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NEWS BRIEFS

Draft Environment Act '94 okayed

The cabinet yesterday approved the Draft Bill of the Protection of Environment Act-1994, an official handout said, reports BSS.

The approval was given at the weekly regular cabinet meeting held last night at Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

Probe body on CHT incident demanded

The Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) yesterday urged the government to constitute a probe body headed by a Supreme Court Judge to investigate the September 15 killings in Khagrachhari district, reports UNB.

Gano Forum public meet today

The Gano Forum will hold a public meeting at Purana Paltan square at 3:00 pm today. Dr Kamal Hossain, president of the forum, and other central leaders of the party will address the meeting, reports UNB.

Ravi Shankar to undergo surgery

MADRAS, Sept 19: Noted sitar maestro, Pandit Ravi Shankar, is to undergo surgery on September 23 to 'repair' a 'torn muscle' in his right shoulder, at a US hospital. The maestro suffered the injury last month, when he slipped and fell in the garden of his California home, according to Editor-in-Chief of 'Straits', Dr N Pattabhi Raman, who quoted a fax message he received from Ravi Shankar's wife, reports PTI.

PM offers dialogue with Opposition

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday formally offered dialogue with the Opposition towards solution of all issues vexing the nation, reports UNB.

Addressing the nation yesterday evening over radio and

television marking the third anniversary of restoration of parliamentary democracy, Begum Zia renewed her call to the Opposition to rise above all doubts and misgivings and return to Parliament for the greater interest of the country.

"I firmly believe there is enough scope for dialogue. I also believe that we shall be able to resolve all problems in Parliament after a dialogue with free minds," said the Prime Minister.

"For the greater interest of the nation and the country, let us rise above all doubts and misgivings, sit in Parliament and find out solution to all issues vexing our minds through discussions," she added.

Referring to the Opposition demand for a caretaker government for holding national polls, the Prime Minister said the majority party has no place in the framework of the caretaker government worked out by three opposition parties in Parliament.

"Although it is solely their demand, they are putting pressure on us to bring a Bill on it in Parliament. To achieve the objective, they continue to boycott Parliament and have embarked on siege and continuous hartal programmes."

"I leave it to the nation to judge how far the opposition programmes are helpful for democracy and development of the nation," Begum Zia added.

Reverting to the demand for a caretaker government, the Prime Minister said that the Deputy Leader of the House had discussions in phases with the opposition leaders. He had even written a letter to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for formal dialogue.

"I regretted that instead of coming to the dialogue, the Opposition had called for continuous hartals affecting the life and economy of the country."

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the nation over radio and TV last night on the third anniversary of the restoration of parliamentary democracy. — PID photo

For solution of political impasse Anyaoku made specific suggestions

By Staff Correspondent

Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Emeka Anyaoku said yesterday that he had placed specific proposals to the ruling party and the Opposition to help find out a solution to the current political impasse in Bangladesh.

"I have put specific proposals to them on how some of

press conference at the state guest house Padma.

The C'wealth Secretary General declined to disclose the proposals even when newsmen pointed out that unless those were stated publicly, there could be misgivings, once he had left.

Anyaoku said he would not divulge the proposals since those might be misunderstood.

Before meeting the press, he met the Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament for the second time. The press conference was delayed by an hour for this.

"It is fair, having put these proposals, to expect that they would need some time for reflections before announcing their positions," he said. "These would provide a way forward," he hoped.

He assured continued Commonwealth support for establishing a durable democratic structure in Bangladesh.

In reply to a question whether he came here to mediate between the two sides (ruling party and Opposition), Anyaoku said, "I came here to consult the leaders of Bangladesh on a variety of subjects of Commonwealth concern and the subjects relating to how C'wealth can better serve Bangladesh."

The C'wealth leader said his proposals were completely different from which had been reported in different newspapers.

He, however, declined to

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Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the present problems, indeed I would say the present political difficulties in this country, may be resolved," he said before his departure from Dhaka after a five-day official visit.

"I have had extensive talks with the Prime Minister ... the Leader of the Opposition ... and also with the Chief Election Commissioner and I believe there is good ground to hope a promising future of this country," Anyaoku told a crowded

Token strike by non-gazetted govt staff

By Staff Correspondent

Non-gazetted government employees observed a four-hour work abstention, to press home their charter of demands, yesterday forcing work at most government offices to a virtual standstill.

Several thousand government employees attended the scheduled rally during the work-stoppage between 9 am to 1 pm in front of the National Press Club.

The work abstention was called by the liaison committee of Sarkari Karmachari Samannaya Parishad and the Sarkari Karmachari Sanghati Parishad.

Speakers at the rally announced a fresh work abstention for four hours from 9 am

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Doctors begin strike tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Members of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) will go on an indefinite strike from tomorrow to press for implementation of the BMA's accord with the government and in demand of reinstating 12 doctors, suspended earlier from the Tongi and Gazipur hospitals.

However, the BMA members would perform their duties at the emergency departments, attend serious patients admitted earlier and open alternative out-doors at the hospitals and health complexes across the country, BMA sources said.

1000 political activists held in Saudi Arabia

NICOSIA, Sept 19: Saudi authorities in a military-style crackdown have arrested more than 1,000 political activists, including clerics and university professors, an Islamic Human Rights group said, reports AFP.

Most arrests took place in Buraydah, 300 kilometres northwest of Riyadh, which is held by tens of thousands of soldiers and armoured vehicles, the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights said.

The London-based CDLR said in a statement to AFP late

Sunday that dozens of clerics and professors were among those arrested, including Sefr Al-Hawwail, a professor at the Religious University in Mecca.

Also arrested were Mohsen Al-Awaji, a professor in the Agronomy department at King Saud University in the Saudi capital Riyadh, as well as Sheikh Abdallah Al-Jalali, Ayedh Al-Gurni and Sultan Al-Khamis, the statement said.

It said security forces on Saturday raided and arrested all the occupants of several homes, including that of Sheikh Salman Al-Awada — a

religious leader recently arrested in Buraydah and whose release the CDLR has demanded.

During Friday prayers security forces raided several mosques in Buraydah, the committee said, adding that "two clashes took place between the forces and worshippers."

Saudi authorities banned the committee several days after it was formed in May 1993 with the goal of fighting "oppression and injustice" and since then it has organised activities from London.

Nothing new in speech: Opposition

The Opposition showed a lukewarm response to the Prime Minister's latest appeal to them for returning to Parliament and resolving the issues relating to free and fair election through discussion and dialogue, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister made the appeal in her address to the nation yesterday evening marking the 3rd anniversary of restoration of parliamentary democracy in the country.

Giving instant reactions to UNB, the Opposition said that there was no new element in the Prime Minister's nationwide speech and said that it would not change their stand on a neutral caretaker government for holding election.

Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman said, "The Prime Minister in her

One killed, 6 hurt in Tangail police firing

TANGAIL, Sept 19: One person died and at least six others injured when police opened fire on an unruly processionists at Gopalpur thana headquarters today, local official sources said, reports BSS.

According to the sources, Awami League, Jatiya Party and Gano Forum called hartal at Gopalpur in protest against the result of September 17 Gopalpur Pourashava polls. The activists of these political parties today brought out processions.

At about 11:30 am the demonstrators became unruly and the police had to open fire to bring the situation under control, the sources said.

As a result, Shaheen, 30, a local shopkeeper died on the spot while six other received injuries.

Junta to quit by Oct 15

Haiti invasion averted

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Sept 19: Former US President Jimmy Carter pulled off a diplomatic triumph here Sunday night, persuading Haiti's ruling military junta to step down and turning back the first wave of a massive US invasion, reports Reuter.

Carter flew home late Sunday after getting military leader Raoul Cedras to agree to a peace pact in Port-Au-Prince, President Clinton confirmed in a televised address.

American troops meanwhile reached Haiti peacefully Monday to ensure order.

Ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide will return to power after the military rulers have departed by October 15, as called for in the agreement.

"The military leaders of Haiti have agreed to step down from power," Clinton said in the five-minute speech.

"The dictators have recognised it is in their best interests and in the best interests of the Haitian people to relinquish power peacefully," Clinton said.

The accord was hammered out in a final six-hour session

Sunday between the Carter-led mission and Lieutenant General Cedras at military headquarters in the capital after three previous rounds of inconclusive talks which began Saturday.

It calls for the retirement of "certain military officers ... when a general amnesty will be voted into law by the Haitian parliament or October 15, 1994 whichever is earlier."

After talks with Cedras and his Chief of Staff, General Philippe Biamby, the US team drove a short distance to the National Palace, where they saw Jonassaint. Carter and his team drove from there to the airport, then headed back to the United States.

The third junta member, Port-au-Prince's shadowy police chief Colonel Michel Francois, did not attend the talks.

The three-man junta led by Cedras has run the impoverished Caribbean country since Aristide was ousted in a coup in 1991.

Shortly before midnight, military-installed president Emile Jonassaint went on television to explain that he signed the agreement to avoid an invasion-related bloodbath.

Speaking in French the 81-former Supreme Court Justice said he took the decision after learning that more than 61 warplanes and 20 or so warships were ready to come and wipe us out."

After thinking it over, with the support of the high command of the Haitian armed forces I thought, no, we couldn't let the annihilation of Haiti happen without any reason, hence we signed the accord," he said, as translated by a television interpreter.

Seeking to calm Haitians, he added: "You may sleep

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US President Bill Clinton speaks from the Oval Office to former US President Jimmy Carter in Haiti Sunday. — AFP photo

Pakistan's premier bank takes root in Bangladesh



MCB started operations from Dhaka in 1948. Thus having old ties with Bangladesh. Since its formation more than 47 years ago, MCB has grown from a small domestic bank to a financially sound international bank. While MCB is the second oldest bank in Pakistan, it also holds the distinction of being the largest bank in the private sector in Pakistan, with around 1,300 branches within Pakistan. MCB's international operations extend to representative offices in Beijing and London including a branch in Colombo. The bank also has strong correspondent relationships with over 400 international banks across the globe.

In April 1991, MCB was privatized and since then there has been no turning back for the bank. It has grown from strength to strength. Improving its facilities. Introducing new and innovative products. And changing the entire outlook of the bank and its employees. As a result, MCB has established a record growth of 300% in deposits and assets within a short period of three years. In fact, assets stood at over US\$ 3 billion on December 31, 1993.

MCB is amongst the top 200 banks in Asia (Financial Times magazine October 1993).

From September 21, 1994, MCB begins banking operations at Dhaka. We are proud to be opening our doors to offer all our Bangladesh brothers a range of dynamic and efficient banking services in areas of retail and commercial banking, trade and investment, joint ventures, mergers, acquisitions and privatisation facilities.



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