

PM encourages large-scale investments from Japanese companies

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged Japanese businessmen to make larger investments in Bangladesh and help increase bilateral trade.

She made the remarks during outgoing Japanese Ambassador Ito Naoki's courtesy call on her at the Gono Bhavan.

"Bangladesh is a lucrative place for investment. Japanese private companies can invest in Bangladesh on a larger scale," she said.

The Japanese ambassador praised Bangladesh's socioeconomic improvement and hoped that the country would continue to prosper in the days to come. PM's Deputy Press Secretary KM Shakhawat Moon told the journalists after the conversation.

"Peace, discipline, stability, and democratic process, alongside the socio-economic development in Bangladesh, will continue under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," said the ambassador.

Noting Japan's support in implementing mega projects such as Matarbari Deep-sea Port, the third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka, and Dhaka Metro Rail, Hasina sought continuous support from the country.

She also asked for Japan's cooperation in developing a dedicated tourist place for foreigners in Bangladesh.

Termining it a good initiative, the Japanese ambassador expressed his eagerness to cooperate in this regard.

They also talked about the repatriation of the Rohingyas living in Bangladesh.

Hasina appreciated Japan's involvement in developing Bhashan Char for the refugees.

She also greeted the ambassador over the successful completion of his tenure in Bangladesh.



Outgoing Japanese Ambassador Ito Naoki pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhavan yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Minsk deals failure led to Russia's Ukraine offensive

Says Kremlin, claims US benefitting from European gas crisis

REUTERS

Russia launched what it calls a special military operation in Ukraine because its concerns around peace accords between Kyiv and Russian-backed separatists were ignored, Russian news agencies quoted the Kremlin spokesman as saying yesterday.

President Vladimir Putin this week bemoaned the failure to implement the Minsk agreements - ceasefire and constitutional reform deals between Kyiv and Russian-backed separatist forces in eastern Ukraine brokered in 2014 and 2015 by Russia, France and Germany, at the outset of the conflict with Ukraine.

Both Russia and Ukraine have accused

each other of violating the deal.

Asked by a journalist whether Russia understood that it was being "deceived" over the Minsk accords, spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "Over time, of course, it became obvious.

"And, again, President Putin and our other representatives constantly kept saying this," the TASS news agency quoted Peskov as saying. "But this was all ignored by the other participants of the negotiation process.

"This is all precisely the precursor to the special military operation."

Putin was asked on Friday about remarks by former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, one of the agreements'

sponsors, who told the Zeit magazine in an interview published on Wednesday that the 2014 agreement had been "an attempt to give Ukraine time" - which it had used to become more able to defend itself.

Russian media and politicians have quickly construed this as a betrayal on Merkel's part.

Peskov said Europe is simply switching from dependency on Russian gas to dependency on liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the United States.

European Union countries held emergency negotiations on Saturday as they attempt to line up a deal to cap prices at a Dec. 13 meeting of their energy ministers, but states remain split over the plan.

Case records go missing from court

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of various cases at the storeroom during court hours, and would provide copies of the documents to different people for money.

"When I brought the matter up with Rasel, he became very agitated. On January 30, he threatened me and court staffer Johurul Islam, saying that he could even have our pension benefits cancelled," he said in the letter.

Along with the letter, he furnished several court documents detailing various allegations made against Rasel in the past and the warnings he received from lower court judges.

Talking to The Daily Star recently, Ashek alleged that Rasel threatened him a second time on June 21 on the court premises with dire consequences, saying that he was on good terms with the drivers of distinguished personalities in the judiciary and ministries.

Rasel dismissed the allegations. "I am a driver of the judges. I am the custodian of the court's car, not case records. The bench assistants

and peons are the custodian of the records," he said.

Khurshid Alam Khan, an eminent criminal lawyer, said the alleged incident would have serious impact on the cases in question.

It is also a "grave message" for the judiciary, he said, adding that those involved should be taken to task.

"The court is our custodian. If records disappear from the court, people will lose faith in it," said Mohammad Shaheenoor Islam, also a criminal lawyer.

Supreme Court Registrar General Md Golam Rabbani said last month, "We are looking into the matter."

In September, when he was the registrar of the HC, Rabbani said, "I know that the court concerned will take action in this regard."

THE 4 CASES

In September 2001, the Department of Narcotics Control arrested a man named Harun-Or-Rashid from the capital's Gendaria for allegedly carrying 10 grams of heroin. The department pressed charges against him in January next

year.

In March 2011, police arrested Rabeya Begum and Meherun Nesa from Mirpur's Darus Salam area for "possessing" 12 bottles of Phensedyl. They were charged later that month.

In January 2013, police held one Abu Taher Liton from the capital's Pallabi for "possessing" 10 bottles of Phensedyl. Pallabi police pressed charges against him the next month.

