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The World on Time

More Australian cos now seeking to invest in Bangladesh: Fischer

Australian Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer yesterday said economic reforms in Australia and Bangladesh are opening up both countries to the world and presenting many new opportunities for strengthening the bilateral relationship, reports UNB.

"Our bilateral relationship is underpinned by two elements: the Australian development cooperation programme with Bangladesh and our joint interest in boosting the level of two-way trade," he said.

Fischer, also the minister for trade, was addressing a seminar on "Australian Business Partnership with Bangladesh" at a local hotel in the morning.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, President of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Yusuf Abdullah Haroon, Executive Chairman of Board of Investment Anisul Huq Chowdhury and Australian High Commissioner in Dhaka Charles Stuart also spoke on the occasion.

Fischer said: The contribution of Australia's Bangladeshi-born community to "our economic and social life and their vital role in fostering bilateral relations has been very significant."

The Australian deputy prime minister said trade and investment are on the rise, with a substantial increase in interest by Australian companies seeking to invest in Bangladesh.

Turning to Bangladesh's market reforms, Fischer said the implementation of market reforms in recent years have brought positive results and its economy has grown steadily at an annual rate of 4.5 per cent throughout the 1990s.

He said though tariffs have been lowered across a number of lines, but in some sectors as in the area of medical equipment they still remain high.

"There is still a need to further simplify regulatory requirements. Addressing the function, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed urged the Australian government to take immediate step to import Bangladeshi products without duty to narrow the trade gap and enable Dhaka to face the challenges of trade liberalisation and globalisation.

He urged the Australian authorities to buy jute goods, ready-made garments, leather products, specialised textiles and hard board from Bangladesh.

He listed various liberal economic policies undertaken by the government and hoped that the Australian investors would come forward to exploit the opportunities and become development partner of Bangladesh.

He told the Australian delegation that the opportunities being provided in Bangladesh is much higher. Bangladesh is pioneer in bringing down tariff in this region, he added.

BOI executive chairman Anisul Huq Chowdhury listed the various reform measures taken up by Bangladesh and urged the Australian investors to avail the opportunity of package incentives and invest here.

Australian business delegates David Smith, Robert AA Burbury, Dr Asil Avioğlu, Dale Coleman, Daniel Bergade, Eric Garner, William Barratt and Ross Hitt presented papers on various subjects like banking, trading, geo-engineering and hydrological services during the working session of the seminar.

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PM assures investors of cooperation, assistance

SAVAR, Apr 8: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today called upon local and foreign investors to come forward with their capital and technology to utilise the world's most inexpensive labour force and the package of incentives given by the government, reports UNB.

Inaugurating the expansion project of Dhaka EPZ this morning, the Prime Minister assured the investors of all possible cooperation and assistance of the government and said the government has already taken a number of unprecedented steps to attract foreign investment.

The expansion project of the Dhaka Export Processing Zone was taken up on 215 acres of land at a cost of Tk 59.90 crore in August, 1996. The project is due to be completed by June this year.

Proposals for setting up industries in about 60 per cent of the total plots have already been received and in most of the cases plots have been allocated, official sources said.

Hasina said present industrial policy is aiming at evolving a realistic industrial reform programme after a careful evaluation of the problems and prospects of existing units.

The Prime Minister said the government is attaching utmost importance to the national industrial process. It has already declared 1997 as the "Year of Investment".

A large number of foreign investors have already come to invest in the EPZs of Bangladesh following combined efforts of the government and BEPZA, she said.

She said she was happy to learn that a sizeable amount of land of the expanded area of the Dhaka EPZ has already been allocated to the foreign investors.

Referring to shortage of power and gas supply, she said steps had been taken to supply these to Chittagong and Dhaka EPZs on priority basis.

About the gas and oil sectors, Hasina said the government has just had a successful licensing bidding for gas and oil exploration in London and Houston.

Share scam

From Page 1

Rahman and Salman F Rahman of Beximco Group.

Three other accused, Abdur Row Chowdhury, Sayeed Kabir Chowdhury and Moshir Rahman, upon surrendering before the court yesterday submitted petitions for anticipatory bail, which is likely to be heard today.

The court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka on April 2 upon complaint cases filed by the Securities and Exchange Commission in allegation of manipulating share prices through 'fraudulent' means issued warrant of arrest against 32 persons.

