

Japan sees bitter ties if DAP deal not resolved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Japan yesterday reiterated that its trade relations with Bangladesh might be strained if an amicable solution was not found regarding the di-ammonia phosphate (DAP) fertiliser project.

Earlier this year, the government decided to cancel two DAP projects on Japanese and Chinese suppliers' credits.

On August 17, the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) informed the Japanese and Chinese contractors of the decision.

The Japanese government "is unlikely to issue any insurance about any business activities with Bangladesh", Tetsuo Yamashita, minister of the Embassy of Japan in Dhaka, told reporters at a briefing yesterday.

As the Japanese government has insured the export, it has to pay a huge compensation to the Japanese contractor for the DAP project, he said.

The Tk 392.97 crore DAP-1 was undertaken on Chinese suppliers'

credit and the Tk 451.70 crore DAP-2 on Japanese suppliers' credit in 2001.

If the authorities had decided on implementing the projects, production cost of each metric tonne (MT) of fertiliser from DAP-1 would have been Tk 12,374. As for DAP-2, the cost would have been Tk 12,228, while the cost of importing per MT of fertiliser is Tk 10,440.

"We are communicating with the contractors of both Japan and Bangladesh for a solution," Yamashita said.

Earlier, on August 8, Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Jiro Kobayashi wrote a letter to the Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman mentioning that the project cancellation would strain business ties between the two countries.

The letter also mentioned that when the claim for the project compensation was submitted to the Japanese government and the insurance paid, it is likely that they will act to stop initiating new export and insurance related businesses

with Bangladesh.

In the first week of January, the ministry of industries prepared a proposal to cancel the project. But strong lobbying from a quarter took a long time to seal the fate of the 'costly' fertiliser projects, sources said.

The issue arose at a cabinet committee meeting on economic affairs on July 17. But in spite of nearly all members agreeing to the cancellation of the project, no decision was reached.

"Because of the delay in the decision-making, we have to pay more as compensation to the contractors," said a source in the government.

Earlier, the finance and planning minister said the government did not approve of the two DAP fertiliser projects on Chinese and Japanese credit. "We thought it might lead to a situation like KAFCO's and create a huge burden on the country," he said.

Battle line drawn

FROM PAGE 1

BNP's one year in power. The government recently enforced a decision that prior permission has to be taken from DU authorities to hold any public gathering at the Shaheed Minar.

The BNS (aggrieved citizens' society), a body of some socio-cultural organisations, was floated recently to protest the restriction.

Law enforcers at the Shaheed Minar told The Daily Star yesterday they would not allow any gathering there without prior permission from the DU authorities.

Sources said all entrances to the Minar would be sealed off early morning today to prevent BNS activists from going there. Police will raise barbed wire fences on roads leading to it.

"Besides a large number of intelligence personnel, huge contingents of police and paramilitary BDR would be deployed at all strategic points on the DU campus today," said a police source.

Campus sources said that leaders and activists of ruling BNP's student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) would also remain vigilant on the campus.

Addressing yesterday's programme of JASAS, titled "Vote Revolution of October 2001" at the Minar, JCD leaders warned of resisting those "conspiring" to vitiate

the peaceful atmosphere at DU.

Addressing the function, some BNP leaders also accused opposition Awami League of creating unrest in the country after being rejected by the people. They urged BNP activists to resist all "conspiracies" against the government.

A large number of police were seen in the Shaheed Minar area yesterday. Sources said police will remain there till the JASAS programmes is over.

Police yesterday barred a procession of writers, artists and cultural activists from going to the Minar to protest the government decision.

The procession starting from in front of the National Museum was led by Prof. Serajul Islam Chowdhury and Prof. Ajay Roy. Police stopped it on the road in front of the Minar.

The JASAS function was going on when the procession went near the Minar.

The processionists held a rally there. Addressing the rally, Prof. Serajul Islam Chowdhury strongly criticised the government for restricting public gathering at the Minar.

"Central Shaheed Minar does not belong to any person or party. It belongs to the people of the country," he said.

Referring to the government's

call for maintaining sanctity of the Minar, he said free movement of people never damaged its sanctity. "Rather, its sanctity has been damaged by sealing it off."

