

Kibria on economy

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 nomic crisis and century's worst 1998 floods.

"Mr Saifur Rahman can criticise our performance only when he can match or improve upon our record," Kibria told UNB, refuting Saifur's remarks as "sweeping and exaggerated."

The rate of inflation was 1.59 per cent in July 2001 when Awami League transferred power to caretaker government, compared to 6.65 per cent in June 1996 when the previous government left office.

Rate of national savings increased from 20.17 per cent in 1995-96 to 23.78 in 2000-01 while rate of investment grew from 19.99 per cent to 23.63, said the former finance minister, giving a comparative picture of the marginal fiscal years of the two successive governments of BNP and Awami League.

Exports increased almost two folds in five years of Awami League, from \$3884m in 95-96 to \$477m in 2000-01.

"I challenge Mr Saifur Rahman to better this record," Kibria said. A steady growth rate of 4.2 per cent was achieved in food grain production during AL rule while it had decreased by 1.8 per cent 93-94 and 5.4 per cent 94-95, both years when BNP was in power.

Grain production reached 264.9 million metric tons in 2000-01 from 190.6 MMT in 1995-96, Kibria said.

"Prices of food grain and most of the daily necessities of life remained stable and within reach of the common people," he added.

Development budget increased

Help Hindus

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 repression, loot, extortion and illegal occupation, pushing the people to the limit of their patience. Even journalists are not spared from their repression," Hasina alleged.

She urged the people to resist all forms of atrocities on religious minorities by 'BNP-Jamaat alliance.'

Expressing concern over the prevailing situation, the AL president said that the last caretaker government, the Election Commission and BNP-Jamaat alliance had resorted to 'barbaric torture' on AL leaders and workers and particularly on members of the Hindu community to 'snatch her party's victory' in the October 1 polls. The process continues under the new government.

"Even members of the public who voted for Awami League are not spared," she added.

Hasina further alleged that armed attacks, loot, arson, intimidation and damage of temples and images of deities continued unabated.

In this regard, she criticised the home minister for his recent statement terming reports on such violence 'exaggerated.'

200 acres of CPA land

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 downs, teachers' residential complex, madrasahs, shopping complexes, Salt and cottage industry units, commercial offices, restaurants, labour colony, markets, fish stalls, and, garages and offices of political parties and labour unions.

The biggest eviction drive was launched at South Halishahar on May 6, recovering 25 acres of land known as dock labourers residential area that was illegally occupied by a pro-Awami League labour leader Sirajul Islam Chowdhury alias 'dock Siraj'.

Chowdhury reportedly earned a huge amount of money by leasing out the illegally occupied land to different private bodies. The labour leader could not be contacted for comments.

CPA also removed 10 illegal dockyards and industries from port areas beside Karnaphuli river during the eviction drive.

Meanwhile, vast lands from Banglabazar to Chaktai area belonging to the CPA remain illegally occupied where clubs, mosques, shops and residential

Bush, Jiang now partners

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 midmorning from his downtown hotel to a guest house in western Shanghai. Security was unusually tight. No other traffic was permitted along the motorcade route. Groups of pedestrians, most of them expressionless, stood along the intersections.

Bush told Jiang he was impressed by the gleaming metropolis Shanghai has become since he was here in the mid-1970s, when his father headed the US diplomatic mission. Then, Bush said, he could not have imagined "the dynamic and impressive Shanghai of 2001."

Bush thanked Jiang for the immediate support Chinese leader offered to the United States in its moment of anguish after the deadly terrorist attacks Sept 11.

Jiang said he made clear to Bush that he is "opposed to terrorism in all of its forms." At the same time, alluding to the US-led air strikes on Afghanistan that began Oct. 7, Jiang said China hopes "anti-terrorism efforts can have clearly defined targets. And efforts should be aimed accurately, and also avoid innocent casualties." Some Afghan civilian have been killed in the air

by Tk 8000 crore in AL government's marginal fiscal while reforms and administrative measures initiated by the government resulted in a 22 per cent growth in revenue.

