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Investment in EPZs increases more than 5 times in a yr

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday emphasised on bringing the entire country under industrialisation and setting up export processing zones (EPZs) and industrial parks across the country to spur economic growth, reports UNB.

"Bringing the entire country under the development network, particularly the northern region, by setting up EPZs and industrial parks," she said while presiding over the 17th meeting of the BEPZA Board of Governors at her office.

Reviewing the progress of the EPZs, the Prime Minister said that the entire country would have to be brought under EPZs and industrial parks.

She observed that with the construction of Bangabandhu Bridge an ample opportunity has been opened up for setting up new industries, particularly agro-based ones in the northern region, she said. "These areas must be industrialised with utmost speed. With the improvement of communication and supply of gas, there will not be much problem to do so now."

The Prime Minister said her government is providing all sort of incentives and encouraging entrepreneurs to establish industries in the country.

The meeting was informed that during the current finan-

cial year, the investment in EPZs has reached 391 million US dollars from last year's 71 million dollars. The export from EPZs till May this year stood at 632 million dollars, which is 11 per cent more than the previous year.

Employment generation has also increased in the 11 months of the current fiscal year to 81,531 from 11,425 in the previous year. Accumulated investment has increased to 98 per cent, employment generation to 91 per cent and export 172 per cent in the EPZs.

At present, 132 industrial units are engaged in production in Dhaka and Chittagong EPZs, and another 101 units are being set up.

It is expected that within the next two years the number of industries will exceed 200 and 600 million US dollars will be invested. The annual export will stand at 1,000 million dollars from Dhaka and Chittagong EPZs and employment generation will be 120,000.

The meeting was also informed that work has been undertaken for setting up three more EPZs in the country.

Later, the Prime Minister presided over a meeting of the Private EPZ Board of Governors at her office and discussed various issues.



Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presiding over the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the city yesterday. —PID photo

Face critics boldly

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prime minister advised party lawmakers to come up with statistics and arguments while facing their opposition colleagues in parliament.

"You see, the proposed budget has not caused price-hike of essentials," she said, explaining the merit of the new budget to her party MPs.

That yesterday's hartal against the budget was not justified had come out from within the main opposition party itself, she cited.

Responding to a suggestion in the meeting for withdrawal of fresh import duty on books, Sheikh Hasina said it had been proposed to "protect the local publication industry".

In the 85-minute meeting, the prime minister also heard criticism against some other budget proposals, including imposition of Value Added Tax (VAT) on physicians engaged in private practice from a doctor-turned-MP of her party.

VAT for private practitioners would not affect the poor, she argued.

The prime minister also preferred to wait for opposition suggestions regarding controversial issues.

In the meeting, Education Minister ASHK Sadique came under fire by some AL MPs who complained that colleges, schools and madrassahs in their areas were not on the list for government grants and assistance. In reply, the premier asked for a list of the educational institutions.

She also assured to look into an allegation, made by a MP

from Narayanganj that some ministers were working against the interest of the ruling party.

Earlier, the finance minister briefed the AL lawmakers on the key aspects of the proposed budget which he claimed had no new taxes and would help local industries to grow.

"The proposed budget has mainly emphasised on poverty alleviation, self-employment, industrialisation and setting up of more agro-based industries," he noted.

Planning Minister Dr. Mo-hiuddin Khan Alamgir told the ALPP meeting that he was ready to prove in parliament that the GDP growth rate was 5.2 per cent in the out-going fiscal year. "I'm also ready to have it proven even by foreign experts."

Discussion on budget will be 30 hours

Deputy Speaker Abdul Haamid yesterday told the Jatiya Sangsad that as per the decision of the Business Advisory Committee the length of general discussion on the proposed budget for 1999-2000 fiscal would be 30 hours, reports BSS.

Presiding over the proceedings of the House the Deputy Speaker said there would be three hours of discussion on the budget everyday. "Whatever the length of discussion on the budget today the three hours of allotted time would be deemed to have been utilised," he said.

People rejected budget, says Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia has congratulated the countrymen for making the dawn-to-dusk hartal an all-out success.

In a statement yesterday, she said people have rejected the proposed budget for 1999-2000 by observing the hartal spontaneously. It will be wise for the government to immediately withdraw the budget and place a people-oriented one if the government respected people's verdict, she added.

The opposition leader said the government has again proved its failure and incompetence to run the country by presenting an anti-people, and unrealistic budget in the parliament.

Begum Zia said the government has imposed direct and indirect taxes on the people by expanding the VAT net. "In fact, the government has presented a deficit budget of Tk 12,000 crore by imposing tax burden of Tk 1050 crore," she claimed.

