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RMG export to Asian markets promising



Black boxes found at Nepal plane crash site



'I discovered a new Badhan in Gutti'



A library that welcomes no reader

Decision on the IMF loan January 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's \$4.5 billion loan programme with the International Monetary Fund is expected to get the final approval on January 30, said the lender's visiting top official yesterday.

"In our discussion, we focused on the key elements of this programme, including the longstanding challenges of raising tax revenues, and building a more efficient financial sector," said Antoinette Monsio Sayeh, the deputy managing director of IMF, in a press statement following her meeting yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The government has agreed to time-bound conditions, including some key structural reforms stalled for years, for the 42-month programme in the staff-level agreement reached so far.

"Reforms in these areas, combined with measures to facilitate private investments and export diversification will help create conditions to make Bangladesh's economy more resilient and support long-term, inclusive



A motorcycle in flames after being torched by agitating BNP men in Chattogram city's Kazir Dewri area yesterday afternoon. The opposition activists clashed with police in front of the BNP office there during a protest to press home the party's 10-point demand.

PHOTO: FM MIZANUR RAHMAN

US to focus on polls atmosphere

Lu says in interview with *Star*; there were no fresh sanctions as Rab made progress; labour rights ensured will mean GSP reinstated

There was a lot of interest in US Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Donald Lu's visit to Dhaka. Before leaving early yesterday, he held a series of meetings with the top ministers, labour rights, and civil society leaders. What were the discussions and outcomes? Lu shared with Porimol Palma in detail.

TDS: After landing, you directly went to the foreign minister's home and met him over dinner. What did you discuss?

Lu: I was really honoured to be welcomed by the foreign minister right off of the aeroplane. It was a very frank discussion. We all agreed that we could work a little harder to prevent misperceptions on both sides, but work harder to focus on the future of our relationship. There's a lot that we're doing. Trade, investment, security, climate change. We have a lot of hard work going forward. I was very clear the US is going to continue to value democracy and human rights in this country. That it's important that when friends have concerns or questions that we're raising. But I think we can do that in a friendly environment. I certainly see on the part of the minister a desire to make this a constructive relationship.

TDS: In Washington, you had expressed concerns over the security of your ambassador over an incident on December 14 in Dhaka. Did you raise that issue in Dhaka? Has the issue been settled?

Lu: I have to say, we take very seriously the security of your Bangladeshi diplomats in the US. We spend a lot of time making sure that they are safe and well taken care of. We expect the same from the government of Bangladesh. I was given assurances from everyone we met, including the home minister, that they are very focused on the security of our team.

TDS: There was a rumour that more sanctions were coming. Is it so?

Lu: I hope not. Normally, we impose sanctions on the anniversary [December 10]. We would have designated more individuals from the Rab to face

AL activists keep a tight grip on the streets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the BNP staged a rally in front of its Nayapaltan central office, ruling Awami League stayed on Dhaka streets throughout the day yesterday and held programmes at five points.

The BNP organised a countrywide demonstration to press home its 10-point demand, including election under a non-partisan interim government, and to protest the price hike of electricity.

Even though AL leaders claimed that their programmes, including rallies and discussions, were not to counter the BNP's rally, party insiders said these were counter programmes.

At the events, the AL leaders hinted at tackling the opposition on the streets and asked the BNP to join the next national election.

The AL's first programme of the day was a discussion organised by Dhaka city (south) unit AL in front of the party's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue where AL leaders claimed that the streets were under their control and they would be in future.

They also urged all activists to remain on the

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BNP'S PROTEST PROGRAMMES 30 hurt in Ctg clash, peaceful elsewhere

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 30 people, including 20 cops, were injured in clashes between police and BNP leaders and activists during the opposition party's demonstration in Chattogram city's Kazir Dewri area yesterday afternoon.

During the violence, BNP men set a motorbike on fire, and vandalised a traffic police box, a police service centre, a media car, and some shops in the area.

Police fired rubber bullets and teargas shells to disperse the demonstrators.

Chattogram city BNP organised the protest as part of the party's countrywide demonstrations demanding the government meet its 10-point demand, including election under a non-party interim government, and protesting the recent price hike of electricity.

Although there was violence in the port city, the opposition party's protest in the capital was peaceful.

The BNP from its rally in Dhaka announced that it would hold protest rallies in all cities and district headquarters on January 25 to press home the 10-point demand.

