

Govt has solved problems in admn: Hasina

BARISAL, Jan 27: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said her government is doing everything possible for bringing dynamism in the administrative set-up, reports UNB.

"The main objective of our government is good governance and our government has done everything for it," she said while inaugurating a newly-constructed divisional administrative building here today.

The building has been constructed on 18 acres of land at a cost of Tk 6.60 crore.

The Prime Minister said the previous government could not do public any good as it was plagued by indecision. "There was administrative complexity everywhere. In fact, the country's administrative system collapsed during their rule. There were no rules and regulations."

Hasina said that after assuming power, her government took timely and pragmatic steps to solve the problems and infused

dynamism into administration. "Actually, we want to create a working environment where government employees can discharge their duties smoothly."

On the promotion of government officials, she said there was a serious promotion tangle in administration which her government has already solved successfully.

"We have given promotion in different cadres so that the administrative activities go smoothly and appropriately."

Terming village as the centre of all development activities, she said her government is doing everything possible for the development of rural infrastructure and improvement of rural life.

The Prime Minister said that during last four and a half years, the government had taken a number of pragmatic steps to maintain high economic growth and ensured all basic rights of the people.

PM opens leather fair

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for encouraging local and foreign investments has been yielding results and increasing private investment and volume of export.

She said the export-import policy was formulated for a period of five years instead of the previous two years in order to boost export.

Besides, the subsidy to export sector has been increased to Tk 632 crore this year from Tk 631 crore in the last fiscal year, the Prime Minister said.

This is to increase export of commodities like leather goods, readymade garments, jute goods, etc. she added.

The leather sector earned US\$246 million in fiscal 1999-2000 against \$137 million in 1999-91.

Hasina said in recent years the leather sector could not

flourish at the desired level because of fluctuation of demand of leather and leather goods.

To improve the situation, she said, cooperation has been extended to take practical steps for raising the quality of leather and diversifying their use through appropriate technology.

The Prime Minister said the government has taken steps for formation of Leather Council, import of raw leather at zero tariff and credit facility for setting up industry.

Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Commerce Minister M A Jali, Chairman of Bangladesh Finished Leather, Leather Goods and Footwear Exporters' Association (BFLLEFA) M A Sattar Bhuiyan and Vice-chairman of Export Promotion Bureau A B Chowdhury also spoke.

BNP joined hands with razakars

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Serniabat Teacher's Training College and the Barisal Divisional Commissioner's Secretariat at Ichhakati.

UNB adds: Freedom fighters wearing white T-shirts and red-green caps with national flags in hand joined the assembly chanting Joy Bangla slogan invoking the spirit of liberation war to fight against razakars.

The Prime Minister said people do not want to vote "thieves and autocrats" to power again because they know that after capture of power their main work will be making money instead of doing people's welfare.

And that is why the opposition was trying to create anarchy and unrest in the country to capture power by undemocratic means, she observed, because they know that the people will not cast vote for them.

If they can go to power, the PM said, corruption and violence would creep in all spheres as they will start playing games

with the fate of the people.

Ridiculing the announcement of opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia that she will set up separate ministry for the freedom fighters, Hasina questioned whether Khaleda would give "Razakar Golam Azam or Nizami" the charge of that ministry.

She said Khaleda is doing movement with the razakars and autocrats and saying that she would open separate ministry for the freedom fighters. "When her husband was in power or while she was in power, why they did not open that ministry, why in last 21 years they did not try, and now shedding crocodile tears?"

She said the process of destroying democracy was started through the killing of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the process of distorting national history began therewith.

Lawyers' formula

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judges was made unconstitutional.

She also said if two more judges are now appointed in the SC as per the senior lawyers' formula, other lawyers might demand cancellation of their appointment.

In this connection, a member of the lawyers' team Dr MA Zahid told newsmen they did not say that the Prime Minister had violated the Constitution.

Some sources said that in the statement to be placed before the Prime Minister, the lawyers would give a resume of the systems followed in India and Pakistan. They would propose that the President should appoint judges in consultation with the Chief Justice for the sake of independence of the judiciary.

They would argue that though it was Constitutionally right that the Constitution would discharge his responsibilities in consultation with the Prime Minister, in the case of judiciary opinion the Chief Justice,

should be sought, the sources said.

The President could always be the Prime Minister's views after his consultation with the Chief Justice, they would note.

The statement would also mention that in the recent appointment of SC judges, the Chief Justice's opinion was not taken, the sources further said.