The BNP Chairperson criticised the government for "trying to conceal the actual economic situation by providing false documents and statistics."

She called upon people to join the current movement and continue street protest against the 'anti-people' budget.

Beyond the boundary

From Page 1
be seen was whether Australia could pull off a victory that could put them within sniffing distance of actually redeeming the bookies' faith in their abilities. There was more than just pride at stake.

With New Zealand already assured of a place in the last four, it remained to be seen whether Australia had the wherewithal to deny Zimbabwe their place in the last four. With South Africa winning the toss and opting to bat, the Aussies had their work cut out. The Aussie bowling attack, aside from Glenn McGrath, looks fairly ordinary. Their customary trump card Shane Warne had not been in his elements in this competition. In this match, however, Warne displayed his true colours.

In spite of Herschelle Gibbs, who managed to handle the Aussie attack with aplomb, the rest of the innings struggled for a while against McGrath and a seam attack that was penetrating without being lethal. Kirsten prospered briefly. Cronje died early, while Cullinan flattered to deceive. It was left to Jonty Rhodes and Lance Klusener to take the Aussie attack to the sword and put 271 runs on the board for the Aussies to chase.

Quick wickets were the order of the day, and the South Africans tasted blood immediately. With the openers out of the way, Cronje probably had ideas of running through the rest of the order. It was not to

be, however. First Ricky Ponting and then Steve Waugh put matters in the proper perspective. Ponting laid on the ideal launching pad, but it was the skipper who strung together the most vital of runs, to ensure Australia a chance of being where they rightfully belonged. Steve Waugh may have scored many a century in the past, but none quite as relevant and important as the one he scored yesterday.

South Africa showed enough chinks in their armour to suggest that the road to the final may not be as smooth as was once envisaged. The bowling, all seam and predictable, would need to fire on all cylinders, should any batsman, without a sense of humour, decide to take them at face value and proceed to do with them what he pleases. The Aussies, particularly Steve Waugh, gave enough indication that such a ploy might be on the cards. The fact that the Aussies carried enough batting firepower right till the end, may have been the crucial difference between a team wanting to make the last four, as opposed to one that was simply the beneficiary of circumstances.

The famed grit and determination of the men wearing the baggy green caps, once again came into prominence. The question that remained unanswered, was why Australia had to leave it to the very end to assert themselves of their place in the semis. In retrospect, Zimbabwe were perhaps better off not being there. There is obviously a time and place for most things. For Zimbabwe, this was not their moment. No, they were not Prince Hamlet, nor were they meant to be. They were just attendant lords, ones that were meant to swell a progress, create a scene or two, as Eliot would have said. For some time at least, the stage has to be set aside for those who had been there before. They were the ones who were politic and meticulous. Zimbabwe would need to wait a while. The club for the big boys still remains exclusive and out of bounds.

One killed in blast while carrying bombs

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was killed in a bomb blast near Swamibagh graveyard under the city's Sutrapur thana in the early hours of yesterday.

The dead was identified as Babul alias Boga, 25, son of Siraj Mia, a resident of Karatola in Swamibagh area.

Police suspected that the incident occurred when Babul along with his accomplices was carrying bombs at around 2 am.

Babul was rushed to Mitford Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead. His body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy.

A case was filed with Sutrapur thana in this connection.

Ex-Shantibahiniman shot dead in Khagrachhari

KHAGRACHHARI, June 13: A former Shantibahiniman was shot dead allegedly by his rivals at his home at Chankhola under Matrangha thana here today, reports BSS.

Alamgir Kabir MP's bail prayer rejected again

NAOGAON, June 13: A Magistrate Court here rejected the bail petition of Alamgir Kabir, a BNP MP, for the second time today, reports UNB.

About 20 lawyers led by local Bar Association general secretary Advocate Hafizur Rahman moved the bail petition.

The refusal of bail to Alamgir Kabir evoked sharp criticism of the government. The members of the Bar alleged the government interfered in the judiciary to discriminate application of law.

They pointed to the bail granted to the ruling party MP of Chhatak who was arrested for bomb explosion in his house that killed two men. But Alamgir, held on suspicion in connection with the April 30 Atrai murder, has repeatedly been refused bail, they said.

Not taxable

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with regard to filing of income tax return by overseas non-resident Bangladeshis to the nearest Bangladesh mission.

Under the present system, the statement said, non-resident Bangladeshis may submit their income tax return for income earned in Bangladesh by themselves or through their relatives or by the legal representatives to the concerned income tax office in Bangladesh.

