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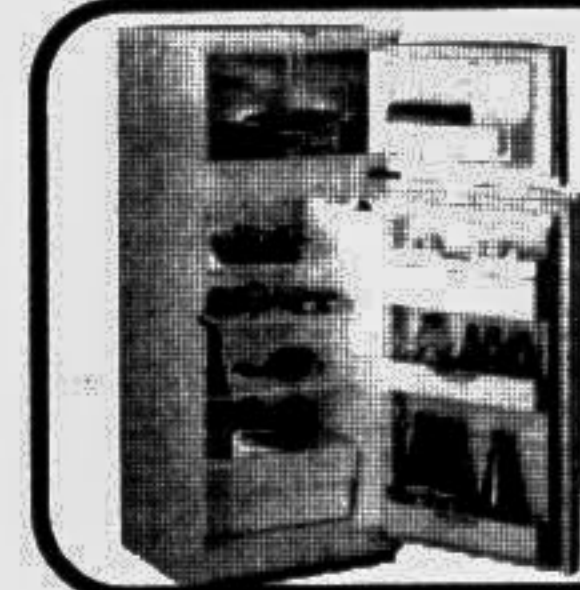
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SC drops contempt proceedings against Ershad, B Observer

By SC Correspondent

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday dropped the contempt proceedings against former President H M Ershad and the Bangladesh Observer authority.

The court accepted the unqualified apologies sought by the editor, publisher and a staff reporter of the newspaper.

The court also gave a cautionary warning to the staff reporter of the daily and asked the Observer authority to be careful in future in publishing such reports.

The Bangladesh Observer published a report on August 11, 1998 that Ershad, addressing a public meeting at Paltan Maidan on August 10, said he had set up seven benches of the High Court during his regime, but it was undone through conspiracy of a group of people including President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

He was further reported to have said Justice Shahabuddin criticised setting up of seven benches of the High Court and questioned the wisdom of his (President) assenting to the Hill Tracts bill.

Ershad submitted to the court that he did not make any contemptuous statement or show any disrespect on the court. His statement was published in a distorted way in the daily.

Following publication of the report some leading lawyers of the Supreme Court in a joint statement condemned it.

Jatiya Party office secretary Humayun Kabir Hiru in a rejoinder to the press asserted that Ershad did not make such statement.

Later Habibur Islam Bhuiyan, president of the Supreme Court Bar Association submitted a letter before the Registrar of the Supreme Court drawing attention to the report.

On August 19, 1998 the Appellate Division drew the contempt proceedings and directed the contemners to show cause as to why they will not be charged with contempt of the Court and also directed them to appear before the court.

FBCCI

From Page 1

ing BATEXPO-98 and foreign cricket teams are arriving to take part in the Wills International Cup in Dhaka.

Such programme has created the ground for renewed terrorism and again a fresh hartal has been called on October 22.

The FBCCI said the entire country is now engaged in the post-flood rehabilitation works while export and import sectors are trying hard to recoup the losses.

Besides, an environment has been created for foreign investment after the flood. Arrangements have been made in Dhaka to host an international cricket tournament.

Under this circumstances, repeated calls for hartal are tarnishing the image of the country as well as obstructing the development works, said a press release.

Ticket sale

From Page 1

Elephant Road, Kawranbazar, Malibagh, Naya Paltan and Narayanganj.

The Federation branch will sell only the VIP tickets.

One person will be allowed only three tickets for any particular match while anybody buying all the tickets for eight matches together can have five such sets.

Meanwhile, a 19-member New Zealand team is scheduled to arrive here at 10:25 pm today.

The Kiwis led by left-handed batsman, Stephen Fleming, will be the third team to reach the capital. The team included 14 players and 5 officials.

Two lower ranked teams among the nine test playing nations, New Zealand and Zimbabwe, will meet in the inaugural match of the tournament on October 24.

Zimbabwe and England already reached Dhaka on Sunday.

FDI: BOI survey

From Page 1

other projects, he hoped that power generation would jump substantially by the year 2000.

Ambassador Drury said European Commission's job here is to develop trade relations between Bangladesh and European countries.

He stressed the need for setting up backward linkage industries for the garment sector to help it survive the free trade regime beyond 2005.

The country (Bangladesh) has mixed image in Europe, British High Commissioner said adding, "Appropriate and adequate business facilities should be ensured for the people (the European investors) who are already here in Bangladesh and what they say 'positive' or 'negative' (back in Europe) is always counted by the newcomers (new investors)."

Italian ambassador Dr Raffaele Minieri said that further improvement of reception in the airports and easing visa formalities would play positive role for attracting FDI.

