

IFIC shares

FROM PAGE 1
official Lutfar Rahman Badal have also purchased another big part of the IFIC Bank shares.

Jubok also intends to purchase the bank's 28 per cent share owned by the Beximco Group and 35 per cent share owned by the government.

The total number of IFIC Bank's shares is 40,63,861 of which 26,98,798 are sponsor shares.

However, when contacted, Beximco Group Vice-Chairman Salman F Rahman, also a sponsor director of IFIC Bank, said he or his group will not sell their holding shares right now.

The purchases by Jubok meanwhile raised questions as to how the small NGO has become so big an organisation that it can buy a healthy portion of a bank's shares.

Although Jubok started its operation in 1994 providing small credit to its members, it was registered with the Joint Stock Companies in 1996, and since then it has set up around 20 companies under its umbrella.

It is now involved with businesses in telecommunications, housing and real estate development, tourism, health, ceramic, sea foods, IT, hatchery and nursery, agro-biotech industry and capital management.

"By purchasing the shares of IFIC Bank we have made an important move in the banking sector of Bangladesh," Jubok Executive Director Hossain Al Masum told The Daily Star yesterday. "It will help us ensure our presence in the banking sector as we have long been trying to get involved in the business."

According to sources, due to poor financial situation of the IFIC Bank and an internal conflict between Islam Group and Beximco Group, the former is giving up its ownership.

The sources said the Islam Group, which holds around 26 per cent share of the bank, is concentrating more on CNG conversion business and it needs more money to invest into it. So, the group decided to sell its stakes in the IFIC Bank.

According to Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) sources, sponsor director of IFIC Bank and Director of Islam Group M Asaduzzaman announced on April 5 to sell his 1,04,729 shares in the DSE block market. Another sponsor director and Islam Group Director Shahful Islam announced on April 19 to sell his 4,47,172 shares.

Shares of late industrialist Aga Yusuf, a sponsor director of the IFIC Bank, are also being sold in the DSE block market. DSE Chief Executive Officer Salahuddin Ahmed Khan told The Daily Star recently that around 13 per cent share of the bank was sold in the block market. He, however, refused to reveal the names of the buyers.

Shaful Islam also refused to say anything in this regard. Another buyer of the IFIC bank shares, Mosaddek Ali involved himself in media business after serving as the political secretary to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. Presently he is the chairman of ntv, and owner of Dainik Amar Desh and

Rtv.

Sources said the change in the directorship or shareholding position of the IFIC Bank may damage the bank's image although it has already suffered some degree of image loss during the last couple of years as it failed to hold annual general meetings since 2003.

Under the circumstances, if the Islam Group gives up its total ownership, the IFIC Bank will further lose its image, which the bank has earlier acquired as a first generation bank, analysts said.

Ex-communist

FROM PAGE 16
The vote puts Prodi a step closer to forming a government, following his narrow victory in April 9-10 parliamentary elections.

The head of state is a largely ceremonial figure who has the task of giving mandates to try to put together new governments. Outgoing President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi had declined to do so as his seven-year-term was running out, preferring to leave that task to his successor.

Prodi said Napolitano, who is the first former communist to become president, would represent all Italians, even if the center-right didn't support him in the vote. Outgoing Premier Silvio Berlusconi urged Napolitano to be even-handed in carrying out his functions.

"We hope that he carries out the role that the constitution assigns him with impartiality," Berlusconi said minutes after the voting.

Voting for a president began Monday, but no candidate won the necessary two-thirds in the first three rounds of balloting. By the fourth round, the margin for victory dropped to an absolute majority. With the centre-left united behind Napolitano, his win had been expected.

Napolitano's credentials include stints as parliament speaker between 1992-94 and minister of interior in the first government headed by Prodi between 1996-98.

He was always known for his moderate, pro-Western stance, and he was among the biggest supporters of the reform that led Communists to change the party's name and drop the hammer-and-sickle symbol.

Earlier Wednesday, Prodi told reporters that he expected to obtain a mandate between Sunday and Tuesday, and that a confidence vote was likely by May 23.

Napolitano also was optimistic before the vote, saying that as president he would be above the political fray.