As per the proposed arrangement, it said they can submit their income tax return showing such income to their nearest mission.

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Pickers set afire an autorickshaw at Shahjahanpur during hartal hours yesterday. —Star photo

Hartal: 50 injured

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anti-hartal activists in the morning.

Activists of ruling Awami League and opposition BNP staged chase and counter chase throughout the day. Police backed the anti-hartal activists, the witnesses claimed.

Fifteen of the injured people, four with bomb and cocktail splinters, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, hospital sources said.

The persons injured with splinters are Akram (13), brought from Roy Shaheb Bazar area, Kamal (20) and Manki (18) from New Market area, Abdul Malek (45) and Ismail (19) from near the National Medical College and an unidentified rickshawpuller brought from Nayapalton. The admitted people include Pinku and Aziz, injured in a clash with police at Swamibagh.

The four policemen were admitted to Rajarbagh Police Hospital with bomb injuries, police said.

Police said three of their personnel were injured when a bomb was thrown on them at about 4 pm at Nayapalton. Another policeman was injured during a clash near the court building in the old part of the city, they said.

Pro-hartal activists also

damaged a good number of rickshaws, some motorcycles and autorickshaws near the BNP central office at Nayapalton in the morning.

An autorickshaw was torched in front of Motijheel School at South Shahjahanpur at about 1:15 pm.

All business establishment, shops, educational institutions and private offices remained closed during the hartal hours. Attendance in government offices was thin.

A few BRTC buses, minibuses and autotempos were seen plying on the main streets while movement of rickshaws was less than normal.

During the hartal hour, BNP and its front organisations brought out several processions in different parts of the city. Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Sadek Hossain Khoka, Mirza Abbas and Amanullah Aman led the processions.

Leaders and activists of Awami League and its front organisations also brought out several anti-hartal processions in the city. State Minister for Shipping Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, who is also city AL General Secretary, led one of the processions.

Private cars and motor vehicles including inter-district buses stayed off the roads. Train, launch and air services operated on schedule.

Road accidents kill 8 in Magura, Rajshahi

By Staff Correspondent

At least eight people were killed and 35 others injured in separate road accidents in Magura and Rajshahi yesterday.

Of them, five were killed in Magura and three in Rajshahi.

Our Magura Correspondent reports: Five people were killed and 20 others injured when a Meherpur bound coach from Barisal collided with a truck coming from opposite direction at Ramnagar in Sadar thana on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in the early hours of yesterday.

The dead were identified as coach driver Aminur Rahman, 40, helper, Abu Bakar, 40, Tulu Mia, 30, Gopi Poddar, 26, and Samir Kumar Shah, 24.

The injured were admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital. Police seized both the vehicles, but the drivers managed to flee.

Our Rajshahi Correspondent writes: Three people were killed and 15 others injured, seven of them seriously, in road accident at Jouta Bottola Crossing on Godagari-Amnura road yesterday.

The dead were identified as Monirul Islam, 25, Darul, 32, and Mongal 12.

Discussion on supplementary budget 'Good governance behind miracle in agri sector'

Agriculture and Food Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury said in Parliament yesterday that good governance and efficient management of government were behind the miracle witnessed in the agriculture sector, reports UNB.

Taking part in the discussion on supplementary budget for the fiscal 1998-99, she said: "Donors always think they do all the good things and we the people of developing countries do all the bad things. That's why when people achieve something they see it as miracle."

"Yes, the people of Bangladesh performed miracles. We once liberated our country. We let no one have die in the severe floods of the century. We also grew bumper crops and compensated the economy... people of this country have proved several times that they can do miracles," Matia said.

On the additional expenditure for the current fiscal year, she said but it was less than the fiscal 1993-94. The minister said that the total additional development and non-development expenditure of the government was Tk 4,274 crore during the current fiscal while it was Tk 4,564 crore in 1993-94 when there was no natural calamity.

"Further, the principal amount of this additional expenditure was spent to feed the vulnerable people affected by floods."

She said 42 lakh families have been supported for six months through VGF cards while 86,000 metric tonnes of rice has been distributed under the Gratuitous Fund among the flood affected people during the three months of flood.

Referring to the agricultural rehabilitation programme, the Agriculture Minister stated that over 70 lakh agriculture-based families have been affected by the floods. Of them, 14 lakh families were helped through a Tk 30 crore fund distributing free seeds and fertiliser. The remaining families assisted by the Tk 3,270 crore agri-loan programme, she added.

"We helped them and they gave back many times in return," said Matia Chowdhury, thanking the farmers for the bumper crops they produced.

