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BNP workers stage a demonstration in front of the party's central office at Nayapaltan in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Govt facing difficulty

From Page 1

unless government expenditure is controlled.

The government, however, views that its borrowing is not 'very high' and is restricted within one per cent of GDP which, it says, can be taken as within the standard level of borrowing.

IMF's conditions also include restricting the central bank's lending to specialised credit institutions, mainly the development financing institutions (DFIs). Reviewing the dismal performance of the DFIs now limping with huge bad loans, IMF has come to the conclusion that unless there has been some positive improvement in their performances, pumping further money into them will also be wasteful.

It has also set privatisation of a DFI, Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSRS), as a condition for ESAP loan.

IMF is also pressing for raising interest rate ceiling on agricultural credit on the ground that it is not being utilised by those needing it most.

Putting special emphasis on privatising the state-owned enterprises (SOEs), IMF has said

## JCD-BCL clash in Ctg: 10 injured

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 20: At least 10 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and ruling party backed Chhatra League at Baroma College at Chandanais, 25 miles off the city, this noon, police and witnesses said.

The injured were rushed to local health complex for treatment. Police said the clash had erupted at noon when the BCL activists brought out a procession welcoming the freshers in the college.

Police said the procession came under attack by rivals near Amirhat. The supporters of both BCL and JCD used lethal weapons during an hour-long clash.

Later, police rushed to the spot and dispersed the feuding groups.

The enterprises have to be corporatised to enable them to be off-loaded. Closing down of non-viable SOEs and promoting private sector entry into power, communication, water and sanitation areas are also demanded as preconditions for ESAP loan.

But the toughest part of the conditions, as viewed by the government, comes in the domain of domestic pricing of fertiliser and petroleum products.

The government has to increase its fertiliser and gas prices to the world market level between this year and 1999-2000. Diesel prices have to be restored to 1991-92 level in real terms and power tariff is to be adjusted annually. These increases in prices have to be passed through to the retail level.

In the trade area, IMF is pressing for reducing tariff levels to 0-15 per cent. The maximum tariff rate has to be lowered to 30 per cent by 1997-98, to 20 per cent by 1998-99 and to 15 per cent by 1999-2000.

IMF has also asked for introducing a flexible exchange rate system and for liberalising capital controls by 1998-99 to 1999-2000.

## Murder in custody

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tan Police (DMP).

"I can not stay in this place. It's too hot," Nuruzzaman had to a stool borrowed from a neighbour. CID sources said the Biman crew was assaulted only once. Later, he fell sick and started behaving abnormally.

It was reported that when Nuruzzaman's relatives went to Tejgaon thana to meet him two days after the arrest, they found him "devastated and wearing

## Police action

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Bijoyganar, Kakrail, Purana Paltan, Fakirpool and Dainik Bangla crossing before dissolving inside the Baitul Mukarram for the Maghreb prayers.

However, police did not put up any more resistance after the brief action in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

Addressing the supporters without a microphone which he said police had taken away earlier, Nizami, standing on a stool borrowed from a cigarette vendor, denounced the police action and blasted the ban on street rallies.

He announced countrywide demonstrations and protests on Monday, to be preceded by a demonstration in the city after a gathering at Paltan crossing at 5 pm today.

The government which bans rallies and demonstrations does so out of a feeling of losing its toe hold, Nizami observed. He urged police to discharge their duties professionally, not as partisans, claiming, they (police) showed bias against people with beard and cap.

He urged the government to take lesson before it is too late. Even Ershad could not survive by banning rallies and resorting to repressions. He also demanded withdrawal of the ban on gatherings in and around the Baitul Mukarram.

This government has failed to run the country in all respect, Nizami said cataloguing a litany of failures to support his claim. These include faltering power supply, deteriorating law and order, poor economic management leading to rise in oil prices, and failure in capping the fire at Magurchara.

The Jamaat leader also warned the government against withdrawal of Army from the Chittagong Hill Tracts "to placate a neighbouring country".

The rally was addressed by party leaders Kamruzzaman, Abdul Kader Mollah, Jasimuddin and ATM Azharul Islam.

## One stabbed to death in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, Sept 20: Unidentified miscreants stabbed a young man to death in the town this evening, police and hospital sources said, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Akbar Ali, 25, a mason and son of one Siraj Ali Mandol of Sadar thana.

The assailants swooped on him at about 7.30 pm while Akbar was returning home. He died on the spot. However, reason behind the killing could not be known.