Some members in Berlusconi's alliance praised the well-respected Napolitano and even said they might break ranks and support him. But the final count showed that they largely united against him.

The head of state is traditionally seen as a unifying figure in Italy.

PDB

FROM PAGE 16
'inefficiency and negligence' of the PDB officials is responsible for the severe road shedding.

Criticising the government for the situation, they said the HSC candidates are now facing immense suffering due to frequent power cuts.

They warned of tougher agitation programs if the authorities fail to ensure smooth supply of power within seven days.

The road barricade from 11:00am to 1:00pm created a long snarl up of vehicles on both sides of the road.

Later the lawyers and people met the local PDB resident engineer and placed three-point demand including smooth supply of power in the district and taking action against corrupt PDB officials and staff.

Chaired by district Bar association General Secretary advocate Shah Alam, the rally was addressed, among others, by advocates Mustafa Lutfullah, Farida Akhtar Banu and Azad Hossain Belal, Prof Abu Ahmed, and Obaidus Sultan Bablu.

Another case

FROM PAGE 1
and Kushtia correspondent of the daily Jangtor, Munshi Tarikul Islam, Kushtia correspondent of the daily Samakal and Chennel 1.

Equipped with arms, the three stormed the business establishment of Azad Biswas, a contractor and a ruling BNP leader of the town, at about 5:00pm on May 7 and demanded Tk 40,000 from him, Azad said in the case.

Azad, who is a close associate of lawmaker Shahidul, said when he declined to pay, the journalists threatened him to shoot and looted Tk 10,000 in cash and other valuables including a gold chain at gunpoint.

Earlier on Tuesday, ruling BNP lawmaker Prof Sahidul Islam of Kushtia-2 constituency (Mirpur-Bheramara) filed an extortion case against them with Bheramara Police Station.

Sahidul in his case said the journalists went to his Bheramara residence on May 2 and demanded Tk 50,000.

Following a Manavjabin report on Sunday about the declining popularity of three lawmakers including Sahidul, the lawmaker on Monday threatened the journalists of dire consequences in the presence of Forest and Environment Minister Tariqul Islam when they went to cover the programme on the birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore at Shilaidah.

Police raided different places in the town to arrest the journalists who are now on the run to avoid police harassment, sources said.

Teletalk's

FROM PAGE 16
on each SIM (subscriber identity module) card.

The HC division bench also ordered Teletalk, the state-owned mobile phone company, to sell their SIM card to the six petitioners at Tk 1,800 each.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) on June 9 last year issued an SRO (statutory regulatory order) imposing Tk 1,200 VAT on each SIM card.

Following the SRO, Teletalk on June 13 announced that the lottery winners will have to pay Tk 1,200 each in addition to the declared SIM price of Tk 1,800.

Six lottery winners filed the petition challenging the Teletalk notice and the court issued a rule on the government and the Teletalk authority to explain as to why the levying of Tk 1,200 as VAT on each Teletalk SIM cards would not be declared illegal.

The court also issued a rule on the respondents to show cause as to why they should not be directed to sell the SIM cards at the previous rate of Tk 1,800.

Finance secretary, telecommunications secretary, chairmen of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board and NBR, and Teletalk managing director were among the six respondents.

The court heard the petition filed as Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the last 11 months before delivering the judgement yesterday.

Counsel for the petitioners Idrisur Rahman said 50,000 people had won the lottery last year and of them, 20,000 were given SIM cards until June 9, 2005 at the rate of Tk 1,800.

So, forcing the rest 30,000 lottery winners to pay the additional amount is discriminatory and illegal, he maintained. "It is against the Article 27 of the constitution."

He also said Teletalk cannot impose the extra VAT unilaterally, because it had pledged before the lottery that it would sell a SIM card at Tk 1,800.

So, imposition of extra Tk 1,200 on each SIM card is against the Article 31 of the constitution, Idrisur Rahman told The Daily Star.

In a reply to a question, Rahman said the 30,000 lottery winners, who were made to purchase each Teletalk SIM card paying additional charges, should now get back the extra amount.

"If Teletalk does not pay them the money back, they can seek justice in the court," he said.

