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Let's make things better

PHILIPS

Kibria opens NY office of Sonali Exchange

Floods marred chances of hitting almost 7pc growth

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria said the country's economy was moving fast and had it been spared from recent floods, economic growth this year would have been close to seven per cent, reports APB.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the sixth branch of Sonali Exchange in Astoria, New York on Friday, he pointed out that the country had made a significant progress in the industrial sector as well as in export during the last two years.

"Growth rate was nearly six per cent, inflation was low and growths of industrial output and exports was the region's highest during the period," the minister asserted.

Kibria told the function that the government had decided to float US dollar and UK pound-denominated Industrial Bond and that the expatriate Bangladeshis would be given preference when it would be launched.

The finance minister praised expatriate Bangladeshis for their contribution to Bangladesh's development and directed Sonali Exchange to provide them with the best possible service, according to a message received in the city yesterday.

He reiterated that the present government is determined to improve the efficiency of financial institutions and instill discipline in the banking sector.

Earlier, referring to the extent of devastation caused by an unprecedented flood the minister said Bangladesh has started smarting from the debilitating effects of the flood under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

He mentioned that a UN assessment team had termed as "exemplary" the government's flood disaster management, especially of supply of food and other essentials.

Government's relief distribution is "above political influence and free from corruption," Kibria said.

Outlining the relief and rehabilitation steps, the minister said the government has given special emphasis on agriculture rehabilitation and informed

BCL activists

From Page 1
As the BCL president was about to announce the new committee, armed-men backed by Ratan, a "non-student" student leader of BCL, brandished firearms to refrain the president from going ahead. They also tried to snatch the microphone from the president, witnesses said.

The BCL president, however, declared a three-member committee with Bashir, Mamun and Rahim as president, general secretary and organising secretary respectively.

The supporters of Ratan then ransacked the auditorium, the venue of the council. They damaged some furniture, flower tubs and windowpanes of the hall.

BCL council meetings for DU hall units began on September 30 and are scheduled to complete by October 11.

Meanwhile, the Council of the DU and the central committees will be held on October 14 and on October 22 respectively.

BATEXPO: Spot order

From Page 1
Fair as against US\$ 35 million last year. The four-billion-dollar export-oriented garment industry earns about 70 per cent of the country's foreign exchange and that the business is increasing at 20 per cent a year.

"If (30 per cent) quota is given, our revenue will increase by US\$ 1.30 to US\$ 1.40 billion a year in the American market," Qudus said.

BGMEA's lobbyist in the US, former Representative Steve Solarz, was reported to have "tried his best" to convince the administration to increase the quota.

"Clinton was supposed to declare the quota enhancement during his proposed visit here," Qudus claimed.

Garment factories began sending their child workers - aged below 14 - to 300 schools in accordance with an MOU involving ILO, UNICEF and the BGMEA in 1994.

About 8,000 young workers were taking lessons in those schools while many of them went for secondary education under an "earn and learn" programme.

Board of Investment executive chairman Feroze Sohan, also present at the meeting, said Bangladesh should establish sufficient backward linkage industries to help sustain the RMG industry after the complete elimination of quota system in 2005.

"Setting up backward linkage industries should be our

that a Tk 3270 crore agri-credit programme had been adopted.

The government took timely steps ensuring that Bangladesh's industries do not suffer a serious setback owing to the floods," he observed, saying that special ferry service and airlifting were made to help exporters meet deadlines.

Whip Abdus Shahid MP, Jinnatul Firdaus MP, Bangladesh Ambassador to the US K M Shehabuddin and Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the UN Anwarul Karim Chowdhury were present.

Later in the afternoon, the Finance Minister addressed a gathering of some potential investors at the Bangladesh Consulate General in New York.

He told the investors that Bangladesh has emerged as one of the most attractive destinations for investment, and the country's greatest resource is her people.

"It is a country of culturally, linguistically and ethnically homogenous people," Kibria said, adding that Bangladesh is very liberal towards foreign investment and that it is ready for investment.

Responding to a question, the Finance Minister said Bangladesh offered one of the highest rates of return on investment and invited the potential investors to avail the opportunities on offer.

Upendra Chakma

From Page 1
land dispute, unemployment and backwardness in the communication sector."

The former tribal MP said as many as 1,600 tribal families, who returned from the refugee camps in India, are still facing land-related disputes in the CHT region.

These disputes could not be settled as the proposed Land Commission is yet to be established, he said.

He complained that the returnees of the first two batches are yet to receive their money for buying cattle as per the 20-point package deal under which they returned.

They have been informed that the matter is under consideration of the Ministry of CHT Affairs, he said.