"Who says that the macroeconomic situation was not strong when we handed over power?" asked the finance minister of the immediate-past Awami League government rhetorically, disowning any irregularity that may have happened after the AL government left.

Any cutbacks on the ADP will have to be approved by parliament, Kibria said, in response to Saifur's announcement on downsizing the ADP by Tk 1000 crore. "We will watch with interest the areas where the axe will fall."

About the new finance minister's announcement on increasing revenue by Tk 500 crore, Kibria doubted whether this could be achieved without imposing new taxes. "Let us know the nature and extent of the new tax," he concluded.

Dalai Lama calls on US to show restraint

AFP, Bombay

Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, said Friday that the United States must act with restraint in Afghanistan.

The Dalai Lama, in Bombay for a routine medical check-up, said: "The issue is serious and the US, being the world leader, should act with restraint."

The United States has since October 7 led military strikes against Afghanistan which hosts Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, accused by Washington of being behind the September 11 terror attacks that left 5,700 people dead and missing.

The Dalai Lama postponed a European tour this month due to "mounting tensions" after the September 11 attacks. The visit would have taken him to Croatia, France, and the Czech Republic and Slovenia.

FEMA

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 terrorists.

FEMA also said that reports received from 178 constituencies indicate that 96.6 per cent of the population have generally accepted the election results. "In so far as the political parties or individual candidates are concerned, the figure is 76.4 per cent."

Inter-party clashes have also increased during the post election period, most of those centring past political rivalry and outcome of the election, it added.

7 separatists

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Shibir preventing

FROM PAGE 12
 connection with BCL. Campus sources said a large number of residents with or without links with BCL had already been ousted from their dormitories while many others had left their halls to escape the wrath of ICS.

A large number of outsiders are now seen roaming around campus and general students are passing their days in a state of insecurity.

ICS President Alauddin Shikder said, "We didn't prevent any student from entering the campus. Allegations of resistance is a false one to tarnish our image."

CU VC Professor Fazle Hossain told this correspondent, "If BCL leaders and activists feel insecure on the campus and inform us, we will take proper measures for their security."

Postal workers

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 Tambaram and also the nuclear power plant at Kalpakkam town, have been sent to laboratory analysis to rule out Anthrax.

Four packets had been received Thursday, two from a local post office in Madras, one from Vellore and one from Coimbatore, according to the state director-general of police BP Nailwal.

One packet tested at the Christian Medical College Hospital at Vellore showed no traces of anthrax and contained some ordinary chemicals freely available in the market.

Three packets are still undergoing examination at the Centre for Animal Studies at Madhavaram in north Chennai.

"The centre wanted 72 hours to complete the investigation, which means we will know the final result only by Sunday," the DGP said.

He said all precautionary measures were being taken to screen any suspicious-looking mail.

Anthrax scare

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 post office was being investigated," House of Commons speaker Michael Martin told members of parliament.

The second package was found in the health ministry less than two hours later.

"There is a suspect package but we haven't any more details about it yet," a ministry spokesman said, declining to give any more information.

The parliamentary post office is in the lobby leading to the House of Commons debating chamber. Police barred access to the lobby while the package was investigated, but did not evacuate the rest of the 19th century parliamentary building.

Urea quota

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 ership.

Criticising the district quota system, the BFA said farmers in many areas faced difficulties in getting urea, as the dealers cannot sell it in other areas.

It demanded lifting of control on selling of fertiliser on a district basis. Existing rules do not allow dealers of one district to sell urea in other districts or other thanas of other districts.

On allocation of the minimum amount to all dealers, the additional amount should be supplied to the big dealers where a big fertiliser storage has been developed such as Noapara, Narayanganj, Nagarbari, Ashuganj, Chandpur, Bhoirab, Chittagong and Bogra, the BFA said.

