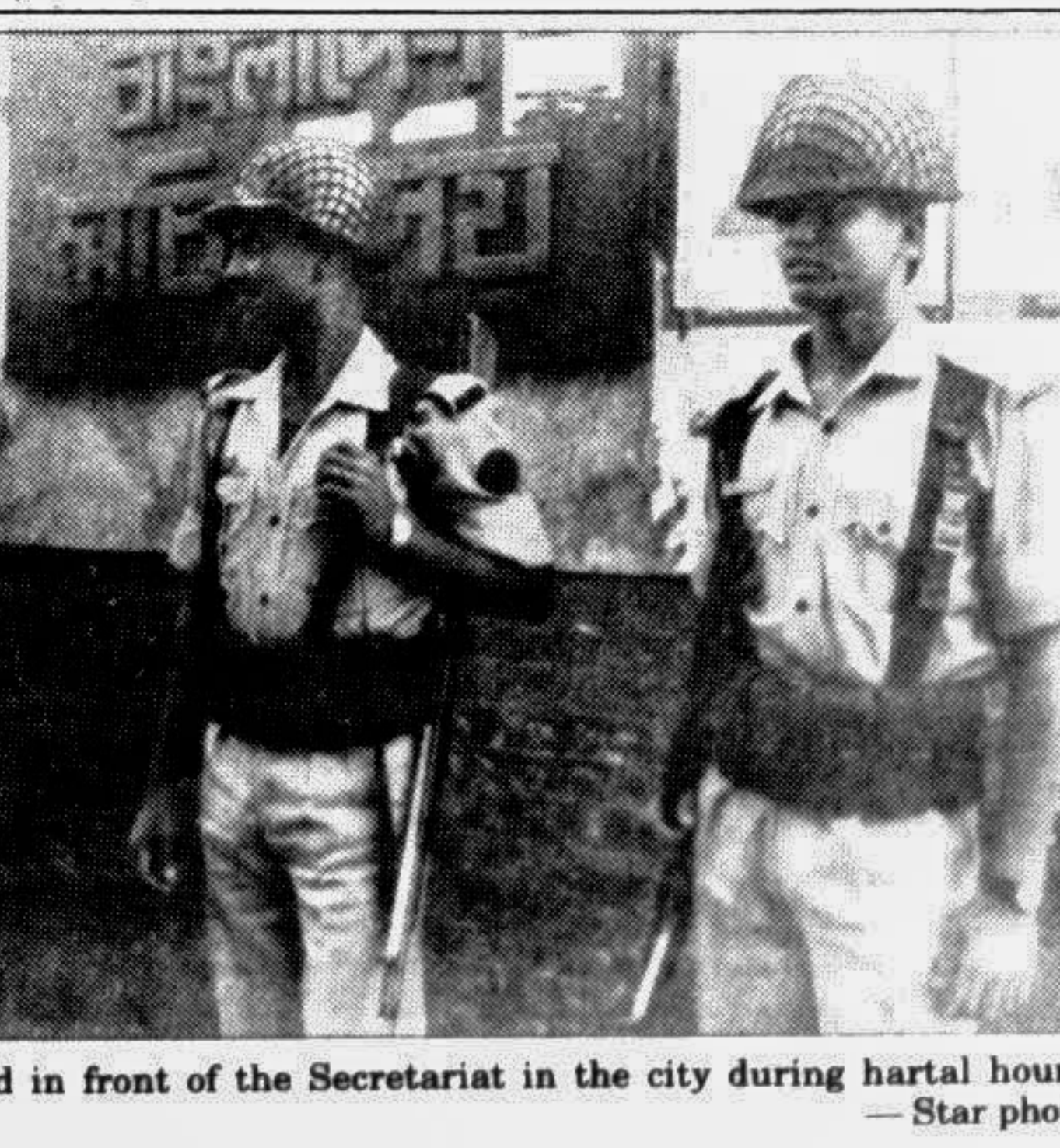
PM: Opposition agitation

When lakhs of victims are awaiting all kinds of help, the Opposition parties are blocking transportation of relief by enforcing hartal to keep them unfed, she added.

"This is their (Opposition's) love and affection, and kindness to the people. This is the semblance of their movement and democracy."

The Prime Minister once again made it clear that it is absurd to realise their demand through hartal and renewed her offer to the Opposition for thrashing the prevailing political problem by sitting across the table.

The hartal which causes suffering of the people cannot be the means of realising demand. "You must have to sit for dialogue to resolve the problem created by you," she told the Opposition parties.



BDR personnel stand guard in front of the Secretariat in the city during hartal hours yesterday. — Star photo