The Daily Star

DHAKA THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1995

'Foreign investment poor due to distorted image'

A chronic apathy of foreign investors to Bangladesh is somewhat rooted in the country's distorted image of dire poverty, devastating disasters and lack of development.

This was observed in the latest review by the United States government on Bangladesh-US commercial relations.

"Some of the difficulties in attracting foreign investment has been with overcoming an outdated and inaccurate image of dire poverty, devastating disasters, and near total lack of development," said the report, a copy made available to UNB last night.

Red tape and corruption, "uncertain" law and order situation, poor infrastructure, inadequate commercial laws and courts, and policy instability were cited by the report as other major weaknesses of the country's investment climate.

The report, Country Commercial Guide 1995, documented by the US Embassy in Dhaka, estimated Bangladesh's stock of current foreign direct investment (FDI) at 540 million US dollar, a meagre 3.5 per cent of GDP.

It, however, forecast increased FDI flow in the coming years following the government's authorization to foreign companies to explore and develop minerals.

However, on the FDI inflow in the manufacturing front, the report was not much optimistic and observed that such a prospect was linked to situation in domestic investment.

The US report, while recognising incentives to potential foreign investors and profits being made by foreign companies in Dhaka, observed that the government "does not pay adequate attention" to the problems of existing foreign investors.

The report referred to recent divestment of three major foreign firms — Pfizer Laboratories, Philips and Swedish Match.

It also pointed out, with resentment, the authorities' handling of a US investor over a dispute with a nationalised bank earlier this year. "His treatment appeared to be arbitrary, disproportionate, and possibly arising from extra-judicial motives."

Like the one last year, the latest US report was bitterly critical of Bangladesh's week legal system, bureaucratic corruption and policy instability.

DDT

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than the tolerable quantity in samples of dried fish.

"This means DDT is being used directly on dried fish whereas the pesticide is banned in the country," he said.

He added that the Commission had developed a plant which extended facilities of preserving food through radioactivity on commercial basis. But he said response to this safe way of preservation was yet get public attention.

Quayum spoke in a lecture series on "atomic energy technology and Bangladesh," organised by the National Museum of Science and Technology.

He said at present there were 10 healthcare centres using atomic radiation in the country where fifty to sixty thousand patients are treated every year.

Quayum said the commission is also conducting a exploration project at a cost of Tk 1.30 crore to discover uranium.

He said, "we know that there is uranium in the Sylhet region but we still do not know the exact location and quantity of uranium." Uranium is used in unclear reactors for generating atomic energy.

PM: Constitution

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porters' Association (BGMEA) SM Fazlul Huq along with several thousand leaders and workers of different political parties of Hathazari thana in Chittagong formally joined the BNP.

A total of 11 union parishad chairmen of Hathazari thana also joined the BNP at the function.

Referring to opposition threat and agitation, the Prime Minister said her party was not afraid of any threat because hers is an elected government. The people have full confidence in it, she asserted.

Referring to the Awami League's claim for establishing people's right to food, Begum Zia said those who keep people hostage, do not allow rickshaws to play, close shops and deprive day labourers of incomes cannot establish the right to food.

Mentioning the opposition parties' claim that hartal is democratic right, Begum Zia said ruining the economy of the country, keeping the people hostage, destruction of public and private property in the name of hartal cannot be democratic acts.

Agri sector reforms

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and distribution, Faruquee said, "even privatisation of manufacturing should be considered."

On government interventions in the rice market, the recommendations observed that static inefficiency could, in principle, be insignificant, but costing should be done to allow policy-makers to chose.

Recognising the importance of ground and surface water as a source of agricultural growth, the role for action towards effective management of water resources in the country was stressed.

The recommendations of the second working group said that the government should not go where the private sector does a better job. But it should bridge the information gap, invest in research for the generation of new technology and create database on soil health, siltation and land record system.

Urging for system-level planning, they suggested providing autonomy for the national agricultural research system and urged that the Department of Agricultural extension should be reorganised in way that it was system-oriented rather than crop-oriented.

Agricultural diversification was recognised to be a "means to an end and not an end in itself. Whether current policy set are restricting diversification should be carefully evaluated, it was observed.

On fertiliser sale and distribution the Agriculture Secretary said, "There will only be a monitoring cell in the ministry and other market operations will remain with the private sector." On the role of BADC, he said there is a need for careful analysis.

Referring to autonomy for the agri-research system, he said that the government will soon sign an agreement with the World Bank which would include this issue.