It further said dealers hardly get allocation of Triple Super Phosphate (TSP) and Single Super Phosphate (SSP) produced by BCIC factory though there is a government decision to allocate these types of fertilisers.

It also demanded that all the TSP and SSP produced by the TSP complex at Chittagong should be allocated against the dealers.

Removal of barriers to import of phosphate fertiliser by the private sector is also vital; otherwise, there may be a fertiliser crisis in the country, the BFA warned.

Skid Ghat

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 Relatives of Farhad are so much scared that they have not yet sought police action against the killers.

Besides, terrorists allegedly belonging to BNP have already taken possession of all points at Skid Ghat, which were earlier in the grip of alleged 'AL terrorists' following the arrest of condemned prisoner Ershad Shikder. All gambling and drug trafficking points have been occupied by BNP activists, overpowering those of AL. But police have so far remained inactive.

Various quarters allege that many of the top police officials seem reluctant to contain terrorist activities and other crimes despite frequent appeals.

"It seems that a section of police officials are allowing terrorists and other criminals to create lawlessness," said an elderly citizen. Many others also expressed similar views.

Some businessmen said AL leaders or activists are not involved in acts of terrorism or other crimes



Members of 'Friends and Brothers' demonstrated in front of the National Press Club yesterday hiding their mouths with black ribbons. They were protesting against all kinds of war.

PM outlines programme

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 She also directed the leaders and workers of the four-party alliance not to take law in their own hands.

Referring to law and order situation during the past government, the prime minister said terrorism and anarchy that engulfed the entire country discredited the nation.

She reminded that the US State Department in its report on law and order and human rights situation in Bangladesh had stirred world conscience.

Stressing the need for fast recovery from the situation for the sake of economy, Khaleda said economic activities and production would remain stagnant unless the situation was improved rapidly.

She called for concerted efforts to eradicate terrorism from society by creating a social movement against his evil. She sought cooperation of the mass media in this regard.

The prime minister informed that citizens' committees on law and order would be formed in every locality in the towns and villages to secure a peaceful environment.

She said all corruption cases would be investigated and the accused brought to book. Under the recovery drive, special teams will be sent abroad with the request to increase quota of garments and export of manpower from Bangladesh.

Mentioning observance of the ensuing December 16, which marks the 30th anniversary of independence, the prime minister also informed that an observance committee would be formed to observe February 21, 2002 as the 50th anniversary of the historic Language Movement.

She also observed that efforts had been made to turn some TV

channels into 'BNP channels' shortly after the election results.

She called upon people involved with mass media people, including Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television, not to pursue personal glorification. "Come out of adoration of the deceased and adulation of the alive. Such efforts affect the memory about those who have passed away and also about weaken the position of those living," she pointed out.

She also asked them to depict real economic and social problems that the new government is encountering.

Her government is committed to maintaining communal harmony in the country at any cost, Khaleda said, adding that it is giving full security to the people of all communities for performing their religious rites.

Referring to the upcoming Durga Puja, the prime minister said it is the endless blessings of the Almighty that three big festivals of the country's three major communities Hindu, Muslim and the Christian will be observed in a short span of time after the takeover by her government.

She expressed the hope that these festivals would help strengthen the religious harmony among various sections of people.

Referring to the landslide victory of the four-party alliance at the general election, the prime minister said there had been a "bloodless vote revolution" on October 1.

She called upon the countrymen to extend cooperation towards building a happy, peaceful and prosperous nation.

The referring to the postponement of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit, Khaleda said smaller but more important and

necessary international seminars would be organised.

International seminars on arsenic and computer education will also be organised.

Efforts will be taken for introducing courses on foreign languages and other technical education for employment generation at home and abroad, she added, setting forth her government's action plan.

The prime minister portrayed a grim picture of, what she said, the Awami League misrule, including signing of agreements with private companies for power stations involving exorbitant costs.

