



Hasina, Clinton hold official talks today

WASHINGTON, Oct 18: Official talks between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and US President Bill Clinton will be held tomorrow (Thursday), reports BSS.

The Dhaka-Washington formal talks, scheduled for an hour from 12.25 pm local time (10.25 pm BST), will focus on issues of mutual interest of both the nations.

The issues include extradition of the killers of Bangabandhu, increasing US investment in Bangladesh, particularly in oil, gas and energy sectors and duty-free and quota-free access of Bangladeshi goods to US market.

The two leaders will also discuss regional and global issues on which they have been maintaining identical views.

WB aid sought for post-flood rehabilitation

WASHINGTON, Oct 18: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today urged the World Bank to provide needed assistance to help her government to cope with post-flood situation and repair flood-damaged infrastructure, report agencies.

Hasina's call came during a meeting with World Bank President James D Wolfensohn at the Blair House on Tuesday. Wolfensohn was accompanied by Vice-President Mieko Nishimura and other high officials of the Bank.

They discussed the World Bank programmes being implemented in Bangladesh. The World Bank President enquired about the on-going reforms in Bangladesh.

Hasina referred to the damage caused by the unusual floods in the south-western districts which did not witness flood in more than half a century.

She said Bangladesh needed assistance from the development partners to cope with the post-flood situation, particularly for the draining of stagnant water, and repairing the damaged infrastructure.

The prime minister said her government has initiated reforms in a big way in the social sector programmes, particularly for alleviation of poverty. Speaking about the reforms in power sector, she said, 'We have allowed

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receives a guard of honour at the Pentagon in Washington on Tuesday with US Deputy Secretary of Defence Rudy DeLeon (extreme left). On the same day, she also placed a wreath at the National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. Hasina is scheduled to meet President Bill Clinton today.

-AFP photo

Fostering democratic values a must for development

Clinton hopes Bangladesh would put aside 'destructive partisan politics'



Bill Clinton

WASHINGTON, Oct 18: US President Bill Clinton has expressed strong optimism that Bangladeshis can put aside destructive partisan politics to work together towards development in a democratic order, reports UNB.

Fostering democratic values is never easy, but it is essential to the progress of any nation," he said in an interview with UNB chief editor Enayeturah Khan.

During the interview, the US President made frank and candid observations about Bangladesh's politics and economics, its role in international affairs, North-South co-operation, problems facing the LDCs, impact of globalisation and global peace and security.

Bangladesh has overcome a violent political history, and my great hope is to see Bangladeshi politics enter a period of productive cooperation for the benefit of all," Clinton said.

Asked if Bangladesh has chosen the right path for its development through fostering democratic values and pursuing economic reforms, he said Bangla-

den made some truly impressive progress on development.

He said economic reforms are never easy, and the returns are not immediate, but future generations would benefit from today's wise economic decision.

The US President praised Bangladesh's efforts to eliminate child labour from its textile and apparel industry, and steps to protect environment.

Those are advances that are not included in the bottom-line analyses of accountants, but are essential to long-term prosperity for the whole nation."

USAID for Bangladesh

President Clinton observed that the United States in Bangladesh's number one export market and the US investors had "discovered Bangladesh's attractions."

About development cooperation, he said USAID is currently providing \$50 million to Bangladesh and other nations in South Asia to harness clean energy resources.

He said Bangladesh just became the first country to receive debt relief under US Tropical Forest Conservation Act.

We cooperate on the environment, we cooperate on child labour providing an example to the rest of the region and the world by removing children from garment industry jobs and placing them in school."

Moreover, the President said, the two countries are working

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Hasina may ask Clinton to deport 3 ex-military men

WASHINGTON, Oct 18: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, here on an official visit, said she plans to press her government's case for the deportation from the United States of three former Bangladeshi military men who are wanted for the murder Bangabandhu in 1975.

In an interview with the Associated Press on Tuesday, Hasina said she plans to raise the issue during separate meetings tomorrow with President Bill Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno.

She conveyed annoyance that the United States has not acted more quickly in the case.

Fifteen former army officers were convicted in 1998 for the murder of President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in an Aug 15, 1975, military coup.

Eleven of the 15 were convicted in absentia, three of whom are living in the United States, according to Hasina. She referred to them as "self-confessed killers."

The United States and Bangladesh have no extradition treaty but Hasina said legal norms permit the deportation of convicted murderers.

Hasina conducted the interview at Blair House, where distinguished foreign visitors often stay. She sat on a sofa next to a large photograph of her father that was placed on an easel.

She signalled impatience that her government's request for deportation had not progressed further in official US channels.

Speaking through an interpreter, Hasina said it was "somewhat paradoxical to live with the reality that in a country with well-established democratic institutions like the United States, self-confessed killers can find sanctuary."