Dr Anu Mohammad said the Shaheed Minar is the symbol of our hope and inspiration and people would never accept the restriction. He urged all pro-liberation and democratic forces to make today's rally a success.

As per the plan, supporters of the grand rally will try to enter the Minar premises from three directions. BNS activists will go there from the Doel Chatter area and political parties including Awami League, 11-party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) from Shahbagh area. Student organisations including Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) will try to enter the area from Plassy, sources said.

Talking to this correspondent, Shahriar Kabir, an organiser of the grand rally, yesterday alleged that JASAS was given permission just to create a tense situation. "We announced our programme much earlier than JASAS."

Replying to question, he said, "There is no question of taking permission because we are demonstrating against the provision for taking permission."

Dhaka, EC agree

FROM PAGE 12

projects also came up for discussion.

Technical assistance in trade-related areas and support for expanding and diversifying Bangladesh's exports were considered a top priority, as reflected in the NIP (2003-2006).

During the Sub-Group meeting on Trade Related issues, the Bangladesh side sought EC assistance in improving capacity and investment flow. Issues related to market access and foreign investment were also extensively discussed.

Commerce Ministry joint secretary Abul Kamal Azad and EC Directorate General Head of Unit Philippe Meyer co-chaired the meeting on Trade Development and Trade Related Issues at the Commerce Ministry Sunday.

In yesterday's meeting on economic development, both sides discussed the areas for economic development. The EC's long-term assistance for health, education, food security and poverty alleviation would amount to 411 million Euro.

Bangladesh sides pressed for incorporating environment and information communications technology sectors, which were not included in the previous plan.

"They have agreed to our proposals," said ERD joint-secretary (Europe) AMM Nasiruddin, who co-chaired yesterday's meeting with Markus Cornaro, Head of Directorate General for External

Relations of the European Commission.

Identification missions will start coming here later this year to choose ongoing sector-wise projects, and if required, undertake new projects for EC assistance in economic development, the ERD official said.

Ambassador Esko Kentschynskyi, Head of delegation of the European Commission to Bangladesh, was also present in the meeting on Economic Development Cooperation held at the Economic Relations Division (ERD).

The sub-group meeting reviewed the EC-Bangladesh National Indicative Programme (NIP), the South Asia Enterprise Development Facility (SEDF) and other areas of possible EC assistance, especially in the fields of SME development, EC small project facility, quality control, certification and standards. The EC side at the meeting also presented the Asia regional programmes managed by the European Commission.

The Sub-Group meetings were held on the basis of EC's Country Strategy Paper and the draft NIP document, which has been the subject of close consultations between the government of Bangladesh and EC that were capped with the agreement reached by the two sides in yesterday's meeting.

30 gold statues of Buddha recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The BDR (Bangladesh Rifles) yesterday recovered 30 gold statues of Buddha worth about Tk 10 crore from two boats on the Naf River.

According to BDR sources, jawans of the 23 Rifles Battalion acting on a tip-off challenged the two Myanmar boats bound for Teknaf in the early morning yesterday and recovered the precious statues that were being smuggled to Bangladesh through the Naf River.

The smugglers however managed to flee as the BDR swooped on the boat. The BDR also recovered 1280 cartons of torchlight batteries and two pieces of clothes worn by Buddhist monks.

ETV

FROM PAGE 12

ETV. It was agreed that they (ETV) would pay for this, would not do any harm to the film and return it within five days of the telecast.

He also alleged that the ETV had telecast the film on March 9 last year at 3:20 pm on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. The ETV also telecast it on several occasions without permission from him. But he was not at all paid for this.

The complainant further said that claiming payment, he had served two legal notices on the accused on February 12 and March 18 this year. They responded to those through their lawyer on July 28, brushing aside his claims.

After hearing, Magistrate Mohammad Emdadul Haq took the plaint into cognizance and directed the Officer-in-Charge of Gulshan Police Station to take legal action against the accused after investigation.

Dring

FROM PAGE 12

moistening, still accompanied by his wife Fiona on the daïs.

Referring to various ETV programmes he called the result of a new genius vision, Dring said, "ETV's achievement is a reflection of strength of scores of potential Bangladeshis to work on the huge world stage."