She accused the Awami League of plundering public property, including illegal sanction of flats and plots. At the end of the past regime, 45 plots were allotted to the relatives of the AL leaders, she alleged.

Detailing the final few months of their rule, she said the Awami League had purchased cable worth Tk 40 million without floating tender, made special allocation of wheat worth Tk 4730 million in the name of rural development and sanctioned various other government purchase worth Tk 80,000 million.

The prime minister mentioned the controversial agreement with private developers that demolished the Gulistan Building belonging to the Muktiyoddha Kalyan Trust.

She assured that a 'white paper' on the Awami League government's corruption misrule during the past five years would be published soon.

Khaleda thanked the people for voting her party to power and sought their support for building a prosperous Bangladesh.

Home minister blames AL for post-polls violence

UNB, Bagerhat

Home Minister Air Vice-Marshal (ret'd) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury yesterday blamed the Awami League for the post-election troubles saying the situation would not be so had the AL accepted people's verdict.

"Failing to win the election, Awami League is creating anarchy in the country through violence and propaganda," he said addressing party workers meeting at the district BNP office in the morning.

Referring to press reports on the post-election violence and attacks on the minorities, the home minister reiterated that some of the reports were exaggerated while some were prepared by a certain quarter with ill motives to tarnish the government's image.

US ground forces enter Afghanistan

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 use a third air field, at Dalbandin, a small town in southwestern Baluchistan province bordering Afghanistan.

Pakistani government officials were tightlipped about whether Dalbandin, about 70 km from the border, was being used by US forces for logistical support. But sources close to the military said that it was.

Vice President Dick Cheney gave further clues as to how the war would develop.

"The success of our air campaign has cleared the way for further action which the Taliban and the al Qaeda terrorists can neither predict nor escape," he said in New York.

"It is important to realise the military aspect will not always be so visible... Other successes will come from covert operations that are not seen or heard of beyond a very small circle."

The Taliban however said yesterday they had no reports of US

special forces or ground troops on Afghan soil in districts under their control.

"Fifteen or 20 troops will be able to do nothing," a Taliban spokesman said. "If they want to send in soldiers, they should send in 100,000. Then it can be a fight between our soldiers and theirs."

Instead, he said, America has been waging "a war against civilians."

President Bush's national security adviser declined to discuss the special forces' activities in Afghanistan. "I cannot talk about what special operations are doing," Condoleezza Rice said on CNN.

Special operations troops specialise in undercover search-and-destroy missions, quick commando raids, psychological warfare and training of friendly local forces.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan's opposition forces plan to surround the key northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif and squeeze the Taliban militia that control it into surrender, a senior

commander said yesterday.

Ustad Attah, one of three commanders trying to recapture the strategic town from the ruling Taliban movement, told Reuters by satellite telephone that he hoped Mazar-i-Sharif would be encircled within a few days.

Attah said eight US personnel, apparently on an intelligence or reconnaissance mission, had been with fellow opposition commander General Abdul Rashid Dostum for several days.

Dostum, also aiming at Mazar-i-Sharif, was 90 km southeast of the city in Dara-i-Suf. Attah said the Americans had arrived by helicopter "some time back" and stayed when the aircraft left.

"First we want to surround Mazar-i-Sharif, so that people there will remain calm and so that the Taliban has no way of escaping," he said from his position just southeast of the ancient Central Asian city.

Govt to resolve problems of garment sector on priority basis

BSS, Dhaka

Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury on Thursday said the government would give highest importance in solving the problems of the garment sector.

He said this while a delegation of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) led by its President Kutubuddin Ahmed called on him at his office, a BGMEA press release said.

The team urged the Commerce Minister to take appropriate measures to win duty and quota-free access of local garment products to the US market.

The leaders of the garment sector said quota and duty-free access of Bangladesh products to the USA is essential as the local garment exporters have been facing uneven competition following awarding of preferential market access to some countries through the USTDA-2000.