Witnesses and police said BNP leaders and activists from different wards of Chattogram city thronged Nur Ahmed Sarak in front of Nasiman Bhaban since yesterday noon.

Police blocked one side of the road leading to BNP office from Kazir Dewri to enable traffic to continue moving.

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"We don't want any bail-out. This programme of ours is not a bail-out but a preemptive measure."
PM Sheikh Hasina

"I welcome Bangladesh's comprehensive set of measures to deal with [the impact of global shocks]."
IMF DMD Antoinette Monsio Sayeh

and sustainable growth," she said.

Raising the tax-GDP ratio, implementing the VAT law, setting up an asset management company to dispose of soured loans, bringing down the banking sector's default loans to within 10 percent and raising the capital adequacy ratio to the BASEL 3 requirement of 12.5 percent, are among the reforms agreed upon.

Periodically adjusting the fuel price, implementing the climate-related proposals made in the budget and at various international conferences and increasing remittance receipts through formal channels are also on the task list.

Increasing social spending and better targeted social safety net programmes, increased exchange rate flexibility, developing the capital and bond market, expanding and diversifying exports and modernising the monetary policy framework are the other agreed reforms.

The government has already started implementing some of the reforms such as raising the fuel and power prices and the central bank is aiming to move towards a market-based, flexible and unified exchange rate regime (within a 2 percent variation) by the end of this fiscal year.

Earlier on Sunday, Sayeh, who is in Bangladesh on a four-day tour as part of her four-country trip to Asia, met with Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal and Bangladesh Bank Governor Abdul Rouf Talukder.

She expressed satisfaction with the initiatives taken by the government and the central bank to deal with the ongoing crisis, said a press release from the finance ministry after she met with Kamal.

"Just like countries around the world, Bangladesh is now dealing with the impact of global shocks -- first from the pandemic and then from the ongoing war in Ukraine.

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Students of Vigarunnisa Noon School and College, along with their guardians, have been struggling to get to school for over a week, as at least half a kilometer of the road in front of it has been dug up by the Dhaka Power Distribution Company to lay underground electric cables. The photo was taken in the capital's Bailey Road yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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বাস টার্মিনালের বাহিরে আন্তঃজেলা কাউন্টার পরিচালনা বন্ধকরণ প্রসঙ্গে
গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

সম্প্রতি লক্ষ্য করা যাচ্ছে যে, ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশনের আওতাধীন বাস টার্মিনালের নির্ধারিত স্থানের বাহিরে আবাসিক/বানিজ্যিক এলাকায় আন্তঃজেলা বাস কাউন্টার স্থাপন করা হয়েছে। ফলশ্রুতিতে নির্দিষ্ট স্থান ব্যতীত যত্রতত্র পार्কিং করা সহ যানচট সৃষ্টি, পরিবহন খাতে বিশৃঙ্খলা এবং জনদুর্ভোগ তৈরি হচ্ছে।

সে প্রেক্ষিতে ঢাকা মহানগরীতে গণপরিবহনে শৃঙ্খলা আনয়ন এবং যানজট নিরসনে Bus Route Rationalization ও কোম্পানীর মাধ্যমে বাস পরিচালনা পদ্ধতি প্রবর্তন এবং এ সংক্রান্ত কার্যক্রম সমন্বয় কমিটির গত ২২ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২২ খ্রিষ্টাব্দের ২৫তম সভার কার্যবিবরণীর গ(১)এ "আগামী এপ্রিল, ২০২৩ হতে ঢাকা মহানগরীতে বাস টার্মিনাল ব্যতীত অন্য কোন স্থানে আন্তঃজেলা বাসের কোন কাউন্টার থাকবেনা" সিদ্ধান্ত গৃহীত হয়।

এমতাবস্থায়, উক্ত সভার সিদ্ধান্ত অনুযায়ী ১লা এপ্রিল, ২০২৩ এর পূর্বেই বাস টার্মিনালের বাহিরে সকল আন্তঃজেলা বাসের কাউন্টারসমূহের কার্যক্রম বন্ধ করে সংশ্লিষ্ট বাস টার্মিনালে স্থানান্তরের অনুরোধ করা হলো। অন্যথায় সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠান/পরিবহনের বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

আদেশক্রমে
ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন