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Visiting Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Najmuddin Sheikh called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday. — PID photo

Prospects of trade ties with Tripura discussed

The prospects of mutually beneficial trade and business relations between Bangladesh and India's Tripura state came up for discussion during a meeting yesterday at the conference room of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI). reports BSS.

The physical closeness of Tripura with Bangladesh, and the common language and culture and the food habit of the two peoples were described as sound basis for exploring the potentials of business relations.

Welcoming an eight-member delegation from Tripura Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI), Fazl R M Hasan, acting president of DCCI expressed the hope that the first ever visit of the chamber members of Tripura would open up new avenues of contacts among the business community. There are immense scope of trade promotion between Bangladesh and India, but unfortunately it was one-sided, he noted.

Hasan pointed out that because of its geographical location, there can be good business links between Bangladesh and Tripura through land routes. Tripura can import items from Bangladesh at a cheaper rate due to less transport cost and similarly Bangladesh can also import items through Tripura border, thus reducing heavy pressure at Benapole and other customs points, he observed.

The acting president of DCCI requested TCCI members to identify the items which can be transacted through Tripura-Bangladesh border and stressed regular exchange of information between the two chambers to achieve the declared objective of higher trade from mutual advantage. He thanked the people of Tripura for their support during the Bangladesh War of Liberation.

Parliament tidbits

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list of the works done by the former BNP government. He, however, dropped the project from his list and urged the Chair to expunge it from the proceedings after his party colleagues reminded him that the project was not implemented.

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid, who chaired the entire sitting of the Sangsads yesterday, reminded the MPs, especially those who spoke in the House for the first time, that the yellow light would be on two minutes before the expiry of the time allotted to them and the red light when the time expired.

While doing so, Abdul Hamid told BNP lawmaker Prof. Rezaul Karim, "Your red light will be on after eight of 10 minutes time given to you." The Chair hastened to add, "Not your red light but mine."

Participating in the discussion on the proposed budget, some Opposition MPs made a common statement that they wanted to go to their respective constituencies to highlight the problems in those areas.

Going one step further, BNP lawmaker Mosharrif Hossain Manju told the Chair, "Now I will take you Mr. Speaker to my area Barisal by crossing the Meghna and other rivers."

Similarly, another BNP lawmaker Fazlul Azim told the Chair, "Please, allow me some more time because I'll have to go to my constituency."

BNP legislator Dr. Ehteshamul Haq Nasim Biswas, the son of President Abdul Rahman Biswas, getting the floor to speak on the budget, told the Deputy Speaker, "We special

weakness, respect and love for the Chair you're sitting on. Because, my father was also once on this chair."

Responding to Dr Biswas' delayed congratulations to him, Abdul Hamid said, "Better late than never."

In a clear indication to Dr Alaudin's changing of party from AL to BNP just before the June 12 general elections, Abdul Hamid recited the Bangla proverb, "Nadir Epar Kohe Chharia, Nishwas. Operate Shorb Shukh Aamar Biswas" (Whatever is on the other bank of the river, carries all the happiness).

Taking the floor to speak on the proposed budget, Dr Alaudin expressed his heartiest thanks to BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia for giving him the BNP ticket to contest the last elections in a contest hasty arrangement.

Indemnity

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at a seminar on "the role of newspapers in upholding human rights" at the conference hall of Narayanganj Chambers of Commerce and Industry this afternoon.

Organised by Amnesty International, Narayanganj group, the seminar was addressed by Barrister Motiul Husein, Syed Mohammad Dastagir Hussain, president Amnesty International Bangladesh, Alhaj Afzal Hussain, president Narayanganj Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Principal Shamsul Huda.

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Tk 15 cr post-flood rehabilitation plan

By Reaz Ahmad

The government has taken up a Tk 15 crore post-flood rehabilitation programme, said official sources.

Of the total allocation, Tk 10 crore has been earmarked for reconstruction of damaged houses and the rest Tk 5 crore for agricultural rehabilitation.

Over 45 lakh people in 151 thanas in 37 districts were affected in the recent flood, according to official statistics. Twenty-three people died in flood-related incidents and crops on 1.4 lakh acres of land were damaged fully while those on 3.7 lakh acres partially.

Minister of Agriculture, Food, Relief and Disaster Management Begum Matia Chowdhury told The Daily Star that though it was not possible for the government to fully compensate the flood loss, "at least, our efforts will make people feel that there is a government who cares for them."

The government is planning to create a buffer stock of 1.50 lakh metric tons of urea to deal with any possible fertilizer crisis in the country, parliament was told yesterday. reports UNB.