UL Chakma further complained that the seniority of the tribal servicemen, who returned home under the deal, is yet to be fixed.

Besides, 40 families, who received verdict in their favour about the disputed lands, have not yet got possession of those lands.

Some of the returnee families are still staying at the Dighinala reception camps and passing their days in misery, he said.

Replying to a question, he said the leaders of his organisation had committed to the returnees that they would play a due role in resolving their problems.

"We could only do that partially," commented the elderly tribal leader.

He called upon all the parties involved in the CHT to practise restraint and emphasised on united efforts of all the political and social leadership of the region in achieving permanent peace in the Hill Tracts.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Editor Matur Rahman speaks at a pre-launch ceremony yesterday, promising to bring to light the facts of life and society, however bitter and unpleasant they may be, through the pages of the *Prothom Alo*. —Star Photo

Drama festival to raise funds for flood victims

By Staff Correspondent

A 10-day drama festival aimed at raising funds for post-flood rehabilitation work, began at the Mahila Samity auditorium in the city yesterday.

Ten plays will be staged at the festival, organised by Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation (BGTFF).

Explaining the rationale of the festival, noted actress Sara Zaker said, "As theatre activists, it is our responsibility and commitment to stand by the flood victims with all our strength." She said, BGTFF had earlier arranged an eight-day festival in August to help the flood victims.

She also urged all to help create awareness among people of the affect of indiscriminate dumping of polythene bags on the environment.

BGTFF President Nasiruddin Youssuf said they expect to raise about Tk two lakh from the festival which would be spent for rehabilitation work of the flood victims.

Vice President of Zonta Club IV, Dhaka, later handed over a cheque for Tk 50,000 to the BGTFF president to help expedite the BGTFF rehabilitation programme.

Among others, theatre personality Ramendu Mojumder, Aly Zaker, Khaleda Khan, Mamunur Rashid and Sammitto Sangskriti Jote secretary Golum Qudus were present on the occasion.

The plays scheduled to be staged in the festival are Khamakha Khamakha of Theatre Arambag, Dewan Gazir Kissa of Nagorik Natya Sampradaya, Meherian Arambar of Theatre Bailey Road, Khandani Kissa of Subachan Natya Sangsad, Jai Jayanti of Aranyak Natyadal, Ghum Nei of Mahakal Natya Sampradaya, Shamukbaash of Theatre Centre, Bishad Sindhu of Dhaka Padatik, Merchant of Venice of Dhaka Theatre and Kanjush of Loknattyadal Siddheshwari.

Jail killing

From Page 1

investigation and therefore no further remand required for the three accused.

Cross-checked the evidences and information in connection with the case, and the involvement of the arrested accused in plotting the killing of four national leaders has been proved beyond doubt," he said.

The official said the confessional statement of the three was not essential for establishing the case.

Hannan said they were expecting to submit the charge sheet of the Jail Killing Case within October 15 on completion of the investigation process and added that some 50 to 60 witnesses would testify in the court on behalf of the prosecution.

CID officials said they earlier arrested five other persons under the Jail Killing Case and haunting for another 14 accused.

Most of the accused in the jail killing were also involved in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, they added.

Investigation into the killing of four national leaders was revived by the present government in June 1996.

BNP MPs

From Page 1

venge and annihilate the opposition when it became isolated from the people.

But, they warned, the people will never forgive the conspirators.

The signatories to the statement included Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Saifur Rahman, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Oli Hossain, Khondoker Delwar Hossain, Khondoker Mosharrar Hossain, Shaikh Razzak Ali, Akbar Hossain, Nazmul Huda, Shamsul Islam, Chowdhury Kamal-ibne-Yusuf, MK Anwar and Zamiruddin Sircar.

Juicy details

From Page 1

tial testimony or reading the report. The company based its figure on an average employee cost of 35 dollars per hour.

That figure dwarfs the estimated cost of 45 million dollars for Kenneth Starr's investigation into various scandals surrounding President Clinton.

Pre-launch programme Promoters of Prothom Alo pledge to project truth

By Staff Correspondent

Members of the civil society yesterday welcomed the proposed launch of a new Bengali daily newspaper, whose promoters and editors pledged to uphold high standards of journalism and remain independent and non-partisan.

Prothom Alo or the first light in Bengali is expected to hit newsstands shortly.

Bangladesh needs a newspaper to respond to the hopes and aspirations of a people that has been facing enormous challenges of development and arresting social degeneration, they said.

At the same time, as the message from a host of guests from many different backgrounds went, the country requires a newspaper which is sufficiently modern in its outlook to deal with the realities of the 21st century.