"We got there on our own feet and dare to stand beside other international broadcasting channels."

"This is a catastrophe of change," he said, pointing to closure of the ETV. "...

Since ETV is the window to the world that must not be shut down...nobody should be allowed to take it away, take it from our children."

Expressing his gratitude to the people of Bangladesh for love and encouragement, he said, "We will do again what we've done before."

Dramatist Mamunur Rashid conducted the function where some recited poems for Dring.

Truant cabbies

FROM PAGE 12

three-wheelers in the city. The DMP has already set up a cell to receive complaints over phone at the following numbers: Traffic Control Room: 017-000990, DMP fixed phone: 7124000-49, Ext. 2627, Traffic South Office: 017-000991, Ext. 2578 and 418124, and Traffic North Office: 017-000992, Ext. 2580 and 9143212.

As for safety of the cab drivers, the DC said two detective teams have been engaged to act in response to distress calls by cab drivers in danger and work in close coordination with them to meet their security needs.

Cab drivers can also dial the DMP numbers above in case of any trouble and for assistance from police.

"We are serious about security of the drivers but they in turn must do their part by following the taxicab rules," the DC said.

Who owns the bank now?

FROM PAGE 1

Ahmed Chowdhury, meanwhile, could not be contacted for his comments despite repeated attempts.

Earlier in December last year, 70,500 shares or 27.16 per cent stake of the bank, owned by the Amanullah Group, were transferred to five local companies.

Interestingly, in both transfers, including that of Al-Baraka Investment and Development Company shares, the address of the witnesses in the transfer forms was the same.

There are also allegations that the central bank was not informed of the transfers. The bank management claims Bangladesh Bank permission is not required for transfer of sponsor shares.

The transfers have given the loan defaulter total control of the board as the majority shareholders endorse his wishes, according to sources.

Meanwhile, the loans sanctioned by the bank to different people were used by others and for fictitious purposes, according to documents collected by The Daily Star.

The same defaulter was found using different people to open accounts to get the loans.

The Dilkusha branch of Al-Baraka Bank sanctioned Tk 4.90 crore Bi-Muajjal loan to one Lytton Jute Mills Limited in different phases between June and August last year

for procurement of raw jute and spare parts for exports of jute products. The loan was sanctioned in a flash without any loan risk analysis (LRA) and mill inspection.

Lytton Jute Mills, a small factory with years-old machinery, did not require Tk 4.90 crore for any business purpose. The Daily Star found out. According to bank documents, it sent money from the loan accounts to people, who were not involved in any way with jute business, through pay orders.

Other documents also show that the loan amount was actually used by the Bengal Group for different purposes. Hemendra Kumar Shaha, a director of the Lytton Jute Mills who is also assistant vice-president of Desh Beverage Company Limited, a sister concern of the Bengal Group, issued two pay orders worth Tk 12.16 lakh from the company's loan account to one Huraya Jannat as house rent.

Also, pay orders of Tk 2.09 crore were issued to different other persons and firms that are not involved in jute business.

Al-Baraka Bank also sanctioned Tk 3 crore each in loans to Messrs Anas Traders and Messrs Unique Trade International through its Mirpur branch for supply of rawhide to some tanneries. The total loan amount was used for different purpose.

Just after approving the loan proposals, Tk 3.75 crore was disbursed on January 6 without necessary formalities and the total amount was received by Shaha.

Later on February 2, the bank upped the credit facilities for the two firms from Tk 6 crore to Tk 11 crore.

Once again, Shaha received Tk 9.75 crore from the bank on behalf of the firms. Later, he issued a pay order of Tk 8.68 crore to different firms.

There are also evidence that Tk 40 lakh transferred to the Desh Beverage account and also the loan money was used to adjust loans worth Tk 33.60 lakh of Bengal Engineering and Construction Company Limited, a sister concern of the Bengal Group, with Rupali Bank.

Shaha also issued pay order of Tk 1 crore to Nationwide Communication Limited, a company owned by Abul Khair Litu.

Litu, however, denies any link with the transactions. "Why should I use others to take loan from banks when I have reputation as a businessman and enough property and businesses to pursue on my own to take loan from banks."

He also says question does not arise to use others' loan to adjust his loan with another bank.

