

Normalcy returns to BTW

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Welfare Association and the Non-gazetted Employees' Welfare Association, during the meeting held at the TV Bhaban, accepted the government decision to appoint Mustafizur Rahman, Director, Development as the new General Manager of BTW.

An earlier order of the ministry, revoking the appointment of Nawazesh Ali Khan as GM in addition to his duties as Director, VTO, within two days of appointment sparked resentment among the employees and officials who had announced a series of action programmes. Khan was appointed GM on September 24 but the ministry cancelled that order on September 26.

Yesterday's meeting was attended by Information Secretary Dr. Ekram Hossain, Director General of BTW Habibur Rahman, Deputy Director General (Programme) Mostafa Kamal Syed and Director (Admin) Chowdhury Fakhruzzaman.

When contacted over telephone, Information Minister Nazmul Huda told The Daily

Star: "The matter has been resolved. There was some confusion among a section of employees and officials which has been dispelled after today's meeting."

He said, "The previous decision was taken in my absence, which has now been amended and Mustafizur Rahman appointed GM."

Indian plague

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seven confirmed cases in the region, but they reversed themselves today, saying they had spoken before definitive test results were available.

In a puzzling development, the NICD said three or four of the Delhi victims had no connection with Surat, raising questions as to how they contracted the disease.

The Delhi government today ordered all schools and cinemas in the Indian capital to close immediately to help check the spread of plague, a senior official said.

Lawyers-BMA

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will file a writ petition in the High Court next Sunday. Dr. Mohiuddin told The Daily Star over telephone last night.

The legal notice said, "You (both the doctors and bureaucrats) are continuing your actions and inactions knowing fully well that such a situation would lead to more deaths and aggravate the suffering... and as such why you should not be criminally liable for the deaths and sufferings."

It further said their actions, inactions and omissions are also contrary to their professional ethics and code of conduct.

Govt threatens doctors

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The press noted with regret that despite sympathetic gestures shown by the government the response of the BMA was negative.

"At a time when the country is facing the danger emanating from the outbreak of plague in a neighbouring country, there is every need to mobilise all our human and material resources to protect the people from this scourge. In such a

Durga Puja from Oct 10

note.

The five-day Sharada Durga Puja, the main religious festival of the Hindu community, will be celebrated from October 10 to October 14 throughout the country, according to a press release of the Bangladesh Puja Uddhayan Parishad yesterday, reports BSS.

In a statement, president and general secretary of the Parishad K B Roy Chowdhury and Swapna Kumar Saha appealed to the leaders of all political parties and various socio-cultural organisations not to give any such programmes during the five days of Durga Puja that might interrupt the normal celebration of Sharada Puja. They sought cooperation of all in this regard.



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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia caressing some children at the inaugural ceremony of the World Children's Day and Children Right Week-94 at Osmany Memorial Hall in the city yesterday. — PID photo

Children's Rights Week opens

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Begum Zia said more than one crore children die in the world every year and about 20 per cent die within one year of their birth in the developing countries due to various reasons.

The Prime Minister said over 10 crore children have no homes and children's literacy rates in developing countries are not satisfactory.

Under these circumstances, she stressed the need for united efforts of all to ensure welfare of children at home.

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh, being a signatory to the UN charter on children's rights, is committed to implementing all its programmes and has undertaken various steps for flourishing their talents.

She said the countries of this continent, known in the economic field as 'Asian Tigers', had made huge investments for the welfare of the children in the past two

decades. This resulted in a skilled and active workforce and now they are enjoying the fruits of their investments, she observed.

"Inshaallah we will also step into the new century as a competent nation if we can implement our programmes for children's welfare," Begum Zia hoped.

She said her government has attached importance to children's welfare and establishment of 'children families' for the orphans as well as rehabilitation of the handicapped children.

She said the government has strengthened the expanded programme for immunisation and introduced compulsory free primary education for removing illiteracy.

Besides, all primary schools in 1,000 unions have been brought under the Food-for-Education Programme — free education upto Class Ten for girl students in rural areas and stipend for the girls have also been introduced, she said.

The Prime Minister informed her audience that a 'children policy' was being formulated and after its finalization a Children's Welfare Council would be set up and more elaborate programmes taken up for the development of children.

She recalled that Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman had established the Shishu Academy and Shishu Park, introduced the TV programme Natun Kur and national children's competition and undertaken various other programmes for their development.

As per the election pledge, Begum Zia said, the BNP government has been establishing branches of the Shishu Academy in all districts and formulating laws to prevent repression on children and child trafficking.

She advised the children to devote themselves to their studies and build themselves up as worthy citizens to lead a developed Bangladesh in future.

Food imports from India banned

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A government announcement last night said the task force, headed by an Additional Secretary of the Commerce Ministry, will submit its report within a week to a parliamentary committee.

In a notice yesterday, the Chief Controller of Import and Export prohibited all food imports from India for the time being. The notification said, the prohibition will apply to all edibles, including fruits, vegetable, fish and meat.

