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Dhaka Day by Day

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Page 3Emeka names mediator
for dialogue in Dhaka

The Commonwealth Secretary General yesterday named Sir Ninian Stephen, a former Governor-General of Australia, to be his envoy to Bangladesh for mediating in the dialogue between the government and the Opposition.

Sir Ninian is expected to arrive in Dhaka on October 11 to begin a series of consultations with the government and opposition parties in a bid to end the country's political crisis, according to a message faxed to the UNB office by the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.

His appointment follows agreement by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina to a three-point proposal put forward by Secretary

General Chief Emeka Anyaoku during his visit to Bangladesh last month.

Chief Emeka's proposal includes a dialogue on the basis of an open agenda which would include any topics raised by either side, such as strengthening the Election Commission, the question of a caretaker government to hold general elections and proposals for an overall code of conduct to guide political activity.

As part of the three-point plan, Sir Ninian would be available to both sides to facilitate a dialogue aimed at reconciling their political differences. He will be assisted by two officers from the Commonwealth Secretariat.

"I am delighted that such a distinguished Commonwealth

figure has readily accepted my invitation to assist the process of dialogue and the consolidation of democracy in Bangladesh. Sir Ninian will bring to this task a wealth of experience gained from outstanding service not only to his country, Australia, but to the Commonwealth and the wider world," Emeka said while naming his envoy.

Since the 1991 general elections in Bangladesh, declared by a Commonwealth monitoring group as a triumph for democracy, Bangladeshi politics have become increasingly confrontational, culminating in street protests and an Opposition boycott of Parliament since March.

During a visit to Bangladesh
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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a mammoth public meeting at the Rajapur High School ground in Jhalakathi district yesterday. — PID photo

Opposition have become
imbalanced : Khaleda

RAJAPUR (Jhalakathi), Oct 5: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today criticised the Opposition, saying they are out to replace an elected government by an unelected one in violation of the Constitution, reports UNB.

"But the people do not approve of their destructive politics," she told a huge public meeting at the Rajapur High School ground here in the afternoon.

Criticising the opposition political parties for calling programmes like hartals and blockades for a caretaker government to replace her elected government, she said they have become 'unbalanced' seeing the 'development spree' under the BNP regime.

But, she asserted that her party would carry forward its 'politics of production' with the people's support and intensify its endeavour to maintain the onward march of democracy.

"The people want peace and stability. They are in favour of development and democracy. They don't want hartals, blockades, anarchy and destruction," she said.

Describing the people's support as the BNP's strength, she said her party always relied on the people and added: "They are very much with us and will remain so in future too, because the BNP has established the rights to vote and food for the people."

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Indian newsprint
floods Natore

By Our Correspondent

NATORE, Oct 5: Taking advantage of a shortage of locally produced newsprint, smuggling of Indian newsprint has become rampant here.

Indian newsprint has captured a considerable share of the market in the district headquarters although the smuggling of other items from India has declined sharply following the outbreak of plague in that country.

A fall in the production of newsprint in the Khulna Newsprint Mills has resulted in a crisis in the country and consequent price hike.

At the stationery shops in Natore town, smuggled newsprint is being sold at Taka four per 12 sheets and Tk eight per 25 sheets.

Besides, bound note or ex-
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DMC reopens but
no classes held

By DMCH Correspondent

The Dhaka Medical College (DMC) reopened yesterday but no classes were held due to the doctors' strike.

The DMC was closed on September 12 following a clash between the activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) over the occupation of a room at the Dr. Fazle Rabbi Hall.

Earlier, the college was closed for one month and 17 days from June 26. It reopened on August 13.

Opposition
discusses
situation
today

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of the Opposition parties in Parliament will meet at the Sangsad Bhaban at around 11 am today to discuss the latest political situation in the country.

According to sources, they are likely to discuss the third letter received from Deputy Leader of the House, Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury in connection with the proposed dialogue between the government and the Opposition.

The meeting may also suggest possible dates of a dialogue between Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina.

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Import control

Textile mills owners
demand their
representation

Textiles manufacturers reacted sharply to the empowerment of the BGMEA to control imports by the garments sector which, they feared, might aggravate leakage of duty-free fabrics into the local market.

Giving reactions to UNB yesterday, they suggested strong monitoring of the new measure so that it is not abused.

The manufacturers also demanded their representation in the import monitoring process.