Hasina vows to foil 'plot'

FROM PAGE 121

Abdul Jahur were among others who attended the session.

The programme started with recitation from the Holy Quran, Geeta, Bible and Tripitak.

Sheikh Hasina declared the conference open by hoisting the National Flag. Party General Secretary Zillur Rahman hoisted the party flag.

Several thousand leaders and workers from the four districts in Sylhet division joined the programme.

Criticising the BNP-led alliance government's performance, Hasina said they have "institutionalised terrorism and corruption".

Even people who voted them are now repenting because of the "horrifying" situation they have created, she alleged.

Incidents of rape, killing and abduction have increased sharply. She claimed that every day, 10 murders are taking place on an average. A total of 46,744 people have been killed and 10,000 women raped since the government took power. Police atrocities killed 101 people, she claimed.

As it came to power through a farcical election, it is trying to retain power through terrorism, she alleged.

The people now want to get rid of the "torture and repression" she claimed and called upon the party men to stand by the people.

She alleged that BNP had blasted the bombs in Narayanganj, Ramna, Jessore and other places during AL's five-year rule but they (BNP) are now blaming AL for those.

"Some people died while making bombs at BNP's central office. Even they attempted on my life several times," Hasina said.

"These are conspiracies to eliminate Awami League but they do not know this is not possible", she said.

"Before the (October 2001) election BNP had said it would scrap the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Agreement and the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty. But, nothing has been done. This proves these were done properly and for the benefit of the country and its people. People are getting fruits of the water treaty and the peace agreement".

The Awami League chief held the prime minister responsible for the recent wheat scam. "She (the PM) gave the approval and sanctioned the money (for procurement of wheat). "This government has the earned a name of wheat thief".

The Transparency International has also revealed other acts of

corruption by ministers of this government, she added.

Hasina also accused the government of distorting the glorious history of the Liberation War. Truth can not be suppressed and those who distort history would find their place in the dustbins of history, she observed.

"We want to make the country a developed one by 2020 by using the resources properly. For that, (AL) organisational structures at union, ward and upazila levels should be strengthened".

She called upon party leaders and workers to mobilise people again to end the "era of darkness".

After attending the inaugural session, the AL chief met the family of slain Dr Aftab Hossain, Assistant Director of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, at their house and consoled them. Dr Aftab was killed by assailants recently.

Hasina was scheduled to address the closing session of the conference last night.

Sheikh Hasina reached Sylhet at 10:40 PM on Sunday and soon after offered Fateha at the shrines of Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) and Hajrat Shahporan (RA). She stayed at Sylhet Circuit House.

Japan celebrates

FROM PAGE 12

Sonargaon Hotel was built with Japanese assistance while Japan also assisted Bangladesh in building roads and bridges and improving the telecommunications sector.

The Japanese embassy in Dhaka will honour painter Mohammad Kibria for his contributions in the field of fine arts for the last 40 years, said Kouji Sugiyama, first secretary of the Japanese embassy.

He said Kibria is the second Bangladeshi to be awarded with such an honour by the Japanese government after Maleka Khan, who was honoured for her contributions towards promoting Japanese culture by popularising Ikebana, the traditional Japanese way of flower arrangement, in Bangladesh.

The Japanese film festival will begin on October 13 at the auditorium of the Institute of Modern Languages of Dhaka University, while the Japanese Blues concert

will start at Osmani Memorial Hall on October 24. The Japanese doll show will begin at the Shishu Academy on October 29.

The Japanese language speech contest will begin on November 1. The theme of the contest is "Prospect and retrospect on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Bangladesh". Any Bangladeshi national conversant in Japanese language is eligible for the contest that will take place at the Multipurpose Hall of the Japanese embassy.

The Ikebana contest will be held on November 8 at 11:00 am to 4:00pm at the same venue.

A three-day Japan Education Fair, aimed at providing Bangladeshi students with information on studying in Japan, will begin at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, Chittagong centre, on November 14.

Man hacked to death in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A young man was hacked to death by some criminals in Zimkhana area of the town at about 10:30 pm on Sunday in front of hundreds of people.

None of the witnesses resisted the killing for fear of the armed criminals.

The victim was wearing a jeans pant and a black shirt but he could not identified till filing of this report yesterday evening.