The government has also stayed all letters of credit in favour of food importers, to prevent the epidemic from entering the country.

Blood samples of M. Shamsul Huq and Feroz Ahmed, the two passengers, are now being tested at the IDH, the results of which would not be available before Saturday.

They were quarantined by doctors at the Zia International Airport plague testing camp yesterday morning and later led to an isolated ward at the IDH for observation.

Feroz and Shamsul were travelling by a Dubai-bound Biman flight on their way to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

But the two Bangladeshis along with other passengers had to return as Dubai authorities refused Biman landing permission because it had made a stop-over at Bombay airport.

The refusal of the Dubai authorities prompted Biman to suspend its flights to Delhi and Bombay for an indefinite period. However, the airlines continued its flights to Calcutta.

A press release from Biman Bangladesh Airlines said its flights would not touch New Delhi or Bombay because of restrictions imposed by Dubai.

Landing of any aircraft from any Indian airport has been restricted at Dubai indefinitely.

Plastic surgery team due Oct 3

A ten-member plastic surgery expert team, led by plastic surgeon Charles Vivar from England will arrive in Dhaka on October 3 to conduct plastic surgery and provide treatment free of cost, according to a press release of the Interplast Bangladesh, reports BSS.

During its two week stay, in Bangladesh the team would conduct surgery and provide treatment from October 4 to October 10 at the Noorjahan Clinic, Dargah Gate, Sylhet and from October 11 to 17 at Bangladesh Medical College, Dhanmondi, Road No. 14 (old 25), House-35, Rashmond Poly Clinic, Magbazar and Stone Crush Hospital, Dhanmondi, Road-4, House-48.

Interested patients have been requested to contact, from 10 am to 12 noon every day for preliminary scrutiny.

Biman operates one weekly flight to Athens via Bombay and Dubai while its twice-a-week flights land at Delhi and Dubai on way to New York.

Biman officials said two Dhaka-Calcutta flights were cancelled yesterday, not because of the plague but for the Bharat bandh (general strike) in India.

Biman operates 16 flights from Dhaka to Calcutta a week while its carriers fly twice a week from Chittagong to Calcutta.

The Chittagong Port Authorities at a meeting, decided that any ship coming to the port after staying 15 days in any Indian port will have to anchor at in the outer anchorage. The ship has to be fumigated and its crew medically checked.

No Indian ship would be allowed inside the port without certificate from the Port Health Officer.

The master of an ship in the port will have to immediately inform the port authorities of any symptom of plague on board.

A press release from the Chittagong Port Authority, however, added that at present, there was no Indian ship at the port.

Reports from Rajshahi said the authorities have begun a motivational drive along the bordering areas in a bid to prevent trespassing of Indian citizens.

Officials at the Sona Masjid border checkpoint have started medical check-up of people entering Bangladesh.

The international checkpoint at Godagari has been closed and the district authorities have set up a control room to monitor situation.

A BSS report from Rajshahi said that preventive medicines

like tetracycline are being smuggled out of the country to India and the local authorities have instructed the drugstore owners to check it.

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

A government announcement last night said the task force, headed by an Additional Secretary of the Commerce Ministry, will submit its report within one week to a parliamentary committee.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Shipping has taken precautionary measures to prevent the plague entering Bangladesh.

According to the decisions of the parliamentary standing committee on the Shipping Ministry, all ships coming from India will be fumigated at the quarantine bay of Chittagong and Mongla ports.

Other water vessels from India through inland river ports will also be fumigated at entry points.

Similar measures have been taken for the Benapole land port.

The ministry has ordered sealing off two inland water points at Daikhawa (Kurigram) and Dhuplia (Chapainawabganj).

Our Staff Correspondent in Chittagong reports: The district administration has taken measures to prevent possible outbreak of plague in the port city following the havoc caused by the disease in India.

According to an official announcement, the authorities requested the people to give plague-related information by telephone numbers 223078, 223013 and 228118.

Aristide rules out blanket amnesty to coup leaders

WASHINGTON, Sept 29: Exiled Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on Wednesday ruled out granting blanket amnesty to the military leaders who ousted him in 1991, saying they were responsible for "crimes against humanity," reports AFP.

"We had over 5000 people killed by the coup leaders," Aristide told CNN in an interview as the Haitian parliament debated an amnesty law as part of a US-brokered agreement for military leaders to step down.

"I'm sorry. Once you have crimes against humanity, you cannot talk about blanket amnesty. And we have a lot."

Aristide also said he hoped for a "new beginning" with the restoration of democracy, and reiterated his appeal to Haitians to refrain from violence.

Aristide said he was optimistic that the agreement with

Haiti's military would allow his return without an outbreak of violent unrest.

"We're building a nation through democracy," he said. "I hope the world will celebrate a new beginning with us, the same way we did that on May 10 in South Africa."

Aristide said he hoped his pending return to Haiti would lead to reconciliation.

