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Three leading trade bodies urge govt

Improve law & order, build consensus on nat'l issues

By Staff Correspondent

Presidents of three leading trade bodies yesterday voiced concern over the deteriorating law and order and urged the government to improve the situation, modernise infrastructure facilities and build a political consensus on issues of national interest.

They said investment is declining, creating pressure on the country's foreign exchange reserve and increasing unemployment.

They urged the government to take steps so that Bangladeshis can have access to markets in the region. This issue should be top on the agenda and taken up at the highest level.

The presidents of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturer and Exporter Association (BGMEA) were delivering a talk on State of Business in Bangladesh at a 'meet the reporters' programme organised by the Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) in the city.

DRU President M Anwarul Haq and its General Secretary Monowarul Islam also spoke on the occasion.

DCCI President Aftabul Islam said the foreign exchange reserve has hit a shocking low of US \$ 1.37 billion, which can

barely meet two month's import bill.

There has been a persistent deficit in the balance of trade. In fiscal 1998-1999, the deficit increased to an all time high of Tk 17629 crore.

"In view of this, we have to attract FDI (foreign direct investment) to give a big push to investment by at least 25 per cent to break the vicious circle of poverty," Aftab said.

Poverty and unemployment are causing frustration and socio-political instability. Only rapid industrialisation and expansion of modern service industries can help improve the situation, he said.

The DCCI president said the

government has declared a 'unique' incentive package to attract FDI. "But actual response has been far from satisfactory."

He said the World Bank projected an average annual investment inflow of US \$ 620 million during 1996-2000 and about US \$ 900 million till 2010.

"On the other hand capital outflow would average US \$ 129 million annually during 1996-2000 and about US \$ 171 million annually till 2010. Adequate and timely steps should be taken to increase investment in the most productive sectors, particularly export

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Divine intervention, the last resort? Having failed to infuse enough civic sense into the pedestrians to get them to use overbridges for crossing road, a traffic constable in desperation wears a banner that reads "For Allah's sake, use the over-bridge," at Farmgate in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

Govt 'interference' in FBCCI polls 'undesirable'

By Staff Correspondent

Top leaders of three leading trade bodies yesterday expressed their dissatisfaction over government's alleged interference in the election of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

Businesses should be left with businessmen, they observed at a 'meet the reporters' programme organised by the Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) in the city yesterday.

Presidents of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturer and Exporter Association (BGMEA) were delivering a talk on State of Business in Bangladesh at a 'meet the reporters' programme organised by the Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) in the city yesterday.

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Court martial of 12 officers

Army refuses to submit documents to JS body

The Army has refused to submit documents of court martial of 12 army officers on charge of assassination of President Ziaur Rahman to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence Ministry, reports UNB.

A three-member sub-committee meeting yesterday was shocked and surprised that a joint secretary of Defence Ministry appearing before the committee informed that the army authorities have refused to submit those documents.

Ruling party MP Col (ret'd) Farook Khan reacting sharply suggested that action be taken against the Ministry of Defence for violating the Constitution.

BNP's expelled MP Maj (ret'd) Akhteruzzaman, who is a member of the sub-committee, said the government has refused to produce the court martial proceedings in its bid to "protect HM Ershad who was involved in the killing of Ziaur Rahman."

The Ministry of Defence in its explanation said that the proceedings of court martial were "restricted." The meeting

They observed that it was a

challenge to the Parliamentary Standing Committee and violation of the Constitution.

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Four reasons for deferral of NAM Summit

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad said yesterday that Bangladesh has asked for deferral of the 13th NAM Summit at least until the early part of 2002 since a caretaker government would be in place in September 2001 when the summit is scheduled to be held.

"NAM was scheduled to be held in September 2001. It is the convention to hold the summit in November. But we have informed the NAM chairman that Bangladesh would not be in a position to hold it before early 2002," the foreign minister said in reply to questions at a press conference.

He said there are four reasons for Dhaka's request for the

Diamond cutting industry to be set up in Savar

By Inam Ahmed

Think of diamond trade and names like Johannesburg, Antwerp, Bombay and Colombo will race across the mind. Now add Dhaka to the list.

