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NEWS BRIEFS

Ferry disaster: Hasina shocked

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed her profound shock at the death of more than 800 people in Wednesday's ferry disaster in Baltic sea near Finland. She sent separate condolence messages to the Swedish King and the Finnish head of the government and expressed her sympathy for the members of the bereaved families, reports UNB.

Kuwaiti army chief in city

Chief of Army Staff of Kuwait Armed Forces Major General Ali Mohammad Hasan Al Momen arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a six-day goodwill visit to Bangladesh. He is leading a 12-member military delegation. Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim Bir Bikram and other senior army officials received them at the Zia International Airport, reports UNB.

Postage stamp on Asian Games '94

Bangladesh post office will issue a commemorative postage stamp of Tk four denomination on the occasion of 12th Asian Games Hiroshima 1994 October 2. A first day cover valued Tk 5 will also be issued and a special canceller will be used, reports BSS.

Former Turkish minister killed

ANKARA, Sept 29: Leftist gunmen in Turkey killed former Justice Minister Mehmet Topac in an attack today. Anatolian news agency said Topac, minister between June 1987 and March 1989, was gunned down by three attackers in his downtown Ankara law office, reports Reuter.

## BMA decides to ignore call to end strike Govt threatens docs with legal action

By Staff Correspondent

The government yesterday threatened to take legal action against the striking doctors unless they resume their duties immediately, a press note said yesterday.

However, the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), which called the indefinite strike on September 21, in an emergency meeting yesterday evening decided to ignore the government directive and continue the on-going strike until their 21-point charter of demands was implemented.

offence.

"The BMA will not bow to any repressive measure of the government. We are ready to sacrifice anything for the realisation of our demands," the secretary general of BMA, Dr Gazi Abdul Haq said.

The BMA decision to continue the strike was supported by the Prokrishi-BCS Central Action Council last night. The BMA brought out a procession in the city last night demanding withdrawal of the press

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Lawyers threaten writ over BMA strike

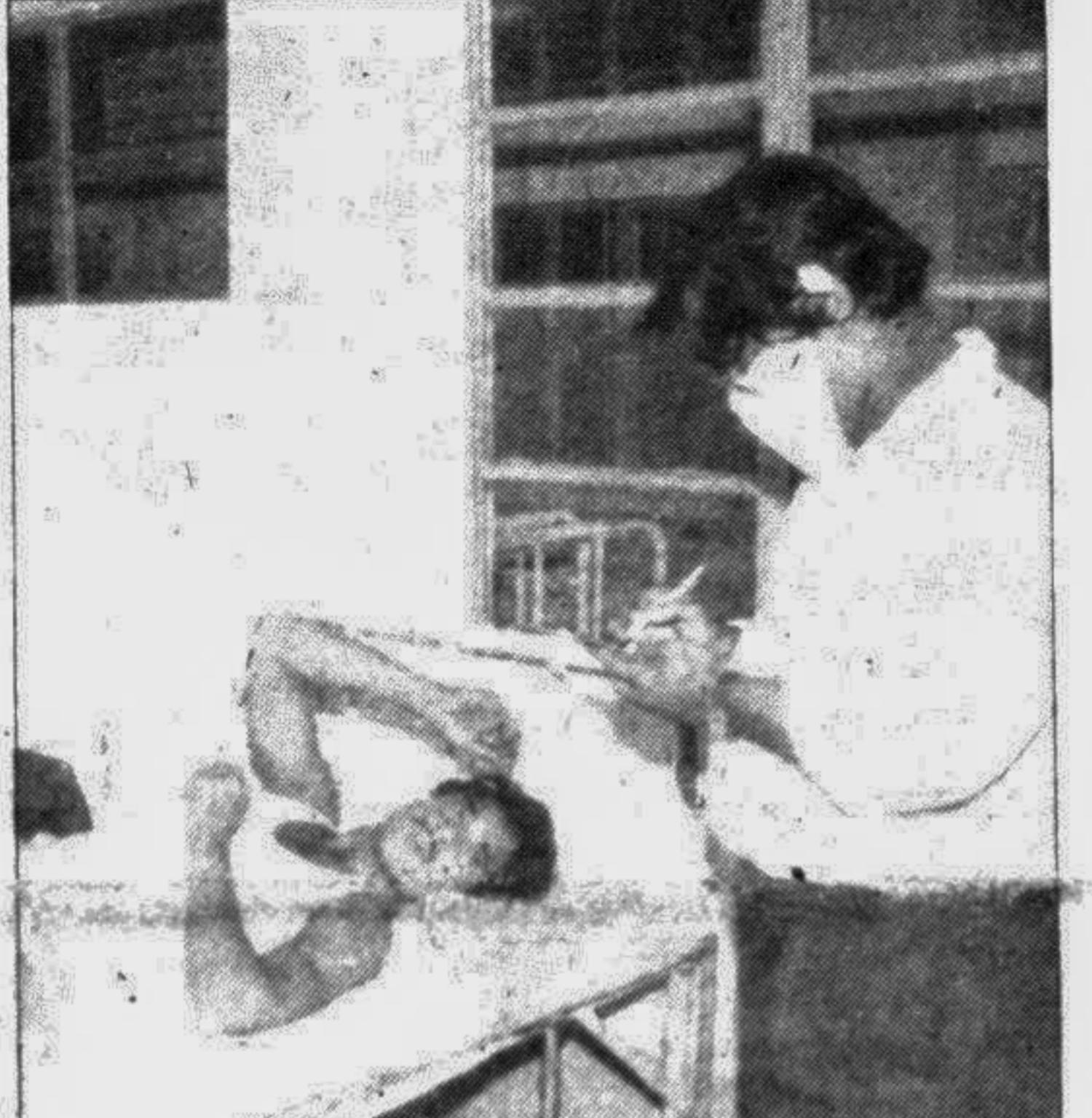
By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) has issued a legal notice regarding the doctors' strike to the Health Secretary, the Director General of Health, the chairman of Medical and Dental Association and the president of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), according to a press release yesterday.