On the following day most of the petitioners filed petitions for anticipatory bail.

Barrister Syed Ishiaq Ahmed, Rafiqul Huq and Rokonuddin Mahmud, among others, moved for the petitioners separately. Attorney General K S Nabi assisted by Deputy Attorney General Nikhilesh Dutta opposed the petitions.

Pre-bid meet on Jamuna bridge rly link held

A pre-bid meeting on the construction of Jamuna bridge railway link was held at Rail Bhavan Conference Room yesterday, reports UNB.

Representatives of eight pre-qualified bidders participated in the meeting.

Director General of Bangladesh Railway M A Mannaf opened the meeting. In his address, Mannaf welcomed the pre-qualified bidders and assured BR's all assistance of completing the construction work by the successful bidder.

Feni rally

From Page 1

The BNP leaders went to the minister's office at 12 noon and waited in vain for more than half an hour and returned after handing over the memorandum to the Home Minister's PS, party sources added.

In the memorandum, BNP alleged that Tushar and Nasir were killed by terrorists patronised by the ruling party.

It said police did not arrest any of the killers or the accused even seven days after the killings. Moreover, some of the accused took shelter at the residence of Jinal Hazari, a ruling party MP, it alleged.

BNP also said the party leaders have discussed with district and divisional officers and requested them to arrest the culprits for the sake of maintaining law and order. But, in spite of all these, nobody was arrested so far, it said.

Aid Consortium

From Page 1

The aid consortium and investors forum, meeting, to be held for the first time in Bangladesh, is expected to be attended by 20 multilateral donor countries and agencies and more than 100 representatives of different international trade and commerce bodies and investment organisations.

The World Bank is the sponsor of the aid consortium meeting which is usually held in Paris every year.

Bangladesh will seek a fresh commitment of foreign aid for the fiscal 1997-98 at the aid consortium meeting. The government has already directed the authorities concerned to make an aid-memoir seeking fresh commitment for foreign aid.

Meanwhile, a meeting on the proposed investors forum will be held today at the NEC building with ERD Secretary Dr Mashur Rahman in the chair.

4 killed

From Page 1

and another at Kaliganj Thana Health Complex.

A Railway press release said the four were travelling by the autorickshaw, but it did not mention the fate of its driver.

High officials of the Railway visited the spot and a three-member enquiry committee was formed to ascertain the cause of the accident. The committee will record its eye-witness account at Arikhola station today.

Railway authorities expressed deep sorrow at the death of four people in the mishap.

NAM confce

From Page 1

East, Bosnia-Herzegovina and in other places that involved the interest of the member countries.

The NAM conference also urged all states to refrain from organising, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in the territories of other states or encouraging activities within their territories directed towards the commission of such acts, including allowing the use of national territories and territories under their jurisdiction for planning and training for that purpose.

Meanwhile the conference unanimously elected South Africa the next chairman of Non-Aligned Movement and it will host the next summit towards the end of the next year.

BB report

From Page 1

ditute and mobilising more domestic resources and attaching priority to productive and employment-generating projects in the ADP.

It noted that the banks faced a remarkable liquidity crisis due to the dependence of the government on the banks caused by fall in foreign assistance and food imports in public sector, and a huge credit to the private sector.

The total domestic credit rose by 20.4 per cent in 1995-96 fiscal compared to 17.6 per cent a year back.

A credit boom of Tk 1669.40 crore in government sector and Tk 5856 crore in private sector had contributed to the domestic credit growth. But a fall of Tk 158.30 crore in public sector credit reduced the expansionary impact of the credit growth.

Wake-up call for AL

From Page 1

ruling party. This should wake them up to the fact that it has been quite some time that they have gone into the repressive mode. That the claim of the opposition that they are being victimised is not a figment of their myopic imagination but have now been proved to exist by no less an authority than the High Court.

Another lesson for this government is a clear signal by the judiciary not to play with the Special Powers Act. It was sheer arrogance of the Prime Minister when she categorically denied that SPA would not be removed. Why? Because all previous governments kept it. Well are we to understand that AL will take Zia's and Ershad's governments as models for itself as far as SPA is concerned. Isn't the present government constantly pointing out that it is the "first" democratic government after 21 years. Are to expect nothing new.

