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PHILIPS

US, Malaysian investors keen to invest in various sectors

A five-member delegation of Malaysian investors, led by Aziz Mustafa, called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday, reports UNB.

During the meeting, the private sector investors team expressed its willingness to invest in physical infrastructure projects and in the power, energy and transport sectors.

The Malaysian investors especially showed interest in investment in mass transit system and city railway projects. Welcoming the Malaysian investors team, the Prime Minister said the present government is offering a very attractive investment package for the investors.

"You can avail the opportunity by investing in Bangladesh," she said.

Meanwhile, a US investors' team called on the Prime Minister and discussed the prospect of investment in developing the inland container river port in Dhaka and an international container terminal in Chittagong.

The four-member US business team, led by Bob Watters, presented their project proposal to the Prime Minister apprising that they have expertise in container projects.

The Prime Minister showed her keen interest in their projects and said investment in this sector of the country will be welcomed.

BCL activist

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According to campus sources, Raju was an activist of BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and was attached with Jasimuddin Hall of the university. He joined BCL as Awami League came to power and was residing in Mohsin Hall.

Raju was latter sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

3 activists

From page 1

auction if they did not agree to pay them Tk 500 for the sale of every cattle.

After the officials expressed their inability to do so, they became agitated and used abusive words, the witnesses said the hue and cry, traders and local people came to the spot and attacked the 'toll collectors'.

They tried to run away from the area but people gheraoed them and roughed them up. Later they were released after first aid at the Dairy Farm Medical Centre.

When contacted, Officer-in-Charge of Savar thana Nabi Hossain said, "Police have been deployed in the area following a request by the Farm authorities to maintain law and order during the auction."

He, however, told this correspondent that police were not officially informed about the incident.

Biman employees

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man headquarters but there had been no untoward incident. The sit-in began at 10 am and continued for an hour. But the employees continued demonstrations chanting slogans.

Abul Kashem said the employees would hold further talks with the management and submit a memorandum containing their demands to remove the anomalies.

But supporters of the Biman Samik Union, which is outside the CBA, reportedly did not participate in the demonstration. A top leader of the union, said they would come up with a separate programme on the new pay scale after the Eid holidays.

7-party

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tour, hold rallies and procession across the country from February 11 to 20.

The programmes were announced at a meeting of the alliance held at 29 Minto Road with BNP Standing Committee member Barrister Abdus Salam in the chair.

The meeting discussed latest political development, economic condition and situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It also exchanged views on different aspects of the next phase of anti-government movement.

It urged the people to observe the programme unitedly.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Shamsul Islam MP, JP co-chairperson Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Shamim Al Mamun, Jamaat leaders Abdul Qader Mollah and Azharul Islam, Oli Ahmed of Democratic League, Shafiqul Alam Pradhan of JAGPA, PNP leader Sheikh Sawkat Hossain Nilu and Nuzul Huq Majumdar of NDA.

'Thwart any attempt to misinterpret Islam'

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the people to be imbued with real teaching of Islam to thwart the ill-attempts of the vested quarters who were out to misinterpret it, report agencies.

"We will have to remain alert so that the vested quarters can not trade on religion taking advantage of our soft feelings towards religion," she said.

The Prime Minister was inaugurating the construction of the Islamic Foundation complex building at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar here in the morning.

In the first phase, five floors of the 10-storied foundation complex will be built at a cost of Tk 10 crore. Another Tk 15 crore will be needed to complete the remaining construction works.

Sheikh Hasina said acceptability of the Islamic Foundation has risen among the people for its expanded activities on the socio-economic issues like imam training, mosque-based children and mass education, poverty alleviation, free treat-

ment and publication programmes.

She said Islam has made education obligatory for every Muslim men and women.

"If poverty is a curse, then ignorance is a more dangerous curse," the Prime Minister said, adding that only education can salvage this huge burden of illiterate people from the curse of ignorance.

Hasina called for concerted government and private initiatives to make the nation free from the curse of illiteracy. Only the government budget and initiative are not enough for this gigantic task, she said.

She said the Religious Affairs Ministry can strengthen and make effective the Islamic Foundation's programme taken for imparting mass and child education with the help of lakhs of mosques across the country.

The Prime Minister assured possible help of the government for conducting and expanding mosque-based education programme for children.

One killed, 20 hurt in Bheramara gunfight

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Jan 25: One person was killed and 20 others were injured in a gunfight between two rival groups at 12 Dagh under Bheramara thana last night.

The clash took place over possession of a char emerged in the river Padma.

The dead was identified as Abdur Gaffar, 35.

The injured were admitted to Kushtia General Hospital.

DC, police super and local MP Shahidul Islam today visited the area.