"In principle, we do not oppose any step towards deregulation, but our experiences about the garments sector say there is every possibility of abuse of this power," said

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China to halt sale of missile
technology to Pakistan

WASHINGTON, Oct 5: China and the United States concluded a major agreement on Tuesday designed to halt the spread of Chinese missile technology to Pakistan and around the world, reports AP.

They also agreed to cooperate in promoting an end to the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Russian President Boris Yeltsin proposed such a ban in a speech last week to the UN General Assembly.

"We hope to see an early and smooth completion of this process," Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said at a signing ceremony at the State Department.

'Trade, investment to dominate
Khaleda-Mahathir talks

By M Anwarul Haq

Promotion of trade and investment will dominate the official talks during the forthcoming visit of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to Malaysia.

A 60-member team will accompany the Prime Minister during her four-day visit beginning October 11.

The tour is at the invitation of Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad, extended during his visit to Bangladesh in February, 1993.

Dhaka will invite Malaysian entrepreneurs to promote investment in Bangladesh. Emphasis will be given on investment in joint ventures.

The Prime Minister will address a special seminar on investment in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur organised by the National Chamber

of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia.

The seminar is expected to be attended by a large number of Malaysian business leaders and members of trade and industry.

To underline the importance given to investment, the Prime Minister's entourage will include around 15 Bangladeshi businessmen, who will also take the opportunity to explore business prospects in that country and encourage joint venture participation. Although part of the official entourage, the businessmen will themselves bear the cost of passage.

Dhaka looks forward to expanding economic and technical cooperation in different spheres with Kuala Lumpur.

Progress may be made regarding the signing of a protocol on youth and sports and on cultural exchange.

Bangladesh and Malaysia already have agreements on shipping, avoidance of double taxation and exchange of news between the two countries.

The two prime ministers will have talks covering bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual concern. Besides, they are expected to exchange views on health, family planning, education and rural development.

Bangladesh is likely to request Malaysia to increase its import of jute and jute products. Malaysia may make a request to increase the consumption of palm oil. Dhaka
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Steps to improve
city transport
system

A meeting of the Task Force for the improvement of transportation system of greater Dhaka metropolitan area was held yesterday at the Planning Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. Abdul Moqim Khan, State Minister for Planning, reports BSS.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of concerned ministries, agencies, the Bus-Truck Owners' Association, Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samity and the Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samik Federation.

The overall traffic congestion problem and possible remedial measures comprising regularity, infrastructural enforcement and mass awareness aspects were discussed thoroughly in the meeting. The meeting underscored the need
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Dhaka's call to
increase
resource flows
to LDCs

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman Tuesday called for international support for the development programmes of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) aiming at poverty eradication, population control and environmental protection, reports BSS.

Chairing the annual ministerial meeting of the LDCs in New York, where he is leading the Bangladesh delegation at the UN General Assembly session, the foreign minister emphasised the need for substantial increase in external resource flows to the LDCs, waiving of their bilateral and multilateral official debt, and abolition of trade barriers for products from these countries.

Mostafiz also called for transfer of technology to the LDCs at concessional and preferential terms and provision of new and additional resources for programmes seeking to eradicate poverty, control population boom and protection of environment from degradation in these countries.

These issues, he suggested, ought to be forcefully highlighted by the LDCs at various international forums and particularly during the 50th anniversary celebrations of the United Nations in the next year.

Mostafiz suggested the need for new and corrective measures.
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Biman gets four
bids for supply
of new airbus

By Staff Correspondent

Four companies have offered Biman Bangladesh Airlines to supply two new A 310-300 aircraft for which the national carrier floated tenders. Biman sources said.

The companies are the Airbus Industrie, the Eagle Aerospace Consultant, Atlas Airlines and Aerolease Group of Companies.

The tenders were opened on October 1 and Biman's technical wing was now evaluating the offers of the four bidders.

A Biman official said, the technical wing has been asked to complete its evaluation in two weeks.

Biman had earlier planned to procure two used midhaul airbus but finally decided to purchase new ones from its own resources.

NEWS BRIEFS

CMCH nurses
start strike

From Our Correspondent
COMILLA, Oct 5: The nurses of the Comilla Medical College Hospital (CMCH) have started an indefinite strike today demanding removal of the Sister Tutor, Priti Barua, from the hospital. The nurses gheraoed the office of the civil surgeon in the morning to press home their demand. The nurses brought allegations of nepotism and corruption against the Sister Tutor.

