

Saifur warns of inflated flood loss estimate fallout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Exaggerated flood-damage estimate will only dent Bangladesh's image and put brakes on foreign investment, Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman said yesterday.

"We need to be careful about estimation and should not come up with an assessment figures based on guess-work," Saifur told reporters after a meeting with Executive Director of International Monetary Fund (IMF) BP Misra.

"No estimation should be done that

may leave an adverse impact on foreign investors. We will seek help from the international community for post-flood rehabilitation after making a plausible damage assessment."

Misra said Bangladesh should adopt measures for a permanent solution to the flooding, including structural reforms, as it is a regular phenomenon.

Saifur said the government would attach priority to building schools, roads, and culverts and other infrastructure in such a way that they are left unscathed by the floods.

PM launches

FROM PAGE 12

Jibikari Programme (char livelhood programme) at Bogra Rural Development Academy.

The Tk 500crore project will be implemented in 149 unions of 28 upazilas of Bogra, Sirajganj, Jamalpur and Kurigram districts aimed at reducing poverty of the char people living in the programme areas by 50 percent in eight years.

The Ministry for Local Government, Rural Development (LGRD) and Cooperatives will implement the programme in two phases by 2011 with financial and technical assistance of the Department for International Development (DFID), UK.

"Successful implementation of the programme will make the char people economically self-reliant," Khaleda hoped and urged all concerned to work hard with sincerity and devotion to make the venture a success.

She said direct participation of the char people will be ensured in the Programme.

"These people will have improved access to education, health, housing, safe drinking water and sanitation services through this programme," said the prime minister.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, State Minister of the ministry Ziaul Haq Zia, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Chowdhury, local MP Golam Mohammad Siraj and Secretary of LGRD Division Mbedayul Islam also addressed the function.

Ministers, MPs, representatives of development agencies and chairmen of the union councils of the programme areas attended the function.

"Poor char people, both men and women, of the programme areas will receive training for income-generating activities and new technologies in farm and non-farm sectors," she said, adding that credit facilities would be available for

self-employment of the trained persons.

She said about 5 percent of the total population living in char areas are underprivileged and backward. They are deprived of equal facilities rendered by several service agencies and NGOs, she added.

The prime minister said implementation of the programme would make their links with the mainland easier with the development of roads, ferry ghats and water communication system.

Referring to this year's devastating floods, the prime minister said the government has taken up a massive rehabilitation programme along with relief activities to overcome the havoc caused by the calamity.

SYLHET BOMB BLASTS

Nunu sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A magistrate's court in Sylhet yesterday sent SM Nunu Miah to jail after he was arrested in connection with twin cinema blasts and a grenade attack near an Awami League (AL) meeting venue.

The police have so far concentrated on the interrogation of Nunu, also a Sylhet AL leader, arrested after the twin cinema blasts on August 5.

Nunu was brought back to Sylhet Tuesday night after he faced interrogation by the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) in Dhaka.

As the investigators from different agencies, including the Criminal Investigation Department, failed to get any clue from Nunu, he was sent to Dhaka on August 13 for rigorous interrogation.

Earlier, Sylhet Kotwali police remanded him after he was taken on remand for three days, sources said.

First athletics gold

FROM PAGE 1

European title, she has consistently struggled to find her form in major finals.

She was among the favourites for last year's World Championships in Paris but finished fourth.

Cumba, the Ibero-American champion, leaped from sixth to second with her final throw.

Cumba said: "I am so excited I can hardly speak. This year is my year."

Kleinert shed tears of joy despite being pushed down the medal podium by Cumba's last-gasp effort.

Khorzhanenko will go into the record books as the first woman champion at the site of the ancient Games.

Women were forbidden from participating in the ancient Games, on pain of death, although there are several stories of women competing disguised as men.

The ancient Games were staged from 776 BC to 393 AD, when the Roman

emperor Theodosius I ordered them to be stopped because he was a Christian and considered them to be a pagan festival.

In the final, Ostapchuk could only manage 19.01m.

The shot put has a controversial record in terms of doping.

Khorzhanenko was disqualified from the 1999 World Indoor Championships after testing positive for drugs. Yanina Korolchik of Belarus,

the Olympic champion in this event four years ago in Sydney, was not able to defend her title because she is serving a ban after testing positive for a banned steroid last November.

The Russian's victory came on the day that Greece's Olympic 200m champion from the 2000 Games, Kostadinos Kenteris, and women's 100m silver medalist Ekaterini Thanou withdrew from the Athens Games after missing a mandatory drugs test last week.

