

Default loan committee submits report

No rescheduling for habitual defaulters

INAM AHMED

The committee on default loans has recommended that habitual defaulters should not get any loan rescheduling facility.

It has also laid down a detailed guideline for loan rescheduling and said no interest waiver request should be entertained in case of loan rescheduling.

However, the guideline will not be applicable for loans guaranteed by the government.

The committee, headed by Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud and comprising Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud, chartered accountant Moslehuddin Ahmed, banker MA Mazid and Deputy Governor of the

Bangladesh Bank (BB) Nazrul Huda, submitted the report last Saturday.

The committee observed that the Bank Company Act does not provide for any bar on loan rescheduling. But, in a 1995 circular, the central bank imposed that 10 per cent of overdue loans have to be paid as down payment for rescheduling.

The committee pointed out that existing rules of rescheduling have created problems in loan realisation, as influential defaulters abuse the system. The 1995 circular did not differentiate the down payment requirement according to amount and nature of classified loans. Moreover, the circular did not mention any step in case of failure to

follow rescheduling rules.

The issue turned even more complicated as some banks allowed 10 per cent of defaulted instalment as down payment while others demanded 10 per cent of the classified amount. The BB explanation from time to time could not make the issue clear.

Abusing the system, defaulters could lay their hands on more credit by rescheduling their loans. On the other hand, banks had the chance to jack up their profit by showing the interest on rescheduled loans in the income head.

The committee has categorically said the banks must review any reschedule application to assess whether the defaulter is a habitual one or has siphoned off fund from

his project to elsewhere. Such defaulters would not be entertained for rescheduling and the banks would go for legal actions against them.

The banks would also assess the financial status of defaulters to judge whether they are able to repay their loans. Bank officials will visit the business establishment of the borrower for the assessment. The banks will also look at the loan status of the defaulter with other banks. If the bank becomes satisfied through such procedures, only then it will reschedule loans. Otherwise, legal actions would be taken against the defaulter, make provision for the

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PM for realistic approach in poverty reduction by SAARC

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia advised members of the SAARC poverty-alleviation commission meeting here to prepare a practical report incorporating recommendations that can be implemented for banishing poverty from South Asia.

The PM's call came when a delegation of the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (ISACPA) met her at her office yesterday noon.

"Recommendations of the report should be practical, down-to-earth and implementable, not theoretical," Khaleda told the delegation members who are preparing reports and recommendations for how to alleviate poverty from this region, home to world's largest concentration of poor people.

In response to the PM's call, the delegation assured her of following her suggestion in making recommendations.

Co-convenor of the SAARC poverty-alleviation commission Dr

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Rejoinder & our reply

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The London-based KMC Travel Limited has issued a rejoinder to the October 31 report of The Daily Star, headlined 'Biman's Manchester office faces axe'.

The company termed the allegations in the report 'false' and 'unfounded'.

The rejoinder says that whereas the company has been accused of false bookings and other irregularities in the past, the fact of the matter is it is not even an appointed agent of Biman.

It also denies the company's involvement in false bookings or any other irregularities.

The report was based on an investigation conducted by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism. The investigation report clearly recommended that Biman monitor activities of the KMC and two other travel agencies appointed by its London office.

They are believed to be involved in false bookings and other such activities in the past. Therefore, we stand by our report.

Sehri, Iftar timing

Ramadan	Nov	Sehri	Iftar
12	18		5-15
13	19	4-53	5-15
14	20	4-54	5-15

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 18		5-12 pm
Nov 19	5-15 am	

Prayer Timings

Nov 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-52	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-15	5-25
Esha	7-30	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

BSF jettisons jetty over Kalindi

Situation tense despite flag meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

India yesterday suspended construction of a jetty on the international river Kalindi following a flag meeting between the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the Border Security Force (BSF) of India.

The BSF tried to construct the jetty on the other side of the river, opposite Khikli BDR border outpost in Shyamnagar thana in the district, violating an earlier flag meeting decision.

At the five-hour sector com-

mander level meeting, the BSF agreed to abide by a probe report to be prepared by the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC), BDR officials said.

The JRC will prepare the report within 30 days and the 'dispute' will be resolved at state level, BDR commander Major Moazzem Hossain who attended the meeting said.

At the meeting, the BDR strongly protested Friday's unprovoked attack on two BDR border outposts (BoPs) by the BSF and served it with a damage list.

"The BDR showed utmost patience and opened fire only in self-defence after the BSF attacks," BDR told the meeting.

Both sides regretted Friday's incidents.