For the first time in the country, a joint venture export-oriented diamond cutting and polishing industry based on cuttable rough diamonds will be set up in Savar.

The company, Brilliant Hera Ltd, will import rough diamonds from the Sri Lankan sight holders, which after cutting and finishing in Bangladesh, will be re-exported to the same overseas market as value-added finished gems.

HRC Bangladesh Ltd and KW Worldwide Ltd. will be local partners in the project while Asia Global Investments of Sri Lanka will be the foreign partner.

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Dhaka will ask Islamabad to apologise for '71 genocide

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad reiterated yesterday that Pakistan should apologise for the genocide and war crimes committed during the War of Independence in 1971.

Dhaka will demand apology from Islamabad through diplomatic channels for the genocide its soldiers committed in 1971, he told reporters while replying to queries about the prime minister's statement in this regard on September 14.

"Just wait and see. We'll do what needs to be done. We'll

also move through diplomatic channels. The Pakistani people have already realised about the wrongdoings of the Pakistan army (Generals) and are now themselves speaking about the need for trial of war criminals and release of the Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report," said Azad responding to a barrage of questions on the recent downturn in Bangladesh-Pakistan relations following Pakistan's chief executive's cancellation of a scheduled meeting with the Bangladesh

prime minister on the sidelines of the UN Millennium Summit.

Reacting to the recent developments in Bangladesh-Pakistan relations, Samad Azad said, "Pakistan has missed the bus. Now they are explaining their lost position. He said Sheikh Hasina's statement was the manifestation of the deep concern of the people of Bangladesh about Pakistan's past activities. It was not a personal statement, but was made in the capacity as the prime minister

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Raducan stripped of gold

Doping scandals, dreary weather in Sydney

SYDNEY, Sept 26: The Sydney Olympics staggered through a day of doping scandals and dreary weather today, the gloom and doom dimming the glow of gold, reports AFP.

Romanian Andreea Raducan was stripped of her gymnastics all-around gold medal after testing positive for the stimulant pseudoephedrine.

The diminutive 16-year-old then vowed to take her case to the Court of Arbitration for

Sport. A CAS statement said arbitrators would hold a special meeting at their Sydney office tomorrow to consider the matter.

Between Raducan's sanction and the report of her appeal, an emotional CJ Hunter, accompanied by his superstar wife Marion Jones, told a news conference he would defend himself against the charge of steroid use.

"I am quite positive that

when everything is said and done I will be totally exonerated," Hunter said in response to the announcement by International Olympic Committee medical chief Prince Alexandre De Merode that the shot put world champion had tested positive for nandrolone four times this year.

The turmoil seemed to spill over into the Sydney weather. Japan's dream of softball gold dissolved in the rain as leftfielder Shiori Koseki, her eyes turned into a downpour and a fly ball almost in her glove, slipped on the wet grass in the bottom of the eighth innings. The mishap let the winning run cross the plate in the United States 2-1 victory.

"As I saw her fall I knew we had it," US catcher Stacy Nuveman said.

Leontien van Moorsel of the Netherlands powered through driving mid-day rain to win her second cycling gold of the Games in the women's road race.

Van Moorsel added the title to her individual pursuit crown, and silver in the women's points race on the track last week.

The cold, wet weather didn't dampen spirits at Bondi Beach, where Americans Dain Blanton and Eric Fonoimoana rallied to beat the Olympic third-seed Santos of Brazil for the beach volleyball gold.

The day brought a mini-gold rush for Russia, whose three triumphs included two in Greco-Roman wrestling for Vartkes Samourachev in the 63 kg class and for Mourat Kardanov in the 76 kg category.