Ainun Nishat, professor of Water Resource Engineering of BUET, said "approach of water sector management strategy is still biased towards growing more rice."

Referring to the tussle between the two ministries — agriculture and water resources — on water management, he said, "We have to fix a new course, otherwise we will be criticised again."

Z Karim, member-director of BARC, said minor irrigation is facing the problem of sustainability, "that was the first lesson learnt after privatisation."

Ridwan Ali suggested for decentralisation of water system, group discipline in the market and capacity building for technological breakthrough.

2 killed, 30 hurt in B'Baria road accident

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, Nov 8: Two persons were killed and at least 30 injured, four seriously, when a Dhaka-bound minibus plunged into a road side ditch at Tantur bus stand under Akhaura thana here today.

The identities of the dead a woman and a man could not be known immediately. Of the injured four were rushed to Dhaka in critical condition. Eighteen others were admitted to the Brahmanbaria Modern Hospital.

The bus fell into the ditch after it collided with a speeding truck.

The driver of the minibus managed to escape. A case was registered with Akhaura police station.

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Panicked passengers rushing out of a bus which came under attack during the clash in Paltan area in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Banani-Kachukhet link road may be completed by Aug

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said her government attached priority to construction of roads and bridges to ensure a balanced development in the country, reports UNB.

Begum Zia was speaking at a gathering while laying the foundation stone of a 4160-foot-long and 75-foot-wide link road between Kachukhet and Banani at Kachukhet Bazar in the city in the morning.

The road will connect Kachukhet Bazar with New Airport Road through the MP unit of Dhaka Cantonment, Shaheed Sarani, Shaheed Badiuzzaman Road and MP check post at Banani.

The Engineering Corps of the Bangladesh Army is expected to complete the road by August 11, 1996.

Begum Zia said the government has been working relentlessly to remove the city's traffic jam and provide all facilities to the people. It is committed to realising all its pledges given to the people, she added.

She lauded the role of the Army in development efforts and in constructing roads, bridges and culverts in different parts of the country. The Army also stands by the distressed humanity at times on natural calamities.

Biman-KLM

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sake of arriving at a solution."

"The problems should now be discussed at government-level". Swaving came to Dhaka Monday for the talks. KLM's general manager in Bangladesh Cees Ursem was also present at the press conference.

Replying to a question Swaving said he did not know whether the Dutch civil aviation authorities would allow Biman again to operate its New York flights via Amsterdam. "They (the Dutch civil aviation authorities) have the right to cancel the stopover facility if they feel unsatisfied." When pressed for elaboration, he said he has "nothing much to say."

Mentionably, the civil aviation authorities of the Netherlands on October 28 cancelled Biman's stopover facility at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport for its trans-Atlantic flights from Dhaka to New York. Biman is now making stopover in Brussels as a temporary way-out.

Biman had been operating flights to Amsterdam since 1972 while KLM started its Dhaka-Amsterdam flight only in October 1994 following an agreement in April last year.

50 hurt in clash

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Alam, Enayet Hossain Bachchu (25), Nazrul Islam Babu of the Chhatra League and Ishaq Ali (30) of the Juba League were given first aid at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), hospital sources said. Monir, a bus helper, also injured in the clashes, was admitted to the DMCH.

Police said, five policemen including inspector Isharat Hossain were seriously injured in the clashes. Seriously injured Isharat was admitted to the Pangu Hospital at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar while four constables were taken to the Rajarbagh Police Hospital.

Police arrested five persons from the spot.

However, Awami League and its front organisations in separate press statements issued last night, claimed that over one hundred of their workers including Chhatra League general secretary Ishaq Ali Khan Panna were injured when police attacked a procession of Chhatra League, AL's student front at Purana Palton. Police later attacked the AL's central office while the party chief Sheikh Hasina was addressing a press conference there, the statements said. The statements also claimed that police arrested 25 people including Fazlul Haq, an activist of Juba League. AL's youth front and Shah Md Shahadat of Chhatra League.

According to witnesses and police, the clashes erupted when several vehicles were brickbatted while a Chhatra League procession was passing through the Purana Palton crossing in the evening. Police attacked the processionists and picked up four Chhatra League activists from the spot.

UNB adds: Police charged batons and lobbed tear-gas shells on the Awami League and Chhatra League workers inside the office at about 7 pm. A few of them were arrested from the party office.