Replies to a call-attention notice from Alhaj Md Abdul Wahab (BNP-Jhenaidah) at the Jatiya Sangsad, he said the head of the government has given clear instruction to start work towards construction of such an important bridge.

The minister said there is no denying the need of the bridge over the Padma for manifold reasons and the present government fully recognises this.

He told the member that construction of three bridges in Sajalupara thana in the Jhenaidah district will begin soon although some faults were there regarding the tenders for the bridges.

Replies to another call-attention notice by Shamsul Huq (AL-Mymensingh) about inertia in the reconstruction of the Mymensingh railway station, the communications minister said measures are underway for repair and improvement of the station.

After that incident, Rockey picked up Tareq and went towards the airport road and returned to the same restaurant once again. This time, he picked up Lubna and went towards the Meghna bridge. The complaint lodged by Tareq's father concludes that Tareq was killed in a pre-planned manner and his body was dumped near the Meghna ghat.

Giving reasons why the body could not be traced a senior police official said, "the strong current of the river might have swept the body away."

Abul Kashem in his complaint lodged with the Gazaria police said, "Rockey is the main culprit behind the murder of Tareq. His other friends are also involved in the murder. Rockey even crossed over the Meghna bridge and went to an isolated bank of the river for dumping Tareq's body."

Police, quoting the statements of the three arrested friends of Tareq said, "Tareq along with his friends Rockey and Lubna after dinner at Steam Boat Restaurant went for a long drive towards Comilla."

Stopping the car near the Meghna ferry ghat, Tareq wanted to take a dive, said police quoting the statements of his friends, recorded with them. They were then intoxicated, police claimed quoting the statements of the arrested persons.

According to the complaint lodged by Tareq's father on August 15, Tareq was picked up from his house by his friend Rockey to have a dinner at the Chinese restaurant Steam Boat on the night of August 14. Tareq did not return home Friday and Saturday.

New cantt at Trishal likely

The government has a plan to set up a cantonment at Trishal in Mymensingh district, reports UNB.

This was stated by Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Md. Gen. (rtd) Noor Uddin Khan in Parliament yesterday afternoon, replying to Mirza Azam of Awami League during question hours.

Khan, however, did not mention when the Trishal cantonment project would be implemented.

Samad Azad
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Biswas regrets press reports

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday regretted certain "unfounded and ill-motivated" reports published recently by a section of the press with a motive to malign the institution of presidency, reports UNB.

The institution should not be dragged into unwanted criticism for imposing their like and dislike on it, he said.

Fanciful interpretation of the constitutional obligation of the President should be avoided, President Biswas said in the rebuttal.

He was talking to the members of Dhakabashi, a cultural organisation, who, led by its president Sukur Salek, called on the President at Bangabhaban, said an official release.

ETROPOLITAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, DHAKA

AND

ECONOMIC REPORTERS' FORUM

AT THE BALL ROOM, DHAKA SHERATON HOTEL

ON 18TH AUGUST, 1996

CHIEF GUEST: MR. S. A. M. S. KIBRIA

MINISTER FOR FINANCE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH

PHOTO: M. A. M. KIBRIA

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria addressing as chief guest the seminar on 'Budget for 1996-97 and Reforms Programme', jointly organised by the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Economic Reporters' Forum in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Consensus on reforms needed

From page 1
better comparative advantage is also limited.

In the first session of the seminar, World Bank's resident representative Pierre Landell-Mills opened the discussion and said the present government has taken over when the economic situation is difficult with loss of reserve, high inflation and marked increase in government borrowing.

"It is imperative not to let the situation go out of hands," he said adding that careful macro-economic management for stability is needed.

He felt that public expenditure has to be further curtailed than envisaged in the budget and that the projects in the ADP have to be "ruthlessly" examined to ascertain their priority.

Dr. Wahiduddin Mahmud, former adviser in the caretaker government, said despite the proposed reduction of tariff on import of double-decker buses, while increasing the duties on import of all transports including tempo.

Appreciating the 'subsidy', AL legislator Mostafa Kamal urged the government to make sure that the peasants get the facility in time.

Dr Alaudin Ahmed, a former AL parliament member and now a BNP lawmaker, criticised the proposed budget as "it did not address the problems of the poor, especially the helpless family members of martyred freedom fighters."

Gautam Chakrabarti of BNP criticised the proposed reduction of tariff on import of double-decker buses, while increasing the duties on import of all transports including tempo.