The Italian envoy stressed the need for creation of stan-



The six-year-old rape victim (eyes covered to conceal identity) on her father's lap after being released from the judicial custody yesterday. —Star photo

Six-year-old rape victim released from judicial custody

By Staff Correspondent

The six-year-old girl who was raped at the premises of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court was released from the judicial custody yesterday.

The girl was raped on March 10 this year inside a police control room at the CMM's court building.

Witness of the case one Shipan was also released from the custody as per a court order passed respectively on August 18 and September 22.

The court order said that they (the victim and the witness) could be released from the judicial custody as their statements had been recorded.

The girl was handed over to his father Fazal Bepary.

Deadlock over assessment procedure Raw materials for RMG remain dumped at port

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 19: A large quantity of imported garment raw materials worth crores of taka has been remained dumped at Chittagong port following a deadlock over the assessment procedure that requires undertaking from the C&F agents as per a new circular by NBR, sources said.

The stalemate began yesterday when the C&F agents declined to give any undertaking to bear the responsibility in case of any irregularity in the garment raw materials imported under back-to-back LCs, customs sources said.

According to the new circular, the C&F agents are required to certify the importer of the raw materials as a genuine businessman, having factory, customs sources said.

Talking to this correspondent, commissioner of Chittagong Customs House Abul Kasem said that the trouble started yesterday with the implementation of the new circular issued by NBR on Thursday.

"Actually, the C&F agents have been tagged with the importers of garment raw materi-

als to ensure their re-export," the commissioner said.

"As per the new order, the C&F agents also will have to shoulder the responsibility in case the importers do not re-export the goods," he said.

However, I will talk to the NBR authorities today over the deadlock, he added.

Meanwhile, president of the C&F agents M Salimullah said that the circular was not issued from realistic point of view.

"We have no control over the importers once our job is finished after clearing the cargo from port on commission basis," Salimullah said.

"Even NBR did not discuss the matter with bodies concerned including BGMEA before issuing such an order," he said.

"We will not go for clearing the cargo until and unless the order of NBR is withdrawn," he announced.

Salimullah informed that if the deadlock continued, it would affect on shipment of garment products causing huge stock lots and other dislocations.

New taxes

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"A demand depression is already there. At such a moment, the government should take up programmes aiming at putting money into people's hands, instead of taking money out of the people's pocket by imposing new taxes," Rahman said.

He said the measures would result in the contraction of the economy. "With all these added taxes, people will be discouraged to save, which means investment will also be lower."

Akkas buried

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caught snatching a wrist-watch. BNP also claimed Akkas was its activist.

When contacted, police said that they supervised the burial of one "dead man" at the Azimur graveyard in presence of his parents and faced obstruction from a group of "miscreants" on the way.

Earlier, police took the body of Akkas after autopsy at DMCH.

A BNP press release last night alleged that police forcibly took the body to Azimur graveyard although they had told the victim's parents that it would be taken to their house at Fakirerpool from the hospital. It also blamed police for misbehaving with Abdullah Al Noman, party's joint secretary general and a former minister.

Meanwhile, BNP and its allies in the seven-party held a *gayebana-janaza* of Akkas and Hasan, who died during Sunday's hartal, at the Baitul Mukarram after Asr prayers yesterday. A mourning procession followed.

Pro-BNP labour front postpones programme at Ctg port

The Dock Jatiyatobadi Sramik Dal has postponed its planned programme designed to paralyse the Chittagong Port from October 22, reports UNB.

It was decided after a meeting with Deputy Minister for Shipping, Sabur Hossain Chowdhury in Chittagong yesterday, said a Shipping Ministry press release in the city.

The meeting between the government and labour leaders at the Chittagong Port Authority rest house discussed the unresolved problems of the port workers and other problems there.

The meeting decided to implement shortly the workers' proposal for registration after examining the legal aspects, introducing incentive schemes and three-shift system, and providing healthcare facilities.

Shipping Secretary Saiful Islam and senior officials of the ministry and of the Chittagong Port were, among others, present at the meeting.

The minister also held a meeting with the Food Cell on Foodgrains Unloading Process and other senior officials of the port.

Saifur

From Page 1

policy, its normal budgetary plan. The step will give rise to further inflation to the suffering of the commonman," Saifur Rahman told UNB over telephone last night.

The government has announced two to 15 per cent supplementary duty on a number of items and surcharge on some services for raising additional revenue to meet the requirement of post-flood rehabilitation.

Reacting to the government step, Saifur thought that the country's economy will be seriously affected in the process of devaluation, supplementary duty and surcharge.

"Why he needs additional funds, why the surcharge, when he is telling international donors and agencies have pledged more than what he had sought for overcoming the post-flood situation," he said pointing to finance minister SAMS Kibria.

"He (Kibria) should explain how much additional revenue he has been receiving from the petroleum sector. He is earning a huge hidden profit since prices of petroleum products were raised last year," he added.

Saifur said oil prices came down by more than 30 per cent, to 12 or 13 dollars a barrel. Despite the sharp fall, prices of petroleum products were kept at an abnormal high rate.

He was critical of the levy on savings. "It will discourage savings and investment as well."

Holzman visits terminal site at Patenga

CHITTAGONG, Oct 19: US Ambassador in Bangladesh John C Holzman today visited the Chittagong port to see the port activities, and held meeting with the chairman and the other high officials of the port, reports UNB.

The US Ambassador also visited the site of the proposed private container terminal at Patenga. The proposed container terminal will be constructed by US investment company Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) at a cost of Tk 2,000 crore.

About 22 labour organisations of Chittagong port are opposing the construction of a private container terminal apprehending that it will threaten the existence of the port.

Shipping ministry has formed a four-member committee to look into their objections. Later, Holzman held a meeting with Mayor ABM Moinuddin Chowdhury and talked about the political situation of the port city.

He also held meeting with the local leaders of BNP, Jamaat and Jatiya Party.

Israel halts negotiations

QUEENSTOWN (Maryland), Oct 19: Israel suspended today all West Bank negotiations with the Palestinian Authority except for security talks in response to a bloody attack on Israeli civilians back home, reports AP.

Announcing the breakoff on the fifth day of Mideast peace talks, David Bar-Ilan, a senior adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said: "The Palestinian Authority is not doing anything to crack down on terrorist activity."

A Palestinian official, Yasser Abed Rabbo, called the suspension "cheap blackmail."

Netanyahu declared that a land-for-peace accord is impossible unless Palestinians live up to their security commitments. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat called the grenade attack in Beersheba, Israel, regrettable and pledged to investigate.

Delhi yet to clear

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had not received any formal orders for rice purchase from Dhaka.

The Indian government is still to decide the price at which the 350,000 tonnes of parboiled rice will be sold to Bangladesh, which is fearing a food shortfall in the wake of devastating floods. Vajpayee had assured his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina Wajed last month that the rice would be sold at a "special friendship price. The Statesman newspaper reported today.

According to the daily, Bangladesh had sought the rice at \$300 per tonne. Hasina is said to have spoken to Vajpayee over the telephone seeking India's help to offset the expected shortfall after the floods damaged her country's paddy crop. The Indian rice is needed to shore up Bangladesh's food reserves to the stipulated safe level of 2.2 million tonnes.

BNP turns down AL plea

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The Alliance called an eight-hour countrywide hartal on October 22.

When contacted, Saifur Rahman, a former finance minister, told The Daily Star last night that Mannan Bhuiyan and himself had talks with Begum Zia at 7:30 in the evening. "We conveyed the ruling party's concern over the hartal call to her (Begum Khaleda Zia)."

Another BNP source said, the party chief listened to her senior party colleagues and expressed the view that the Opposition did not want to call the hartal but the government, by resorting to repression of Opposition leaders and workers, forced it to go for such a programme. She also told her party colleagues that BNP did not like to give any political programme that would shatter the country's economic growth.

When contacted, Matur Rahman Nizami told this correspondent last night that Nasim telephoned him.



BGMEA president Mostafa Golam Qudus presents a crest to BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia at the closing ceremony of BATEXPO '98 at Sonargaon Hotel yesterday. —Star photo

National forum on SAPRI begins today

By Staff Correspondent

The national forum of Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative (SAPRI) begins in the city today, keeping in the forefront questions like whether reforms in the agriculture and industrial sectors increased the viability of the crop sector and improved industrial capacity.

SAPRI is a tripartite collaborative exercise involving global network of civil society organisations, the governments and the World Bank. In Bangladesh, the initiative is being led by Bangladesh SAPRI steering committee headed by Prof Rehman Sobhan with support from national technical committee led by Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud.

Speaking at a press briefing on the eve of the forum, Prof Rehman Sobhan said structural adjustment is in place in different countries having varied results.

"It is now recognised that the outcome of the reform process and its impact on economies and stakeholders who are affected by the reform programmes should be scrutinised," said Prof Sobhan. "We are now in the process of launching a major research initiative about the impact of structural adjustment."

He said the debate on the structural adjustment programme should go on among different sections of the people to make it participatory.

Francis Temple, incoming World Bank country director for Bangladesh, told the press conference that the Bank was interested in the study because of its participatory nature.