The pre-launch programme, held at CA Bhawan Auditorium, drew a galaxy of personalities from different professions including professors, writers, business leaders, journalists, columnists, sportsmen and performing artistes.

Matur Rahman, editor of the forthcoming newspaper, assured all of a fully independent, non-partisan voice that would speak the truth and for the rights of the ordinary citizens.

"Truth, regardless of the obstacles, shall prevail," he said. "People of Bangladesh want a completely non-partisan and independent newspaper which is committed to revealing the true state of the society."

Mahfuz Anam, the paper's publisher, told the gathering that bold journalism and patriotism would be the two cardinal principles guiding the new publication.

Some surprising moves towards global peace

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 3

With a global economic crisis looming and conflicts creating turmoil in more than 30 hotspots, world leaders came to the United Nations over the past two weeks - and made some surprising moves towards easing global tensions, reports AP.

After detonating nuclear devices in May, India and Pakistan announced plans to adhere to the nuclear test ban treaty within the next year, which would slow the south Asian arms race.

Benjamin Netanyahu announced Israel will shortly hand over 13 per cent of the West Bank to the Palestinians, and Yasser Arafat backed down from unilaterally declaring that a Palestinian state would be in place by May 4, 1999, the deadline for implementing the Middle East peace accords.

Iran's moderate government distanced itself from a \$2.5 million reward for killing Salman Rushdie, author of 'The Satanic Verses' which religious leaders claimed blasphemy against Islam, prompting a positive response from Western Ministers.

Nigeria's new leader, Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar, committed his military government to fair elections and a return to civilian rule next year, key Western demands to end the country's pariah status.

Still, many of the world's conflicts showed no signs of cooling down.

There was no progress on reunification of Cyprus. The border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea remained tense. Congo accused neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda of invading the country and massacring thousands of innocent Congolese. Rwanda and Uganda denied the allegations and blamed Congo for slaughtering innocent men, women and children.

And the threat of NATO military strikes against Serbia targets in Kosovo grew, following the broadcast and publication of gruesome pictures of massacred ethnic Albanians. Survivors blamed Serbia forces trying to crush independence seeking ethnic Albanians.

The UN Security Council on Thursday condemned the massacres, but didn't assign blame or add any new legal backing for any NATO action.

Yugoslav Foreign Minister Zivadinovic denied any new attacks in Kosovo and insisted his country wanted "direct, unconditional" dialogue with the ethnic Albanians - which they have rejected to resolve and conflict peacefully.

PM: Purchase land, if needed

From Page 1

The court premises was swarmed with people while thousands were waiting on boats, trawlers and cargo ships to listen and have a look at Hasina who is the first prime minister to visit the area.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman visited Mithamon in 1970. Since then no head of the state or government have gone there. Mithamon, a haor area of the district, is still under water.

Before addressing the people, the prime minister distributed relief goods among the flood victims. She also distributed seedlings and fertiliser to the affected farmers. She released fish fries in the thana complex pond and planted a sapling at Tomija Khatun Girls High School.

BNP calls hartal in Faridpur today

FARIDPUR, Oct 3: The BNP

has called a half-day hartal in the district tomorrow protesting arrest of three opposition leaders, including KM Obaidur Rahman MP, reports UNB.

The hartal call was announced from a procession brought out in the town today defying Section 144.

The district BNP leaders had earlier called a public meeting this afternoon at Janata Bank square to protest the arrest of Obaid who hails from Faridpur. Ruling Awami League also called a public meeting at the same venue at the same time.

Fearing troubles, the administration today imposed Section 144 on the town.

Falling to hold the public meeting, BNP leaders and activists brought out processions, in some areas of the town. They chanted anti-government slogans and demanded immediate release of Obaidur Rahman and others.

Bombs and crackers were exploded in different parts of the town this evening.

5 dacoits held at Ctg: Looted goods recovered

CHITTAGONG, Oct 3: A special

team of Kotwali police recovered looted goods and gold ornaments, and arrested five dacoits just after two hours of dacoity, reports BSS.

The dacoits at gun point looted goods and ornaments from the house of a businessman, Mozaffar Ahmed at 3 am at Yakubnagar today, the press release added.

According to a police press release, a police team arrested Safi Alam, Abul Bashar, Mohammad Farook, Deeder and Abdul Khaleque from different parts of the city after a massive manhunt.

On the basis of their confession, police later recovered looted goods and gold ornaments worth about Tk 1.50,000.

Capital's direct rail link with northern dists restored

JAMALPUR, Oct 3: Direct

rail communications between Dhaka and northern districts has been restored today after two days of suspension, report agencies.

The communication was disrupted when a bridge at Patharghata on Jamalpur-Bahadurabad route collapsed on Wednesday.

