

Dhaka to seek more access to US market

The Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, is expected to meet US leaders to seek their support toward increasing US investments in Bangladesh and greater access for its products to the American market, reports BSS.

The Foreign Minister, now in New York to attend the UN General Assembly session, arrived in Washington yesterday at the invitation of the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee for Asia and Pacific Affairs of the US House of Representatives, Congressman Gary Ackerman.

Ackerman will hold a reception in honour of the Bangladesh Foreign Minister at the Capitol building during which Mostafiz will have a round of discussions with the members of the House Committee of Foreign Affairs.

The Foreign Minister's meetings with the US leaders are expected to contribute to strengthening of existing cordial and warm bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Mostafiz is expected to seek

4 banks asked to give loans to drought-hit farmers

The Bangladesh Bank has directed four banks to provide special credit to the farmers affected by drought in the country's northern region to help them recoup losses, reports UNB.

According to a press release of the central bank, issued in Dhaka yesterday, the Sonali Bank, Janata Bank, Agrani Bank, and especially the Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank were advised to start the credit programme immediately.

A drought-affected loanee can now be given fresh credit after rescheduling his previous loan borrowed under the agricultural credit programme for the fiscal 1994-95 for Aman paddy (local and HYV).

But the branches of the banks concerned will examine the feasibility of Aman cultivation before sanctioning new loan, the press release said.

Besides, fresh credits may be sanctioned for other crops cultivable in the drought-hit areas.

A bank can also channel crop loan to farmers who borrowed for pumps, bullock and pisciculture but defaulted maximum two instalments. The banks can lend fresh amount rescheduling both the instalments, and the loan borrowed earlier to be repaid within maximum one year.

All transactions relating to disbursement and recovery of agricultural credit should be completed through the Agricultural Credit Pass Book.

The banks have also been

Plague in Calcutta

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have no access to medicine or doctors.

Many of the people who fled Surat last week went to 160 miles south to Bombay, but the first cases of pneumonic fever outside Surat were reported today in New Delhi, 730 miles to the northeast.

Twenty people, most of them from Surat, have been admitted to the Infectious Diseases Hospital in New Delhi, and two of them tested positive for pneumonic plague, said Dr RC Panda.

At the capital's train and bus stations today loudspeakers were ordering arriving passengers with plague symptoms to report to doctors working there around the clock. Nearby police have been ordered to rush anyone with plague symptoms to the hospital. Although no such cases have been reported yet, hundreds of people were asking the doctors questions about the plague.

In West Bengal state, where Calcutta is the capital, the government issued a red alert tonight after seven of 17 patients admitted to hospitals in the state tested positive for pneumonic plague, United News of India reported.

Five of the plague patients were in a Calcutta hospital, 1,000 miles east of Surat, and one each in Malda and Midnapore districts outside the city, UNI said.

In Bombay, 10 suspected pneumonic plague patients were admitted to hospitals today, raising the total of 42, health officials said. But tests haven't found any cases of plague yet.

About 2,500 paramedical workers are conducting house-to-house surveys around Bombay—a city of 12.5 million people, more than half of whom in slums—looking for

people with plague symptoms. Health officials also have raided pharmacies hoarding or black marketing antibiotics that plague sufferers need.

Hospitals in Ahmedabad, the largest city in Gujarat, and the bordering states of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, also are examining several dozen patients with suspected plague. In states as far away as Tamil Nadu in southern India, authorities reportedly are killing rats and spraying homes with insecticide.

In Surat, a port city in western India, doctors and soldiers are searching filthy shantytowns for more plague victims and Guarding Civil Hospital to stop infections patients from fleeing.

But tension remains high in some areas of the city.

Hundreds of private doctors fled Surat, where 2 million people live, when the plague broke out. Five doctors and two nurses are recovering from the disease at Civil Hospital. On Monday, angry people ransacked the clinics of two doctors and burned furniture in the streets, police said. No injuries were reported.

At Civil Hospital, where most of the city's 400 plague patients are being treated, three people died today, more than died on Sunday or Monday. But doctors said they still believed that the number of people suffering from the disease in Surat was falling.

But nine of the 58 people admitted Monday arrived from villages outside the city, doctors said. And two of the patients who died at the hospital Sunday were from nearby rural areas.

"Surat is improving, but the situation appears to be getting worse outside the city, so we are rushing doctors and clinics out there," a city administrator said on condition of anonymity.

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Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina went to the Dhaka MC Hospital to see Abdul Aziz, vice-president of the city AL who was injured splinter injuries during yesterday's Opposition barricade programme. — Star photo

Opposition barricade disrupts life

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pur, Syedabad, Pagla, Gabtali, and Tongi. Police fired tear gas at Tongi where pickets tried to remove railway tracks.

Police also used batons and lobbed tear gas shells to disperse mobs engaged in putting up barricades on railway tracks at Ashuganj, Sylhet and Myemensingh.

Inter-district buses were off the roads and did not leave the terminals at Gabtali, Syedabad and Mohakhali in the city.

Normal life in the capital was affected during the barricade programme. The city wore a hartial-like look although no such strike was announced by the Opposition parties.

All motorised vehicles stayed off the streets while only a few autorickshaws drivers dared to ply their vehicles. However, rickshaws moved freely without any hindrance.

