

Economy doing very well: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reiterated that the country's economy was doing very well despite the global economic meltdown.

"We've maintained a good production of food as well as industrial production which enabled the country to attain over 6 per cent GDP growth over the last couple of years," she said.

The prime minister made the remarks when Subrata Roy Sahara, Chairman of Sahara India Pariwar, the largest private sector employer in India, along with his wife, Swapna Roy, met her at her official residence at Gano Bhaban in the evening.

After the meeting, Deputy Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Bijan Lal Deb briefed reporters.

Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh has made a good progress in the IT sector as Bangalees are technology friendly showing an increasing trend of using the internet and mobile phones.

"There're some 30 million internet users as well as 4,576 union information and service centres across the country," she said adding that it has created huge employment opportunities apart from providing services.

In response, Subrata highly appreciated Bangladesh's present economic condition as he mentioned the stable credit rating for Bangladesh by the S&P and Moody. "Bangladesh's economy is moving well despite the global economic recession."

He said there is a huge potential for promoting tourism and constructing satellite towns in the Bangladesh, especially outside the capital.

Subrata also paid rich tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Awami League presidium member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Abdus Sobhan Golap also were present on the occasion.



Sahara India Pariwar Managing Director Subrata Roy Sahara along with his spouse Swapna Roy pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Gono Bhaban last evening.

PHOTO: PMO

South Africa keen to invest more

Says new envoy

BSS, Dhaka

South African entrepreneurs are ready to invest in agriculture and industrial sectors of Bangladesh considering the country's prevailing congenial investment climate.

"South Africa wants to take its trade relations with Bangladesh to a new height," newly appointed South African High Commissioner to Bangladesh Geoffrey Quinton Doidge said while presenting his credentials to President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the envoy conveyed "special greetings" of South African former president and also legendary humanist leader Nelson Mandela to President Zillur Rahman.

Doidge highly appreciated Bangladesh socioeconomic development and its success in maintaining high economic growth in last couple of years.

"It's not imaginable that despite global recession, Bangladesh secures seven per cent growth of GDP," he said.

He lauded the achievement of Bangladesh in increasing women empowerment as well as maintaining gender parity.

The South African envoy also thanked Bangladesh for its immense contribution to establishing peace in different African states through the UN peacekeeping missions.

The envoy apprised the president that South Africa would like to extend identical cooperation to Bangladesh what it offers to other African states.

Welcoming the South African envoy to Bangabhaban, Zillur Rahman said Bangladesh attaches great importance to its relations with South Africa and looks forward to take it to a new height.

The president urged the South African entrepreneurs to import more world standard products from Bangladesh as well as invest in the country's potential sectors.

Earlier, on his arrival at Bangabhaban, the new high commissioner was given a guard of honour by the President's Guard Regiment.

CHT PEACE ACCORD

Delay in implementation emboldens miscreants

Observe civil society, indigenous community leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society and indigenous community leaders yesterday reiterated their demand for the implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) peace accord as the delay is encouraging miscreants to oppress indigenous people.

They also demanded exemplary punishment of all people who oppressed indigenous people at different times in the country.

The leaders were addressing a human chain organised by Samillito Nagorik Samaj before Jatiya Press Club in the capital, protesting the recent incidents of torture, murder and rape in the CHT region.

Gonoforum Presidium Member Pankaj Bhattacharya said, "The miscre-

ants are becoming stronger, strengthening their oppression on indigenous people with the delay in the Chittagong Hill Tracts peace accord's implementation."

"It is not acceptable that grenade attacks are carried out in the hills while you (the government) keep army rule there. What is the point in keeping the army there?" he asked.

Bangladesh Adivasi Forum General Secretary Sanjib Drong announced that a grand rally will be held at the Central Shaheed Minar within a few days to protest against the oppression.

Prof Mesbah Kamal of the history department of Dhaka University blamed a portion of the government for the delay in the accord's implementation. He also urged all to term the indigenous community "indigenous and human".

Workers' Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon blamed bureaucracy for the delay. "They (bureaucrats) are dilly-dallying so that the accord is never implemented."

In recent months, two indigenous minor girls were violated, four indigenous farmers were murdered and an indigenous student died in a grenade attack.

Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, Jatiya Adivasi Parishad, Bangladesh Adivasi Odhikar Andolon, Manusher Jonno Foundation and Brotee expressed solidarity by participating at the programme.

Brotee Chief Executive Officer Sharmin Murshid and Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam also spoke at the programme.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Discharge plea for Mojaheed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At the International Crimes Tribunal-2, the defence for Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed yesterday sought his discharge from charges of crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War.

The defence made the plea in response to the prosecution's prayer to indict the former minister of a BNP-led government. Mojaheed is facing 32 charges of crimes against humanity, allegedly committed during the Liberation War.

Nazrul Islam, one of Mojaheed's counsels, yesterday read out the discharge petition.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice ATM Fazle Kabir and members Justice Obaidul Hassan and Judge M Shahinur Islam adjourned the proceedings until May 29, following a time prayer from the defence.

Nazrul said Mojaheed was merely a 23-year-old student leader then and during the war he spent his days in panic and fear.

"The accused petitioner has no connection with the army officials or high ups of the then Pakistani government," said the counsel, adding, "He [Mojaheed] had no connection with the Razakar, Al Badr, Al Shams or Al Mujahid [collaborator forces] as well," Nazrul said.

The defence counsel claimed that on many occasions, the Jamaat and its then student wing Islami Chhatra Sangha had criticised the attack of the Pakistani army on Bangalees during the war.

"The media were censored totally during that time [during the Liberation War]. In many cases, what was published was not stated and what was stated was not published," said the defence counsel, quoting a statement of his client provided with the discharge petition.

"Especially, the statements of Jamaat and Islami Chhatra Sangha protesting the oppression of the military junta never saw the light of day," he added.

However, the prosecution alleged that the Jamaat leader through speeches and media statements provoked his followers to "eliminate" freedom fighters and pro-liberation Bangalees in 1971 and the prosecution mentioned 12 such incidents in their formal charges.

The defence said charges should not be framed against its client as the prosecution brought the charges on insufficient legal basis and inadequate evidence. The defence said if the trial was held, it would result in an unfair trial by domestic and international standards.

Nazrul said up to October 31, 1973, a total 37,471 people were put on trial under the Collaborators (Special Tribunal) Order, 1972 but the prosecution failed to provide any evidence that Mojaheed was one of the 37,471.

When the defence counsel completed reading out the petition, the tribunal chairman drew his attention to page 55

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Samillito Nagorik Samaj forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday, protesting continuing attacks and repression on indigenous people.

PHOTO: STAR

Worker dies from iron fall

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A worker died as a piece of iron fell on his head at Pran Agro Ltd company in Ekdala area under Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased was Nazir Hossain, 38, of Jangli village in the upazila.

Sources said the iron fell on him while working in the factory about 08:00am.

Nazir was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where doctors announced him dead.

US embassy closed May 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The American Embassy, including the Consular Section and the American Center with the Archer K Blood American Center Library and the Student Advising Center, will remain closed on Sunday (May 27) on the occasion of Memorial Day, an American national holiday.

Emergency services for American citizens will be available. They have been requested to call 885-5500 for help, said a press release.

Sabera's chehlum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chehlum of Sabera Mustafa, wife of veteran journalist and former ambassador, late KG Mustafa, will be held today.

A milad mahfil will be held at Ilora apartments on Sir Syed Road at Mohammadpur in the capital after Asr prayers. Her relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the programme. Sabera Mustafa breathed her last on April 15 this year.

PM encouraging 1/11 situation

Say BNP leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition BNP leaders at a rally yesterday said the prime minister herself was encouraging the build-up of a situation similar to that of the 1/11 by torturing and repressing the opposition.

Referring to the comment the PM made on Wednesday to remain alert against those who want to grab state power through unconstitutional means, they said the PM must take the responsibility if any such incident does occur.

They also said the PM should run the country in a democratic way and stop incidents of killing and disappearances so that none can get the chance to implement the "minus-two formula".

Dhaka city BNP organised the rally before the party's central office at the capital's Nayapalton demanding release of the opposition leaders including BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir and city Convener Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

BNP standing committee members Moudud Ahmed, Tariqul Islam, Rafiqul Islam Mia and Nazrul Islam Khan and Joint Secretary General Mohammad Shahjahan spoke at the programme with city BNP Member Secretary Abdus Salam in the chair.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, during a meeting with professionals on Wednesday, said those behind the "minus-two formula" were still active but the opposition BNP failed to understand it.

Two workers electrocuted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A female worker of a plastic factory at Kamrangirchar and an electrician in Tejgaon were electrocuted in two separate incidents in the capital yesterday.

At Kamrangirchar, the victim was identified as Shefali Begum, 30, wife of Abdur Rahim and a worker of Parvez Plastic Factory.

While working, a part of Shefali's saree got entangled with a running floor fan. When she tried to untangle her saree, her hand came into contact with a snapped wire, Abdur Rahim told reporters.

Co-workers rushed her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where she succumbed to her injuries, he added.

Meanwhile, electrician Ripon, 20, was electrocuted while welding at the ground floor of a four-storied building at West Tejturibazar of Tejgaon. Workers rushed him to DMCH where he was declared dead.

Verdict on 4 'fake' law instts starts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday started delivering the verdict on a writ petition filed for taking appropriate action against the fake institutions which are giving law degree certificates to students without legal authority.

It fixed May 27 to resume the reading out of the verdict. The ministry of education has found four fake educational institutions in Dhaka, which have no affiliation with any university of the country or abroad, but giving law degrees for money, petitioner's counsel Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star.

The institutions are Chancery Academy of English Law at Dhanmondi, International University at Uttara, North American University at Lalmatia and Victoria University at Dhanmondi.

Manzill said he had prayed to the HC to direct the government to find out all such fake institutions across the country, shut them down, and award punishment.

One Rehana Ali, who took admission to Chancery Academy of English Law, earned a certificate of law degree last year from the institution after she had given Tk 10 lakh to the authorities of the fake institution.

Bangladesh Bar Council, the authority that gives licence to the country's lawyers to practice law, has refused to allow her certificate, saying that the institution is not authenticated by any legal authority.

She filed the petition with the HC in August last year, saying that Chancery Academy of English Law is running in the name of Williamsburg University of United Kingdom, but she could not know from the ministry of education and the British Council in Bangladesh that there is no institution in the UK by the name of Williamsburg University.

The HC bench of Justice Tariq ul Hakim Justice Md Faruque yesterday started delivering the verdict.

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country having chances of rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind at one or two places over Rangpur and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Bogra, Tangail, Mymensingh, Dhaka and Comilla in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Mild to moderate heat wave is sweeping over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna divisions and the regions of Rangamati and Dinajpur and it may continue, Met Office said.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The highest maximum temperature is likely to be 40-41 degrees Celsius and lowest minimum temperature may be 23-24 degrees Celsius.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:39pm and rises tomorrow at 5:12am.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	36.0	26.6	73	70
Chittagong	33.2	28.0	77	77
Rajshahi	41.0	29.0	74	42
Rangpur	35.4	24.5	82	75
Khulna	38.4	29.4	78	76
Barisal	35.6	29.0	76	74