Terming the figures of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) as conservative, she said: "Even if we take the statistics, the farmers grew an additional 24 lakh metric tons of rice and 4 lakh metric tons of wheat."

Their current market value stands at Tk 3,050 crore."

On the utilisation of relief goods, Matia quoted the World Food Programme and said the utilisation rate was 85 per cent, the best as per world yardstick.

Earlier in the discussion, the MPs mainly spoke on the proposed budget for fiscal 1999-2000. They urged the government to reconsider any VAT that might affect the ordinary people and to withdraw the provision of VAT on health service.

The lawmakers also urged the opposition to avoid the culture of hartal for the sake of strengthening democracy.

Advocate Fazle Rabbi of Jatiya Party urged the government to speed up the privatisation programme and save the nation from further wastage of public money.

"If one Adamjee (Jute Mills) can be denationalised the whole nation will be saved from an additional taxation of Tk 500 crore a year," he said.

Others, who took part in the discussion, were Whip Mizanur Rahman Manu, Dr MS Akbar and Rafiqul Anwar of Awami League.

Tension mounts in Patgram border area

LALMONIRHAT, June 13: Tension was mounting as Indian backed by Border Security Force (BSF) tried this morning to fence a tea garden within 20 yards of Bangladesh territory at Panbari in Patgram, reports UNB.

Immediately, the BDR rushed to the spot and chased them back.

"We made a strong protest and proposed a flag meeting to avoid recurrence of such illegal trespass. They agreed and the flag meeting would be held on no man's land at 3 pm tomorrow. Lt Col Niranjan Bhat-tacharya said.

He said similar attempts had been made earlier on June 6 and again on June 11, but the Indians gave up in face of strong protest by BDR.

Residents of Panbari and officials said Indian BSF have mobilised hundreds of troops and heavy firearms from its nearby camps of Jigabari, Bhim and Upen Chaki. BDR was also mobilising its strength to face the situation, they added.



A view from the Gully

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'boys' appeared completely distraught as they took the strike against New Zealand, generally not remembered for their consistency or brilliance.

Trent Bridge was cloudy and gloomy was the Indian faces. That a team, with such talent, clout, and perhaps the most adored and pampered of the dozen, would have such a sad impression was beyond even any skeptic's wildest imagination. Out they went but not before putting a spanner in the works for Zimbabwe to whom they lost by only three runs in the first round, India's defeat to New Zealand had so many surprise elements. The mere fact that the full Indian batting machine could not take the score to around 300 against a pedestrian Kiwi attack, barring Geoff Allott, should be a matter of concern for the losing team. Sachin Tendulkar's performance with the bat left a big question mark over his fitness. Were the English conditions, to which he was not 'new', to his dislike?

Apart from the success against Kenya Tendulkar had disappointed his admirers across the world. Ganguly was painfully slow. It was left to Jadeja, Azhar and Robin Singh to score quickly with help from Dravid and take the score to respectability.

New Zealand seized the opportunity with both hands because this was their only chance to be in the semis. They made no fuss about their intentions and went about in a professional manner. The normally disciplined Indian bowlers bowled a generous dose of wickets and no, and by the time the rains intervened Mathew Horne and Roger Twose had taken their team to safety.

The Indians must be feeling hollow inside themselves. If all their preparations and attentions were focused only for their match against Pakistan, which they won handsomely and also as a better team on that particular day, they can sit back and smile for a consolation prize. But as far as the tournament goes, they will have to compose themselves and deeply go into retrospection and come up with genuine causes and their remedies for the future.

Tailpiece: For the advertiser the message is clear: Till the final, it's all dandruff and no clear. (No malice intended).

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Walkathon to save trees at Osmany Udyan today

By Staff Correspondent
A walkathon has been arranged by the 'Movement to Save 11,000 Trees at Osmany Udyan' today.

Starting from Osmany Udyan at 3 pm, walkathon will end at Bahadur Shah Park at 5-30 pm.

A rally will be held there later, said a press release of the movement yesterday.

Shibir calls strike at CU today

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 13: The Chittagong University unit of Islamic Chhatra Shibir called for a day-long strike at CU tomorrow as police prevented them from holding a rally on the campus yesterday.

After Saturday's clash between BCL and Shibir police banned rallies and processions on the campus to avoid further clash.

When Shibir activists gathered to hold their rally police dispersed them charging baton indiscriminately. Later Shibir leaders announced the strike programme protesting police action and threatened to go for a greater agitation from June 15 unless their 5-point demand is met.

Police also charged baton and dispersed a gathering of Anti-Communal Students Forum in front of Arts Faculty yesterday.

Aussies in semis

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