"We want to listen to all groups. But in the past we had not always been listening enough," said Temple. "We want to understand what worked and what did not. This will help us improve the quality of our programmes."

Others who spoke in the briefing are Giasuddin Pathan, DG, NGO bureau, and Tony Ahmed, member, SAPRI Global Network Secretariat.

JCD leader murdered

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mad Ali has been sealed up. Advocate Akhtar Jahan Ruku (50) and Khokon (30), Ali's daughter and second son respectively, were immediately arrested along with Nadim (25) and Aziz (28). The latter two, security guards of the JCD leader, were found washing the floor.

All the four arrested persons are supporters of BNP, police and party leaders said. But other male inmates of the house are still absconding.

The dead was buried after autopsy at the local government hospital and *namaje janaza* in front of the party office after Asr prayers.

Tension gripped the entire city that saw violent clashes all over.

At about 8 am today, the Awami League office came under attack by angry BNP supporters who also damaged a large number of vehicles and shops. Some shops were allegedly looted, witnesses said.

Police said the angry BNP supporters also damaged three temples as they went on rampage.

The Kotwali thana building and three commercial banks

Khaleda

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said. "As the chief of the main opposition party, I want to assure Bangladesh, said the participatory approach of the study on adjustment programmes distinguishes it from other studies.

"We are taking opinion of the people who are affected by the structural programmes and looking at how the livelihood of the vulnerable groups are being affected," said Dr Bhattacharya.

He said three issues are being looked into by this study. These are: How policy changes have affected the livelihood of labourers and small and medium entrepreneurs; how changes in agricultural policy have affected the marginal farmers and landless labourers; and whether changes in public finance has increased fund allocation for the vulnerable poor.

Former finance minister M Saifur Rahman MP, former commerce minister Shamsul Islam, BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, special envoy to the former PM, M Morsheed Khan, BGMEA president Mostafa Golam Qudus also spoke at the closing ceremony.

Khaleda referred to what she said "the government's insolent attitude and provocative activities" which compelled them taking to the street.

"We want a political situation where there will be difference of political opinions but not confrontation and abuse of power," Begum Zia said.

She urged the government to take necessary steps so that the garment factory owners could overcome flood damages.

However, the BNP chairperson did not respond to BGMEA's demand for an exemption of activities in garment factories from full-day hartals. She had declared the garment industry out of half-day hartal purview in October '97.

Saifur Rahman said the economy has been stagnant for the last two and half years due to budgetary mismanagement by the government. "Savings and investment rates have been halved this time, resulting in low GDP growth," Saifur said and added that the government needed immediate policy changes to achieve a high economic growth.

Criticising the incumbent finance minister SAMS Kibria, who held BNP responsible for releasing "politically motivated" loans, Saifur said it was his (Kibria's) ignorance if he does not know where the money has really gone.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said power failure and bad law and order situation have hurt the economy more than a hartal could do. He said it was BNP government's initiatives in the late 70s when the Ziaur Rahman government took initiatives to go for non-traditional export items for the development of the country.

He later told The Daily Star over telephone last night, "I'll continue to persuade BNP leaders to call off the hartal when we'll get together again on the sidelines of the tournament's advisory committee meeting on October 21."

Asif Iqbal, Event Manager of the Wills International Cup, told newsmen at BCB office, "I think the ICC is only a guest here. But, I can only say that sports should be kept out of politics."

"Bangladesh got the unique opportunity to earn honour for itself by holding such an event which never took place here before," said Iqbal, a former Pakistan cricket captain.

PM's letter says Dhaka to take note of Amartya Sen's recommendations

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has congratulated Prof Amartya Sen, on his winning the Nobel Economics Prize and described the award as a rare honour for all of us, reports BSS.

"You are the first Asian to win this coveted prize since it was first awarded in 1969 and we are simply delighted at the great news of your winning the 1998 Nobel Prize in Economics," Sheikh Hasina said in a letter sent to the Nobel laureate Sunday.

The Bangladesh leader said Prof Amartya Sen, by his incisive work on defining and measuring poverty, has made the problem easier to comprehend and analyse. She said Bangladesh will take note of "your recommendations for poverty to be analysed not just as a problem of distribution of income and wealth, but also of education, health, nutrition and other manifestations of human deprivation."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said Prof Sen, by drawing on philosophy and economics, "has added a new dimension to conventional welfare economics" and "enabled us not only to understand the complex issues of poverty more deeply, but also to cope with it a lot better."

Referring to Prof Sen's childhood in Dhaka, Sheikh Hasina said "We all, as fellow Bengalis, feel very proud of you." She said, "We share the accomplishment, glory and honour" of both poet Rabindranath Tagor and Prof Sen, winners of the Nobel Prize.

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