## Principal

From Page 1

hospital with serious injury.

The Namaz-e-Janaza of Prof Haque was held at the Jagannath University College premises at 1 pm yesterday. He will be buried at his family graveyard at village Nowapara.

Vice-Chancellor of the National University Prof Aminul Islam, in a message of condolence, yesterday expressed his deep shock at the sudden death of Prof Haque.

## BNP condemnns

From Page 1

ing of "false" cases against 30 BNP men, including Ilias Ali and Shaheeduddin Chowdhury Anne. He demanded immediate withdrawal of the false cases and unconditional release of all arrested leaders and workers.

He also urged the government to stop its repressive measures against political opponents.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Shah Moazzam Hossain, co-chairman of the Jatiya Party (Z-M) have condemned the 'police attack' on the rallies of BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote and other opposition parties.

In a joint statement yesterday they called for formation of a 'united platform' of the nationalist, democratic and Islamic forces.

They also condemned 'police attack' on Jamaat rally and assault on their top ranking leaders including Moulana Matru Rahman Nizami in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

## Jute about to become history

From Page 1

Things are getting worse every year. In Tangail, jute now sells at around 200 taka per maund against last year's 500 taka.

Price situation in northern jute growing pockets are much worse than Tangail. In Thakurgaon, price is 120-130 taka per maund while in Gaibandha, it is less than 100 taka.

An agriculture official in Tangail said farmers in the district produced 408,275 bales of jute in 1987,60 acre in 1985. In 1997, the production dropped to 20,881 bales. "Future looks bleak," he said.

National figures are equally gloomy. In 1969-70 fiscal year, Bangladesh farmers grew jute on 24.45 lakh acres and produced 73.91 lakh bales of fibre.

In 1995-96, the acreage came down to 11.33 lakh acres and production to 41 lakh bales. "Both acreage and production have been halved in the 25 years," said one jute official.

The downside is closely linked to dwindling demand in international market. Bangladesh exported 447.7 thousand metric tons of jute in 1979-80 which came down to 325 thousand tons in 1995-96. International prices are either static or waning gradually.

Stable price of petroleum has given synthetic substitute a big edge over the natural fibres. Immediate consequence is also giving rise to both industrial and households uses of synthetics. Comparatively costly natural fibres like jute became the victim.

Growing international competition is another cause for the plight of Bangladesh jute. Once Bangladesh being almost the lone producer used to dictate the international price.

Now there are many other low-cost competitors, including India, China, Myanmar, Thailand and Philippines.

"International price now is not at all controlled by production in Bangladesh. Production in China is the dictating factor," said one jute expert.

Growing distortions in domestic market also has created additional burdens on jute growers. "Farias and mahagans (middlemen) eat up a major portion of the returns," grumbled Abul Kalam, a jute grower in

## Banks keep branches open

From Page 1

important places.

He said the banks were asked to report to the central bank how many branches at which places would be kept open. Till date, only Prime Bank and ANZ Grindlays Bank reported to the Bangladesh Bank.

The central bank official also informed that the management of the NCBs sought a little time from the Bangladesh Bank so that they could organise the branches to operate on Saturdays.

"Hopefully, they would start their Saturday operation from the next week," Raquib told UNB.

Leaders of the business community welcomed the Bangladesh Bank decision allowing the commercial banks to keep open some selective branches on Saturdays, but again demanded weekly holidays on Sundays.

"It's a positive step, but most ideal would be half-day banking on Saturdays and weekly holidays on Sundays," said Samson Chowdhury, the President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI).

He told UNB that the commercial establishments, most of which remain open on Saturdays, would be benefited by the banking transactions on the holiday.

But Chowdhury again strongly demanded Sunday as weekly holiday as most of the

## Task Force

From Page 1

The report, however, said that the system should not be introduced in a haste as it is not sufficient ground work as the recommendations were not consistent with the traditional ideas of the people of the country. The new system could be discussed in conferences of teachers, it proposed.

The Committee for Formulation of National Education Policy has also suggested that students failing in one subject should be allowed a second chance to pass in the same subject.

Both the Task Force and the Committee recommended introduction of Grade System, replacing the present 'merit list'.

Sixty-three per cent students failed in the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations held under the five education boards this year. The HSC results were announced on September 11. Forty-eight students failed in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations this year. The results were announced in July.

Under the existing system, students failing in one subject have to appear at examinations in all the subjects next year.