Pro-opposition lawyers recently staged an unprecedented demonstration protesting the appointment of Justice Golam Rabbani and Justice Md Ruhul Amin as judges of the SC.

They alleged that the two judges were elevated to the SC superceding two other judges in the High Court- Justice KM Hasan and Justice JR Mudassir.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasrul returned home from a Phnom Penh last night. It is expected that the five senior lawyers would meet the Prime Minister shortly.

Blast at rally

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bomb explosion. Seven persons were killed and over 50 injured in the blast.

CID is now investigating the distribution of some leaflets against CPB President Monjurul Ahsan Khan who is also leader of the Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation, the sources said.

The leaflets were distributed during the rally before the bomb blast.

The Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation (Reg No: 494) controls toll collection at Syedabad bus terminal in the city.

Another union-- Dhaka Zilla Sarak Paribahan Sramik Union-- has been trying to control the terminal.

This union, led by Sadar Ali General Secretary of Demra thana Awami League and Shahjahan Shaju of Kaptan Bazar, is also using the registration No. 494.

A case filed with High Court regarding the dispute over the registration number is yet to be settled. The two groups clashed in the past.

that both may be amputated.

The doctor said the condition of his legs was also not good.

Sources in Feni said a so-called journalist working for Zainal Hazari's local newspaper Hazarika yesterday filed a case with Feni Sadar thana accusing six persons for attacking Tipu Sultan.

Meanwhile, opposition leader Khaleda Zia has strongly condemned the heinous attack on Tipu Sultan and demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the culprits.

The government is not only unleashing attacks on journalists, it is also trying to curb press freedom by controlling advertisements and newsprint quota," she said in a statement yesterday.

The opposition leader said the armed cadres of the ruling Awami League are attacking journalists besides killing BNP leaders and activists.

Khaleda said that they would ensure security of the journalists and freedom of the press by ousting the fascist Awami League government through mass upsurge.

He urged the authorities concerned to examine the scope

for and the extent of private sector participation in increasing the efficiency of Chittagong Port for greater benefit of the region in general and Bangladesh in particular.

Professor Wahidul Haque said that South Asia's globalisation experience has been bad and cautioned that South Asia may get a bad deal unless it watches out.

In particular, Bangladesh must do her homework before the final negotiation.

Bangladeshis should not remain in the wilderness or stand in the wayside any longer.

Referring to George Bush's comment during the Gulf War that the 21st century would be the American century, Prof. Wahid said if 'Pax Americana' even remotely resembles 'Pax Britannia' then South Asia, along with many other regions including Europe, will have to think

about a different world order which is hard to visualise at this state of globalisation.

Speakers on this topic, in response, said that globalisation should not be like a vehicle without brakes in the context of Bangladesh's perspective and interest. They urged for a commanding state's control and role on this issue.

Presided over by Dr. Omar Haider Chowdhury, research director of BIDS, the seminar was addressed among others by Professor Jamal Nazrul Islam, Professor Anupan Sen, Professor Mahfuzul Haq Chowdhury, Professor Harendra Kanti Dey, Dr Moinul Islam, Professor Jyoti Prakash Dutta and Professor AK Azad.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visiting a stall at the Dhaka International Leather Fair 2001 after inaugurating the 3-day event at Hotel Sonargaon yesterday. --Star photo

PDB recommendations

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Since losing the original bid for the first phase in 1997 to AES, Marubeni had strongly lobbied to get the second phase of the Meghnaghat project.

In 1998, it proposed to the government that if awarded the contract, it would develop the second phase as per AES terms and conditions and tariff pricing.

Accordingly, the Cabinet Purchase Committee gave PDB the nod to go for the second phase Meghnaghat-1 project. Later, as AES pinpointed some faults in the land development, for which PDB had to pay another 4.5 million dollars, Marubeni's plant would not require such land compaction or any land rectification. Thus it would save the government 9.5 million dollars.

Moreover, while AES is committed to build Meghnaghat-1 in 37.5 months, Marubeni will build the second phase in 35.5 months, PDB pointed out.

Marubeni will give free electricity during the Initial Operating Period (IOP) of the plant worth 45 million dollars, Marubeni offered free electricity worth five million dollars.

Marubeni later offered different packages of benefits to PDB just to avoid free electricity during IOP.

After a series of negotiations, Marubeni convinced PDB that its package of benefits were 'much better' than that of AES.

