



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XIV No. 109

DHAKA TUESDAY MAY 11, 2004

People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

BAISHAKH 28, 1411 BS

RABI-UL-AWAL 20, 1425 HURI

16 PAGES PLUS STAR LIFESTYLE PRICE: Tk 10.00

No extra aid if crime, graft go unchecked

Donors hint at \$1.6b disbursement a year for FY03-05

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will not be given additional aid for the next year's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in the event of its failure to fulfil commitments to crime and corruption control, good governance and infrastructure development, donors warned yesterday.

The warning came on the last day of the three-day Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF) meeting at the Sonargaon Hotel, where Praful C Patel, World Bank vice-president

for South Asia, said: "Total disbursement is likely to average about \$1.6 billion a year between FY2003 and FY2005."

"We should aim to increase disbursement to \$2 billion a year, from both increased commitments and faster aid utilisation, based on an agreed PRSP and progress on the issues discussed," Patel, also head coordinator of the donor community at the BDF meet, said in his closing statement.

The additional requirement for

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Some donors may quit if security doesn't improve

AFP, Dhaka

Some donors may withdraw from Bangladesh if law and order does not improve, a World Bank official said yesterday.

Speaking at the end of a three-

day meeting of Bangladesh's donors, World Bank vice-president for South Asia Praful Patel urged the government to redouble efforts to improve security for ordinary citizens.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Saifur links Swiss bank practice to graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday told donors Bangladesh will not be able to stop corruption unless the Swiss and American banks barred corrupt people from depositing laundered money.

"If there are scopes for the corrupt people to siphon money and deposit it in your banks, how can a country like Bangladesh stop corruption? They had no answer to my question," Saifur told journalists during session breaks at the Bangladesh Development Forum

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

Vice-president of the World Bank's South Asia region Praful C Patel, C, and World Bank's Country Director Christina Wallich, R, listen with rapt attention as Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman makes a point at a press conference yesterday.

Thousands walk streets to mourn Ahsanullah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tens of thousands of people, carrying black flags and wearing black badges, marched down major city streets in a silent procession yesterday to mourn Awami League (AL) lawmaker Ahsanullah Master killed by unnamed attackers in Tongi on Friday.

Frontline leaders of the AL and its front organisations led the two-hour procession, also joined by a large number of women. Senior leaders boarded a truck fronting the procession, which was part of the party's

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

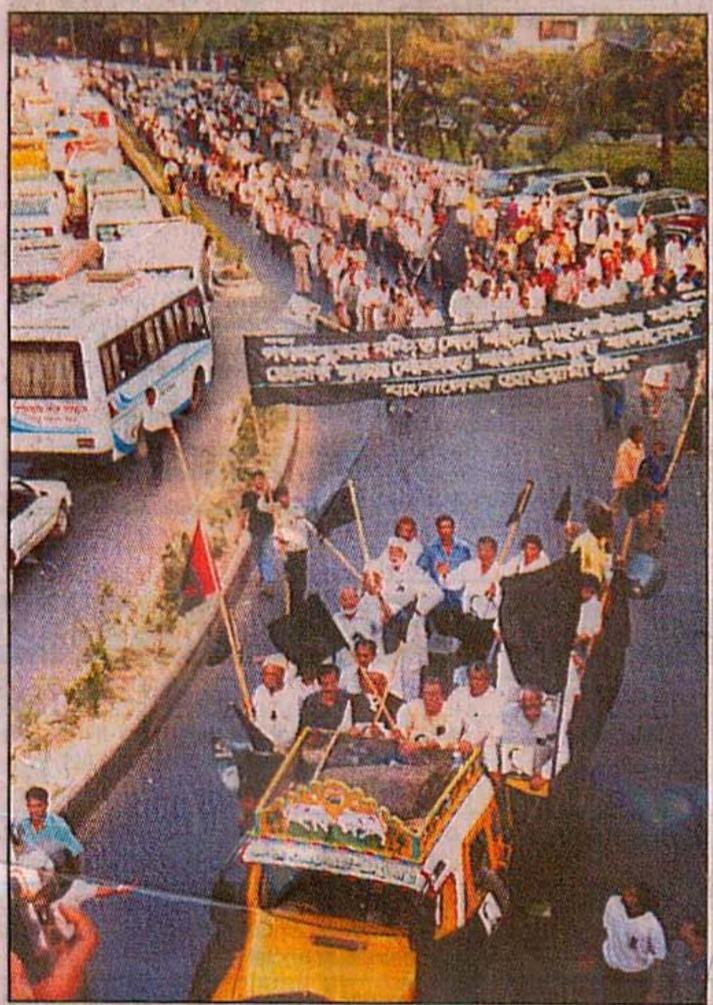


PHOTO: STAR

Tens of thousands of people carry black flags to march down Dhaka streets in a silent procession yesterday to mourn AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master's murder.