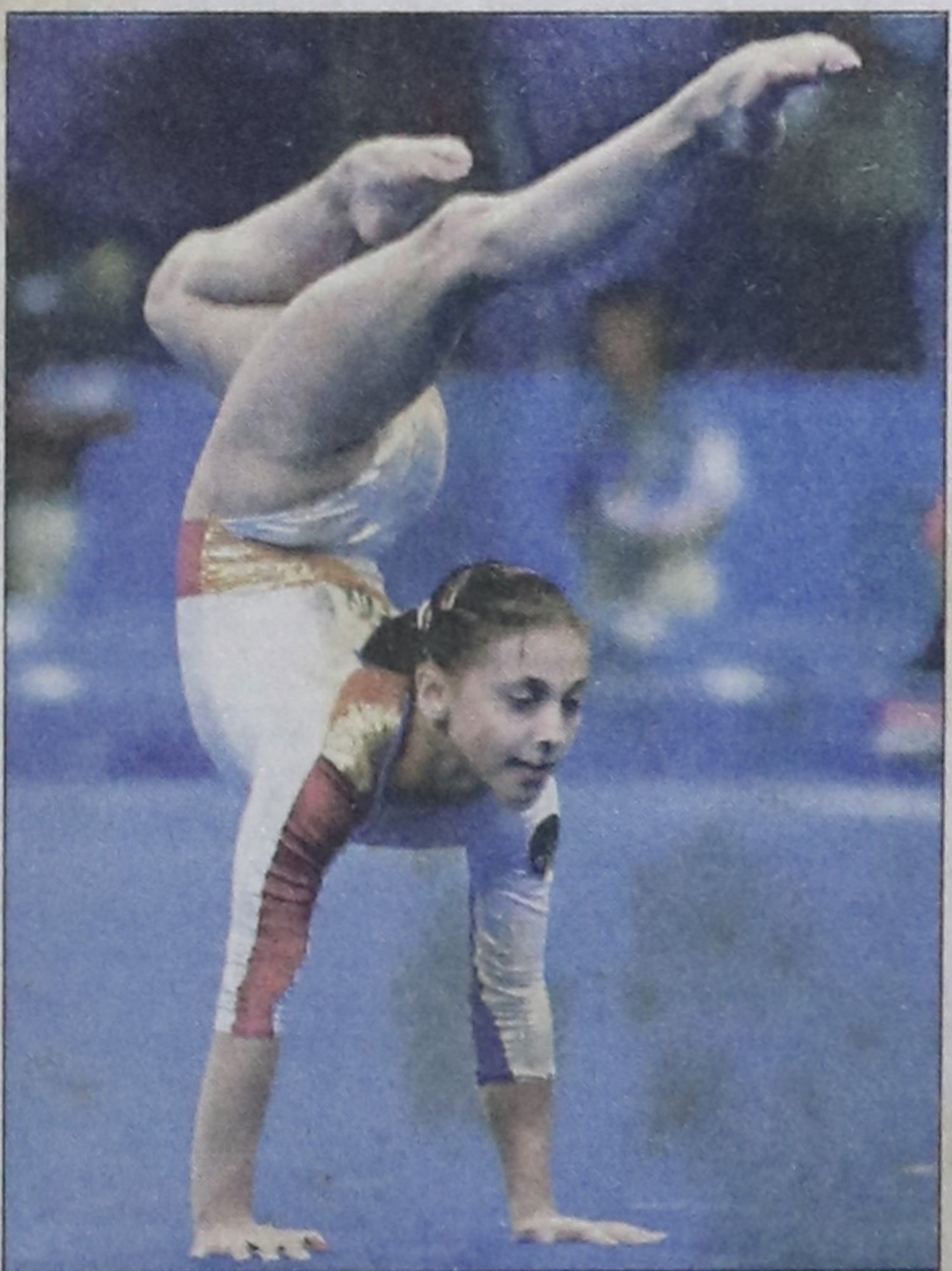
The other two wrestling titles on offer went to South Korean Sim Kwon-Ho, who defended the 54 kg title he won in Atlanta, and Swedish star Mikael Ljungberg who added a 97 kg gold to his Atlanta bronze.

The third Russian gold went to synchronised swimmers Maria Kisseleva and Olga Brusnikina in the duet.

It was a sign of the many loopholes and landmines in the anti-doping battle that their triumph came barely more than two months after they were stripped of their 2000 European title because Kisseleva tested positive for ephedrine, a stimulant similar to the pseudoephedrine that was Raducan's downfall.

Still, IOC media director Francois Carrard said the Olympics couldn't afford to let Raducan slide, even though she did not appear to have taken the illegal drug in an effort to improve her performance.

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File photo shows Andreea Raducan performing her floor exercise routine at the SuperDome during the women's gymnastics all-around final at the Sydney Olympic Games. She was stripped of her gold medal yesterday for doping.

