

## Sharp fall in FDI flow

Down from \$280m to \$78m in 2001, says UNCTAD report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country plunged 72 per cent to \$78 million last year from \$280 million in 2000, despite a 32 per cent increase in South Asia.

Global FDI inflow marked a massive 51 per cent downslide to \$735 billion, the first time in a decade, according to the World Investment Report 2002 released globally yesterday by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

"The downturn concentrated mainly in developed countries (down 59 per cent) against a 14 per cent drop in developing countries," the report said.

Dr Mirza Azizul Islam, a former director of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), released the report in the city at the CIRDP auditorium and briefed the press on its salient features yesterday.

The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) officer-in-charge Kazi Ali

Reza also spoke on the occasion.

Islam could not be specific when asked what had triggered the sharp decline FDI inflow to the country.

Besides the global FDI downturn, low investment in energy sector last year could be a major reason, he said.

Poor infrastructure, militant trade unionism, poor governance, weak legal system and frequent strikes continue to be major impediments to FDI inflow, he said.

According to the report, average annual inflow of FDI to the country was \$3 million between 1985 and 1995 before it marked a surge from 1997.

It was \$178 million in 1997 and touched \$280 million in 2000 before a dramatic decline the next year.

Overall, however, South Asia fared better, with \$4 billion injected in FDI.

Both India and Pakistan experienced significant rise in FDI, 47 and 26 per cent respectively.

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## AL stages brief walkout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League walked out of the Jatiya Sangsad at around 8:00pm in protest at the Chair's denial to let some of its lawmakers make personal clarifications. They rejoined the session 15 minutes later.

The question-answer session over, Jamaat-e-Islami legislator Delwar Hossain Saidee stood up to give a clarification on article 274 of the parliament's rules of procedure.

As the Speaker allowed him the floor, Saidee referred to an earlier remark passed by AL lawmaker

Mohammad Nasim terming him (Saidee) as a 'rajakar', saying the claim was baseless, as he was not actively involved in politics before 1973.

Saidee claimed that there was no proof of his being a rajakar and he threatened to file Tk 10-crore defamation suit if he was termed a rajakar again.

As Saidee finished, Nasim sought the floor. But as he started, the treasury bench lawmakers started shouting at the Chair, who switched Nasim's microphone off.

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## 1,029 children in 65 jails

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 1029 children aged below 18 years were languishing in 65 jails across the country last year, reveals a report.

Odhikar, a human rights organisation, in collaboration with Save the Children UK launched the report titled, "Our Children in Jail", a year book on the state of juvenile justice and violence against children in Bangladesh, at a ceremony in the city yesterday.

However, the number of such children has now almost risen to 1200, said Inspector General of Prisons Brigadier General Zillur Rahman, who was a discussant at the ceremony.

The report says children accused of crimes are being kept with convicts and on-trial prisoners despite the fact that it is against law. It also noted the deplorable lot of children of female inmates staying with their mothers.

Children living in jail become

more vulnerable to diseases due to the poor living condition there, the report says. Overcrowded prisons, lack of proper ventilation, poor food and inadequate medical facilities make the situation worse. There is no arrangement for children's recreation in the jails, it added.

However, the inspector general of prisons said the condition of the children in jail is not different from the children in the streets. "When the school children are being killed by their relatives or friends, these children are safe in jail." "At least their basic needs like food, clothes and medical facilities are ensured there," he added.

The report notes that police is unaware of the rights of children and sometimes send the children to jail by registering them as over 18 years old. Moreover, they do not spare the children from physical torment and even physically abuse them while in custody.

However, majority of the chil-

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## Massive hunt for outlaws, 109 held in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Police yesterday arrested 109 people in connection with the attack on Chak Makimpur police camp in Belkuchi on Monday in which four policemen were shot dead and nine rifles along with ammunition were looted by outlaws.

Eighteen policemen were also injured as outlaws equipped with stenguns and LMGs attacked the police camp at Radhunbari village on the bank of Jamuna river.

Over 250 law enforcers including policemen, APBN and BDR personnel raided different areas of Belkuchi and Sadar thanas and arrested them, police sources said.

Policemen from Sadar, Belkuchi, Ullahpara and Kazipara police stations, 60 APBN men and a platoon of BDR took part in the raids which started early in the morning. They launched a massive man-

hunt for outlaws following instruction from higher police authorities.

The arrested people are being interrogated at Sirajganj Police Lines.

Senior police official yesterday confirmed that the outlaws took away seven SLRs and two rifles. Police, earlier said that 12 rifles were looted.

Meanwhile police yesterday recovered a big bucket, a hacksaw and a box from the spot. Some sources claimed that the outlaws came in the guise of milk traders and hid their arms in the big bucket and the box.

Bodied of the victims were sent to their village homes yesterday after autopsy at Sirajganj General Hospital.

The body of Zahedul Islam, son

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## 'Ruling party flouting JS rules, conventions'



Sheikh Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the Treasury Bench of flouting rules and conventions of the Jatiya Sangsad, and forcing the Speaker to go by its whims.

"The ruling party is running the parliament by force, flouting all rules and conventions. It is forcing the Speaker to work at its beck and call," Hasina told a news conference, explaining why the Awami League (AL) lawmakers had walked out of an

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Star West Indian batsman Brian Lara hits a ball to the boundary during yesterday's ICC Champions Trophy match against Kenya in Colombo.

## Govt ordered to produce Alamgir before court today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to produce former state minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir before the court today.

The order followed a petition seeking release of Alamgir as he has already been granted bail in all the seven cases filed against him.

The bureaucrat-turned politician was arrested on March 15 from Zia International Airport (ZIA) on his arrival from the United States.

Meanwhile, the High Court yesterday asked the government to explain why proceedings against another AL leader Bahauddin Nasim at the special tribunal on charges of dollar smuggling should not be quashed.

Justice Mohammad Abdul Matin and Justice SK Sinha issued the rule upon a petition filed on behalf of Bahauddin. The rule was made returnable within three weeks.

Bahauddin, now in jail custody, was arrested on February 28 from the ZIA as he was about to leave for the United States.

## PCB loans to Agarwal, Modi BB to ask chairmen, directors for explanations today

SHAHRIAR KARIM

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) today serves show-cause notices on the chairmen and directors of four private commercial banks (PCBs) on charge of irregularities in sanctioning loans to three business

groups, according to sources.

Earlier, the BB had served similar notices on the managing directors of the four PCBs for the same.

The central bank drafted notices yesterday addressing the chairmen of One Bank Limited, National Credit and Commerce bank Limited

(NCCBL), Dhaka Bank Limited and National Bank Limited (NBL), the sources said.

The BB action follows its findings that the banks flouted rules and did not properly monitor sanctioning of loans to Giridhari Lal Modi and his Uttara Group, Om Prakash Agarwal and his business enterprises and Ashok Kejriwal and his Doel Group.

The BB notices asked the chairmen and the board of directors of the banks to explain within 15 days whether they can deny their responsibilities for failing to check the irregularities, according to central bank sources.

The NBL already suspended a vice-president, an executive vice-president, an assistant executive vice-president and another official, according to NBL sources.

Meanwhile, the BB has received replies from the managing directors

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