In May 2015, police arrested Shipon and Mohammad Jewel from Jatrabari's Dolaipar area and "recovered" 150 ampoules of pethidine injection from their possession. The same month, Jatrabari police pressed charges against them.

All accused are out on bail.

The first three cases carry jail sentences between two and 10 years, while the last carries up to death penalty.

Dhaka's Special Judge's Court-2 was scheduled to hear the cases on different dates in January and April this year, but that did not happen as the documents went missing.

BNP MPs tender their resignations

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issued a gazette notification declaring the seats of six BNP MPs vacant.

The seat of Harunur Rashid, however, was not declared vacant as his resignation letter was not accepted.

The JS secretariat could not be sure whether the signature in Harun's resignation letter was by him.

"He'll have to sign the letter by himself and send it again," Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury told reporters at her parliament office yesterday after receiving the resignation letters.

According to the constitution, their [the other six] seats in parliament are now vacant.

Rumeen, on her way out of the Speaker's office, said they submitted their resignations to press home the demand for the dissolution of parliament.

"This is just the beginning. Now the other MPs from different political parties who support democracy should also come forward and resign.

"We had a cordial discussion with the Speaker after the submission of the resignations. We have cordial relations with her as we had worked together for three and a half years."

Rumeen added, "The Speaker was surprised and asked us why we are resigning from parliament. She, however, knows she cannot request us to stay, so she did not."

She further said the BNP's anti-government movement will gain momentum following the resignations.

Golam Mohammad Siraj said the BNP came to parliament as per the party's strategy.

"And now we have resigned from parliament at the right time and as per the party's decision."

Appreciating Shirin Sharmin's conduct, he said, "The Speaker's politeness, knowledge and decency is praiseworthy. We felt good submitting our resignations to such a person."

In the resignation letters, the BNP MPs said dictatorship is currently taking over Bangladesh.

The party MPs, in each of their letters, separately mentioned the government's "anti-democracy and anti-people activities; suppression of the opposition political figures; mass arrests; enforced disappearances and killings; and muzzling of freedom of speech, and voting and human rights; and ineffectiveness of parliament.

Reading her resignation letter to the reporters, Rumeen said, "I agree with the public demand for the abolition of this parliament by resigning from as a member of this parliament, which has taken a stand against the public interest, and I voluntarily express solidarity with the party's decision.

"With good health, a sound mind, and without the instigation of others, after deep thought and consideration, I resign from parliament today on December 10, 2022."

Meanwhile, Election Commissioner Md Alamgir yesterday said elections to the seats left vacant will be held within 90 days from the issuance of the gazette as per the constitution.

Meanwhile, Obaidul Quader, Awami League general secretary and road, transport and bridges minister, at a Manikganj AL rally yesterday, said the resignation of the five BNP MPs is nothing but "a drop in the ocean".

He said such an action does not matter to parliament.

"The BNP MPs have made a mistake and those who suggested taking this course of action will soon regret it," he added.

Hasina won't bow to any external pressure

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Shahriar said the AL was the party that led the birth of this nation and has the glorious history of struggle against authoritarian regimes of Pakistan and later Bangladesh.

The source of the government's power is the people, who will determine who will rule this nation, he said.

"Neither any external power nor any internal conspiracy will be able to determine this," he said.

"We will never give up our fight to protect democracy, human dignity and fundamental freedom on this soil. I would call upon the foreign missions concerned in Dhaka to abide by diplomatic norms and etiquette that they themselves expect from foreign missions in their country to practise.

"The government is patient and cordial to our foreign guests and is sincerely willing to maintain friendly relations with all nations, but we do have some red lines."

Shahriar said globally, human rights agenda continues to remain

the most neglected, largely due to the impasse created by the politicisation of the human rights agenda by a handful of countries.

"Developing countries like Bangladesh are being the target of undue pressure by a handful of countries from the North," he said. Shahriar said that out of the 76 cases of so-called "Enforced Disappearances" communicated to Bangladesh by the UN Working Group, one case is as old as 28 years while 10 people have reappeared.

Of the remaining 66, police found that 28 had cases filed against them, including murder cases, and they have been absconding.

Out of the rest 38, police did not receive any feedback from the relatives of 10. The remaining 28 cases are under investigation, he said, stressing that UN needs to do its own analysis before accepting allegations from "politically motivated NGOs".

Law Minister Anisul Huq said Bangladesh was born after a genocide.

Five years into the independence, the Father of the Nation and his family members were assassinated. Indemnity bill was passed so that the killers could not be tried.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who faced sheer injustice, is therefore determined to uphold human rights and justice.

