

Govt to sell or lease some Beximco units

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Shafiquzzaman told this newspaper over the phone.

The secretary said that currently more than 70,000 employees are employed in different companies of the group. They include more than 40,000 in the group's textile and garment section.

The Beximco Group has a lot of loans with the banks, including Tk 23,000 crore with Janata Bank, Shafiquzzaman said. He could not immediately specify the amount of Beximco's defaulted loans with the banks and other financial institutions.

The advisory committee on Beximco will hold its second meeting on December 11. Government agencies like BIDA and BSEC will present the current situation and possible ways out there, he said.

The first meeting of the

committee headed by Labour and Employment Adviser M Sakhawat Hussain was held on November 11. Several other advisers of the interim government also attended the meeting.

Among the 169 companies of the troubled conglomerate, Beximco Pharmaceuticals, which falls under category A, is a profitable unit. The handover of the shares of the company can be postponed in case of legal challenges, according to the minutes of the first meeting of the committee.

As many as 32 Beximco companies, half of them mainly textile and garment units currently in operation, are of category B. The rest of the group's companies fall under category C.

The committee suggested that the ownership of the B category companies of the group can be

sold out to international standard operators to pay the loans of Janata Bank and IFIC Bank, according to the meeting minutes.

The companies under C category can be closed down after paying the due salaries and allowances, the advisory committee suggested in the meeting.

The meeting also decided that the Janata Bank will arrange three months' salaries for the workers of the companies housed inside Beximco Industrial Park, the meeting document shows.

Earlier, the government committed to lending Tk 60 crore to Beximco from the national budget in a bid to help it clear wages for the month of October.

The labour and employment ministry will provide Tk 10 crore while the finance ministry will fund the rest.

Return to Dhaka

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"They were asked to return to Dhaka for consultations on the recent attacks and demonstrations in India," he added.

Protesters burnt Bangladesh's national flag during a demonstration outside the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata on November 28, drawing condemnation from the interim government.

After the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala came under attack by members of a Hindu group on December 2, the Bangladesh foreign ministry summoned Indian High Commissioner to Dhaka Pranay Verma to hand a protest note. The Agartala mission also suspended visa and consular services after the attack.

The developments came ahead of the Bangladesh-India Foreign Office Consultation which is expected to start in Dhaka on December 9 or 10. This will be the first high level meeting between the two countries since the fall of the Awami League regime in August.

He alleged that some officials from the civil administration and security agencies engaged in corrupt practices, including taking bribes and influencing the selection of candidates.

"I may not have concrete proof, but I will share all my experiences with the reform commission," he added.

Inflation hits

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The injection of the huge volume of high powered money into the economy may fuel inflation.

"The BB is taking a one-sided approach to handling inflation -- we need a multi-pronged approach."

He suggested taking fiscal measures and managing the domestic market alongside tightening the monetary policy.

Raihan suggested forming a common platform including policymakers like the BB, NBR, commerce ministry and the Bangladesh Competition Commission to handle the issue.

"All of them should work in a coordinated way where they can easily share their information," he added.

2 key accused

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profession, was taken to Kotwali Police Station in Chattogram yesterday evening.

In the afternoon, police in Anwara upazila of Chattogram arrested another suspect named Riton Das, said Shakila Solana, deputy commissioner (south) at Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

Riton was also seen in the video, wearing a red helmet, blue T-shirt and carrying a sharp weapon.

He is a resident of the port city's Harish Chandra Lane, she said.

So far, 11 suspects have been arrested over the murder.

On November 26, a Chattogram court sent former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmacari to jail. His followers then engaged in a clash with police and lawyers. Saiful was hacked to death at the time.

Chinmoy, also spokesperson of the Sammilito Sanatoni Jagor Joni, faces charges of sedition.

Chennai cops

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In Dibrugarh, Hindu Kranti Dal members on Wednesday protested against the alleged atrocities on the Hindus and the arrest of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das.

Prakash Rai, state president of Hindu Kranti Dal, urged the Indian government to intervene and protect the Hindu community in Bangladesh.

Demonstrations were also reported in Agartala and Hyderabad.

Over 3,000 protesters took to the streets of Jharsuguda in Chhattisgarh on Wednesday. The Jharsuguda Hindu Suraksha Samiti led the protest.

