

Cash subsidy for exports no more, says Saifur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Exports will no longer receive any cash subsidy, Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman has said.

"There will be no subsidy from now on," he said while speaking as chief guest at the 23rd consultative committee meeting of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday. "Cash subsidy has been squandered in many cases."

However, there will be interim cash injection for some pending cases in the textile sector, he said.

The government provides subsidy to export-oriented industries that use domestic raw materials.

Total subsidy in the 2000-01 for readymade garment industries, selected leather products, manufactured jute products, flower and artificial flower stood at Tk 797 crore.

Finance minister of the Awami League government Shah AMS Kibria assured in his budget speech for the current fiscal (2001-02), "The existing subsidy on exports will continue in the same terms and conditions."

The amount of subsidy for the export sector is expected to cross the Tk 800-crore mark in this fiscal.

There have been allegations that some exporters, using fake documents, misused cash subsidy in the RMG and textiles sectors. In 1998 several such cases were detected in export of jardani saris.

The government has stalled disbursement of subsidy in the tune of Tk 300-400 crore for the last few months for RMG sector.

Meanwhile, at the meeting, the minister reiterated that the country had to depend on its own resources. "We want to mobilise our own resources for development financing, depending less on foreign aid."

External assistance, he pointed out, has become more and more associated with mutually imposed conditionalities of both bilateral and multilateral sources. "Other than from Japan, there is virtually no bilateral assistance for Bangladesh."

In such a context, Saifur said, the country needs to develop better expenditure management.

"The economy cannot afford unnecessary development projects that

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PHOTO: STAR

Students of Tejgaon Polytechnic burn tyres on the Tongi Diversion Road yesterday protesting killing of a student in a gunfight the previous night, while police swing in wild action on an agitator.

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Increase in FDI depends on gas

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Danes admit breaching norms: Aid cut remains

STAR REPORT

Denmark has admitted it breached

process in rehabilitation of four

ferries'.

The ferries were to be rehabilitated

with Danish grant.

The Danish under-secretary had

also announced that their co-

operation with the shipping ministry

was over and that Denmark had

withdrawn Danish grant for the

inland water transport sector.

Danish Ambassador in

Bangladesh Niels Severin Munk

handed over a note to Director

General of Europe Desk at the

foreign ministry Humayun Kabir

regretting the incident and reiterating

their desire in continuing further

economic co-operation with

Bangladesh.

Foreign Secretary Shamsher

Mobin Chowdhury talking to The

Daily Star yesterday said it was a

matter of diplomatic nicety that

Copenhagen expressed its concern

over the incident and accepted the

fact that it was a violation of

diplomatic norms.

He expressed his happiness that

the Danish government is willing to

continue unfettered co-operation in

the different development spheres

with Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, it was confirmed

yesterday that the Danish grant of

US\$ 22 million earmarked for the

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'Frequent policy shift hurts FDI'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

UN Resident Coordinator in

Bangladesh Jorgen Lissner yester-

day said frequent policy changes by

the government sends wrong sig-

nals to foreign investors, which

ultimately hurts foreign investment

in the country.

He said this in reference to an

incident on April 15, 2002 where

some 30 investors and business-

men from eight different countries

were held up for five hours at the

airport for not having a visa, as the

policy for issuing on-arrival visas

had been changed a few days

earlier.

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Polytech hall recapture bid kills student, sparks protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of the Tejgaon Polytechnic Institute put up

barricades on the Tongi Diversion Road yesterday,

protesting the killing of a student in a shootout the previous

night.

Sariful Islam, 21, a third year student residing in the

Zahir Raihan Hall of the institute, died instantly in a

shootout between two groups of armed cadres.

On Saturday night, VP Jahangir and his supporters

clashed with their rival group led by Gittu Masud over

recapture of the hall. Earlier, the Masud group had

driven the Jahangir group away from the hall.

A bullet hit Sariful when he was brushing his teeth on

the third floor of the hall. Another source said Sariful was

killed on the ground floor of the hall in crossfire.

The death of the student sparked protests among the

students. More than 200 students agitated and dam-

aged several vehicles on the route.

More than 15 people, including the on-duty police-

men, were injured during the blockade. Police picked up

at least 35 people from the spot for creating trouble.

The students kept the Tongi Diversion Road blocked

at Sat Rasta from 8:30am to 11:30am. They also burnt

tyres in a bid to bar the drivers from the road.

As a result, the major city streets saw heavy traffic

congestion, witnesses said.

Police, however, could not arrest anyone in connec-

tion with the killing of the student.

A case was filed with Tejgaon Police Station in this

regard.

UNB adds: With the rampage taking on a violent

edge, police took a hard line on maintaining law and

order. Police stormed into the campus and flushed the

students out of the halls.

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Powerless at heart hospital

Angiogram machines lie idle for want of electricity

NAIMUL HAQ

Two of the five angiogram machines at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) have been lying idle for the last four months for lack of power lines, and hundreds of heart patients are being turned away every month without proper diagnosis.

Worst still, one of the three other machines has now become obso-

let and cardiologists cannot rely on

it for proper investigation of specific

cardiac ailments, costing patients

valuable time that could be a matter

of life and death for them, sources in

the hospital said.

Angiogram machines are

essential for detecting any problem

with the heart and blockage in

coronary arteries.

According to Siemens (Bangla-

desh) Ltd., the supplier of the two

angiogram machines, both

machines were to be installed at the

newly constructed 'Cathlab' as per a

contract between the supplier and

the CMSD (Central Medical Stores

Depot), the purchasing agent of the

machines.

The contract stated that the

required rooms and other facilities

would have to be ready before

installation of the machines manu-

factured by the German Company

Siemens,

Earlier in September 12 last year,

Siemens reminded the director of

CMSD to make necessary arrange-

ments to have the 100KV (continu-

ous load) and 160KV (instant load)

power lines installed and ready for

connection to each machine.

Another written reminder from

Siemens followed on December 3,

asking the CMSD to get the power

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REAZ AHMAD

The parliamentary standing com-

mittees on various ministries are yet

to be formed even after six months of

the general elections.

Out of total 49 parliamentary

committees, only five have so far

been formed. However, these do not

include any of the 38 standing

committees on different ministries,

official sources said.