Yet another lesson would be to seriously introspect as to why there is a growing disenchantment with this government. Are all who criticise the government belong to the anti-liberation camp? How wise and correct is it to brush aside all criticisms as the work of those who opposed our independence struggle, and all failures as the

work of saboteurs and terrorists. Is it not self-defeating to always blame others, and never be self-critical.

A lesson could also be to look into how the decision making in the ruling party and the government really takes place. Take the case of the arrest of the four BNP leaders. Was a thorough discussion held among the party leaders as to the negative and positive aspects of this action? Why was the move necessary now? Has repressive measures ever worked in this part of the world, especially in Bangladesh? If not, then why go for it? A more democratic decision making process within the cabinet and the party could have prevented this humiliation.

Close to the Prime Minister there is an all pervading self-congratulatory atmosphere which is shielding her from the changing reality outside. This judgement comes as a breath of fresh air for the leadership which, if taken in the right spirit, can go a long way to clear the mind, and refresh the spirit with new and creative thoughts. Taken in a negative spirit, the message would be lost. Will the judgement be heeded? Or will it go the way that "the wise words of Mandela" went?

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Cargo handling at Ctg port disrupted for 15 hours

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 8: Cargo handling at Chittagong port was disrupted for 15 hours till 4 pm today following an accident inside the jetty that left one truck helper dead, port officials said.

They said some truck drivers went on rampage last night at 1 am immediately after the truck helper, Noman, 22, was crushed to death as a big pipe slipped from a forklift at the time of handling and fell on the victim.

The truckers attacked a port garage causing damage to it and enforced a sudden halt in cargo handling from 1 am, the officials said.

Hundreds of trucks were kept stranded in and around all port jetties while stick-wielding agitating truckers forced the dock workers and other labourers not to work.

Later, work resumed at the port after 4 pm following a meeting between the leaders of truck drivers and the Port Authority, the officials said.

Pvt schools

From Page 1

Registration 1962 as amended by Registration of Private Schools Act 1989, every private school must be registered with the relevant authorities. Under the law, the private schools have to follow a curriculum and ensure that it does not derail from the education policy of the country. Failure to register could be punishable with a fine of Tk 1,000 or one year imprisonment or both.

Khaleda

From Page 1

ment was trumpeting "sabotage" everyday, but it is the ruling party which taught its workers to do destructive activities when it was not in power. They have no control over their partymen," she added.

President of Tangail Bar Association Golam Sarwar Ali Khan, Vice-President Golam Mostofa, General Secretary Faizur Rahman, President of Supreme Court Bar Association Barrister Nazmul Huda and General Secretary Advocate Jinal Abedin, Lutfur Rahman Khan Azad MP, Abul Kalam Azad MP and Goutam Chakrabarti MP also spoke on the occasion.

JSAC, JMB projects

From Page 1

The management was asked to submit a progress report in April 1998 on the execution of measures to compensate the char dwellers and the panel will be invited to give its comment.

Under the IDA policies adopted in the late 1980s, a project must include measures to mitigate adverse effects on people in voluntarily displaced or whose livelihood and environment are affected.

Reviewing the claims of the private sector jute mill operators, another panel cites problems in project design, slow implementation, and political instability which have delayed privatisation of public sector mills and resulted in adverse impacts on private mills.

An adjustment credit of 240 million US dollars — also from the IDA — was approved in 1994 to support the government in carrying out its reform programme in the jute sector.

IDA Management informed the Board that an upcoming supervision mission will evaluate the government's progress in achieving privatisation of jute mills.

Based on experiences of JSAC in past three years, the panel recommended that emerging political forces and earlier lessons pointed out that an extension of the closing date of the credit, due in June 1997, without revisiting the basic design concepts with the government and the requesters, may not be an adequate solution.

"Close supervision during this extension with regard to financial discipline might at least meet some of the requesters' concern. The closing of the programme without a new approach in place, however, would presumably meet none of their expectations from the reform programme," the panel report said.

In this context, the panel recommended that an investigation into violations of the IDA policies and procedures alleged by the requesters would serve no useful purpose. The Board accepted the recommendation on a no objection basis.

Mizan, Zafar

From Page 1

taken against any of these three leaders, they would clarify their position at a joint press conference.