Bangladesh Nari Progoti Sangha Executive Director Rokeya Kabir reminded that the fanatic forces that worked against Bangladesh's independence should not be allowed in Bangladesh's politics.

She reminded all political parties not to use religion in politics, which takes women's freedom and democracy backwards.

Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs Director Prof Mizanur Rahman, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Kamal Uddin Ahmed and former Bangladesh permanent representative to the UN in Geneva Abdul Hannan also spoke at the event.

BNP believes rallies proved its strength

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the obstacles put forth by the ruling party and the government, he said, adding that Saturday's rally in the capital was the outcome of the previous rallies' success.

Senior leaders said they had been organising demonstrations at the grassroots to boost the morale of the activists, and the first round of the programmes came to an end with the Dhaka rally.

The party now wants to carry the momentum forward and focus on ousting the government, sources said.

The BNP will organise processions across the country on December 24. The like-minded political parties will hold similar programmes simultaneously.

"From now on, all the programmes will be finalised after discussions with the like-minded parties. A liaison committee will be formed with the representation of all the parties to coordinate," said a senior leader, wishing not to be named.

The BNP's just-concluded series of rallies began in Chattogram on October 12, after which nine other rallies were held in different places.

The last event in Dhaka stirred the political landscape. It came at the cost of a life and imprisonment of hundreds, including BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

The party leaders are now discussing the rallies and the outcomes among themselves.

Standing Committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said, "The involvement of common people was noticeable in the rallies. A movement gets success when the people participate."

Locally and internationally, people realised that the BNP's programmes were peaceful and for the people.

Transport strikes, attacks on the activists, and mobile internet restrictions were inevitable during the rallies, said other leaders.

The mass gatherings created a movement-oriented mentality among the activists, they added.

The top BNP leadership believes that the morale and commitment of the activists has been boosted and those who thought the BNP was in a leadership crisis are now praising its leaders.

BNP Vice-Chairman Mohammad Shahjahan, said, "Many of the senior leaders are in jail. The movement would be unaffected if even more senior leaders got arrested. The leaders and activists from the grassroots will make the programmes a success under the leadership of acting chairman Tarique Rahman."

BNP leaders said that the rallies have created a momentum, and now it is a challenge for the party to carry

it until the demand for election under a non-partisan interim government is met.

Resignation of the BNP lawmakers from parliament was also a key to mount pressure on the government because this parliament turned into a "parliament of the ruling party and its like-minded parties."

"We have to be cautious so that none of our leaders fall into the trap laid by the government. We should not make any decision on whim and affect the momentum," Standing Committee member Goyeshwar Chandra Roy said.

More Iranians at imminent risk of execution: rights groups

AFP, Paris

Several Iranians were at risk of imminent execution over protests that have rocked the country's clerical regime, rights groups warned yesterday, after an international backlash over Iran's first hanging linked to the movement.

The almost three-month protest movement was sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini, who had been arrested by the Islamic republic's morality police.

Casino kingpin Samrat gets bail extension

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday extended the bail of expelled Jubo League leader Ismail Hossain Chowdhury Samrat till January 30, 2023, in a case filed over laundering Tk 222 crore.

Judge Al Asad Md Asifuzzaman of the Special Judge's Court-6 passed the order after Samrat's lawyer Afroza Shahanaj Parvin Hira submitted an application seeking extension of bail.

Samrat, a "kingpin" of illegal casino business in the capital, was present at the court during yesterday's hearing.

The lawyer filed another petition, seeking an adjournment of charge framing hearing as she could not scrutinise all the documents seized by the investigation officer of the case.

On August 22, the same court granted ad-interim bail to Samrat considering his health condition.

Army man killed in Joypurhat road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

An army man was killed in a road accident near Akkelpur Upazila Parishad Complex in Joypurhat yesterday.

Naich Hossain, 30, of the upazila's Mohitur village, was first hit by a motorcycle and then run over by a speedy bus, said police.

He came home on leave for celebrating his newborn's naming ceremony, said family members, adding that he was posted in Khagrachhari.

The victim went to Akkelpur town to purchase necessary items for the celebration, they added.

Naich died on the spot.

Abu Bakkar Siddique, officer-in-charge of Akkelpur Police Station, said they sent the body to Joypurhat Modern Hospital for autopsy.

A case was filed in this connection.

Three new SC judges felicitated

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Attorney General's Office and the Supreme Court Bar Association congratulated three newly appointed apex court judges yesterday.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin and SCBA President Md Momtaz Uddin Fakir accorded the felicitations to Justice Md Ashfaul Islam, Justice Md Abu Zafor Siddique and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim at the chief justice's room on the SC premises.

Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique presided over the function where other judges of the Appellate Division of the SC were present.

Justice Muhammad Imman Ali, the senior-most judge of the Appellate Division, was not present there as he was on leave.