Blaming both the doctors and bureaucrats for the suffering of thousands of patients due to the strike, the notice, issued by its general secretary, Dr Mohiuddin Farooque, said both parties were bound by the Constitution to ensure health

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## Two suspected cases undergo tests in city hospital Ban on Indian food imports



M Shamsul Huq, a Bangladeshi, was admitted to the city's Infectious Diseases Hospital, Mohakhali after being sent back from Dubai, alongwith a whole plane-load of Biman passengers, because the aircraft had touched down at Bombay on way to the UAE Wednesday night. — Star photo

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## Tests on all 50 plague cases in Calcutta prove negative

By Staff Correspondent

As the dreaded scourge called plague slowly comes nearer to Bangladesh borders, the authorities yesterday banned import of all food items, fruits and vegetable from India.

A national committee headed by Deputy Leader of Parliament Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and including several ministers and top officials has also been formed to gear up anti-plague steps. The committee held a meeting yesterday and took a number of decisions.

In another development, two persons suspected of carrying the plague germ were hospitalised in Dhaka yesterday for tests immediately after return by a Biman flight from Dubai.

Doctors at the Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH), however, said the symptoms of agnosia did not confirm that the two Bangladeshis had anything bad except that one of them was running a mild fever.

The government also set up a high-powered task force to recommend steps regarding trade with India in the changed circumstances caused by the plague.

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NEW DELHI, Sept 29: Plague cases mounted by the hundreds in India today, but the death toll leveled off and the government accused foreign countries of unfairly fueling fears of the disease, reports Reuter.

Fifteen hundred suspected plague victims, up from just under 1,000 on Wednesday, were in quarantine wards stretching from the scourge's focal point in the western city of Surat to Calcutta, according to official estimates.

Two more people died of the disease, raising the national death toll to 48, the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) said.

One of the new deaths was in Maharashtra state, south of Surat, and was believed to be the first death outside of the Surat region. NICD officials had no details on the case.

Almost all of the victims, who have surfaced across a large portion of India, had recently been to Surat.

The situation in the Calcutta region appeared to improve. Health officials said tests on the 50 patients under treatment for possible plague had proved negative.

Officials had said there

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## Clinton, Yeltsin agree to cut N-stockpiles

scrapping nuclear warheads under a 1992 accord.

Under Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty 2, each side must reduce their stockpiles to between 3,000 to 3,500 by the year 2003. Yeltsin said at a joint news conference that the agreement could remove warheads from missiles to be dismantled under two strategic arms reduction treaties in two years, rather than the nine — to the year 2003 — called for in the treaties.

Clinton said instead of taking all the time permitted to make the cuts, the two sides will start scrapping them immediately upon ratification of the accord by both countries.

"You can't think fast enough? well, okay I'll go a little slower. H-a-r-m-o-n-i-z-i-n-g military doctrines. Harmonising," he roared.

In a bit of serious work was done at the fifth meeting between Yeltsin and Clinton.

Clinton announced the two sides agreed to accelerate the timetable by several years for

## BNP labour leader Nazrul dead

AKM Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary of the Bangladesh Jatiyatabdil Sramik Dal, president of the city Sramik Dal and one of the secretaries of the ruling BNP for information and research affairs died of a heart attack at the city's Suhrabdia Hospital at 11:30 Wednesday night. He was 45, reports BSS.

He leaves behind his wife, three sons, a host of relations, admirers, friends and colleagues to mourn his death.

The namaz-e-Janaza of the well-known labour leader was held in front of the BNP central office at Naya Paltan yesterday with ministers, BNP leaders and workers attending.

He was later buried at the Banani graveyard.