Moudud said the government alone cannot complete the work and needs cooperation from the court.

Moudud regrets

FROM PAGE 1

The statement came after the Supreme Court on Tuesday took the government to task for failing to specify the time it needs to fully comply with the court directives for judiciary separation.

The government has been given 18 extensions to complete the process since the court issued the directives in December 1999.

Moudud said the government alone cannot complete the work and needs cooperation from the court.

WB threatens

FROM PAGE 1

Iqbal Hassan Mahmud, the country director of the Asian Development Bank, head of UK's Department for International Development and ambassadors of Germany, Japan and Norway.

The WB letter referred to the press reports indicating a decision to re-tender the project and asked for a clarification and urgent reconsideration of the government position on the re-tendering of the project, if the press reports are accurate.

Mahmud however told The Daily Star yesterday that he did not know any such letter of the World Bank. He said the Power Cell of the Ministry of Power has been tasked with completing the re-tender process in line with the Independent Power Producer (IPP) regulations.

Savoy, a Peruvian-American, accompanied on the expedition by his US father, Gene Savoy, named the site Gran Saposoa after the nearby village Saposoa and his team has already mapped the area with preliminary drawings.

The discovery is the third notable ruin Gene Savoy has helped uncover in Peru. In 1964, Savoy found the site of the Incas' last refuge in the Cuzco region of southern Peru. A year later he took part in the discovery of the sacred city of Gran Pajaten in northern Peru.

Replete with stone agricultural terraces and water canals, the city complex is thought to have been home to the little-known Chachapoyas culture.

According to early accounts by Spanish conquistadors who arrived in Peru in the early 1500s, the Chachapoyas were a fair-skinned warrior tribe famous for their tall stat-

Trader abducted in Chuadanga, another freed in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Operatives of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) yesterday abducted a cotton trader from Almudanga in Chuadanga, while a fabric trader bought his freedom in Kushtia on Tuesday.

A PBCP gang stormed the house of Kutub Ali in Belgaon village at about 5:00am and took him away at gunpoint. The gang asked his son Sohel Uddin to pay Tk 2 lakh in ransom for his release, sources said.

In Kushtia, fabric trader Abdul Wahab was freed near Bittipara Bazaar in Sadar upazila at about 9:00pm after his family paid the captors a ransom of Tk 60,000, family members said.

Local extortionists kidnapped Wahab from Harinayarpur Bazaar on August 9 as he refused to pay them Tk 35,000 in toll.

Wahab's family refused to disclose the names of the captors. "They will kill us if we disclose their names," a relative of Wahab said.

Local police, however, denied any ransom for Wahab's freedom.

As many as 90 people including 36 school and college students were abducted in Kushtia in the last seven months. Of them, seven including two schoolboys were killed, 11 are still missing and the rest bought their freedom.

2 killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A grocer and a teenage boy were murdered in separate incidents in Badda and Khilgaon, while unnamed attackers stabbed a journalist in Motijheel yesterday.

Badda police retrieved the body of grocery shop owner Abdul Aziz, 30, from a road near Anandanagar power-house at around 9:30am. The body had stains in the neck and cuts in the hand and chest, sources said.

The victim's cousin Jewel alleged Aziz's friends strangled him.

They called the grocer out of his Anandanagar house at 1:30am yesterday and he did not return home since then.

Khilgaon police found the decomposed body of an unidentified boy, aged about 13, abandoned on a road near a slum at about 9:30am, hospital sources said.

The body, which bore head injuries, was stuffed in a gunny sack. Police suspect criminals might have strangled him.

A gang of six youths stabbed Abdul Hossain, 44, executive editor of weekly Agragami, near Khilgaon rail crossing at around 8:00am.

Abul said he walked up to the rail crossing from his Sipahibagh home and boarded a rickshaw.

"Soon after I got on the rickshaw, a gang encircled me and started stabbing me indiscriminately," he added.

He ran away from the gang and took shelter in a nearby house. The owner of the house rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with seven stabs in the hand and chest.

The government alone will have to bear the responsibility if religious bigots go on with their offensive programme on August 27, he said.

"Religious and ethnic minorities in the country are under threat of extinction and passing their days in insecurity due to the government's repressive attitude towards them," Shahriar alleged.

Speaking on the occasion, Justice KM Sobhan said the government itself is violating human rights and is also encouraging others to follow its path.

Article 40 of the constitution guarantees the right to exercise religious belief independently but the government has failed to uphold this right, he said.