The train service resumed at 3 am today after the repairing of the bridge. Ekota Express, which had been stranded at Dewanganj since Wednesday, resumed its journey for Dhaka soon after.

Pakistan unhappy over postponement of Clinton's visit

ISLAMABAD, Oct 3: Pak-

istan said today it was 'disappointed' at the postponement of US President Bill Clinton's planned November trip to South Asia following the nuclear tests by Islamabad and New Delhi, reports AFP.

Australian PM clings narrowly to power

SYDNEY, Oct 3: Australian

Prime Minister John Howard clung narrowly to power today after an early election called to push through radical tax reforms, reports Reuters.

The conservative leader, elected by a landslide 31 months ago, saw off a resurgent Labour opposition and Pauline Hanson's populist One Nation Party to earn his coalition a majority of around six seats in the 148-seat lower house.

In his victory speech, Howard pledged to fight for real aboriginal reconciliation by the time Australia celebrates the centenary of nationhood in 2001 and claimed a mandate for his plan to introduce a consumption tax and cut personal income taxes.

This is probably the first time in the recent experience of western political parties that a party has successfully won an election championing such a major reform that so readily

City experiences heavy shower

The city yesterday experi-

enced heavy shower, influenced by the 'trough' of the low that formed over the west-central Bay and adjoining Andhra coast.

Met Office Director Mohammad Ershad Hossain told APB last night that the trough or area of low pressure, extended upto the coasts, was causing moist air incursion into the country, particularly in the coastal belt.

"Due to heating, this moisture goes up and forms convective cloud which ultimately falls as rain," he said, adding that the rain of this kind is quite normal during the month of October.

The localised rain would continue until the monsoon withdraws by middle of this month, he added. It may also occur after the monsoon, but with less intensity and frequency.

There would be little above normal rain during this month," he said predicting that the rain, which swamped many streets in the capital, would be beneficial to the late Aman crop now being sown.

Prodhan held

From Page 1

arrested on Tuesday in connection with the jail killing case of November 4, 1975.

The processionists also raised slogans against the government's role in relief distribution and demanded that the task should be handed over to the army, police said.

UNB adds: BNP-led 7-party alliance yesterday strongly condemned the police attack on Jagga procession and arrest of its president and supporters.

In a joint statement, the alliance leaders said that the democratic practice is now at a stake because of terrorism let loose by the government and Awami League.

The police attack on the procession has proved that Awami League just talks of democracy but believes in it, they said adding it is trying to revert to one-party rule to put an end to the existence of opposition parties.

Discord

From Page 1

phone. CMP Commissioner Kutubur Rahman said, "We have supplied all materials to the deputy commissioner for issuing detention order against the arrested terrorist leader. But the detention order is yet to be issued, keeping the issue hanging."

He added, "If there is such type of delay in issuing detention order as per our proposals, it will help the arrested terrorists get easy release from custody."

Despite repeated attempts, the DC could not be contacted for his comments.

Ship detained

From Page 1

thorities then detained the ship. Officials suspected that the 'missing' damaged rice might have been sold out from the vessel.

Port sources said destruction of damaged foodgrains began on October 1 in presence of army personnel. So far, 4,596.5 tonnes of rice and 10.5 tonnes of sugar were found damaged in eight ships.

WFP wheat

From Page 1

tion this week, delivering wheat and rice to about 4 million destitute families across the country.

The food will be distributed through the government's Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) system. Families selected by local committees as most needy will receive ration cards which entitle them to 16 kgs of grains each for the month of October.

WFP field monitors, local elected officials and NGOs will ensure that the correct amount of food is going to those with VGF cards.

It is expected that the programme will continue through the end of the year, when food aid will then be dedicated to supporting rehabilitation through food-for-work projects.

Clinton

From Page 1

forts to lure Monica Lewinsky into making incriminating statements about President Bill Clinton and grand jury testimony by more than two dozen Secret Service agents and officers who passed along to investigators the rumors they had heard.

With the Lewinsky sexual affair about to explode in the news media last January, Jordan was on the telephone two dozen times with Clinton or presidential aides in a span of less than 12 hours.

Jordan said he didn't recall what he and the president talked about.

The seriousness of the brewing scandal was evident to a few of Clinton's inner circle, including Jordan and presidential adviser Bruce Lindsey.

Alerted to the Lewinsky problem, Jordan told Lindsey the president should settle Paula Jones' sexual harassment lawsuit, even offering at one point to raise the money himself.

Jordan "indicated that ... if it was a matter of trying to raise, you know whatever the money was that would be required to settle it, that he thought he could raise" it, Lindsey recounted of the effort in mid-January.