Advocates Protikar Chakma, M Shahidullah and Amatul Karim assisted Idrisur Rahman for the petitioners. Barrister Rafique ul Huq and Advocate Roissuddin Ahmed were the counsel for Teletalk while Barrister Abdur Razzak moved for NBR.

Power Projects

FROM PAGE 1
needed to produce 1,400 MW additional power. But over the last more than 4 years, only 80 MW was produced at Tongi plant. On the other hand, from December 2005 to April 2006, the government selected only skid mount power plants. From this, it is clear that it has been done in 'malafide, arbitrary way and in exercise of power distinctly ignoring the national interest', the notice said.

Advocate of the Supreme Court Md Oziullah on April 30 served the notice on behalf of Engineer SM Shahidullah, Convener of the National Committee for Protection of Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources and Electricity. It has been served on the principal secretary and the secretaries of the Power Division, Cabinet Division and Ministry of Finance, and the Chairman of Power Development Board (PDB) and director general of the Power Cell.

Shahidullah will be compelled to file writ petition on the matter if the government fails to reply to this notice. He had also served the government with another notice on the massive irregularities on awarding of Chandpur power plant contract to Chinese company Harbin.

The legal notice said the government through a letter on April 4, 2005, formed a committee headed by the principal secretary to perform executive functions regarding power sector. This committee on September 27 decided for installation of barge, trailer, skid mount power plants on rental basis with a total capacity of 360 MW in 8 places of the country on an 'emergency basis'.

The committee also decided to offer the rental power plant developers certain privileges. These include a grant of Tk 20 crore to build inter-connection facilities for power evacuation from these plants, Tk 44 crore as subsidy to the PDB for purchasing power from them, a grant of Tk 35 crore as monthly rent the PDB for these plants, allowing to conversion of the income of these plants into foreign currency by selling power to the PDB and transfer the same abroad, exemption of customs duty, Vat and tax on imported equipment and allowing privileges and status as registered foreign investors in the country under the Investment Board.

Accordingly, the PDB floated tender and following bid evaluation fixed power rates for skid mount plants in Bogra at Tk 3.06 per kilowatt hour (kwh), Thakurgaon Tk 12.23, Shahajibazar Tk 2.63, Fenchuganj-1 Tk 12.01 for first two years and Tk 2.83 afterwards and Fenchuganj-2 Tk 2.83 for a period of 15 years.

As per the committee's decision, the government will sell gas to these plants at the rate of Tk 73.91 per unit. In contrast, the government is selling gas to the captive power plants (CPP) at a rate of Tk 105.59 per unit and purchasing power from them at Tk 1.90 per kwh. This shows how the skid mount deals are being done against the national interest to serve the interest of a particular quarter.

The Public Procurement Regulations (PPR), 2003 dictates that the bidders must have necessary professional and technical qualifications and competence including managerial capacity and experience in achieving objectives of the project. But the PDB's tender evaluation committee overlooked this aspect completely. The PDB also did not compare the skid-mount plants' price offers with the available market price of Tk 1.9, and thereby again violated the PPR.

According to the Private Sector Power Generation Policy of Bangladesh (PSPGP), 1996, the Power Cell is the sole government authority to deal with private power projects. But everything regarding the skid mount plants has been done according to the committee headed by the principal secretary. This is illegal and it violates Section 3.1 of the PSPGP.

As per the PMO committee's decision, the government will give a subsidy of Tk 1,763 crore for power purchase from these plants for 15 years. A period of 15 years cannot be considered as an emergency period and even common sense does not permit the skid subsidy as an emergency measure.

The decision to subsidise power purchase from skid mount plants also contradicts the fact that the government is set to increase bulk power tariff by 10 percent and retail tariff by five percent to reduce its subsidy in the power sector.

5 sentenced

FROM PAGE 1
Harun-ur-Rashid at Thanthania in Bogra town to commit robbery.

Later, the victim's brother Ward Commissioner Selim filed a case accusing nine people.

During the investigation of the case, police arrested listed criminals Haider and Swapan.

In a confessional statement before a first class magistrate, they admitted to the rape and murder and disclosed the names of other convicts.

Dhaka elected

FROM PAGE 1
votes, coming next to India with 173 and Indonesia with 165 votes.

Bangladesh will serve on the council for a full three-year term. China, Jordan, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia were also voted to serve full three-year terms while India will serve on the body for a year.

Bangladesh also received more votes than bigger countries like Japan and China who received 158 and 146 votes respectively.

"The victory of Bangladesh in the Human Rights Council elections signifies strong international endorsement for the government's commitment to upholding and promoting human rights in Bangladesh which is recognised by the global community as well as by the regional and other international communities," Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan told a hurriedly called press briefing yesterday afternoon.

He said when a conspiratorial campaign is launched at home and abroad trying to brand Bangladesh as a country of human rights violations, Bangladesh's victory is an apt reply to the critics and campaigners.

"The victory is also a milestone in the achievements of Bangladesh's foreign policy," the foreign minister added.

When asked if human rights situation here will improve with Bangladesh's election to the UN Human Rights Council, Morshed Khan said "We are far ahead of many countries, but there is no room for complacency. We must make joint efforts and work hard to uphold human rights."

He said the council will have much more power and weight to go into action against any violation of human rights.

Ghana topped the race for 13 African seats. The other 12 went to Algeria, Cameroon, Djibouti, Gabon, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia and Zambia.

India received the highest number of votes in the race for 13 Asian seats. The other 12 went to Bahrain, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka.

Brazil received the highest number of votes in the race for eight Latin American and Caribbean seats. Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay got the other seven.

Germany received the highest number of votes in the race for seven seats allotted for Western European countries and other states. The other six seats went to Canada, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Azerbaijan, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Russia and Ukraine obtained the six seats allotted for Eastern European states.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan welcoming the result of the election said, "This will give its members the chance to show the depth of their commitment to pro-

Thousands

FROM PAGE 16
AL presidium member Abdur Razzak, MP said the BNP-Jamaat alliance government has included more than two crore fake voters in the voter list. "The people will not allow the government to hold any election, even one like the February 15 polls in 1996, using the fake voter list," Razzak said.

AL stalwart Tofail Ahmed said the 'controversial' CEC and two ECs loyal to him have virtually made the EC a 'front organisation' of the ruling BNP. The coalition government does not want free and fair polls in the country and for this it has prepared the 'fake' voter list and is not accepting the opposition's proposed reforms.

But the people will foil any bid to rig the next elections, he said.

Chaired by Dhaka City 14-Party Coordinator Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, the rally was also addressed by, among others, Motia Chowdhury, Jahirul Islam, Nurul Islam, Shahab Khan and Hazim Mohammad Selim.

Maya, also general secretary of the city AL, said they would stage demonstrations at Azampur today, Shanir Akhra tomorrow, Mirpur-10 on May 13 and at Lalbagh on May 14 to press the demand for uninterrupted supply of power and adequate water supply.

Our Netrokona Correspondent reports: Over 100 riot police and 200 armed BNP activists attacked a procession of the 14-party alliance at Mukterpara bridge while it was heading for the deputy commissioner's office to lay siege to it, demanding cancellation of 'fake' voter list and protesting power and fuel crises.

The opposition activists countered the attack with bricksbats during an hour-long clash between the two sides. Police fired over 40 rubber bullets and teargas shells to bring the situation under control.

Those injured in the incident include District AL Joint Secretary Nur Khan Mitu, Krishok League President Kashob Ranjan Sarker and local journalists Saidur Rahaman Mintu and Goutom Sarker Babul.

Bullet-hit Sweschasebak League leader Yusuf Jubary was later taken to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

In Sakthira, several hundred leaders and activists of the opposition combine laid siege to the DC office and barricaded Sakthira-Jessore highway protesting the 'fake' voter list and demanding its immediate cancellation, reports our Sakthira correspondent.

Earlier, they brought out a procession from Shaheed Abdur Razzak Park and held a rally in front of the DC office with district AL General Secretary Nazrul Islam in the chair.

In Tangail, the opposition alliance brought out a procession and held a rally in front of the AL office in the town to press the same demands, said a report from our Tangail correspondent.