As tear gas filled the conference room of the Awami League office, police allegedly went up to the second floor thasing the party workers.

At one stage, Hasina was forced to wrap up the press conference half-way during the melee.

"Certainly the government has ill-motive behind it (police action)," Hasina said, and in an angry voice shouted: "What an uncivilized behaviour? What does the Prime Minister want? Whom she want to invite?"

Police said they had to use tear gas shells to control the unruly Chhatra League processionists who threw brick bats at the Purana Paltan police box, threw bombs inside the Secretariat and damaged several vehicles at about 6 pm.

Again in a second clash, police said, the Chhatra League workers attacked a police party in front of Muktijoddha Sangsad office at Bangabandhu Avenue at about 7 pm.

Police said they did not enter inside the Awami League office.

College girl kidnapped

HABIGANJ, Nov 8: Murshida Begum, 16, an intermediate first year student of Madhabpur Syed Soyeduddin College was allegedly kidnapped by their driver Abu Mia and helper Haidar Ali on Monday, police said, reports UNB.

When Murshida was waiting at the college gate in the afternoon, the driver came and told her that her father fell sick. As Murshida got into the car, the driver alongwith the helper took her to an unknown place.

A case was filed against 11 people in this connection.

Ershad suffering from jaundice

Deposed president Hussain Muhammad Ershad, now in the Central Jail serving sentences, is suffering from jaundice, a Special Judge's court was told yesterday.

District sessions and Special Judge MA Salam read out a memo from the authorities of the Dhaka Central Jail that the former president is suffering from viral hepatitis (commonly known as jaundice) since November 4. The Disease was confirmed after examining the blood sample of Ershad, his lawyers said.

Salam was presiding over the proceedings in the Special Judge's court trying Ershad and six others, including a former minister, in a corruption case related to procurement of telecommunications equipment. Because of his illness, Ershad could not appear in the court and the judge adjourned the proceeding till November 20 subject to the recovery of the former ruler.

The judge on being prayed by the defence counsels, directed the jail authority to ensure examination of Ershad by three senior medical practitioners including the Civil Surgeon at the earliest and see that he received proper treatment.

National Revolution Day

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7th November. They placed wreaths and offered fateha there.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas placed wreath at the mazar of Zia, the founder chairman of BNP, at 9 am. He offered fateha and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul. Biswas also sought divine blessing for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the nation.

BNP Chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia placed wreath and offered fateha at the mazar at 10:15 am. Begum Zia was accompanied by her cabinet colleagues, party MPs and senior party leaders.

The ruling party and its front organisations, including the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Jubadal, Mohila Dal and Sramik Dal, Zia Forum, Zia Parishad, Krishak Dal, Tanti Dal, Bastuhara Dal, Matshajibi Dal, Ainjibi Forum, DUCSU, halls and college unions also placed wreaths at the mazar.

The day's programmes also included milad mahfil, rallies, processions, discussion and cultural functions.

National dailies brought out special supplements while Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television put on special programmes highlighting the significance of the occasion.

National flag was hoisted atop all important public and private buildings. The BNP and its front organisations hoisted national and party flags in all its offices throughout the country.

Milad mahfil was held and special prayers offered in all mosques. Special prayers were also offered in temples, churches and other places of worship.

Improved diet was served to patients, inmates of orphanages, children's homes, destitute centres and prisons.

BNP brought out a huge truck procession in the city in the afternoon. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia waved to the processionists from the veranda of the first floor of BNP central office at Naya Paltan.

In observance of the day, JSD arranged a discussion meeting at Colonel Taher Auditorium in the afternoon. Nirmal Sen, Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Huq Inu, AFM Mahbubul Huq, Foyez Ahmed, Gaziul Huq, Dr Sirajul Islam Chowdhury and Dr Anwar Hossain spoke at the meeting.

Jamaat-e-Islami held a discussion meeting at Al Falah auditorium at Maghbazar. The Jagpa organised a mass gathering at Paltan. Bangladesh Muslim League, Progressive Nationalist Party (Progosh) and JSD (Rab) also held discussions at their respective offices in the afternoon.

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and Nazrul Institute held separate discussion meetings and sessions of a patriotic songs in the evening leading singers rendered patriotic songs.

Khatme Quran was held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque under the auspices of Islamic Foundation.

The Day was also observed in all divisional, district and thana headquarters in a befitting manner.

In Chittagong, leaders and workers of BNP led by Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman placed wreath at the first mazar of late President Zia at Rangunia.

