

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 jamdani 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

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



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.

INSIDE TODAY

Article 4

Gujarat cauldron still bubbling

Column: Perspectives

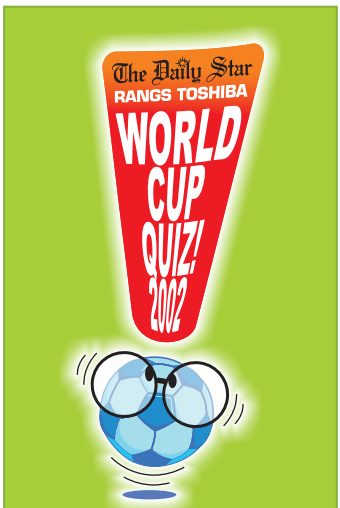
M Abdul Hafiz

Business 6-7

ESCAP report says

Increase in FDI depends on gas export policy

Vajpayee eyes over 6pc growth in 2002-2003



See the rules and coupon of
The Daily Star
RANGS TOSHIBA
WORLD CUP QUIZ
Round 2 on Page 15

Danes admit breaching norms: Aid cut remains

STAR REPORT

Denmark has admitted it breached diplomatic norms in publicly labelling the charge of 'intention of corruption' against Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain.

The government of Denmark also took note of the serious concern of Bangladesh over the press comments made by Danish Foreign Ministry Under-Secretary Peter Lysholt Hansen.

Hansen brought an unsubstantiated charge against the shipping minister at a press conference in Dhaka on April 13 for 'serious intention of corruption in the tendering

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 Shamshe 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

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

'Frequent policy shift hurts FDI'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Jorgen Lissner yesterday said frequent policy changes by the government sends wrong signals 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 businessmen 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.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

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 policemen, 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 connection 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.

Powerless at heart hospital

Angiocardigram machines lie idle for want of electricity

NAIMUL HAQ

Two of the five angiocardigram 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 obsolete 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.

Angiocardigram machines are essential for detecting any problem with the heart and blockage in coronary arteries.

According to Siemens (Bangladesh) Ltd., the supplier of the two angiocardigram 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 manufactured by the German Company Siemens.

Earlier in September 12 last year, Siemens reminded the director of

CMSD to make necessary arrangements to have the 100KV (continuous 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

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Mauled journalist 'missing' from DMCH

STAR REPORT

A critically injured journalist has been mysteriously missing from the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he was admitted to early yesterday morning after being severely beaten up by roughnecks in Kushtia Saturday night.

Mizanur Rahman Bhiza, staff reporter of the local 'The Daily Kushtia', was admitted to the neurosurgery department of the DMCH early yesterday morning by his brother. At 11:00am, doctors discharged him.

According to hospital sources, Bhiza was released in a critical condition and was admitted to a private clinic. They said the hooligans who attacked the journalist had threatened Bhiza's family members to shift the journalist to some 'unknown' clinic for their own good.

Bhiza's family members in Kushtia, who did not or could not disclose his whereabouts, said his condition was critical.

A source close to Bhiza's family in Kushtia said the goons were alerted when he was admitted to the DMCH. Sensing that the press might report the attack, they threatened his family members to shift him to some unknown place.

Meantime, journalists in Dhaka frantically tried to locate Bhiza. The Daily

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Fresh 8-hr hartal called in Rajshahi today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The day-long hartal called by the Nagarik Committee passed off peacefully here yesterday.

The hartal was called demanding cancellation of the Thursday's Rajshahi City Corporation Election, resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner and formation of a judicial committee to probe massive

fake voting during the election.

The committee has called another eight-hour hartal in the city today protesting the killing of Awami League activist Delu and alleged police action on pro-hartal activists during yesterday's hartal.

The fresh hartal call came from a press conference at Nagarik Committee's office in the evening.

Addressing the press conference Fazle Hossain Badshah alleged that police did not allow to hold gayebana janaza for Delu at Shaheb Bazar Crossing at noon. Delu was murdered allegedly by BNP activists during post-election violence in the city on Saturday.

Nagarik Committee's mayoral candidate Badshah, who was defeated in the Thursday's mayoral polls to four-party alliance candidate Mizanur Rahman Minu, also alleged police action on pro-hartal activists.

During yesterday's hartal, Nagarik Committee activists were

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2