Container

FROM PAGE 16
goods that have been lying in the port yard for more than 30 days after submitting bill of entry to the Customs.

He said the existing Customs Act the port authority can sell the goods in auction if those are not taken in 30 days after getting clearance from the Customs Department.

He claimed that the customs clearances are given within 24 hours of submitting bill of entry.

Asked about the function of Inland Container Depot (ICD) at Kamalapur, Sarwar said the depot is located on the lands of Bangladesh Railway that is responsible for maintaining security of the goods there.

Using port yard as warehouse by some businessmen is one of the major causes of huge piling up of containers in the port yard, said a source, adding that around 15,000 containers are now kept in the port yard, leaving no space for the new comers.

The source blamed the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) for the congestion as it failed to expand the yard facility although some 700 acres of port lands have been freed from illegal occupation in the last couple of years.

The CPA ordered shifting some containers to two private depots for creating spaces, CPA sources said, adding that the loading and unloading of containers have also been accelerated.

Meanwhile, the feeder operators, who earlier threatened to impose \$130 surcharge against each container from the first week of next month, said their decision will not be withdrawn unless the turnaround time declines significantly.

JMB

FROM PAGE 1
investigation of Uttar Moheshpur incident case.

A group of JMB activists including JMB's Second-in-Command Bangla Bhai launched an attack on police at Uttar Moheshpur in Khetlal upazila under Joypurhat district and looted arms and wireless set on August 15, 2003.

Samy said he met Alamgir Jahan Rana first in Baniyapara Madrasa at Joypurhat Sadar upazila as an activist of JMB. He further informed CID officials that Shahid Bin Hafez of Nizballi village in Sonatola upazila of Bogra district was another Shura member of the first committee that included Hafez Mahamood, Salauddin and Khaled Saifulla.

SI Rana was included in the first committee that was formed in December 1998 on the third floor of Yasin Plaza, a multi-storied building at Sabujbagh in the capital.

After the countrywide bomb blasts on August 17 last year, the police headquarters sent to Bogra police a letter containing the names of suspected JMB activists including that of SI Rana, said a senior police officer.

Now Rana is posted at Motijheel Police Station in Dhaka, his father Motiar Rahman told local journalists in Shariakand upazila of Bogra district.

Adnan Samy, who was arrested at Bogra Central Bus Terminal recently, disclosed that he was involved in five murder cases including one for strangulating a woman for her alleged immorality, said a Rapid Action Battalion official.

During the interrogation in connection with an explosives case after recovery of a huge quantity of bomb making materials from a maize field in Sherpur Upazila, Samy admitted his involvement with Uttar Moheshpur case.

Nasreen was killed

FROM PAGE 1
(BSEHR) and leader of its investigation team, told a press conference.

Nasreen's husband, relatives, and colleagues -- none is beyond suspicion of the killing, Alena told the conference held at her office to reveal the findings of the BSEHR investigation into the tragic incident.

Earlier, on Tuesday, Nasreen's husband Nurul Islam Bhuiyan Chhoton filed a criminal case with Dhanmondi Police Station accusing the car driver, Zakir Hossain, of killing her by reckless driving.

In the first information report, Chhoton said Zakir first rammed his wife and then crashed her with an open door, leaving her severely injured in the knees.

Zakir, detained earlier under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), was shown arrested in the murder case and placed on a three-day fresh remand yesterday.

Hit by her own car at the car park of her residence on April 24, Nasreen succumbed to her injuries the same day at the Combined Military Hospital, Dhaka.

Alena Khan said Nasreen might have such information that could cause serious damage to some party if made public. There is also a possibility that her car driver might have taken revenge by killing her for some grievance or anger.

"However, our hunch is she was killed for the first reason, while the driver was used as a mere tool," she maintained.

The BSEHR executive director said, although the police are responsible to find out the motive behind the killing and detect the killers, their role seems mysterious, as the driver was arrested as much as 10 days after the death.

"Who directed the police to wait and why are they so prompt now in acting against the driver?" was the question Alena Khan posed.

She also questioned why the police did not immediately file any general diary or record an unnatural death as is typically done in such cases.