Typhoon lashes western Japan

TOKYO, Sept 29: Powerful Typhoon Orchid pounded western Japan Thursday, injuring nine people and disrupting planes and boats throughout the region, authorities said, reports AP.

One man was reported missing after falling into a river on Shikoku island.

WB makes loan worth \$146.9m effective

The World Bank has announced effectiveness of a \$146.9 million US dollar credit to finance a road rehabilitation and maintenance project, reports UNB.

This is the first time that the effectiveness of a credit for the World Bank-aided project was declared without extending the deadline, said an official announcement yesterday.

The credit will finance the total 252.2 million dollar Second Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project (RRMP-II).

Bangladesh's contribution to the project is \$6.6 million dollar while the British Overseas Development Administration, the other co-financier of the project, will provide \$9 million dollar.

The Bank's contribution, the second highest amount after the Jamuna Bridge Project, will be available from its soft-loan arm, International Development Association (IDA).

The RRMP II, inclusive of three components, is now under fast implementation in the northwestern and southwestern parts of the country.

Diarrhoea claims five in Savar

SAVAR, Sept 29: Diarrhoea that broke out a week ago in Savar and Dhamrai thanas so far claimed at least five lives and attacked more than 1,000 people, reports UNB.

The deceased are: Mohsin, 5, Mannan, 8, Sohel, 30, Rekha, 2, and Shara, 8.

The worst affected unions of these two thanas are Gangutia, Dhanara, Amta, Bhariara, Shombagh, Chowhat, Gomgram, Shimulia and Bhakuria.

Opposition

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However, the Opposition, while having a dialogue with the government, would at the same time continue their agitation for realising their demands, Nasim said.

He informed the newsmen that the Opposition would also raise the issues of strengthening the Election Commission, formulating a code of conduct for the political parties and alleged misuse of powers by the government.

The meeting resolved that leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina would very soon give a reply to Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Euneka Anyacku's letter received Monday.

Without disclosing the contents of Hasina's reply to the Commonwealth Secretary General, Nasim said it would reflect the views of all the Opposition parties in Parliament.

At yesterday's meeting, Hasina also gave a resume of her discussions with the Commonwealth Secretary General during the latter's visit to Dhaka earlier this month.

Yesterday's meeting was attended by Abdus Samad Azad and Tofael Ahmed of the AL, Moudud Ahmed and Munirul Huq Chowdhury of the JP, Moulana Abdus Sobhan and Sheikh Anwar Ali of the Jamaat and lone National Democratic Party (NDP) MP Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury.

Malaysian minister

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when we go back to Kuala Lumpur."

He said, there are in Malaysia about 467,000 registered foreign workers of which over 100,000 are from Bangladesh. He, however, mentioned that about another 100,000 foreign workers are staying in Malaysia illegally with no work permit.

About the 1300 Bangladeshi workers now detained by the immigration authorities for illegal entry into Malaysia, Megat Junid said their cases would be considered sympathetically.

The Deputy Home Minister said, his country will cooperate with Bangladesh to fight the abuse of drugs.

"We have invited some officers of the Bangladesh Narcotics Control Department to visit Malaysia and gather experience on how we tackle this problem," he said. Malaysia also offered expertise to Bangladesh in rehabilitating the drug addicts.

During his stay here, Megat Junid visited the Drug Addiction Cure Hospital at Tejaon.

Malaysia is also ready to provide training facilities for the senior police officers of Bangladesh, said Megat Junid.

Describing his visit to Bangladesh as a 'very good' one, Megat Junid said he has discussed a number of issues with the Bangladesh government and reached agreement on certain things. "However, these will be finalised during Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's coming visit to Kuala Lumpur", he added.

The Midnight File

Belgian FM Willy Claes named NATO chief

NEW YORK, Sept 29: Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes on Thursday was chosen to head the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation at a critical juncture for the Western alliance in meeting new challenges from Bosnia to the former Soviet bloc. US Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced that the North Atlantic Council of NATO's 16 foreign ministers unanimously confirmed the appointment of Claes as NATO's new secretary-general for a four-year term, reports AP.

Sindh lifts ban on Sharif

KARACHI, Sept 29: The government of the Pakistani province of Sindh lifted a ban on former Premier Nawaz Sharif today as the defiant opposition leader flew into Karachi to host a planned anti-government rally, officials here said, reports AFP.

The local administration withdrew a police cordon around the airport where several hundred people had gathered to welcome Sharif.

"The government had to remove the ban because of the people's pressure," Sharif told reporters.

BNP leader

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Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed her deep shock at the death of Nazrul Islam.

In a condolence message, the Prime Minister said late Nazrul Islam was a dedicated leader of the BNP and its labour wing — the Jatiyatabadi Samik Dal — and worked relentlessly for the politics of Bangladeshi nationalism and organising the party.

The death of Nazrul Islam, she said, is an irreparable loss for the BNP and the Samik Dal.

The Daily Star

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