

Phantom foreign investment

BOI finds no trace of 41pc projects

NAZMUL ASHRAF

Nearly 41 per cent of the foreign investment proposals registered with the Board of Investment (BOI) in the last decade are now untracked.

According to a recent survey carried by the BOI's Investment Implementation Monitoring Cell (IIMC), 1,078 foreign investment proposals involving Taka 58,858.76 crore were registered with the BOI from July 1991 to June 2001.

Of the registered projects, only 317 to the tune of Tk 17,212.76 crore have so far been implemented, while another 76 projects worth Tk 4,477.59 crore are still being implemented.

"But the rate of implementation is frustratingly slow," the survey report observed, adding that the pace is the slowest in the chemical industry sector.

The BOI officials said successive governments encouraged such papery investments to derive political mileage.

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PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha share a light moment during a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

Khaleda, Sinha for greater economic cooperation

STAR REPORT

Dhaka and New Delhi yesterday agreed to put greater emphasis on economic cooperation, which would be the "bedrock for future relations between neighbours".

Accents were also put on increased people-to-people contact and exploration of surface-communication links. Both sides also expressed their intent to improve bilateral relations in all areas.

The sentiments were expressed

during a meeting between Khaleda Zia and Yashwant Sinha after the Indian external affairs minister called on the prime minister at her office yesterday.

Khaleda hoped that India would come forward with an "attitude of cooperation" and that there would be closer interaction in economic relations on the basis of mutual reciprocity in the days ahead.

Emerging from the talks, Sinha told newsmen that it was a cordial meeting where he had reiterated his country's willingness to reactivate

all institutional mechanisms for resolution of all pending issues.

The Indian external affairs minister also said the joint working group would meet in the first half of October to sort out trade-related issues.

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan, who was present at the meeting, said that reactivation of existing taskforces and joint working groups, and implementation of agreements would set the grounds for the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Economic

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Gas committees submit report tomorrow

STAR REPORT

State Minister for Energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain will submit two expert committees' reports on the country's natural gas resources to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia tomorrow at 12.30 pm.

The government formed the committees -- National Committee on Gas Utilisation and National Committee on Gas Reserve Assessment eight months back to help it take a decision on gas export based on their reports.

All members of the two experts committees will be present at the prime minister's office while handing over the report. The PM is also in charge of the energy ministry.

"We will go through the reports in detail and then take a decision on gas export. Obviously it will go through the cabinet and other forums," Mosharraf told The Daily

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Sinha tells editors Ties should be based on trust, not suspicion

UNB, Dhaka

Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha yesterday said his government attaches great significance to "our relations with neighbours, especially Bangladesh."

But such relations should be based on "trust, not suspicion," he said during an extensive exchange of views with newspaper editors and senior journalists over lunch at Sonargaon Hotel.

About Indo-Bangladesh relations, Sinha referred to his visit to National Memorial at Savar on Saturday, where he wrote in the visitors book that "we were comrades-in-arms in the Liberation War... we are partners in peace, in development."

He added: "Our predecessors have left good structures -- a fine architecture -- to build upon."

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Masked Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) men at work inside the dengue ward of the Suhrawardi Hospital in the city yesterday, ignoring expert recommendation for not spraying adulticide in human presence.

134 more down with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One hundred and thirty-four more dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals and clinics in the city and elsewhere in the country yesterday.

So far, 3,137 people have been hospitalised with the deadly virus since the onset of the dengue season. The number of death from dengue haemorrhagic fever stands at 35.

Three dengue patients were admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital, one to the Khulna General Hospital, three to the Jhalakathi Sadar Hospital, and the rest to different hospitals and clinics in the capital.

Meanwhile, the government has not yet decided whether to make the only platelet machine, Cobe Spectre, at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for public use.

The machine, procured for more than Tk 40 lakh and used exclusively for DMCH patients, has so far provided platelets for only 17 patients.

In the face of a dengue onslaught, people have to rely on the Red Crescent Blood Centre at Mohammadpur for platelets.

The centre charges Tk 500 for each unit of platelet, including cost for sexually transmitted disease (STD) screening.

In another development, the Shaheed Suhrawardi Hospital authorities yesterday requested the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to fumigate its recently opened dengue ward with adulticide.

Entomologists, however, oppose fumigation of insecticide when patients are inside.

"No pesticide is safe. And fumi

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WHEATGATE SCAM

Important clue missing

Report not submitted as deadline expires

REAZ AHMAD

An important letter from the food directorate went missing and a showcause notice was served on a director yesterday, lending a new edge to the probe into an alleged wheat scam.

Officials at the directorate yesterday failed to show the letter Shafiqul Islam, head of the one-man secretarial probe body, was

looking for. And Islam, civil aviation secretary, had to visit the food directorate yesterday, when the letter was not found.

The letter is thought to be an important clue to the scam, official sources told The Daily Star yesterday.

The probe body could not submit its report to the prime minister, since it did not receive chemical test results of 30 wheat samples till last

night. Yesterday was the deadline for submission of the report.

The probe committee could not collect the letter that Food Secretary Abdul Latif Mandal wrote in response to a food director's letter this May.

When the government's internal wheat procurement drive was halfway through, Habibur Rahman, a director of the food directorate,

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JCD gunfight in Sylhet, 30 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

At least 30 people were injured, ten with bullets, in a series of clashes between two factions of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal in Sylhet city on Saturday night.

Two JCD factions -- one led by Khaled and Mashuque and the other by Sadequr and Najib -- clashed over establishing supremacy in the city.

The trouble began at around 9 pm when the activists belonging to Sadeq-Najib faction attacked Khaled-Mashuque men at Mirzabazar in the city.

Both sides exchanged at least 50 gunshots and exploded crackers during the clash that continued for an hour.

Later, the clash between the two rival factions spread in Shibganj, Shahjalal Upashahar, Shahparan

Gate, Tilagarh, Amborbagan and Kazitola areas of the town.

The bullet-injured JCD activists were admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmany Medical College Hospital. They all belong to Khaled-Mashuque faction.

During the clash, the activists of Sadequr-Najib factions also fired

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SC decides ETV fate on Aug 28

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court will dispose of the Ekushey Television (ETV) review petition on its earlier decision refusing to grant leave to appeal against the High Court Division's verdict by August 28.

The court made the declaration yesterday, the second day of the hearing of the review petition.

It notified the counsels for the ETV yesterday that the court will go on vacation after August 28 and so, the date for hearing was fixed on August 24 for disposal of the petition. Till this period, the High Court judgement will remain stayed.

Whether ETV will continue to be on air will hinge on the judgement of the Appellate Division on the review petition.

The court also asked the ETV counsels to complete their submission by today since the other side must also be heard.

At this, the counsel for ETV Chairman AS Mahmud, Barrister Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed, wanted to know whether the court will go on vacation before hearing their submission.

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