



Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Parishad brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding rehabilitation of those affected by flash floods in Sylhet division. — Star photo

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The government will reimburse 50 per cent of such remitted interest to banks, he added. The finance minister said the amount due as determined by the special committee would be payable in 36 monthly installments within a maximum period of three years.

Also, the enlisted sick industries which had borrowed over Tk 50 lakh may submit proposals to banks for a compromise, he said, adding that the banks would take appropriate decision in such cases taking into account the bank-client relationship.

The minister said where court cases are pending, all proceedings would be taken within the legal framework without compromising the interest of the banks.

In order to compensate the losses of banks for the implementation of these measures, the minister proposed to issue bonds worth Tk 60 crore in the new financial year. He said, "If needed, allocations for this purpose will be enhanced in the future."

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When contacted a marginal farmer at village Bhahadurpur under Bheramara thana told this correspondent that they cultivated sunflower in several plots in and around his house and got good result. It has also increased the beauty of his housestead.

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The demand for edible oil can be fulfilled by cultivating sunflower in large scale, agriculturists said.

BRDB disburses Tk 75 lakh loan

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According to official sources, the Board set a target to disburse Taka one crore as loan among the poor people of the thana.

It has recovered Taka 79 lakh 37 thousand from the defaulters during the current year.

Contraband worth Tk 2 lakh seized

Bangladesh Rifles seized Indian goods including phenisidyl worth of Tk two lakh from a bus at Naoda, Joypurhat Tuesday, report UNB.

Official sources said acting on tip off, members of BDR task force on anti-smuggling with the help of jawans of Panchhibi BDR camp raided the Joypurhat-bound bus from Hilly at 6 pm and recovered the contraband.

The goods included 78 bottles of phenisidyl syrup, huge quantity of medicines, oil, shampoo and cosmetics of different types.

The recovered goods were deposited with the local customs godown. A case was filed in this regard.

Exemption of computers from VAT net hailed

The government decision to exempt computers and accessories from the Value Added Tax (VAT) net and existing customs and import duties in the current fiscal has created strong enthusiasm among students and researchers in the country, reports BSS.

"The new computer-friendly national budget has generated hopes in the student community specially on the campus of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and Dhaka University along with other institutions in the country," opined Habibur Rahman Habib, a sophomore-level resident student of Electrical and Electronic Engineering Department in BUET.

"I am lucky that I have decided to buy a computer now but I feel sorry for my roommate Nurul Hasan, Ullash, who bought a personal computer (PC) only last month," he said.

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BSSRS earns Tk 4.45 cr pre-tax profit

Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSSRS) has said it has earned a pre-tax profit of Tk 4.45 crore during the financial year of 1996-97, reports BSS.

This profit has been ascertained on the basis of actual realisation.

Out of the profit Tk 1.25 crore will be provided for payment of income tax to the government and Tk 70 lakh will be paid to the national exchequer, said a BSSRS press release.

While approving the audited accounts of BSSRS for FY 1996-97 at a meeting, the Board of Directors of BSSRS held on June 11, with Hasnat Abdul Hye, Chairman Board of Directors, and Secretary, Local Government Division, in the chair.

The board expressed its satisfaction at the earning of profit and hoped that the management would improve the realisation of loans.

Death anniversary

The 22nd death anniversary of LA Chowdhury, a noted educationist, social worker and politician of Chittagong, will be observed today, says a press release.

A milad mahfil will be held at his Dewanbar residence at Chittagong to mark the day.

Chowdhury was the general secretary of Combined Front in 1954 and president of Sher-e-Bangla Krishak Samik Party, Chittagong branch.

Nat'l Pay Scale Block allocation of Tk 110 cr proposed to remove disparity

Finance Minister S A M S Kibria has proposed a block allocation of Tk 110 crore in the 1998-99 budget to meet the demands of various groups affected by the new national pay scale, reports UNB.

"No new pay scale is equally beneficial to all groups. Benefits vary in the process of pay fixation," he said in his budget speech Thursday.

However, the Finance Minister said "the government is sympathetically considering the demands of various groups, and a block allocation of Tk 110 crore has been proposed for this purpose in the new budget."

Kibria said the expenditure on salaries has increased by Tk 1334.64 crore in the revenue budget and Tk 158.91 crore in development budget in fiscal year 1998-99 over the expenditure prior to implementation of new pay scale.