The ongoing global economic recession and impact of the recent terrorist attacks in the USA have made the situation even worse for the local exporters, they mentioned.

BGMEA president Kutubuddin Ahmed sought intervention of the minister for establishment of central bonded warehouse for reducing lead time and awarding of 15 per cent incentive on FOB value to the local garment producers.

The minister asked the BGMEA leaders to submit a report containing both problems of the garment sector and suggestions to solve those to the commerce ministry as early as possible.

State Minister for Commerce Barkat Ullah Bulu and Commerce Secretary Suhel Ahmed Chowdhury were also present on the occasion.

The BGMEA delegation included, among others, vice presidents Ershadullah, Quazi Moniruzzaman and Shafiqul Islam Mohiuddin.

India, Russia say 'no' to Taliban in post-war govt

AFP, New Delhi

India and Russia said Friday the Taliban and moderate elements within the Islamic militia should be excluded from in any future government in Afghanistan.

"In any future government there can be no place for the Taliban movement," said a joint statement following two days of talks by a bilateral working group on Afghanistan, attended by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav I. Trubnikov.

"The obscurantist, malevolent, extremist and violent ideologies on which the Taliban movement is based will pose a substantial danger to the stability of any broad based multi-ethnic government, in addition to providing a fillip to terrorism and narcotics," it said.

The statement rejects the view put forward by US Secretary of State Colin Powell on a visit to Islamabad this week in which he said moderate elements of the Taliban, a fundamentalist movement long allied with Pakistan, could be incorporated into a future government.

"Moderate Taliban is

oxymoronic," said Indian foreign ministry spokeswoman Nirupama Rao, adding the view was shared by Russia.

The bilateral joint working group on Afghanistan was set up during a visit to India in October 2000 by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Russia, India and Iran are key backers of the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance.

Girl raped allegedly by madrassah teacher

UNB, Sirajganj

A minor girl was raped allegedly by a madrassah teacher at Kazipura village in Kamarkhand upazila on Thursday.

Police and local people said Jamaluddin, 37, a teacher of Kazipura madrassah, run by the Islamic Foundation, took the girl to his residence at about 10am and raped her.

Hearing her cries, local people rushed to the spot and rescued the 7-year-old girl. The teacher, however, managed to flee the scene.

Taliban must go: Germany

AFP, Islamabad

Germany's Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer reaffirmed Friday that the Taliban administration must be brought down before much needed international help could come to Afghanistan.

During talks in Islamabad with Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf and Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar, Fischer also highlighted Pakistan's key role in bringing stability to the region.

Pakistan was the first leg of a tour of central Asia and the Middle East to discuss the crisis caused by the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington and the US reprisal strikes on Afghanistan.

"We must get rid of the Taliban, it will give the Afghan people a future," Fischer said after his meetings with Pakistan leaders.

"We must reconstruct the country and bring in a government that does not support terrorism," he added.

Fischer said determined efforts must be made by the international

community "to put in place a political solution" in Afghanistan that involves all the country's ethnic groups.

The minister, who also met officials from aid groups, said action was even more important because of the "humanitarian disaster" that had hit Afghanistan.

Up to 60,000 Afghan refugees are said to have crossed the border since US air strikes started on October 7.

But he insisted military action must be pursued against the Taliban and the camps run by Osama bin Laden, the accused mastermind of the attacks on the United States.

"There are real problems in Afghanistan," he said. "We must be prepared for a strong humanitarian effort if there is a change in the government structure."

Fischer was to go Friday evening to the Tajikistan capital Dushanbe and return to Berlin on Saturday. On Monday, the German minister will go on a four-day tour of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Nutrition programme

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 Sources said over 70 per cent women are anaemic or suffer from iron deficiency and incidence of low birth weight is estimated to be about 45 per cent.

About 67 per cent women suffer from iodine deficiency and