BNP hands over

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In this regard, they blamed the AL government for what they said not accepting BNP's rightful demands and continuing undemocratic practices undermining the sovereignty of parliament.

The recently-signed peace accord on the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), opposed by the BNP, also came up for discussion.

The BNP leaders also shared their 'bitter' experience about national politics, economy and law and order with the US Ambassador, said a leader attending the meeting.

Party sources said BNP was looking for an opportunity to explain its prolonged boycott of parliament sessions to the US Ambassador, who was learnt to have been eager to listen to the BNP chief on the issue.

The other BNP leaders who attended the closed-door meeting are party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan MP, central leader Dr Abdul Moin Khan MP and Begum Zia's advisor MM Rezaul Karim.

DU Eid vacation extended

The Eid vacation of the Dhaka University was extended till February 5, reports UNB. All the classes will resume on February 8, said a press release yesterday.

Meanwhile, the examination for course No 305 of 3rd year (Honours) of the department of Geology, scheduled for February 9, was postponed due to unavoidable reasons.

Fresh schedule for the examination will be announced later. Other examinations will be held as scheduled earlier.

10pc of traffic police suffer from jaundice or liver diseases

At least 10 per cent of the traffic police in the capital either suffer from jaundice or other liver diseases, according to a police official, reports UNB.

Black smoke, scorching heat and dust may be the main causes for jaundice as the traffic police are exposed to such hostile environment everyday while performing their duty.

As per records of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), usually at least two or three traffic police take leave either because of jaundice or related complications every month.

Admitting the fact, Deputy Commissioner of Traffic Mustaq Hossain Khan said "Over population as well as a large number of unfit vehicles, which ply on the city streets frequently emitting black smoke, are mainly responsible for environment pollution."

Gold at higher price

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kerb markets. Linking kerb market price with confiscation of gold, the source said the price of 24 karat gold increases in the local unauthorised market whenever any huge chunk of gold is confiscated at the airport.

For example, he said, the price of pure gold (24 karat) increased to Tk 5,600 on Tuesday from its previous price of Tk 5,400 per tola after a huge quantity of gold was confiscated at Sylhet airport.

"I simply do not know why there is a big difference between the local and international prices," Bablu Dutta Milton of the Lily Jewellers said. He told this correspondent that the consumers would have got the benefits if the downward price adjustments were made quickly.

"It is said that BJA responds promptly to an upward price adjustment and slowly to a downward adjustment," said another jeweller.

It has been an open secret that the local jewellers are to procure gold from illegal sources since there is no legal procedure to buy pure gold, he said.

"Bullion traders are only authorised to recycle old gold ornaments," the BJA president said adding, that the average growth of gold industry was five per cent a year in terms of sales in recent times. Some other jewellers, however, said, the growth rate was more than 15 per cent a year.

One official at the Commerce Ministry said the ministry had no control on the gold price. He said that since the jewellers do not procure gold from the government, they are not responsible to any of the government agencies for the price hike.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Lutfar Rahman Sarkar, however, said the government does not have any mechanism to control price of gold in the country.

"This is a free market," he said admitting the need to break the syndicated gold business if any, which helps the jewellers appropriate unjust super profits.

Wadud said BJA had urged the government, including the Prime Minister, to allow them import gold and maintain a "pass book" to record its movement, stock or sale. "Only this can rescue the gold buyers,"

Scrap agreement

From page 1

"It is unfortunate that in a country where millions of people remain unemployed and under-employed, the government has compromised on the interests of vital sectors of the economy, for a few lac workers who are already fortunate in having been employed without having to do much productive work."

Focussing on the financial side, the statement said that the agreement would have three broad negative implications.

Firstly, further enhancement of wages and other financial benefits will financially cripple most of the public sector industries.

Secondly, it will set a limit on the privatisation process which will cause a setback to introduction of market economy.

Thirdly, the agreement will lead to retention of surplus manpower in the public sector enterprises.

It will also involve increased subsidy to the nationalised sector, the statement said.

"Quite clearly, this will put further pressure on the country's ailing financial institutions," it observed.

The statement said, the agreement will put a brake on the process of privatisation which will mean 'perpetuation of inefficiency.'

It said "It would have been timely and appropriate to tell

the SKOP that it was none of their business to decide on privatisation."

The financial concessions given by the government was "an alarming signal," it added.

"It negates the concern shown by the government so far to establish competitive economy. What is most regrettable is that the issues have not been discussed at the Tripartite Consultative Committee (TCC) which is the legally constituted apex body to determine labour-related issues," the statement pointed out.

"In the absence of any opportunity to discuss issues in the TCC, the employers' view points have been ignored which will also have an adverse impact on investment circles," the statement added.

TU offices

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These 19 employees include eight who have already been suspended by the BB authorities.