A member of Hasina's entourage identified the three as Shariful Hossain, AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed and Rashed Choudhury. They were described as disgruntled military officers who raked the Rahman home with gunfire, killing the Hasina's parents, three brothers, the wives of two of them and other relatives.

The case was not acted upon by successive Bangladeshi governments until Hasina was elected in 1996.

Before the interview, she met with senior World Bank officials, who urged her to adopt pro-growth policies as a means of reducing the country's widespread poverty.

Without criticizing the recommendation, Hasina said Bangladesh has achieved the highest growth rates since her father was prime minister.

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Tk 6.5cr contrabands in 'diplomatic' consignment

By Staff Correspondent

A Customs surveillance team seized two containers of cigarettes, wristwatches and razor blades worth about Tk 6.52 crore from the Inland Container Depot at Kamalapur in the city yesterday.

The consignment was destined for the 'Attache' of the Iraqi Embassy in Dhaka with a document describing it as foodstuff. Customs officials said the containers were loaded with 869 master cartons of Benson and Hedges cigarette, 14 lakh pieces of Super Max shaving blades and 61,640 pieces of wristwatch for men and women.

The consignment was shipped from Dubai for the 'Attache' and it reached the container depot on October 6.

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Foodstuff? Customs officials yesterday confiscated two containers of cigarettes, wristwatches and shaving razors worth 6.52 crore taka from the inland container depot at Kamalapur in the city. The consignment, documented as foodstuff, was to be delivered to the 'Attache' of the Iraqi Embassy in Dhaka.

Ministry postpones decision to replace DMCH director

By Staff Correspondent

The Health Ministry postponed yesterday its decision to replace the incumbent director of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Earlier on Tuesday, it issued an order, asking Director Brigadier Badrul Munir to hand over charge to Deputy Director Dr Syed Babar Hossain, a controversial figure.

The ministry had also issued a letter on October 2 stating that Dr Babar has been made director (current charge) of the hospital and would take over when Brig Munir, on deputation, goes back to army.

Both the letters were issued

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Tk 35cr ADB aided project

Massive 'fraud' in supply of hospital equipment

By Naimul Haq

A survey has detected massive irregularities in a Tk 35 crore ADB financed hospital equipment supply project.

The survey conducted recently detected that about 80 per cent of the equipment were not supplied as specified in the contract. There were discrepancies in model, country of origin and manufacturers. Even there was shortage of accessories and some equipment were missing.

Anesthesia ventilator instead

of ICU ventilator and ordinary microscope instead of motorised zoom microscope were supplied. Operating microscope, EEG and EMG machines were supplied without accessories.

A top health ministry official termed this the biggest monetary fraud in a single project in the health sector so far.

In June 1997, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare floated an international tender for the ADB Assisted 2nd Health and

Family Welfare Project for supply of various medical equipment and accessories in four separate packages. These were for four medical college hospitals, eight district hospitals, five nursing training centres, two health technology institutes and a hospital for tribal people.

Contracts for Package -1 and Package -3 were awarded to an Italian Company, ESOOTE SPA, and its local agent was Natasa

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Both the letters were issued

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CAAB authorities wake up: 22 held from around ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

Police and several other agencies have launched a 'cleansing' operation in and around the Zia International Airport (ZIA) after a BBC reporter was mugged in the early hours of Tuesday with a police patrol van stationed hardly 20 yards away.

ZIA police Sub-inspector Mahfuzur Rahman said they have arrested 22 people on charges of loitering with intent in the last two days.

He said three people were arrested on charges of mugging and manhandling BBC Bangla Service reporter Moazzem Hossain. But all of them denied any involvement in the mugging.

ZIA official said, 'The thugs just keep a low profile when such police drives are underway.'

Sources in the ZIA told the Daily Star that at least 15 different security agencies of the government are active to keep ZIA a crime-free zone. There is no way that these organised gangs could operate within the