Khulna Sector Commander Col. Anwar Ibne Noor led the four-member BDR team at the meeting, held in Bangladesh territory near Noabdi canal under Koikhal. Deputy Inspector General of the BSF Sanjit Singh led the other side.

The BSF attacked two BDR BoPs

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PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) troops man a position near the Kalindi River bordering India in Koikhal village yesterday. Border Security Force and BDR traded fire over construction of a jetty on the river Friday night and Saturday morning.

Speaker snubs Anti-Bangladesh campaign

AL notices once again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite earlier assurance to allow discussion on the arrests of lawmakers during the anti-crime drive, Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar yesterday rejected all the eight privilege motions on infringement on the rights of the MPs brought by the Awami League (AL).

The Speaker also did not entertain 60 adjournment motion notices yesterday submitted mainly by opposition lawmakers to discuss on important issues like price hike of essentials, anti-crime operation and 'repression' on the opposition.

Without entertaining the notices, the Speaker said the arrests of MPs were now in the court.

Moreover, the Speaker did not allow MPs to speak for two minutes each on rejected call attention notices as has been the practice in the parliament on the ground that he had to finish the day's business early because of an iftar party at the

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Anti-Bangladesh campaign

A national leader sponsoring the propaganda: FM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has launched a massive campaign to defuse "anti-Bangladesh propaganda aimed at harming the country's image", Foreign Minister M Moshed Khan told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

"We've already briefed the foreign missions in Dhaka about the malicious campaign. Also, we've alerted the Bangladesh missions abroad and asked them to do the needful," Khan said adding that foreign journalists have been invited to see for themselves the situation prevailing in the country.

Without naming anybody, the foreign minister said "one particular national leader" was sponsoring the anti-Bangladesh propaganda at home and abroad.

However, the minister said such motivated campaign would not harm the country's image abroad as many world leaders, including US President George W Bush, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and former US first lady Hilary Clinton, have billed Bangladesh as a land of peace and religious harmony.

About media reports that al-Qaida and Taliban activists are operating in Bangladesh, he said some foreign journalists were brought here to publish articles maligning Bangladesh. "This propaganda will not damage the true image of the country. The Bangladeshi missions abroad are

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Memo to PM to resolve Viqarunnisa stand-off

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students, teachers and officials of the Viqarunnisa University submitted a memorandum to the prime minister yesterday, seeking her intervention in reopening of the institution.

In the memorandum, they have urged the prime minister to take an immediate step so that the 133 students can begin classes at the university which closed on September 13.

"Being a woman, you understand troubles of female students better...they are passing days in misery due to the sudden closure of the university after three semesters," the memorandum said.

The prime minister has been requested to deal with any irregularities in a legal way. And it can be done, with the university open, the memorandum said.

Before submitting the memorandum, the teachers, officials, students and guardians gathered in front of the Viqarunnisa Noon School and College (VNSC) and staged a brief demonstration. But police barred them from bringing out a procession.

Dr Niaz Zaman, head of the Department of English, and Nazmul Haq, father of a fourth semester English student, submitted the memorandum to the Prime Minister's Office on behalf of all teachers, students and guardians.

The VNSC authorities closed the university on September 13, alleging irregularities in transferring VNSC land and funds to the university.

"If the prime minister does not take any initiative for resumption of academic activities, we will go for fast-unto-death from next week," said Nazmul Haq.

Double-murder

Two college students to die in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court, Khulna, yesterday awarded death penalty to two college students in a double-murder case.

The accused are Rafiqul Islam, 24, and AB M Nazmul alias Ashique, 24. Both are students of Shaheed Suhrawardy College, Khulna.

According to the prosecution, the accused entered the residence of forest officer, Kazi Abdus Samad at Ismail Road in the city on September 17, 2000 and slaughtered his wife Arjina Begum and son Kazi Abdus Sattar. The accused also took away Tk 32 thousand in cash and gold ornaments from the residence.

A case was filed with Sonadanga police station accusing Rafiqul Islam, Nazmul alias Ashique and Munshi Nasimuddin.

The court acquitted Munshi Nasimuddin as charges proved against him could not be proved.

Eighteen prosecution witnesses gave deposition in the court during the trial.

Judge Sajedul Karim, after examining records and witnesses, pronounced the verdict at noon.

SOS for Madaripur monkeys

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the monkeys of Madaripur face extinction and acute food crisis, Forest and Environment Minister Shahjahan Siraj told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that his ministry was drawing up a project to protect the primate.

Awami League lawmaker Shahjahan Siraj submitted a call attention notice on monkeys facing extinction and the House gave him a patient hearing.