Addressing a rally in Kolkata, senior West Bengal BJP leader Suvenu Adhikari yesterday said there should be a trade embargo on Bangladesh if the attacks on Hindus did not cease there.

The Indian economy does not depend on Bangladesh, he said. "We export onions, potatoes, vegetables and eggs to you. India also supplies machinery for ships, boats and ferries."

So far, 88 journalists have been given this award and of them, seven were women.

Talaash, a programme of

We need accurate info

FROM PAGE 1
He met student leaders on Tuesday evening and spoke to major political parties on Wednesday.

After yesterday's dialogue, Monk Sunanda Priyo, general secretary of Bangladesh Buddhist Federation, said, "We are living well in Bangladesh and have no problems. We highlighted the issues we face. What the [Indian] media says or does is their problem, not ours. What we broadcast is more important. We should highlight the positive aspects of our country."

Prof Sukomal Barua, chief adviser to the Bangladesh Buddhist Federation, proposed holding an international conference where people of all religions, ethnicities, and communities will participate.

"Diplomatic missions in Dhaka should witness our commitment to peace and harmony. Let the world know that Bangladesh is a nation of unity and harmony," he said.

Abinash Mitra, assistant secretary (religion) at Ramna Harichand Temple, said the chief adviser listened to the grievances of his people.

He said those creating divisions are using the propaganda from India. The priest urged the media to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

If there is repression anywhere in the country, it needs to be brought forth to prevent chaos, he said.

Father Albert Rosario of St Mary's Cathedral said if there were any legal avenues, the bail of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das may be considered. "Obtaining bail is the right of all individuals."

There has been provocation by the Indian media after the murder of a lawyer in Chattogram, he said.

"But we have shown patience and upheld harmony. We have all expressed solidarity with political leaders during this difficult time, and we must remain united. Hindus are in pain and agony after the arrest of the ISKCON leader. We told the chief adviser that the grievances of the Hindus must be addressed. We also

suggested that the chief adviser meet the aggrieved Hindus who were not present [at the meeting], as they are in distress," he said.

He proposed organising a dialogue to show the world that Bangladesh is a country of religious harmony.

Sajedur Rahman, general secretary of Hefajat-e-Islam, said, "Several non-Muslim brothers have said that there is no persecution of minorities in Bangladesh. The country enjoys communal harmony, unlike neighbouring countries. Even after the killing of Muslims in Chittagong and Faridpur, there have been no riots or unrest. We are united in the country's interest. We will stand firmly against anyone conspiring against the country."

Sheikh Ahmadullah, chairman of the As-Sunnah Foundation, said the country's ulema and religious leaders are responsible individuals.

"Even after the murder of lawyer Saiful, Muslims have shown patience and restraint due to this sense of responsibility ... We [people of all religions] are united, and there is no division among us ... We conveyed this message."

Priest Khamal Johnson Mree of the Garo community said, "We will resist media outlets spreading propaganda. We support this government."

Sister Reva Veronica D'Costa, student counsellor of St Francis Xavier School and College in Old Dhaka's Laxmibazar, said religious leaders are united in their desire for a harmonious country.

"The media must ensure that no false or misleading news is broadcast. The youth should live disciplined and patient lives, ensuring their dignity is not compromised."

Mahfuj Alam, an adviser to the interim government, told reporters that the religious groups had extended unanimous support for the government.

India must recognise that the Hasina-led government has committed mass killings, he said.

"Whenever we get the opportunity,

we tell India that the coordinated misinformation campaign by the Indian media about Bangladesh must be curbed. It poses a threat to the friendly relations between both countries," he said.

At the discussion with the religious groups, he said, "We sought to convey a message to both supporters and detractors of Bangladesh that the people of this country have reached an understanding from a communal standpoint. The government, formed through the July-August uprising, will work proactively to counter any conspiracies."

The government will not tolerate reckless behaviour, and would focus on building a national consensus. "If we can unite -- politically and through communal harmony -- no propaganda from abroad will hinder our progress."

Regarding repression on minorities, he said, "Saying it doesn't exist at all would be untrue. When it happens, the media should report the measures the government takes to address it. For instance, after the Sunamganj incident, we took swift action. These efforts should be publicised to assure minority groups that this country belongs to everyone."