PDB last week in its draft recommendations to the Power

Division of the energy ministry said that it had spent Tk 18 crore to conduct "land compaction" through a special method to meet the land development standard of AES Meghnaghat-1 project. Later, as AES pinpointed some faults in the land development, for which PDB had to pay another 4.5 million dollars, Marubeni's plant would not require such land compaction or any land rectification. Thus it would save the government 9.5 million dollars.

If they are so eager to give more benefits than AES, it is not clear to us what is their problem in giving free electricity like AES during the IOP," he said.

"Marubeni played a key role in setting up KAFCO where it is a major partner and KAFCO was supposed to be a good deal for Bangladesh as well."

"What Marubeni is trying to sell us is not all like the benefits offered by AES. Marubeni is giving PDB a benefit package that will be given over a period of 35 years while AES' benefit would be available within the next two years for a period of 10 months (IOP)," he noted.

Marubeni will take 35 acres of land for the project -- whereas AES took 70 acres -- and would give PDB the same amount of initial development charge and annual rent given by AES. PDB can set up its own power plants in the 22nd year of operation, it said.

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After the end of the 22-year contract period, it would give to PDB the plant as a gift. The power plant after 22 years of operation, it said.

AES had signed a contract with the government to provide electricity for a levelised 2.79 cents for the next 22 years.

Marubeni's original offer in the same bid asked for a tariff of more than 3.5 cents per unit.

Quake claims 15000

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children were rescued within hours, but 16 bodies of the students, aged 16 to 18 years, were pulled out later.

It was not known if the remaining 15 children were dead or alive.

"Till Friday afternoon we could hear the cries of the children. Now we hear nothing. But we are continuing our efforts," said police inspector Ramesh Barot, in charge of the rescue operation.

"I want my son back. Why can't they do something," wailed Nainabehn Patel, her eyes red and swollen from crying. Her 16-year-old son, Bhowmik, was trapped under the rubble.

The survivors' other immediate needs are for bread, milk powder, rice, wheat flour, protein-rich cereals, gasoline, kerosene, water and medical attention.

That are the 'top most urgent' requirements, he said.

Bhuj, a town of 150,000 people, suffered the worst from the most powerful quake to strike India in more than 50 years. It rippled through Gujarat as people prepared to watch a live television broadcast of Republic Day celebrations in India's capital, New Delhi.

The situation can't be called

a happy one," India's agriculture minister, Bhaskar Barua, told reporters in the capital. "People are sleeping outside at night. Ninety percent of the houses

have developed cracks. It's not possible to go inside them

because of the many aftershocks."

Damage was also severe in Ahmedabad, where 40 to 50 high-rise buildings collapsed. In one building, a four-story elevator shaft remained intact, while the apartments around it came down in a heap.

Some 14,000 people, mostly suffering broken bones and cuts, jammed hospitals.

Survivors sifted through the surface of the rubble, looking to salvage belongings or to hear possible sounds from their still-buried loved ones. Rescue workers, equipped with little more than crowbars or pickaxes, dug through the debris. A few bulldozers were deployed.

Some people crept up the twisted stairwells to pack valuables into suitcases and baskets, lowering them by rope to the ground. But most people were too afraid to re-enter the shaking buildings. They slept in the street around campfires with temperatures at 13 degrees Celsius (55 F).

The ruling party in Kholna is divided over calling of hartal by the Smriti Parishad which mainly comprises the partymen, sources said.

The suspects and godfathers of the murder case belonging to Mizan group of Juba League have taken firm decision to resist tomorrow's hartal at any cost, said a reliable source in the city.

Robi Smriti Parishad, on the other hand, is also determined to make the hartal a success, said Abdul Gaffar Biswas, vice president of city BNP.

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of the murder case belonging to Mizan group of Juba League have taken firm decision to resist tomorrow's hartal at any cost, said a reliable source in the city.

Zhang is scheduled to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 31.

Shengman Zhang was appointed Managing Director of the World Bank Group in 1997. He currently oversees three of the Bank's six Regional Vice Presidencies, including South Asia; the Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Network; the Human Resources Vice Presidency; and the Quality Assistance Group. In addition, he chairs the Bank's Operations Policy Committee, Sanctions Committee and the Corporate Committee on Fraud and Corruption Policy.

He is the first joint Secretary-level officer tipped for such a high-profile posting.

The REB Chairman said the Board's system loss is 16.46 per cent while rate of revenue collection as high as 97.16 per cent.

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