Donors don't buy govt claim on AL MP's murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

World Bank Vice-President for South Asia Praful C Patel yesterday said the donor community does not buy the government's claim that an intraparty feud led to Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master's assassination.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Over 400 industries shut for 3rd day

Hartal observed in Gazipur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The dawn-to-dusk hartal in Gazipur yesterday brought life to a standstill as almost all of the over 400 mills and factories in the district kept their operation suspended, transports went off the roads and educational institutions, shops and businesses remained closed.

The shutdown enforced by the main opposition Awami League (AL) to protest the killing of party lawmaker Ahsanullah Master on Friday stopped work in the factories that include more than 200 garment, sweater and knitting factories. Attendance in government offices was also thin.

Tongi Thana police sources denied any arrest or picking up any person in connection with yesterday's hartal. They picked up 11 persons who were accused in other cases.

Witnesses said pro-hartal pickets

drove away workers and employees and forced suspension of production at mills and factories in Tongi industrial belt and other areas of Gazipur in the morning. They asked the factory managers to allow the workers and employees to leave and

Ershad Shikder walks the gallows

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dreaded killer Ershad Shikder walked to the gallows in Khulna District Jail a minute past midnight Monday.

A beneficiary of the Jatiya Party in the 1980s and of the BNP and Awami League in the 1990s until his arrest in 1999, Ershad, the 373rd person hanged in Bangladesh, was officially informed about his execution two hours before.

Ershad however apparently became aware of the timing of execution in the evening as he wanted to meet his second wife Shobha and their daughter Esha, who he had earlier met at about 4:00pm yesterday, jail sources said.

Shobha and Esha were the last among 28 visitors. Esha did not know Ershad was her father as she was born when he was in jail. Shobha told her daughter to call Ershad "father" but she did not respond.

"I could not do anything for you... I don't have money even to buy a toothpaste for me," Ershad told his daughter on an apologetic note -- fondly looking at her. On her way out, Esha turned round and called Ershad "father" in a rare moment of joy for him.

Convicted of killing 24 people and charged with murdering at least 57 others, Ershad talked to his first wife Khodeja, their three sons and daughter and other relatives too. They informed Ershad that President Iajuddin Ahmed rejected his mercy petition.

In a rare display of emotion, he wept before his daughter but at the same time called his first wife and

sons names, blaming them for his woes.

Later, he had lunch and took a nap. In the evening, he asked authorities to let him meet his family again and upon refusal, Ershad commented: "Who knows when Allah wants to take someone's life!"

He took a shower at 10:00pm yesterday minutes after he was officially informed about his execution. He put on prison uniform -- ready to walk to the gallows set up on a 9 by 12 feet platform 12 feet from the ground -- in a brightly-lit, small

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



Ershad Shikder

Cursing, singing, he spends his last day

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh's most dreaded homicidal killer Ershad Shikder appeared nonchalant on the last day of his life yesterday and was unusually quiet but he cursed his first wife and three sons accusing them of conspiring his execution.

Khulna District Jail sources said he met his only daughter yesterday noon and broke down in tears before her upon learning that his mercy petition to the president has been rejected. The rare display of emotion did not last long, though, as he regained composure and called his wife and sons names.

"He told his daughter not to trust his sons and wife and that they are the ones who wanted his execution. He cursed his wife and sons that they should die of leprosy," said a jail source.

Convicted of killing 24 people and charged with murdering no fewer than 57 others, Ershad had enough hints about his impending execution when a doctor of the jail checked his health at 11:00am and also when he met his family at noon. Jail sources however said that he did not have the slightest idea about his

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Rise and doom of a killer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

He inched his way into the dark world for a better living that gave him notoriety, enormous wealth and the gallows in the end.

Born to a poor family in southern Jhalakathi, he lost his father early in his life and moved close to a jetty in Khulna along with his mother to work as a porter. But the small amount Ershad Shikder earned as a teenage porter could not guarantee him a way out of grinding poverty.

Soon he took to stealing small things from shops -- arguably his first crime. Associated with a bunch of small-time thieves, he formed a gang, Jall Group. The gang first

found 'big money' selling stolen rail lines. When police stood in its way, Ershad bought them off and established a sinister nexus with the law-enforcers.

Now with the men of law on his side, fiercely ambitious Ershad scaled up his stealing of rail lines. Soon this illegal trade snowballed to such an extent that he had to cast for larger factories in Narayanganj to sell his booty.