The report also recommended an inquiry to find out why the BB's internal security did not take action to stop the violence. It should be investigated whether there had been any security lapses which resulted in the violence, the report said.

Meanwhile, the government has taken strict security measures in the BB, deploying some 250 policemen including riot police.

Jail reforms

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As per the decisions, Tk 9 crore 20 lakh were disbursed recently for creating accommodation facilities for another 4000 prisoners in the jails across the country.

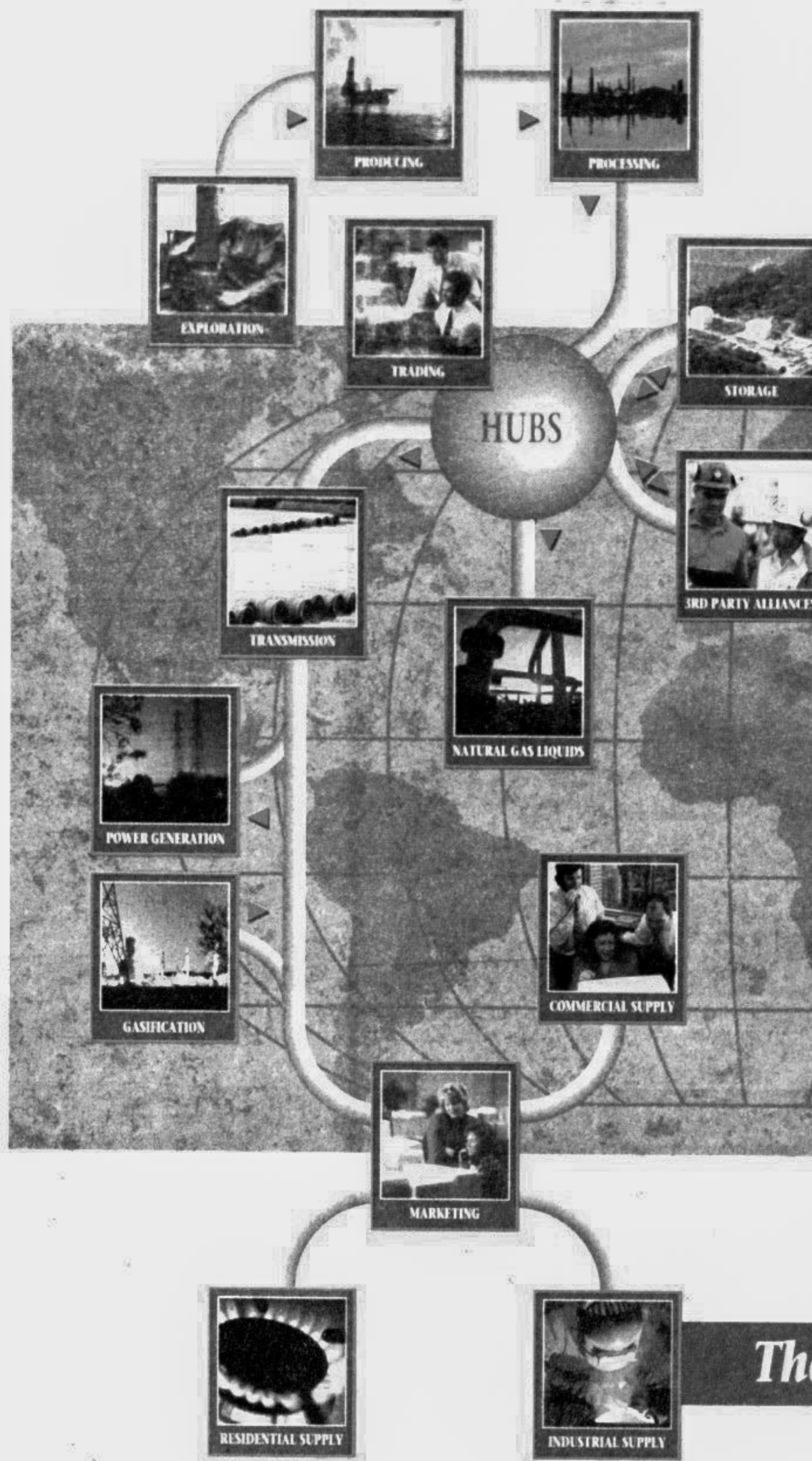
Besides, 580 posts of prison staff for various jails have also been created.

The number of kitchens on the basis of one kitchen per 500 prisoners is also being increased, the sources said, adding that at present there is only one kitchen in every jail. There is only one kitchen even in the Dhaka Central Jail and the number is likely to be increased to four.

Separate interview rooms for convicted prisoners are also under active consideration. There are only 10 interview rooms in the Dhaka Central Jail where more than 300 prisoners meet their relatives through these cubicles everyday.



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