## One murdered in Hathazari

CHITTAGONG, Sept 20: A youth was stabbed to death by some unidentified miscreants in Hathazari thana in the district today, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Haroon, 18, of Shikondi village in the thana.

Police suspect that some youths, who called him out of his residence in the Friday evening, killed him. His body was found in nearby Katakhal beel at about 8 am today.

## Loadshedding

Hartal at Barguna tomorrow

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Sept 20: The Barguna Electricity Consumers' Association has called a half-day hartal in the town and its adjoining areas on Monday protesting frequent loadshedding.

Hundreds of people brought out a hurricane procession in the town yesterday. They demanded of the authority concerned to connect Barguna with the Patuakhali 32 KV substation.

## 1 shot as two rival groups of youths clash in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Sept 20: A woman was shot when several rounds of bullets were fired during chase and counter chase between two rival groups of young men in Niramaidan area in the town this afternoon.

A group of young men from Sagardighirpar attacked the another group belonging to Miremmaidan area in the afternoon.

They also exploded crackers and fired blank shots to create panic in the area.

Karimunnessa, 40, a housewife sustained bullet wounds. She was admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

The incident took place as a sequel to a clash over a cricket match. Additional police force has been deployed in the area.

## Mayor, PM

From Page 1

of public meetings in the city.

"Not that BNP alone is protesting this, rather, all the political parties including LDF, Jatiya Party (Z-M), Gana Forum, CPB, BSD and the city unit of Jatiya Party have already rejected the Mayor's decision", he said.

About the designated venues, Khoka said, the authorities of the school concerned at Mirpur Section 1 was not willing to allow public rallies at the school ground and Osmany Uddiyan was not suitable for rallies because of trees. Besides, Outer Stadium was used round-the-year for pioneer league, second division football and for practices by budding sportsmen, he added.

About the other venues, the city BNP leader said, "Those could at best be used for ward-level meetings, and were totally unfit for holding of national level rallies."

Mayor Mohammad Hanif, who himself had organised 'Janatar Mancha' for days together on the road in front of the Jatiya Press Club, did not consult 90 elected ward commissioners of the DCC, 44 of whom belong to BNP, in reaching the recent this decision, Khoka pointed out.

Hanif is total failure as far as addressing the problems of mosquito menace, traffic jam and water logging are concerned, he said.

Khoka attributed the city's traffic jam to, what he said, illegal operation of 80,000 new rickshaws in the name of 'Rickshaw Sramik League' after the Awami League's coming to power.

The BNP leaders at the press conference also condemned 'police attack' on Jamaat leaders and workers in front of the Press Club yesterday.

They also said BNP will bring out a procession in the city this afternoon, as scheduled earlier, protesting various 'anti-people' activities of the government.

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## Crime: Home Minister

From Page 1

and lawyers appointed to review the criminal cases in which criminals or terrorists get relieved from courts.

The minister said in the reformative measures law enforcement and police investigation would be separated, and two-digit telephone number introduced to inform the police on emergency basis.

An intelligence network will also be formed, to come to grips with the crime galore. Moreover, a dog squad will be raised to trace out criminals.

The Home Minister further informed that 200 vehicles would join the fleet of police by October to accelerate the drive against crimes.

An additional 4,000 police personnel will join the DMP within over year, and to meet the emergency, 1,000-man Ansar force will be deployed to assist traffic and guard primary schools in Dhaka.

The minister said there would be vigilance on policemen and police stations.

"Our approach is different, we want people to go to police station to file case," he said, adding if police refuse to record any case, action will be taken against them.

Referring to allegation from the speakers, the Home Minister said statistics would show the rise of crime rate across the country in last 15 months, but it was because police were now recording crimes and people going to police with complains, which he said was lacking in the past.

"We don't want to hide anything and will project the true picture... we are taking action against the criminals and will continue it," he told them.

Responding to a suggestion, Rafiq said the government was planning to set up homes with the help of Women Affairs Ministry and NGOs to keep the

## Another murder case against Zardari

KARACHI, Sept 20: Pakistani police have filed another murder case against Benazir Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, implicated in the death of a former federal secretary Alam Baluch, police sources said today, reports AFP.

Murder charges were also filed against Zardari's father Hakim Ali Zardari and five others for their alleged role in the deaths of Alam Baluch and his guard near Hyderabad in Sindh province on Wednesday.

Zardari, detained husband of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, is currently facing murder charges for the death of his estranged brother-in-law Mir Murtaza Bhutto, who was killed on September 20 last year.

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