In response, Siraj said the government has already awarded a project to an NGO to take care of the lemurs in Keshabpur of Jessore and similarly, a project for the protection of monkeys is being processed.

In his notice, Khan informed the House that certain parts of the Madaripur district were known for monkey habitats. But now, the monkeys have mostly vanished from there.

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PHOTO: STAR

A student of Viqarunnisa University demonstrates in front of the Viqarunnisa Noon School and College in the city yesterday, demanding immediate reopening of the university that closed on September 13 upon allegations of irregularities.

Another AK-47 seized from Fatikchhari

50 people rounded up from BCL iftar party in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army seized another AK-47 assault rifle the crime-prone Fatikchhari upazila in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Saturday night.

The troops also hauled up from one sawed-off 303 rifle and 24 rounds of ammunition, including AK-47 bullets.

In the capital yesterday, the army arrested 60 people from an iftar party, organised by the Mirpur University College unit of the Bangladesh Chhatra League. Later, 32 of the arrested were released and the rest taken to the Mirpur army camp.

According to sources in the army, the troops went to the iftar party to arrest Piyal, a notorious criminal, but failed. They could only nab a few of his accomplices.

Army teams raided some recruitment agencies at Gulshan and Banani yesterday.

At Dhanmondi, the troops

arrested five people near the residence Awami League President Sheikh Hasina.

Away in Fatikchhari, the troops recovered the arms and ammunition from the rooftop of an abandoned shed at Dharmapur, believed to be a hideout of the notorious Tayeb Bahini, at around 11:30pm, reports our Chittagong correspondent.

It was the third such cache of sophisticated firearms recovered from Fatikchhari since the army-led crackdown on criminals began on October 17. So far, one M-16, two AK-47, one submachine gun, one Taiwan-made 7.62mm rifle and one 303 rifle have been seized.

The troops, meanwhile, carried out several raids acting on the confidential statement of Abdul Quaiyum, a notorious criminal and second-in-command of the infamous Tayeb Bahini.

Quaiyum was held Wednesday night from Halihsahar area of the

portcity. The army yesterday arrested Sarwaruddin Selim, a Jatiyatbadi Chhatra Dai (JCD) leader, from the business firm of a Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader at Mirsarsari in Chittagong.

Selim, a notorious criminal who is the leader of 'Sarwar Bahini' and accused in at least three murder cases in Mirsarsari, was picked up from a transport agency, owned by district BNP leader Nurul Amin, in the city's Madarbari area at around 1.00pm.

Sarwar is an accused in sensational murders of Sunil Jaldas Sandhu, a Hindu priest, and Rebat Mohan Jaldas, and a union parishad member Abul Khair committed immediately after the last October 1 general elections.

According to sources, Selim's arrest came following a confidential statement given by three of

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Audit objections amass as PAC hangs fire

RAFIQ HASAN

The eighth parliament is yet to form the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) although it has been more than a year since it came into being.

As a result, as many as 639 audit reports with around 11,000 objections on government spending worth Tk 21,000 crore are awaiting hearing by the PAC.

Since independence, as many as 780 audit reports with 16,085 objections involving Tk 29,000 crore were submitted to the parliament for discussion.

Of them, 690 were annual audit reports, 75 special audit reports and five performance audit reports.

So far, 120 annual, 20 special and one performance audit reports with 5,257 objections involving Tk 8,000 crore have been discussed at the PAC.

Around Tk 2,500 crore have been recovered following those

discussions. Tk 227 crore were recovered after 103 meetings of the PAC in the last parliament.

The audit reports are mainly on corruption, misappropriation of funds, theft, and undocumented and unauthorised expenditure by the government officials.

A final decision on such objections is made following detailed discussion at PAC meetings.

"We do not see any progress towards formation of PAC though we've written to the prime minister a few months back for her initiative in this regard," said Ahsan Ali Sarker, comptroller and auditor general (CAG), while talking to The Daily Star.

The CAG said in response the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) had informed them that they would look into the matter on a priority basis. The audit reports would be useless if PAC does not review those, he

added. The eighth parliament formed in October last year has already had five sessions but none of the 49 parliamentary committees has been formed. Sources put down the delay in formation of the committees to a discord between the ruling four-party alliance and the main opposition Awami League (AL).

The AL with a 58-member strong presence in the Jatiya Sangsad demanded chairmanship of 10 committees. The ruling coalition disagreed, however.

The ruling party also blamed the AL for not receiving names of its MPs to be drafted into different committees.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia last month declared that the parliamentary committees would be formed keeping the opposition at bay, which also drew flak from the opposition bench.

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