The meeting also decided that the three leaders would issue a statement at a news conference within next three to four days after consultation with leaders and workers of the party.

When contacted, Ershad, the former President, said: I don't know anything about it. They have not discussed it with me.

Australian DPM

From Page 1

cial significance with the visit of the then prime minister, Gough Whitlam, in January 1975, is rated very high by the present government.

The Prime Minister said the signing of a 30-year Ganges water sharing treaty with India and solving peacefully the refugee problem in the Chittagong Hill Tracts are two major successes of her nine-month government.

The Australian Deputy Prime Minister, whose one of the portfolios is human rights, said he was pleased to hear that the Bangladesh government had taken steps to stop child labour in mills and factories and for their education and rehabilitation.

A great fan of cricket, Fischer showed keen interest in Bangladesh's performance in the semifinals of ICC Trophy in Kuala Lumpur.

Hawkers return to city pavements

By Staff Correspondent

Hundreds of hawkers who were evicted about two months ago, returned to the city pavements on Sunday following the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner gave them permission to do so.

When contacted, the DMP Commissioner denied having given any such permission, but said, "I permitted the business on condition that they would begin their business after 5 pm. But I did not designate any area for them." The Commissioner asserted that it was upto the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to allocate space for the hawkers.

DCC officials expressed their annoyance at the directive by the DMP Commissioner. A top official of the Estate Department asked, "who is he to give permission to the hawkers? The police have no authority to permit the hawkers to use the pavements from where we evicted them only the other day."

When asked whether any leniency would be shown to the hawkers in view of the upcoming Eid, the DCC official replied that the Mayor was considering several options as to how they could be rehabilitated.

The DMP Commissioner pointed out that he wanted to make sure that the pedestrian and traffic thoroughfares remained clear during the peak hours.

Gayeswar

From Page 1

prayer before the appellate court, contended that there was no such precedence in habeas corpus matter in the higher court directing the respondent to pay compensation.

He further argued that the petitioners did not claim any compensation in their prayer. The other three stay petitions will be submitted before the Appellate Division later on, the Attorney General said.

BNP MP Nizamuddin Khan dead

Nizamuddin Khan MP died of cardiac arrest at National Cardiovascular Institute in the city yesterday afternoon. He was 67, reports UNB.

Nizamuddin was elected MP from Manikganj-3 constituency with BNP ticket in the 7th general election. He also won 1979 and 1991 parliamentary elections as BNP candidate.

During his long political career, he was involved in various social welfare activities in his constituency.

Namaj-e-Janaza for Nizamuddin will be held at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad at 11.30 am today. He will be buried in his home constituency.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury have expressed profound shock at the death of Nizamuddin Khan.

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia expressed profound shock at the death of Nizamuddin Khan.

The BNP Chairperson also visited the Narinda residence to pay her last respect to the leader. She consoled the bereaved family members and passed some time there.

718 incidents

From Page 1

committed suicide after suffering 100 floggings.

The ASK statistics show that 110 women committed suicide, 48 were kidnapped, 20 were sexually abused after being deceived, 31 were murdered by terrorists, 15 died mysteriously and bodies of 20 women were recovered from different parts of the country in 1996.

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Advertisement for social justice center. Text in Bengali: 'সুস্থ শিশুর ওজন প্রতি মাসে বাড়ে, ওজন বাড়াতাই হলো তার বেড়ে ওঠার সঠিক পরিমাপ।' 'তাঁই শিশুর সঠিকভাবে বেড়ে ওঠা নিশ্চিত করতে আপনাদের নিকটস্থ সামাজিক পুষ্টি কেন্দ্রে আসুন এবং দুই বছর বয়স পর্যন্ত প্রতি মাসে শিশুর ওজন নিন।' List of centers: চাঁদপুর জেলার : শাহরাস্তি, মান্দা জেলার : মোহমদপুর, ফরিদপুর জেলার : ফরিদপুর সদর, বগুড়া জেলার : গাবতলী, বরিশাল জেলার : বানারিপাড়া, মৌলভীবাজার জেলার : রাজনগর. আজই এ সেবার সুযোগ নিন। বাংলাদেশ সমন্বিত পুষ্টি প্রকল্প স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়. DFP-8224-5/4