German doctors'
team due Nov

A team of specialists from Cardiac Surgery Department of the Hamburg University of Germany will work at the Cardiac Surgery and Cardiology Departments at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka from November 2, reports UNB.

Four more win
DV-1 Visa

By Staff Correspondent

Mohammad Abdul Hannan, a student of the Jagannath University College, Dhaka, was selected for DV-1 Visa by the National Visa Centre of the USA. He is one of the 1,10,000 applicants selected through lottery. Our Natore correspondent adds, three persons of the town won the US DV-1 lottery. They are Mamunul Haq of Kanaikhal village of the Sadar thana, Jahir Raihan, a driver of the local fire service and Servia Sultana of Natore Women's Govt College.

Monsoon bids farewell

By Asiuzzaman

The monsoon bade farewell to Bangladesh Tuesday without causing adequate rainfall during the last four months over the country.

"We experienced an erratic weather during this monsoon. It is very unusual but not uncommon," the deputy director of the Meteorological Department told The Daily Star.

Throughout the monsoon, the rainfall was far below the normal, causing a drought-like situation in parts of the country.

Yesterday's rainfall in the city was not the outcome of the monsoon, the Met official

said. The country now has entered a transition period from a wet and hot to a dry and cold period preceding winter, due within two months. Already, there is a nip in the early morning air and the grass is moist with dew.

Met office sources said that during the current month, the country would experience below the normal rain as in the past four months. During the month, the Met office forecast 130mm to 150mm rainfall in Dhaka, 160mm to 180mm in Chittagong, 100mm to 120mm

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48 members of Swiss religious
sect commit mass suicide

CHEIRY (Switzerland), Oct 5: The bodies of 48 members of a religious sect, many with plastic bags tied over their heads and their hands clasped in prayer, were found today in an apparent mass suicide, reports AP.

Police discovered the bodies in the smoking ruins of a farm and three ski chalets in southern Switzerland.

Twenty-three bodies, all adults, were found at a farm in the canton of Fribourg, north-east of Geneva, police said. One man was in the farmhouse with a bullet wound to the head, and 21 others were in a concealed underground chapel lined with mirrors, where they

had apparently suffocated themselves with plastic bags, police said. Another body was found in a separate building.

Some of the victims in the chapel, which was reached by a door hidden behind paneling in a barn, were wearing red, white and black ceremonial robes, said Beat Carlen, the Fribourg police spokesman. Two women were wearing gold robes. One couple was in an embrace.

Carlen said some sort of altar was found in the chapel.

The bodies of 25 more victims, including several children lying next to each other, were found in three chalets in a ski area at Leg Granges in

Valais canton, southeast of Geneva.

Authorities said most of the victims appeared to be Swiss, French and Canadian.

Police said they were assuming the deaths were a mass suicide by a religious sect called the Cross and Rose. It was unclear if the group was related to the Rosticrucians, a centuries-old secret society with beliefs in occult lore and power, whose symbols include the rose and the cross.

Literature for the Cross and Rose and various religious objects were found at the farm-house, along with an audio cassette, authorities said. They did not say what was on the cassette.



Spanish King Juan Carlos (R) leans over to talk with the Chairman of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank annual assembly, Bangladesh Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, during the opening session in Madrid Tuesday. — AFP photo

Plague: None
tests positive
in Bangladesh

None of those quarantined on return from India have tested positive for plague so far, the National Anti-plague Committee observed in its eighth meeting yesterday, reports UNB.

The meeting was held at the EPI Bhaban at Mohakhali with Deputy Leader of the House and President of the Committee Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury in the chair.

Meanwhile, the BDR opened three new checkpoints and also deployed five mobile teams in the border.

The checkpoints were opened at Bakal, Satriale and Sonabari in the bordering district for strict surveillance on movement of people into the country from India.

BMA to take decision
on strike today

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) yesterday did not make any announcement to either withdraw or continue the ongoing strike by government doctors in view of the High Court's mandatory injunction Tuesday, asking them to withdraw the strike immediately.

In a terse statement on the resolutions adopted at an emergency meeting of the BMA executive committee on the day, the association said "This meeting reiterates respect for the rule of law."

Chaired by Prof M A Majed, president of the association, the meeting also decided to convene an emergency meeting of the BMA central council today to "discuss the latest situation of the movement and to decide the future course of action."

BMA officials, however, refused to confirm or deny if the association was served with the court notice.

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