2 killed, 10 hurt in Jhenidah clash

JHENIDAH, Nov 8: A fierce clash between two rival groups of people at Brahimpur village in Shailakupa thana today left two people dead and 10 others injured, reports UNB.

Police said Beltu, 35, died on the spot while Hoor succumbed to his injuries at Kushtia Sadar Hospital.

Witnesses said the clash between the rival groups of Bari Member and Masudur Rahman Molla started when the supporters of later allegedly attacked their rivals at about 8 am.

Local people said today's clash was the sequel to the Tuesday's incident that occurred following a quarrel over teasing a girl student.

Five of the injured were admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital and Shailakupa Health Complex.

The bodies were sent to the Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

20 hurt in clash at Ctg Commerce College

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 8: Installation ceremony at the Chittagong Commerce College in the city this evening ended in pandemonium as two groups of students clashed with fire arms leaving at least 20 injured.

Five of the injured persons were admitted Chittagong Medical College Hospital with bullet injury where condition of one, Sumitra Paul, was stated to be critical.

The rival groups blasted cocktails and fired shots during the clash that followed an altercation between two students while a band-show was on at about 5:30 pm.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. Police has deployed in Agrabad area where the college is situated.

RU clash

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Police also lobbed about 50 rounds of tear gas shells to stop the clash, which continued for about an hour.

Of the injured, six persons were admitted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Campus sources said, the clash erupted when an ICS activist was reportedly beaten by JCD workers and in retaliation the ICS workers made a counter-attack.

Some activists of ICS, which enforced a strike in the campus today, reportedly assaulted the Proctor and three other teachers and damaged window panes when an examination was scheduled to begin in the Arts Building.

Meanwhile, JCD put up a barricade on the Rajshahi-Dhaka road protesting the incident and called for a day-long strike in the campus tomorrow.

Proctor Nazrul Islam said that he was feeling insecure and that the students, who reside in dormitories, would have to stay at their own risk.

Two separate cases were lodged with the Motihar thana in this connection.

Our Staff Correspondent in Dhaka adds: When contacted over telephone last night, Aminul Islam, Police Commissioner of the Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP), told The Daily Star that situation was under control and extra police force was deployed at all strategic points in the campus to avert fresh violence.

He said the Motihar thana OC received minor injury during yesterday's clash.

Token strike

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created a serious traffic jam across the city, which continued for the next two hours. The road from Shahbag crossing to Hotel Sonargaon remained jammed with hundreds of cars, trucks, buses, minibuses and scooters for more than two hours.

President of the FBCCI, Salman F Rahman, at a press conference in the afternoon termed the 15-minute programme a complete success and added, "if the political parties now fail to understand the message after this programme, then I have nothing to say."

However, he pointed out that business leaders would decide their next course of action through a meeting soon.

"We will continue to discuss with the political leaders and try to convince them to find an immediate solution," Rahman said. "I am clearly saying that this protest programme is purely non-political. We believe that 80 per cent people of the city is somehow connected with business and their livelihoods are being affected directly by the political impasse."

The Midnight File

Kashmiris urge election chiefs to reject Delhi's call

SRINAGAR, Nov 8: Mainstream Kashmiri political parties urged India's election chiefs today to reject a federal government call for elections next month in troubled Jammu and Kashmir state, reports Reuter.

Hartal relaxed

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nounced in a press release yesterday issued by its secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju.

As Hasina was addressing the press conference, the AL central office came under tear-gas shelling by police at about 7 pm following a clash between workers of Chhatra League end police.

UNB adds: Sheikh Hasina again urged Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to sit for a dialogue to solve the political crisis without wasting time.

"...Only a neutral non-party caretaker government can ensure voters' right to free franchise and impartial elections. All political parties excepting BNP are at one on this point," the Awami League President told the press conference.

Said Hasina: "I like to clearly know from the Prime Minister if she also is of the opinion as of the people of the country."

"If she (PM) does so, then I will request her (PM) not to waste time and unnecessarily complicate the situation. Accept in principle the demand for neutral non-party caretaker government and sit to give it a formal shape," she said.

"We wanted a solution through dialogue and discussion... but the Prime Minister shut the doors with her provocative speeches," the AL chief said and referred to Begum Zia's remarks made on November 4-5 in Chittagong and Chandpur about caretaker government and opposition movement and hartal.

She alleged that the government was pushing the country towards a dangerous state by creating a political and constitutional crisis.