— AFP photo



Non-government primary school teachers continued their sit-in at Osmani Udyan in the city for the second day yesterday. The teachers have been boycotting classes since September 2 demanding nationalisation of their service.

— Star photo

Flood situation deteriorates in 2 dists, static in 5

By Staff Correspondent

Flood situation in Meherpur and Jhenidah districts deteriorated further with inundation of fresh areas while it improved slightly in Kushtia yesterday.

The situation in five other affected districts — Chuadanga, Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Sirajganj and Netrakona remained static, according to reports from our correspondents and news agencies.

In Meherpur, flood water submerged fresh areas in the district town and Sadar upazila.

The rivers Bhairab, Kajla and Moraganga marked a further rise. The situation in other parts of the district remained

unchanged.

A 30-member army team using four speed boats, has started distribution of relief among the affected people.

In Jhenidah, the flood situation worsened further with inundation of four more unions in Mohespur upazila.

The unions are Jadabpur, Shayamkur, Natima and Fatepur. With these, a total of 10 unions in the upazila have been affected.

A 70-year-old man identified as Sadhu Miah of Seja Bazar in Nepa Union of Mohespur drowned in the flood water yesterday.

With the latest flood-related death, the toll rose to nine since Saturday.

The affected people have taken shelter in nearby villages of Kaliganj and Kotchandpur upazilas and local schools and colleges.

The rivers Ichamati and Churni were flowing above danger marks at 6 pm yesterday, our correspondent said.

An army unit, volunteers and medical teams are working in the affected areas to provide emergency aid to the marooned people.

Our Kushtia correspondent

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Flood alert in Calcutta

Over 700 killed in West Bengal, Bihar

CALCUTTA, Sept 26: Flood warnings were sounded today in the densely-populated city of Calcutta as the death toll from the worst floods to hit eastern India and Bangladesh in recent years neared 750, reports AFP.

P S Ingty, relief commissioner of West Bengal told the news agency that a flood alert had been sounded across the city of some 10 million people.

"There are predictions of high tide and water is likely to submerge several areas," Ingty said, adding that the Hooghly river, which courses through Calcutta, was likely to spill over

into a slew of low-lying areas.

"Several up-market quarters such as Ballygunj and Alipore, where many countries have their consulates, are under threat. We expect flooding in a major part of the city, especially in places close to the Hooghly river like the Kidderpore docks area."

Police said residents from some areas likely to be affected were already being moved from their homes.

Ingty said according to official figures, at least 446 people had died in West Bengal in the past 10 days, while another 179

were missing, presumed dead.

"In this state alone, the floods have affected 10 million people and damaged at least 1.5 million houses."

Very preliminary estimates point that the damage to crops would be in the region of 345 million dollars," he said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu told reporters today that 201 people had been killed in the district of Birbhum alone.

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Unofficial results of 5 municipal elections

The Election Commission last night announced unofficial results of elections to five pourashavas out of 12 held yesterday, reports UNB.

Sajjad Karim Mantu, a Juba League leader, was unofficially elected chairman of Mukhsudpur pourashava in Gopalganj.

He got 2,321 votes while his nearest rival Mizanur Rahman Shipu 1,894 votes.

Some 6671 voters out of 8,913 cast their ballots.

Atiar Rahman (1,730) and Ahajjad Mohsin (1,281) secured the 3rd and 4th position respectively.

Abdul Hamid Sarker was unofficially elected chairman of Shariakandi pourashava in

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Rampant rigging in Comilla

By Abul Kalam Azad, back from Comilla

Rampant rigging featured the otherwise peaceful municipality polls in Comilla yesterday.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Sayed postponed polls in Lutfunnesa Girls High School and Govindapur Government Primary School, two of eight centres he visited yesterday in view of complaints of gross irregularities. Voting took place in 32 centres in Comilla.

A group of about 10 youth, allegedly supporters of incumbent chairman Kamaluddin of Comilla municipality, stormed into booth no. 1 inside the Lutfunnesa Girls High School

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 27		5.50 pm
Sept 28	5-49 am	

Prayer Timings September 27		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-54	6-00
Esha	7-45	8-15

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