Business centres and most of the shops and private offices as well as educational institu-



Police removing a barricade from the railway track at Tongi, a city suburb, yesterday. — Star photo

Sharif's entry into Sindh banned

KARACHI, Sept 27: The Sindh government today banned the entry of former Pakistani Premier Nawaz Sharif into this southern port city, only two days ahead of his planned protest rally here, official sources here said, reports AFP.

"We found a compromise," Yeltsin said at a luncheon given by Vice President Al Gore.

Yeltsin did not give details of the breakthrough but his aide Viktor Ilyushin said the leaders agreed to convene an international summit on Bosnia to which the Bosnian Serbs would be invited.

"This is an old proposal made by president Yeltsin six months ago and that President Clinton has agreed to this time," Ilyushin said.

Ilyushin said that no date was set for the summit and that the proposal must first be approved by the countries invited.

Yeltsin earlier this year proposed a summit meeting of Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States to reach a final settlement of the war in the former Yugoslavia.

Earlier, Yeltsin warned that Moscow would take it badly if the United States followed through on its threat to lift the embargo on arms supplies for Bosnia's Muslims by the set deadline of October 15.

Yeltsin Monday proposed that the five major nuclear powers

Clinton, Yeltsin agree to convene confce on Bosnia

WASHINGTON, Sept 27: Russian President Boris Yeltsin said today he had reached a compromise with President Bill Clinton following three hours of talks at the White House, reports AFP.

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The Midnight File

Kuwait to buy war planes from Indonesia

JAKARTA, Sept 27: Kuwait plans to purchase several military planes and ships from Indonesia's strategic industries, a press report said here today. The Bisnis Indonesia Daily quoted chairman of the Strategic Industry Management Board (BPI) Bacharudin Jusuf Habibie, after a meeting with visiting Kuwaiti military chief Major General Ali Mu-Min, saying that Kuwait had expressed their interest in buying a military hardware, reports AFP.

Germany to participate in UN peacekeeping missions

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 27: Germany said today it was ready to fully participate in UN peacekeeping missions, a conditions set by some countries for permanent membership in the UN Security Council. In his annual speech to the UN General Assembly, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel also expressed hopes that the process of expanding the Security Council would lead to 'productive results,' reports AFP.

Govt-Opposition talks

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continued until late last night, the opposition leaders are learnt to have expressed the view that the formal talks should start only after the arrival of a special Commonwealth emissary, as stipulated in Chief Emeka's proposals, sources attending the meeting said.

They also said the opposition parties would hold further discussions before taking a final decision.

According to one source, some leaders of the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat looked quite unhappy that the Awami League president had agreed to talks with the Prime Minister on the basis of an open agenda leaving them out in the cold. Some leaders of these two parties, who attended last night's Opposition caucus, told The Daily Star that this was in breach of the broad Opposition agreement not to sit for negotiations with the government on a bilateral basis.

Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim told reporters after the meeting that they had discussed the proposals put forth by Chief Emeka as well as the second letter addressed to Samad Azad Monday by Prof B

Party allows Koirala to contest polls

KATHMANDU, Sept 27: Nepal's first democratically elected prime minister in three decades overcame a revolt in the party and was allowed to contest November's general election, party officials said Tuesday, reports AP.

BNP : Agitation

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them," he said. Nazmul Huda said that the BNP assumed power after a free and fair election under a caretaker government. "So, where is the guarantee that there will be no such street agitations after an election under a caretaker government in future," the information minister said referring to the opposition demand for a caretaker administration.

BNP leader and Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah said that the ruling party was ready for a dialogue with an open agenda to resolve the political impasse.

When contacted, he said that he would not comment on the Opposition agitation since both the sides were now ready for a dialogue.

"I hope the matter would be resolved through the planned dialogue," he said.

RU JCD leader stabbed: Six held, 3 expelled

RAJSHAH, Sept 27: Six activists of the JCD were arrested while three others were expelled from the organisation for their alleged involvement in stabbing a JCD leader on the Rajshahi University campus today, reports UNB.

India backs UAE move to resolve island dispute

ABU DHABI, Sept 27: India supports a decision by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to seek international arbitration to resolve its dispute with Iran over three Gulf islands, the UAE news agency Wam reported today, says AFP.

UAE Foreign Ministry Acting Under Secretary, Saif Said discussed the dispute over Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb with Indian Foreign Office Under Secretary, Salman Haidar here today, the official agency said.

Said briefed the Indian official on the UAE's intention to refer 'the subject of the three UAE islands occupied by Iran to the international court of justice,' it said.

PM may declare

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Many of the leading commercial houses which earlier had their head offices in Chittagong later shifted those to Dhaka and now have only liaison offices in the port city. None of the financial institutions in the public and private sectors have their head offices in Chittagong.

A declaration to give Chittagong a special economic status will reverse the declining economic fortunes of the country's second biggest city and greatly improve its commercial life, according to leading members of the business community

Another report adds: Travelers may visit India of pass through Indian airports without restriction despite the outbreak of plague in the country, the World Health Organisation said today.

A WHO circular advised travel agencies that the western Indian city of Surat is the only place officially declared an epidemic zone. It said Indian authorities assured the agency there is no risk for travelers to the country.

The circular said travelers should tell a physician about any illness appearing within six days of leaving the plague area, as well as the visit to the epidemic area.