As part of anti-poverty campaign, the Finance Minister said, the Employment Generation Bank will start operations this month.

Taka 50 crore has been provided in the current year's budget as government's contribution to the bank's capital, he added.

In the new budget, Kibria proposed Tk 25 crore additional allocation to this bank for next year. He also proposed additional Tk eight crore to the Housing Fund which started operation with a capital of Tk 50 crore.

Economic Survey says Power production falls to 2400mw

The power supply situation in the country has deteriorated as production fell amidst ever increasing demand, says the Economic Survey 1998, reports UNB.

The highest power generation capacity was 2908 megawatt in 1996-97 while installed capacity for power generation was 3091 MW in 1997-98.

But the real production decreased to 2350-2400 MW due to lack of gas supply, and because some power plants have become obsolete.

"It was not possible to supply power according to the highest requirements for the last few years due to shortage in production," said the Survey placed in Parliament Thursday.

The present average power generation capacity of the country stands at 1900 MW as some power plants are undergoing renovation and maintenance.

The Survey estimated that the demand for power in the year 2000 will be 3150 MW.

It also mentioned that the government has undertaken a power sector reform programme to improve the situation.

The government is taking all possible steps to increase power production and allowed the private sector to generate power, it said.

Arrangement has also been made to put into operation the 210 MW capacity sixth unit at Ghorashal and the 100 MW barge-mounted power plant at Khulna by next August.

In the private sector, two barge-mounted power plants of 100 MW capacity will be set up at Khulna and Haripur. An agreement was also signed with Rural Power Company to set up a 60 MW gas turbine power plant at Mymensingh.

Another contract will be signed soon for setting up a 450 MW combined cycle power plant at Meghna Ghat while initiative has been taken to set up a 100 MW gas turbine power plant at Baghabari.

Load shedding Khulna power supply office attacked

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, June 12: Office of the distribution department of Khulna Power Supply came under attack by angry people on Wednesday night protesting load shedding during half-time of the opening match of World Cup.

The angry people, mostly supporters of Brazil, brought out a procession and damaged five autorickshaws.

A source at PDB office said that consumers residing in the areas under nine sub-stations could not watch the second half of the first match of World Cup due to load shedding.

Opposition groups threaten street protests against Nigerian junta

LAGOS, June 12: Nigeria's new military ruler, General Abdulsalam Abubakar, today faced the first open challenge to his authority by opposition groups threatening street protests against his four-day old regime, reports Reuter.

The new leader has pledged to go on with the much-criticised democracy plans of former military ruler General Sani Abacha who died on Monday.

Riot police with armoured personnel carriers took up positions at key points in Lagos, Nigeria's biggest city and a hotbed of opposition to military rule, ahead of the protests which were timed throughout the day at various locations kept secretly by activists up to the last minute.

But in the central business district there was no sign of disruption to the usual bustle or indication of fear.

Opposition groups, weary of repeatedly broken promises to restore democracy by the soldiers, have vowed to step up action to end military rule.

Police authorities saying no permits were issued for any demonstrations, have threatened to come down hard on activists who defy a ban on public processions.

Benazir says in interview Pakistan, India should sign 'no first use of N-arms' accord

ISLAMABAD, June 12: Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto urged Islamabad and New Delhi to reach a 'no first use' agreement following their nuclear test programmes, in an interview published today, reports AFP.

Pakistan "should immediately enter into a 'no first use' of nuclear weapons' agreement with India," she told The Nation Daily.

The former prime minister also advocated an independent Pakistan policy over the global nuclear test ban treaty after having achieved nuclear parity with its giant neighbour.

"We adhered to a tit for tat policy during the last 50 years," she said, referring to Islamabad's promise to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) only if India did so.

"Now we have achieved nuclear parity, and it is time for us to have an independent policy and initiate talks on CTBT as long as it does not compromise our position on becoming a member of the nuclear block," Benazir said.

"Since India will sign the CTBT, we should take the higher moral ground and take the lead in this regard," she said.

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"We hope that the envoy will come urgently, as early as the beginning of next week," said Kamal, adding he hoped India would also welcome the envoy.

There was no immediate confirmation from UN officials of such a visit.

Pakistani officials announced on Wednesday after Annan spoke to Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that the UN chief would send an envoy to both countries.

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