

IDA mission to evaluate export development fund

Star Report

An International Development Agency (IDA) mission arrives in the city tomorrow, to evaluate the status of the country's Export Development Fund (EDF).

According to official sources, the two-member mission is coming in response to the government's proposal to the World Bank (WB) for extension of its assistance to EDF.

The EDF, a 25 million US dollar fund, was created by the government with assistance from the WB to help boost the country's export.

The fund was allocated among the private banks for financing exports.

"The performance of the fund was excellent," said a senior Bangladesh Bank official. "The total sum was utilised and the repayment on the credit is excellent. As the fund had created great demand among the exporters, we, in concurrence with the Commerce Ministry, had requested the WB for continuation of the Fund."

This team is coming to see the performance of the Fund.

Taliban capture military base east of Kabul

KABUL, Nov 23: The Taliban militia captured a key Afghan government military stronghold east of Kabul as they stepped up their drive to seize Kabul, defence officials said today, reports AFP.

The Islamic militia overran five more kilometers (three miles) of government-held territory, the defence ministry said.

PM to address nation

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ing all steps to make the polls free and fair and hoped that the Awami League and other opposition parties would participate in the polls.

Addressing a hurriedly-arranged press conference at his Bailey Road official residence, Mannan Bhuiyan reiterated his party's call to the Opposition to take part in the by-polls for resolving the political crisis within the constitutional framework. "We'll continue our efforts until the last minute for an understanding."

Explaining the PM's statement urging the Opposition to form an interim national government, Mannan Bhuiyan said, the offer was only for the three major opposition parties (the AL, Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami) and added that the offer would be invalid if these parties do not accept it.

The proposed interim national government could be formed with equal number of representatives from the ruling and the three opposition parties, he said adding that the BNP, as the largest party, should head it.

Asked about the PM's earlier announcement to resign 30 days ahead of the polls, the BNP leader said, "It would depend on the situation."

Repeating BNP's stand against the concept of a neutral caretaker government, he said, "We're ready to give all concessions permitted by the Constitution, which we'll continue to uphold."

Minutes of 36th TCC meet okayed

The 37th tripartite consultative committee (TCC) meeting of Ministry of Labour and Manpower was held yesterday at the ministry with Labour and Manpower Minister Mir Shawkat Ali in the chair, reports BSS.

The meeting approved the minutes of the 36th TCC meeting and discussed the progress of its decisions. Various issues concerning ratification and implementation of ILO conventions and recommendations were also discussed.

The representatives of the Bangladesh Employers' Association and different labour organisations attended the meeting.

Six held, arms recovered in city

Police arrested six people and recovered two sawed-off rifles, bullets and cocktails from Banani and Lalbagh areas in the city yesterday.

The Speed Enforcement Squad nabbed two persons from an auto-rickshaw with a sawed-off rifle, 10 bullets and two magazines from Banani in the afternoon.

The arrested are Shoab, and Abdul Kalam, the driver. Another person who was in the auto-rickshaw fled away.

A mobile squad, on suspicion, chased the auto-rickshaw from Gulshan Circle Two and caught hold of them near Banani graveyard. The passengers hurled a cocktail at the police escape arrest.

Meanwhile, in a separate raid, police arrested four people from a house in Lalbagh area and recovered a foreign rifle loaded with two bullets, 25 cocktails and materials for making cocktail from their possession.

Trade team

largest recipient of British bilateral aid. Many UK companies have worked and are working on projects which are receiving finance from British aid programmes.

Some 30 British companies, many of them internationally reputed, will have representation in the 40-strong Trade Mission. Peter Lee, Managing Director of Mott MacDonald International, one of the world's largest engineering consultants, will lead the mission.



Nick Leeson arrives at Singapore's Changi airport yesterday, after being expelled by Germany to stand trial on charges of fraud and forgery over the collapse of Britain's Barings Bank in February.

Leeson will be formally charged today

SINGAPORE, Nov 23: Nick Leeson was formally placed under arrest today by Singapore's anti-fraud agency after his extradition from Germany, reports AFP.

Officers of the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) arrested Leeson on 11 counts of forgery and cheating connected to the February collapse of Britain's Barings Bank, the CAD said in a statement.

On arrival from Frankfurt, he was first escorted to the criminal investigation department for registration formalities required in all cases of "registrable crimes," the CAD said.

"As is required by the law, he would have to be notified of the charges and be given the opportunity to answer to the charges," the statement said.

"For this purpose and for questioning, he was brought to the CAD and may be held over for the night. As in all criminal cases handled by the CAD, we will allow him access to his counsel," the statement added.

The 28-year-old Leeson would be produced in a court Friday and formally charged with the offences, it said.

Leeson's multi-million-dollar bets on Japanese financial instruments led to losses of 1.5 billion dollars and caused the collapse in February of Barings PLC, Britain's oldest merchant bank.

Four killed in road accidents

At least four people were killed and 35 others injured in separate road accidents in Faridpur and Sirajganj yesterday and Wednesday night.

Our Faridpur correspondent reports: Three people were killed when a bus fell into a roadside ditch on Faridpur-Barisal highway under Bhangna than yesterday morning.

The dead were identified as Aslam, 14, and Moslem Ahmed, 55, both are passers-by, and Emdadul, a rickshaw driver.

Thirty others were also injured in the accident. They were admitted to Bhangna hospital and Faridpur hospital.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reports: Driver Khabir Ali, 35, was killed and five others were injured when his bus was collided head on with a truck Wednesday night on Nagarbari-Dinajpur highway near Raihata village under Raiganj thana.

PM: Stipend

She said the children of government employees will get stipend for education from this year and a fund of Tk 8.2 crore has already been given for the purpose.

The government contributed Tk 13 crore to the Employees Welfare Fund this year, she said adding that it is also actively considering the development of the government employees' hospital.

"Now the government employees do not have to suffer for getting pension. We have eliminated the pension complexity and taken step so that the employees could get pension with their retirement", she added. The government has also introduced a life-long pension system.

Begum Zia said she had already instructed the concerned authorities to allot a government fielding at Mughabazar to the 4th Class Government Employees Association.

Several thousand employees' delegates from all over the country and representatives from India, Nepal and Sri Lanka are participating in the conference.

Rauzan power plant

The site of the plant is situated 15 km east from Chitragong on the road to Kaptal and 6 km away from the Karnaphuli river. Because of the distance from the river, the water pump and cooling tower of the plant together consume 6 MW of electricity, a fact criticised in the PSMP.

In an investigation some 467 technical faults were found at the first plant. The PMSM noted, the plant was unable to run for more than 15 to 20 minutes while carrying only the station service load.

Shutdown costs US taxpayers over \$700m

NEW YORK, Nov 23: White House officials said last week's government shutdown cost US taxpayers between 700 and 800 million dollars, the New York Times reported in its Thursday editions, reports Reuter.

The newspaper quoted unidentified officials as saying half of the estimated costs were the salaries of 800,000 workers furloughed for four working days as Republicans and Democrats battled over a seven-year plan to balance the federal budget.

The officials also said they could not promise federal workers another shutdown would not happen in a few weeks.

US Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin also disclosed that the Clinton administration was developing plans to pay bills into early 1996 in the event the Republican-controlled Congress refuses to raise the borrowing limit. The New York Times report said.

Clinton vetoed a bill on Monday that would have temporarily raised the debt ceiling by 67 billion dollars partly because it contained measures that would have limited the administration's maneuvering room in the future.

Analyst said treasury's decision to reschedule previously postponed securities auctions, including a three-year note sale next Monday and 10-year note sale next Tuesday, made it certain that treasury must use some accounting tricks.

54 fundamentalists jailed in Egypt

HEIKSTEP, Egypt, Nov 23: An Egyptian military court sentenced 54 Muslim Brotherhood leaders to three or five years in jail today at the end of a trial condemned by human rights groups in Egypt and around the world, reports Reuter.

The court, meeting at an army camp in the desert northeast of the capital, also ordered the Cairo headquarters of the fundamentalist organisation closed and all its contents seized.

The 54 men include prominent academics, doctors and community leaders. They were accused of non-violent offences such as organising an illegal group, holding illegal secret meetings and preparing anti-government leaflets.

Amnesty International this week described them as prisoners of conscience and urged the authorities to set them free. It said they were civilians who should not face military trial.

The defendants, arraigned inside a large cage and dressed in white shirts and trousers, responded to the sentences with Islamist slogans. "God is great, praise be to God. We look only to God,

Victoria college students observe hunger strike

COMILLA, Nov 23: More than five hundred students of the Comilla Government Victoria College observed a six-hour torch hunger strike at the Town Hall today demanding upgradation of the college to a full-fledged university.

The students under the banner of university implementation committee have also announced the next agitation programme including torch procession in the town and rail-road barricade tomorrow to press their demands.

JCD workers attack Sylhet BNP office: 5 hurt

SYLHET, Nov 23: Five people were injured and three private cars damaged as activists of the Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) attacked the district BNP office here this afternoon.

The JCD workers came to the office in a procession and went on a rampage at about 5:30 pm when a meeting of district BNP was going on inside the office.

The district BNP in a press release blamed the 'armed group' in the JCD for the attack.

Hasina

herself as an autocrat. She is pushing the country towards a confrontation by giving this controversial by-election.

Hasina cautioned those who were going to submit nomination papers for the by-elections should do it on their own responsibility. "The government will be responsible for any untoward incidents centering the dropping of nomination papers."

"We are conducting the movement for establishing the voting right of the people. On the other hand, the government is trying to snatch voting right through terrorism and rigging," she told the meeting.

The ruling party knows that rigging would not be possible under a caretaker government, so it is not accepting the demand, she alleged.

The meeting, presided over by City Awami League President and Dhaka Mayor Mohammad Hanif, was also addressed by Zillur Rahman, Tofael Ahmed, Obaidul Kader, Ivy Rahman, Siddiqur Rouf Khan and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya.

The Midnight File

OIC to help implement Bosnia peace accord

RIYADH, Nov 23: Islamic states are ready to help implement the Bosnia peace accord between the Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) said today. The OIC said member states were "prepared to take part in any international mechanism for implementation" of the accord.

'None can play foul with Constitution'

President of the Supreme Court Bar Association Justice TH Khan yesterday described the Constitution as the highest law of the country and said none could play foul with it, reports BSS.

Speaking as the chief guest at an open discussion on "Current Political Situation and Constitutional Continuity" organised by the Supreme Court Unit of the Bangladesh Jatiyatadabi Ainjibi Forum, Justice TH Khan stressed that the constitutional continuity must be maintained.

Presided over by president of the Supreme Court unit of the Forum, Abdul Rab Chowdhury, MP, the discussion was addressed by additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Khondkar, former justice Maksudur Rahman.

Justice Khan said that could the Opposition accept the reality in the context of their demand for a caretaker government, they would not have resigned from Parliament. Because, he added, the Opposition knew very well that any amendment to the Constitution required support of two-third members.

15 JCD activists expelled in Sylhet

SYLHET, Nov 23: The Sylhet district unit of the Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) today expelled 15 leaders and workers of the party for their alleged involvement in the killing of JCD leader Mueyem Khan, who was shot dead by rival group on Tuesday on the MC College campus.

The district unit took the decision at an emergency meeting today and also urged the central committee to approve the expulsion decision.

Police SI shot

Police said that when the SI along with four constables caught the alleged killer, Mohammad Rashedul Islam Russel (20), his accomplices fired shots and tried to snatch Russel.