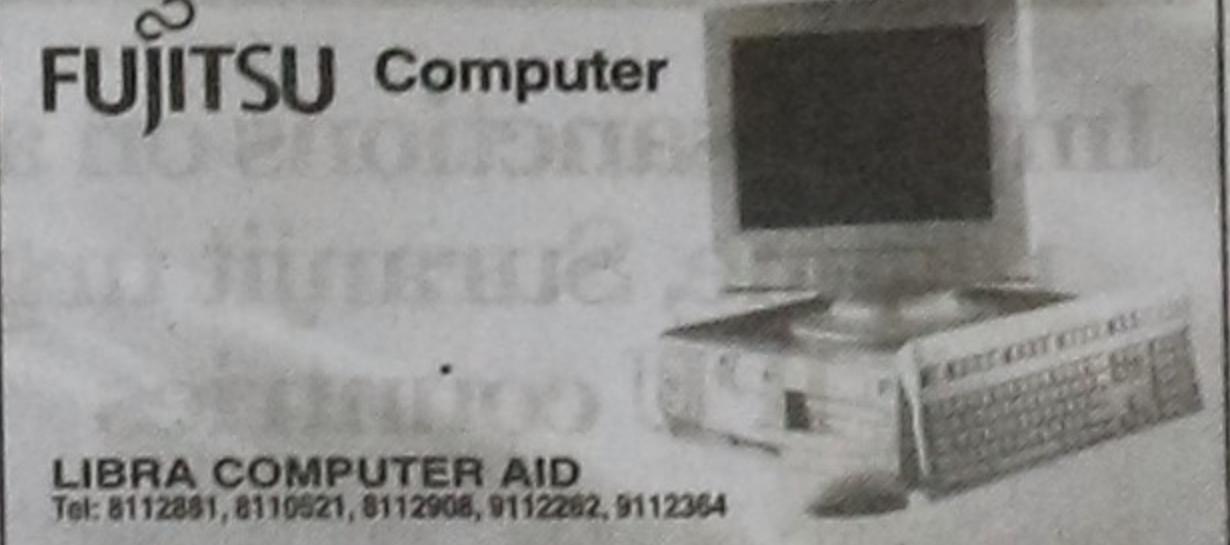
security enclosure of the airport area without being detected by one or the other organisation.

A source said four well-organised gangs with 'solid communication network' are operating inside the ZIA just to extort, mug or steal from the passengers. These gangs have strong links with the people managing the parking lot and regulating various tax services. Hundreds of migrant workers coming home from different Middle Eastern countries are the silent victims of these gangs.

Passengers who land at ZIA and travel to other districts are the most vulnerable ones. In most cases, these passengers do not report any untoward incidents to the authorities fearing further harassment, ZIA sources said.

Those who are coming home

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SIBL Chairman 'removed' for 'harmful acts'

By Inam Ahmed

The Bangladesh Bank yesterday ordered Chairman of Social Investment Bank Limited (SIBL) M A Mannan to abstain from holding the post for his alleged involvement in 'activities harmful to the bank'.

This is the first time a bank chairman has been 'technically removed'. Former ICB Managing Director Giasuddin Ahmed has been made SIBL chairman.

In barring Mannan from holding the chairman's post, the central bank invoked a clause of the Bank Company Act which says that if the BB feels that any director or chairman of a bank is harmful for the institution, depositors or public interest, then he can be abstained from the post before serving him with a removal notice.

Mannan has been given seven days to defend himself as to why he should not be removed under clause 46 of the BCA.

In punishing the SIBL chairman, the BB brought five specific allegations against Mannan.

He was accused of obstructing BB's inspection of SIBL, challenging BB's authority, interfering into bank's administrative activities, invol-

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Armed men led by BCL leaders occupy house

By Staff Correspondent

session of the house, the sources said.

When a Daily Star correspond-

ent went to the house at around 10 last night, he found a large number of youths in and around the house, which was partially demolished.

The street lights on adjacent roads were put out and a bearded man stood on the road beside a car in front of the house where about half a dozen youths were hanging around in candle light.

One of the youths identifying himself as Zakir Hossain said he is a relative of former Awami League Presidium member Mahiuddin Ahmed. Zakir said the house belonged to Shahabuddin. He also said that they did not beat up the evicted inmates.

When asked where the evicted family members had gone, he said that he did not know but heard that they had rented a house elsewhere. The youths identified themselves as local BCL activists and leaders.

Unconfirmed sources said Tuhin, general secretary of BCL Mohammadpur thana unit, Jasim, another leader of the unit and their armed associates accompanied Shahabuddin during the attack.

As it moved away the warning

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Information memo finalised

40pc shares for partner, 9pc for Biman men

By Shehab Ahmed

The consultants for Bangladeshi Biman has finalised the Information Memorandum (IM) of the airline for its planned restructuring and commercialisation by offloading 49 per cent shares.

Forty per cent of these shares would be offered to a Strategic Partner (SP) and nine per cent would be retained by Biman employees.

After two days of negotiations

Biman's flight to Calcutta delayed by 5 hours

By Special Correspondent

A Bangladesh Biman flight to Calcutta was delayed by more than five hours yesterday afternoon without any proper explanation, leaving passengers, many of them going for treatment, stranded at the departure lounge at ZIA.

A Customer Services official told this correspondent he had informed the passengers that the flight scheduled for 5.10 pm was rescheduled thrice due to 'aircraft consequential