"Prof Yunus emphasised that harmony must go hand-in-hand with a sense of security. Citizens should feel free and fearless, and harmony should come naturally, not as a reaction to crises. It shouldn't seem like we only engage with Hindu and Buddhist communities during difficult times."

The interim government urged the religious groups to stand as a unified political community. "This unity will demonstrate our strength to the world and uphold the spirit of the July uprising."

He urged the media to ensure accurate, fact-checked reporting on incidents, so that the government could take necessary action.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam also spoke.

No arrests sans proper probe

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He expressed confidence that the Police Reform Commission will make firm recommendations to ensure "political authorities" do not misuse the police for their own agendas.

The IGP also pointed out that certain groups were exploiting the situation to make profits, and deceive and extort money from innocent people.

Barahul urged all not to fall for such deceit. He assured that the innocents will not be named in the charge sheets of the cases.

He acknowledged misconduct by some police officers during the July uprising, saying they had acted unlawfully under orders from the previous authoritarian regime.

ICT slaps ban

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speeches and leaked phone conversations of Hasina that were published on social and electronic media, he said the victims and witnesses were threatened with some of the words used in these speeches and conversations.

"If speeches like these are published and broadcast, we won't be able to bring witnesses to the tribunal at the time of trials," the prosecutor added.

The prosecution submitted the plea to stop the publication of such hate speeches that may be made in the future, and to remove those already on our social and electronic media, he said.

Speaking to reporters outside the tribunal, the prosecutor said that the ICT heard the petition and relevant international and local laws on the matter before accepting it.

The ICT thereafter ordered relevant

authorities of the government to remove the hate speeches that have already been broadcast, and to make sure no such speech is broadcast in the future, said Prosecutor Tamim.

Prosecutor Abdullah Al Noman said, "We will ensure that the tribunal's order is communicated in writing to the relevant authorities of international platforms like Facebook, Twitter (now X), and YouTube."

Noman clarified that speeches made by Hasina that are circulating on social media now fall under the purview of the Rabat Plan of Action of the United Nations.

Any speech outside of that made by Hasina will not have any broadcasting restrictions.

The Rabat Plan of Action is a United Nations document that suggests a high threshold for defining restrictions on freedom of expression and incitement to hatred.

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Star journo wins TIB award

FROM PAGE 12
empire in Singapore worth at least about USD 1 billion without permission from Bangladesh Bank to invest or transfer any funds abroad.

Shariful Islam, chief reporter at Chattogram's Ekhusho Patrika, won in the local media category for the second consecutive time. This time he was awarded for his series on the health sector, which highlighted patients falling victim to the greed of medical professionals. Al-Amin Haque Ahon of Jamuna Television won the award in the television category for his report on irregularities in the Income Generating Activities programme for women.

Talaash, a programme of



Mourners pray over the body of a toddler who was killed from shrapnel following an Israeli strike in Gaza City, at Al-Ahli Arab hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

'Israel committing genocide in Gaza'

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military offensive on Gaza as Israeli officials vowed to crush the militant group.

The Hamas attack that sparked the war resulted in the deaths of 1,208 people in southern Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official data.

Since then at least 44,580 people have been killed in Gaza, mostly

civilians, according to the Hamas-run health ministry, deemed reliable by the UN.

Independent UN rights experts have accused Israel several times of genocide, and South Africa dragged the country to the UN's top court in December 2023 accusing Israel of "violating the genocide convention by promoting the destruction of Palestinians living in Gaza" in a case

which is still ongoing.

But Israeli officials have repeatedly and forcefully denied all such allegations, accusing Hamas of using civilians as human shields.

"The deplorable and fanatical organisation Amnesty International has once again produced a fabricated report that is entirely false and based on lies," Israel's foreign ministry said.

They also discussed contemporary issues, including the current political situation, the country's independence and sovereignty, the democratic environment and student union elections in educational institutions.

They said the students of Bangladesh stand united to protect the country's independence and sovereignty. Any attack on the nation's independence and sovereignty will be confronted by the students and people of this country, even at the cost of their lives, they said.

The student leaders condemned the attack on the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala, India. They said India has made every effort to politically sustain the fascist Sheikh Hasina regime.

However, failing in that endeavour, India has resorted to provocations, the student leaders said.

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They also said the government must ensure justice for the victims of the massacre during the July uprising, proper treatment for the injured, and rehabilitation of the families of the deceased.