Russel failed to escape from Badrul's grip. At one stage, injured Badrul fired one round to save his life and the miscreants fled the scene.

Russel hails from Gobindopur area of Demra thana. Doctors at the DMCH said that the condition of the SI was improving.

Russel and his accomplices allegedly gunned down one Mohammad Hossain in front of Sheikhdi School on July 19 last, police said.

Meanwhile, police arrested one Ripon a few days ago in connection with the murder. Ripon, who was released on bail, reportedly led the attack yesterday, police said.

Fertiliser

BCIC has a stock of 25,559 tonnes of TSP and 17,937 tonnes of SSP, the sources added.

The government decision to build up buffer stocks in the northern region was identified as the principal cause of the prevailing crisis, because this led the mills to despatch less fertiliser to the traders, some sources said.

"Zia Fertiliser Company is delivering 500 to 600 tonnes per day, instead of at least 1500 tonnes a day," said another BFA member, they could not collect urea at the mill-gate price of Tk 186.25 per 50-kg bag, rather they were compelled to give more than Tk 200 a bag, he alleged. Though the authorities had accepted 483 Demand Orders (DOs) at the Zia Fertiliser Factory, but later they changed their decision and accepted 235 DOs, he said.

Some BFA members expressed doubts about the accountability of government-appointed dealers. They also feared that the farmers would not get fertiliser at the right prices once again as some non-professional dealers might be enlisted.

BFA has suggested a 'fair' distribution system of fertiliser throughout country. The suggestions include 10 per cent penalty for not lifting urea as scheduled, steady supply of fertiliser throughout the year, delivery system based on "first payment first serve," abolition of command areas and a buffer stock (1,00,000 tonnes) in the northern region.

UN sanctions

favour of accumulating arms in the region but in restricting them and reducing them," ambassador Sergey Lavrov told the council.

France, which since August has warned it would not support the move unless it was accompanied by confidence-building measures and agreement on regional stability, supported the resolution, diplomats said.

5 police officers killed in Assam blast

NEW DELHI, Nov 23: Five police officers and a civilian driver were killed when their minibus was blown up by a remote-control bomb in the far northeastern Indian state of Assam, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today, says AFP.

Police told the news agency the vehicle was destroyed while crossing a concrete bridge on Wednesday in Assam's Darrang district.

Five police officers and their civilian driver were killed while two policemen were seriously wounded, PTI said.

The news agency quoted police as saying that Bodo tribal guerrillas were suspected of planting the bomb.

Raushan breaks hunger strike

Begum Raushan Ershad and the other family members broke their 8-day hunger strike yesterday.

They broke their fast-onto-death on request of the leaders of Jatiya Party and some other smaller parties as they fell ill after observing the strike for seven days.

Raushan Ershad, the wife of former president HM Ershad, began the hunger strike on November 16 to press the government to shift her ailing husband to a hospital from the Dhaka Central Jail. Ershad, sentenced to 13 years imprisonment, has been suffering from viral hepatitis since November 4.

A JP press release regretted that the government did not shift Ershad to hospital despite the orders of High Court, recommendation of medical board and hunger strike by Ershad's family members.

Jaffna

thousands of government troops, will fall before the rebels celebrate the birthday of their chief Velupillai Prabhakaran on Sunday.

But the loss of two large transport planes may now delay it. The Antonov was carrying 62 servicemen, mostly soldiers. Air Force sources said it vanished from radar as it neared the Palaly Airbase near Jaffna after an hour's flight from Colombo.

Officials said the plane's pilot asked Palaly to switch on landing lights before it disappeared from radar about an hour after taking off from Colombo's Ratmalana Airbase at 1150 GMT.

There was speculation it might have been shot down by the Tamil rebels, who have used heavy guns and missiles to bring down military planes in the past. But this was not confirmed.

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