President, PM shocked

President Abdur Rahman Biswas has expressed deep shock at the sad demise of Nazrul Islam.

In a message, President Biswas conveyed sympathies to the bereaved family and prayed for the eternal peace of the

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## Mother Teresa checked for plague at Rome

ROME, Sept 29: Nobel prize-winner Mother Teresa, known as "the saint of the gutters", was held up for plague checks at Rome airport on Wednesday when she arrived on a flight from India, reports Reuter.

The Roman Catholic missionary, 84, and other passengers on an Air India flight from Bombay and New Delhi had to wait in the plane on the runway for half an hour while Italian health inspectors boarded to check if any of them appeared sick, airport officials said.

After all 181 passengers were cleared, Mother Teresa was the first to descend the steps and was helped into a wheelchair waiting on the tarmac.

Italy is among several countries that have ordered airport health checks of travellers from India after an outbreak there of pneumonic plague.

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Malaysian minister talks to Daily Star

## Lots of Bangladeshis can get jobs

By Chapal Bashar

Malaysia will need a lot of imported manpower to sustain its current rate of economic development. In recent years many overseas workers have found employment in the booming Malaysian labour market, including thousands of Bangladeshis. And there is scope for many more Bangladeshis to find well-paying jobs in that southeast Asian country.

Talking to The Daily Star in Dhaka Tuesday night, Malaysia's Deputy Home Minister Dato Megat Junid Megat Ayob said his country can recruit at least 50,000 Bangladeshi workers — skilled or semi-skilled — including doctors and nurses a year.

Megat Junid paid a three-day official visit to Bangladesh from Sept 25 and held formal

meetings with the manpower agencies and also recruit Ansars for suitable jobs in Malaysia since they are literate, well-trained, disciplined and healthy.

Megat Junid said, Bangladeshi housemaids can also be recruited for Malaysia. Presently, maids working there are mostly from Indonesia and the Philippines.

Replies to a question, Megat Junid said that during the formal talks with his Bangladeshi counterpart, they had agreed to take stern action against unscrupulous manpower recruiting agents causing suffering to innocent Bangladeshi workers.

We will take up the issue and discuss possible steps

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## Groom children as worthy citizens: PM

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) has issued a legal notice regarding the doctors' strike to the Health Secretary, the Director General of Health, the chairman of Medical and Dental Association and the president of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), according to a press release yesterday.

"Today's children will lead the nation tomorrow. So they have to be groomed as healthy, well-educated, meritorious and skilled manpower," she said.

The Prime Minister was addressing the inaugural function of the "Children's Rights Week '94 and World Children's Day, organised by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in cooperation with the Unicef at the Osmany Memorial Hall in the morning.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs

Sarwari Rahman, Unicef Representative in Bangladesh Rolf C Carriere and Secretary of the ministry Enamul Huq addressed the function. A minor boy, Talab Ali, spoke on behalf of the children.

"Earlier, the Prime Minister arrived at the Osmany Hall premises amid jubilation of the children who danced, sang songs and held physical displays to welcome her. Two little children presented her bouquets. She thanked them with a caress.

Speaking of the state of children across the globe, she said children are the worst victims of diseases, malnutrition, poverty, lack of education, wars and conflicts. "We have to protect them from this

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A colourful procession was brought out in the city yesterday on the occasion of the World Children's Day. — Star photo

## Opposition won't compromise on interim govt: Nasim

By Staff Correspondent

The opposition parties in Parliament yesterday resolved that they would not make any compromise on the issue of a caretaker government.

Mohammed Nasim also expressed doubt about the BNP's sincerity in resolving the present political crisis through the proposed dialogue.

Referring to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's public speech in Chittagong on Wednesday, the Opposition Chief Whip said, "When we are preparing for a dialogue to resolve the political impasse, the Prime Minister directly rejected the main Opposition demand for holding general elections under a caretaker administration."

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## MODERN RADIOTHERAPY MACHINE FOR CANCER TREATMENT

Is Now At Your Service



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## Ferry disaster: Provisional death toll 900

TURKU, Finland, Sept 29: Rough waters prevented salvage workers from finding the sunken ferry Estonia in the Baltic Sea today, and a new provisional death toll topped 900, reports AP.

Survivors — only 140, most of them men — dealt with memories of wailing children

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left clinging to the ship's railing, and wounded fellow passengers left bobbing in the frigid waters.

Estonian authorities submitted a new list of 1,049 names of people they said boarded the ferry before it left their capital, Tallinn, on Tuesday night for Stockholm, Sweden.

That raised the provisional death toll in Scandinavia's worst maritime disaster to 909. Just 65 bodies had been recovered, including seven life jacket-wearing corpses found afloat today.

PM addresses public rally in Khulna today

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 29: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is scheduled to address a public meeting at the Khulna Circuit House maidan tomorrow afternoon.

Tomorrow's meeting is being given much importance here