In a span of only two years, his family said, Ershad made more than Tk 2 crore. With the aim of taking the Khulna jetty under his control, he unleashed a reign of terror. He killed, kidnapped and did whatever

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Crime to be dealt with iron hand

PM holds meeting with alliance leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at a meeting with the top leaders of the ruling 4-party alliance yesterday vowed to deal with crime with an iron hand.

She said stern actions would be taken against those involved in arson and damaging public properties in the name of demonstration.

"I will be tougher in curbing crimes and no-one irrespective of party affiliations will be spared. My government is firm to bring the law and order under control," she was quoted as telling the meeting.

Referring to the killing of Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master, she said the killers will be given exemplary punishment.

"He was a very popular leader and the government has attached highest priority to nabbing the killers," she told the meeting.

"I have given instructions for proper investigation and the government would not hesitate to punish its own party men if found involved in the murder," the prime minister said.

Held at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the meeting briefly

discussed the parliamentary by-polls in Dhaka-10 and Munshiganj-1 constituencies, the Bangladesh Development Forum meeting and the AL's April 30 deadline to topple the government.

BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Information Minister M Shamsul Islam, Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer and Industries Minister Matuor Rahman Nizami, Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) Chairman Nazim Rahman Manzur and Secretary General Kazi Firoz Rashid, and chiefs of two factions of Islami Okya Jote (IO) Azzul Haq and Fazlul Haq Amini attended the meeting.

Some of the leaders present in the meeting commented that a number of vital issues needing urgent attention such as downsizing the cabinet, price hike and checking corruption were not discussed in the meeting. Nor any specific steps were charted to improve order.

Outspoken IO leader Amini was silent at the meeting and even

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

RMG factory officials robbed of Tk 20 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers yesterday looted Tk 20 lakh from four executives of a garment factory on Darusalam Road in Mirpur.

Up to five muggers took away the sum at gunpoint as soon as the officials of Defnary Garments Limited got down from a taxicab in front of their Darus Salam Road factory at about 1:15pm, police said quoting officials.

Factory officials said Accounts Officer Monir Hossain, Assistant Accounts Officer Ziaur Rahman, Assistant Manager (Admin)

Ehsanul Haq and Commercial Officer Mofizur Rahman earlier withdrew the money from the National Bank's Dilkusha Branch.

They hired the taxicab and reached the office after 45 minutes with the money withdrawn to pay the salary of the factory staff.

The criminals fled with the money without firing a shot.

Police said one of the four officials was wounded as the criminals hit him with an iron rod.

Police could not arrest anybody until late last night.

Witnesses avert cops on arrest fear

Under-treatment League leader names no AL men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Witnesses to the Tongi mayhem that left Awami League (AL) lawmaker Ahsanullah Master and schoolboy Omar Faruq Ratan killed and at least five others injured on Friday dare not go to police to provide information for fear of being arrested.

Police failed to arrest any of the killers until yesterday when the case was handed over to Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

They, however, arrested at least 200 people in connection with cases of vandalism, damage to Tongi Railway Station, BNP offices and houses of its leaders following the assassination, prompting many

activists of the AL and its front organisations to leave the area.

Relatives of the slain lawmaker and local AL leaders yesterday alleged the killers were threatening them to withdraw the murder case.

Mahfuzur Rahman Mahal, who was also injured in the incident and is now undergoing treatment at the Combined Military Hospital, gave a statement to Metropolitan Magistrate Shafiq Anwar at the hospital yesterday.

He identified seven killers as Nurul Islam Dipu, Shahidul Islam Shipu, Ohidul Islam Tipu, Kana Hafiz, Ratan, Shohagand Jahangir.

Earlier on Saturday, the official

SEE PAGE 14 COL 6

surf upto **5X faster** than standard dial-up connections

now available at stores near you

Spectra hisSpeed turbocharged dial-up technology accelerated dial-up internet services, the fast, affordable choice for internet users who know what they want

Powered by ZIP

Super Stores: Meenabazar (Dhanmondi), PQS (Uttara, Dhanmondi & Shantinagar), Almas (Gulshan), Ko-Mart (Banani)
Universities: BUET (Central Café), Dhaka University (DUS, Science faculty café), East West University Canteen, IUB Canteen (Baridhara), NSU Canteen, AIUB Canteen | IDB Bhaban: Computer Jagat & Salta Computers | Dhaka Cantonment: Mitali Store (Broadway Market) | Fast Food Shops: Abacus (Gulshan), Twin Food Plaza (Concord Twin Tower, Shantinagar), Banalata sweets (Shaymoli), Piza Howdy (Old Airport Road) | Online Order: http://www.spectrabd.net, http://www.homeviewbangladesh.com

Also coming to Chittagong from May 20th

1704 Sena Kalyan Bhaban, 195 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka 1000. Tel: 7119451, 7119442 | http://www.spectrabd.net | Email: sales@spectrabd.net