Some 18 members took part in the discussion on the proposed budget yesterday. They included Khan Tippu Sultan, Khaleda Khanam, Jannatul Ferdous, Abdus Sattar, Farida Rauf, Hosneara Wahid, and Segupta Yasmine of AL, Jamiruddin Sirar, Ehtesham Ul Haq, Mosharrif Hossain, and Rezaul Karim of BNP and Jainul Abedin Sarker of JP.

Earlier, Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid, who chaired yesterday's sitting, disposed of three call attention notices.

The chair adjourned the sitting at 10:00 pm for resumption at 3:00 this afternoon.

He agreed with Finance Minister Kibria's statement that the government single-handedly cannot deal with major policies. "There should be a national consensus on basic issues. National politics should rule over party politics," he maintained.

Syeduzzaman, who was finance minister during

form process had limited impact on economy."

Pointing out that the growth rate had been arrested at around four per cent since 1982, Prof Sobhan said this means the elements of reforms did not succeed.

"This state of arrested development suggests that we have foregone potential growth that could have emerged from successful reforms," he maintained.

Safur Rahman, MP, the immediate past finance minister, said economic discipline cannot not be expected if there are no rules and regulations.

If judicial process is not good, nothing can be done," he said. "I had caught people taking away crores of taka from banks, but it will not work if the judicial system is not good," he said.

He mentioned that the bankruptcy act had been lying with the Law Ministry for 18 months.

Safur said sound macro-economic management and fundamentals are essential for investments.

The former finance minister was critical of the World Bank's role regarding the government's effort to mobilise savings through savings instruments.

Dr Mahmud said an enormous task now is to raise savings rate to 16 per cent in the next four years.

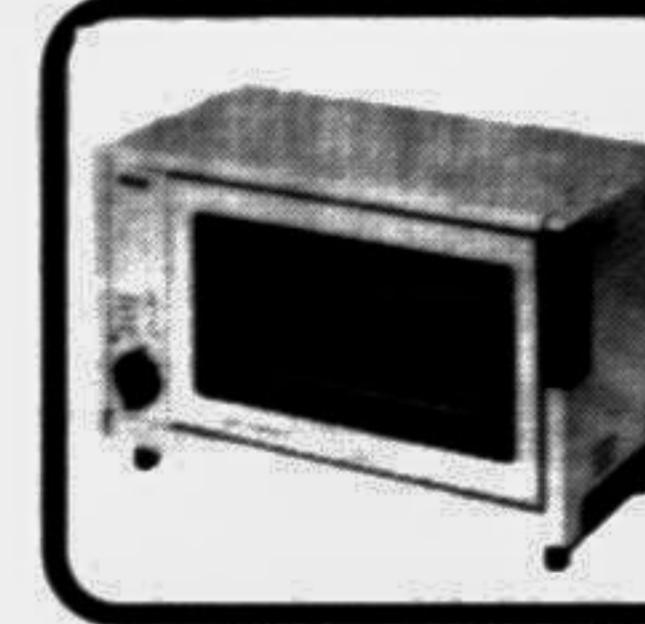
Prof Rehman Sobhan said the World Bank, after every five years, says reform has just started. He rejected this claim by saying "When you reflect where we are today, it is the end result of 15 years of reforms. We have to find why

reforms had limited impact on economy."

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"This state of arrested development suggests that we have foregone potential growth that could have emerged from successful reforms," he maintained.

He said the media could play a crucial role in building confidence of the investors in the economy by correctly informing the people about the health of the economy.



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15 unions in Sirajganj inundated

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 18: Flood water from the rain-swollen Jamuna submerged the low-lying areas of 15 unions in five thanas of the district today, reports UNB.

Of the affected unions, five were in Kazirganj, two in Sadar, one in Belkuchi, four in Chouhali and three in Shahjadpur thanas.

Officials said, standing crops, including seed beds on some 91 acres of land were washed away by the surging water.

Meanwhile, some 150 families of chat areas were rendered homeless due to erosion by the river Jamuna.

In Manikganj, considerable portions of eight unions in two thanas of the district have been inundated following spate of the Jamuna and the Padma.

The district's Harirampur and Daulatpur thanas are now being affected by the flood water for the second time this year.

Officials recorded 8cm rise in water level of the river Jamuna at Aricha point during the last 24 hours.

Allowances to FFs

1784 applications pending

By Staff Correspondent

The Mukti Joddha Kalyan Trust provides Tk 7 crore 8 lakh allowances annually to 2,493 families of *shahid* freedom fighters and 1,042 disabled freedom fighters.

This was disclosed yesterday