According to sources, the youth aged 18-20, had a quarrel with a local group of mastaans in Zimkhana commercial area. At one stage the mastaans stabbed the youth in his throat and hacked him with chapati (a sharp heavy knife used by butchers). Two of the mastaans took the youth to nearby Narayanganj General Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

A source seeking anonymity said, the killing is the result of feud between two local rival group over drug trading in the area.

Narayanganj police lodged a case but none was arrested.

Road accident kills five in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Five people were killed and 30 others injured, seven of them seriously, in a road accident on Baghaichhari-Dighinala highway yesterday morning.

The dead were identified as Subash Chakma, 35, Anwar Hossain, 25, Snehamoyee Chakma, 25, Rubel Chakma, 22, and Milton Chakma, 30.

The seriously injured, identified as Jiban Chakma, 20, Hironomy Chakma, 20, Ismail, 30, Mayed Ali, 35, Monir Hossain, 19, Karim, 35, and Rakib, 30, were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred when a passenger jeep overturned near Baghihat army camp at about 7.30 am.

Three passengers died on the spot and two others succumbed to their injuries at Sadar and Dighinala hospitals.

However, the driver of the jeep managed to flee.

Trophy shared

FROM PAGE 1

over backward point against pacesman Chaminda Vaas, and Sachin Tendulkar was seven not out after opener Dinesh Mongia was out for nought.

Saurav Ganguly's side once again had reason to feel more disappointed after another fighting display by their bowlers had restricted Sri Lanka to 222 for seven.

India had restricted the hosts to 244 for five and reached 14 for none in two overs when Sunday's play was washed out.

Home captain Sanath Jayasuriya once again won the toss and chose to take strike on a slow pitch being used for the second day running.

But left-arm pacesman Zaheer Khan bowled Jayasuriya first ball before the slow bowlers took over to reduce Sri Lanka to 71 for four in the 17th over.

Mahela Jayawardene top-scored with 77 and Russel Arnold remained 56 not out, the pair reviving the innings with a 118-run sixth wicket stand to lift Sri Lanka past the 200-run mark.

Jayasuriya, who completed his 15th one-day fifty, hit six fours in his 99-ball knock. Arnold faced 101 balls and hit three fours for his 17th fifty.

Indian spinners Harbhajan Singh, Anil Kumble, Virender Sehwag and Tendulkar bowled to their field as Sri Lankan batsmen once again found boundaries hard to come by in the later overs.

But the poor weather kept Sri

CU BCL leader beaten up by Shibir: Indefinite siege on campus from today

UNB, Chittagong

A BCL leader of Chittagong University was beaten up by Shibir activists on the campus yesterday.

Islami Chhatra Shibir activists picked up BCL Joint General Secretary Saifuddin Mahmud Sohag from Katapahar area at about 1pm. They took him to a nearby jungle and beat him mercilessly.

Police, on information, rushed to the spot and rescued Sohag. They sent him to a private clinic in the city.

A case was filed with Hathazari police in this connection. BCL held a protest rally in the city's Sholahshah area yesterday afternoon and claimed that a total of 11 such incidents were occurred on the campus during the last few months.

They demanded punishment to the attackers and called for an indefinite siege on the campus from today.

Meanwhile, supporters of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Islami Chhatra Shibir clashed on the BIT campus at 3pm yesterday.

Some 10 activists from both sides were wounded in the clash.

Five of them were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital and the rest to local clinics.

Police have been deployed on the campus to avert further trouble.

Six drown as boat capsizes in Habiganj

UNB, Habiganj

Six people, including women and children, drowned and 44 others went missing as a mechanised boat sank in the Khoai River Sunday.

Two of the deceased were identified as Samla Banu, 26, and her one-year-old son Rihdoy Mia of Jadabpur village in Sadar upazila.

A young woman, a 3-year-old boy and two middle-aged men of Elarkandi village in Lakhal upazila were also among the dead.

Police said the boat, carrying about 50 people, capsized at about 3:30pm at a point between Jadabpur and Radhapur due to strong current. It was heading towards Jadabpur in Lukra union from a cattle market near the district town.

Later, local people recovered six bodies from the river.

Arsenic project