Prof Mir Mobassher Ali said religious bigots would even seek a change in the country's constitution to declare the Ahmadiyya non-Muslim. No Muslim country has done this, he maintained.

"They (religious fanatics) had requested the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) to adopt a resolution to declare the Ahmadiyya as non-Muslim but the OIC did not pay heed to their demand," Mobassher Ali told the roundtable.

President of the SAPUFC Prof

Cops club police job-seekers

Allege examinees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some applicants seeking sub-inspector posts yesterday alleged police authority illegally restrained them from taking part in a physical examination and demanded cancellation of the test.

Around 100 candidates in two separate press releases alleged police clubbed thousands of candidates without any reason and drove them out of the Armed Police Battalion (APB) police lines, Dhaka Range, examination centre in Uttara.

The applicants said some 3,000 candidates turned up at the centre before 9:00am yesterday but the authority closed the entrance before scheduled time. "As we demanded an explanation, police beat up and threatened us with arrest," said a press release.

The assistant commissioner of police (Uttara) said the entrance was closed in time and denied charging truncheon on any candidate. Those who came late and were creating chaos were not allowed to enter, he added.

The candidates also demanded punishment to those responsible for beating up them.

As the candidates demanded to attend the examination and protested the baton charge, police again clubbed to disperse them.

The candidates later gathered in front of National Press Club with placards and festoons to protest the incident but police charged baton and snatched away the placards from them, the press releases claimed.

The assistant commissioner of police (Uttara) said receiving treatment at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, while Abdul Bashar and Abdus Salam were given first aid.

The incident happened 2km off the jurisdiction of Keshabpur police outpost under Rajpara Police Station. Andharpur, according to locals, is an emerging drug zone.

Outpost in-charge ASI Rafiq told reporters that constables Salam, Halim and Bashar chased about 10 drug peddlers and caught a 12-year-old drug seller. But the drug peddlers led by Rafiq and Latu attacked and hurt them, he added.

Locals alleged law enforcers regularly collect toll from the drug peddlers of the area and the constables were stabbled as they took away several bottles of banned Indian phenidony from the criminals and caught one's child.

RMP Deputy Commissioner Rawshan Ara said they are probing the incident.

On the slow banking reforms, Saifur said, "Everything cannot be done according to the dictum of the IMF. We need to take into account the socio-economic aspects in implementing the reform programmes. The government did not anticipate this year's flooding when it agreed the conditions and committed itself to the reform programmes."

They accused him of giving them wrong medicine and of charging higher prices and stabbed and shot him.

Shafiq was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he died at around 6:00am yesterday.

Local businesspersons barricaded some of the city roads and kept the shutters of their stores closed until yesterday noon. They also brought out a rally at Bahadherhat intersection in the morning and demanded arrest of the killers within 24 hours. Otherwise, they threatened to go for tougher programmes.

But others were less optimistic.

"It was dangerous for him for security reasons it was also dangerous for the team who went. I am really disappointed," said Abdul Halim al-Rohani, a spokesman for the conference's preparatory committee.

Iraq's national conference -- heavily overshadowed by the Nafaj conflict -- was scheduled to wind down yesterday after voting for a new interim legislature.

The vote was postponed by one day amid a whirl of controversy from hundreds of furious delegates lashing out at the country's big political parties for trying to hijack the process, and threatening to walk out in protest.

Nineteen of the 100 seats on the bus have already been handed to members of the defunct Governing Council, which was established by the US-led occupation after the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003 and included many returning exiles.

The minister directed all concerned not to build any structure within 50 metres of a waterway.

The shipping secretary and acting chairman of the BIWTA were present at the meeting.

Elsewhere, a US marine was killed

Drug-peddlers stab 3 cops in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Three constables of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) were stabbed, one of them critically, by drug peddlers in Andharpur of Pabna upazila Tuesday night.

Critically injured, Abdul Halim is receiving treatment at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, while Abdul Bashar and Abdus Salam were given first aid.

The incident happened 2km off the jurisdiction of Keshabpur police outpost under Rajpara Police Station. Andharpur, according to locals, is an emerging drug zone.

Outpost in-charge ASI Rafiq told reporters that constables Salam, Halim and Bashar chased about 10 drug peddlers and caught a 12-year-old drug seller. But the drug peddlers led by Rafiq and Latu attacked and hurt them, he said.

Meanwhile, local people continued to enforce a hartal on the river and stopped all barges plying it. Youths in motor boats were seen beating up water transport workers, who tried to defy the hartal.