"We wanted solution of the prevailing political crisis through discussion and understanding. We tried our best with all our sincerity and cordiality to solve the political crisis through discussion, in last one and half years," she told reporters.

Referring to her letters to Begum Zia, Hasina said: "We repeatedly requested the Prime Minister to create an atmosphere for dialogue by accepting, in principle, the concept of a neutral non-party caretaker government."

But, instead of accepting the demand, she (PM) had slammed the doors to discussion. Not only that, at this juncture of crisis facing the nation, she pushed the country towards anarchy and confrontation by announcing programmes to resist the democratic movement of opposition political parties, said the former Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

About the initiatives of the five intellectuals, Hasina said they had taken positive attitude and steps towards solving the crisis.

The Awami League President said a fruitful dialogue is not possible without a specific agenda, but the Prime Minister in her letters skipped the crux of the problem.

Quoting from the comments of Begum Zia made in Chittagong on November 4, Hasina said the Prime Minister herself said she (PM) had written to her (Hasina) on request of some senior journalists.

So it became clear through this comment of the PM that she had no will or intention for the solution of the crisis, Hasina told the journalists.

She termed the remarks the Prime Minister made at a public meeting in Chandpur on November 5 as "irresponsible and provocative."

Bomb hurled at businessmen's rally in city

By Staff Correspondent

Unidentified persons hurled bombs and fired gunshots near a rally of businessmen at Mohammadpur Town Hall Maidan Tuesday afternoon.

Mohammadpur Police said, one bomb was hurled near the car of FBCCI President Salman F Rahman, parked at the gate of the maidan at about 4:15 pm and two others were blasted near the dais where he was being garlanded.

Witnesses, however, said that two round of gunshot were also fired and the people assembled there dispersed immediately. One Mosharraf Hossain, 24 was injured, police said without giving details.

The Mohammadpur Businessmen Welfare Association organised the rally in support of their yesterday's 15-minute programme to protest the persisting political crisis in the country.

Salman Rahman, in a brief speech later, described the attack as a sad incident. "We, the businessmen, do not do politics, we want peace," he said.

NBR chief

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He said that certain provisions of the PSI should be relaxed. "If a PSI Certificate is not received by a bank before arrival of the goods, clearance should be allowed on production of non-negotiable shipping documents and a copy of the PSI certificate duly certified by the bank," he suggested.

The MCCI President suggested presence of VAT Inspectors during Fridays and holidays for signing papers relating to export as an emergency measure.

Regarding Duty Drawback he suggested fixation of a time limit for assessment, approval and refund, in view of the prevailing stringent credit restrictions. The limit should not exceed one and a half months from the date of submission of applications, he pointed out.

Anis-ud-Dowla told the meeting that the newly introduced simplified procedure of income tax assessment was not workable in cases where individuals are required to file wealth statements.

High officials of the NBR, members of the MCCI and leading businessmen were present at the meeting.

Cyclonic storm

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within 64 kilometres of the cyclone centre is about 90 kilometres per hour rising to 115 kph in gusts or squalls.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted distant warning signal number 2.

All fishing boats and trawlers over north Bay have been advised to remain close to the coast so as to take shelter at short notice.

PTI adds: Most parts of coastal Orissa experienced rains as a severe cyclonic storm headed towards the Orissa-Andrha Pradesh coast.

The storm was likely to intensify further and cross the Orissa-Andra coast between Machilipatnam and Gopalpur tonight.

Manzur murder

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During the hearing of the rule issued on August 30 last by a division bench of the HC comprising Justice MM Hoque and Justice Md Nurul Islam, the state declined to contest the case, but agreed to comply with the requirements for which the petition was filed.

AFM Hasan Arif, Deputy Attorney General, submitted that there were some irregularities in the impugned proceeding, but no illegality.

The prosecution agreed to supply certified copies of the statements recorded under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to the petitioner and also agreed to give liberty to engage as many lawyers as the petitioner needs.

But Khandaker Mahbub Hossain, chief counsel for Ershad, submitted that the rule should be made absolute with cost, as the petitioner was harassed for nothing.

Earlier, the state went to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the HC order, but later withdrew the petition.

1.6m Bengalis

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labour for garments factories, the carpet industry and restaurants and serve as maids and servants, the government appears determined to proceed with the deportations.

"Anybody found with fake passport and identity card will be deported," said Interior Minister Babar, adding that already more than 800 Bengalis had been expelled this year.