Though a police official collected and wrote down information and then took signature from Nasreen's relatives to the notes, it is not clear how that statement has been used, she observed, adding the police did not prepare any inquest report either.

Alena also mentioned that it was Nasreen's husband who applied to the authorities concerned to allow her burial without autopsy of the

body.

She said the murderers choose Nasreen's house to kill her to avoid the public uproar and serious consequences if she was killed on the street or shot to death, adding, "In that case, the accused would be forced to reveal the name of the masterminds."

Now, the nature of the incident keeps everyone quiet, Alena remarked.

She also alleged to have detected certain efforts in the legal proceedings to hide the real criminals.

DRIVER ON FRESH REMAND

Zakir was produced before the Court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka yesterday on expiry of his five-day remand.

The investigation officer of the case, Sub Inspector AB Siddique, sought a seven-day remand for Zakir, saying he has to be thoroughly interrogated to unveil the mystery behind the incident and to ascertain whether it was an accident or a planned murder.

However, the court placed Zakir on a three-day police remand.

Sagir murder

FROM PAGE 16
Police recovered a .22 bore revolver and three bullets from the scene. They later sent the body to Salimullah Medical College and Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Buddha

FROM PAGE 16
Buddha Purnima will be celebrated at all monasteries across the country through a daylong programme. Special prayers will also be offered seeking peace, progress and prosperity of the country.

Newspapers will publish articles while radio and TV channels will air special programme highlighting the significance of the day.

4-party

FROM PAGE 16
voting at some centres. Nagorik Parishad candidate Azad also alleged that his polling agents had been ousted by the ruling party men from several centres.

Thai court asks govt

FROM PAGE 16
have faced mounting pressure to resign since the Constitutional Court invalidated the April 2 elections.

But Vasana again insisted that the commission had followed the law in organizing the elections, despite the court's ruling that the campaigning period was too short and that the voting booths did not provide enough secrecy.

"My honour has perished at Election Commission, even though I have never thought of betraying this country or abusing my authority," he told a group of supporters.

Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party won the last election with 56 percent despite weeks of protests against him in Bangkok, but his victory was undermined by an opposition boycott that succeeded in persuading many Thais to cast protest votes.

Thaksin tearfully announced two days later that he would step aside, but with the nation headed toward its third general election in less than two years, the outgoing premier is remaining coy about whether he will run again.

The billionaire businessman remains the leader -- and major financier -- of his party as well as a parliamentarian.

Thaksin said Wednesday that he had not yet decided whether to run for prime minister, although he will run for a seat in parliament.

"Let's wait until everything is clear. As of now I don't know when the election will be held. I am still stunned at how the rules have changed," he told reporters.

A new election date could be months away, warned analyst Thitinan Pongsudhirak from Chulalongkorn University.

Thailand's three most powerful courts said Tuesday they would oversee the next polls but they have yet to decide exactly how to do that.

That process could take weeks and once it is agreed, elections probably would not come for another two months, he said.

"The longer it is until the election day, the better it is for the opposition," Thitinan said.

Factions within Thaksin's party could be lured to the opposition camp, especially if their leader does not bring his charisma and his pocketbook to the campaign, he said.

"It's not going to be good for Thai Rak Thai" if the elections take months to organise, he said.

IMF insists on power

FROM PAGE 1
Among other risk factors, the IMF team named the continued underpricing of energy products and the resulting financial crisis in the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) like the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), Power Development Board (PDB) and Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa), which weakens the government's fiscal position and the banking system.

"In Bangladesh, average domestic petroleum prices are currently about 40 per cent below international prices, while electricity tariffs are below production cost and natural gas rates below opportunity costs," the IMF team pointed out.

It also mentioned that "many low-income countries have adjusted their domestic petroleum prices and/or improved the targeting of fuel subsidies" to deal with the 90 per cent fuel prices hike over the last two years.

The IMF mission suggested a more appropriate pricing policy, which it maintained would eliminate subsidies to the wealthier segments of the population and free up government resources for enhancing transfers and services to low-income groups.

According to the statement, "The mission has encouraged the government to improve the targeting of any subsidies and to introduce measures to mitigate the impact of price adjustments on vulnerable groups."

<