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NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina's meet in Mymensingh today

Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will address a public meeting at Mymensingh Circuit House today. The meeting is part of Hasina's current campaign for a neutral caretaker government to conduct national election and resignation of "corrupt and vote-bought government" of the BNP, reports UNB.

Police SI killed

A police sub-inspector was killed in a road mishap yesterday a day before his entering into wedlock. Humayun Kabir, 32, an SI of Cantonment thana was returning to his village home at Dendabor in Savar thana when he met with the tragic end of his life. The truck hit his motor bike from behind at Jorpur of Hemayetpur under Savar thana yesterday evening. He died on the spot, reports UNB.

Comoros' PM sacked

PARIS, Oct 14: Comoros Prime Minister Mohamed Abdou has been sacked and replaced by Halifa Houmadi, a former oil industry regional director, according to presidential decrees sent to Reuters by the country's Paris embassy today. The decrees, signed by President Said Mohamed Djohar and dated Thursday, gave no reason for the move. The decrees, bearing the presidential seal, were faxed to Reuters by the Paris embassy of the archipelago, a former French colony of eastern Africa.

Talks with Opposition useful: Ninian

By Nurul Kabir

Sir Ninian Stephen, emissary of the Commonwealth Secretary General, had a 95-minute meeting with the leaders of the opposition parties and groups in Parliament yesterday morning.

After the meeting, held at the Sangsad Bhavan, Ninian told waiting newsmen that he had very useful talks with the opposition leaders.

"Leaders of the Opposition explained their position at the meeting which I found to be useful," he said.

"No other statement will be made regarding the meeting."

The opposition leaders emerged from the meeting — all smiling.

The Commonwealth emissary arrived in Dhaka Thursday to facilitate a 'productive dialogue' between the government and the opposition to

end the present political impasse.

Ninian — a former Governor General of Australia — only smiled in response to various questions from the newsmen.

The 13-member opposition team was standing beside him at the time. None of them, however, made any comment.

Later, Chief Whip of the Opposition Mohammad Nasim

PM optimistic

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has said she is optimistic about a positive outcome of the proposed dialogue with opposition parties.

"We have all along been keen about the dialogue to find a solution. I am optimistic about the positive outcome,"

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told press briefing in the evening the opposition leaders had clearly explained to Ninian, during the meeting in the morning, the justifications for the Opposition demand for holding general elections under a non-partisan caretaker government. The opposition also said that the demand for a caretaker administration should be the main issue at the talks with the government side," Nasim added.

Nasim, however, gave no further details. Earlier, the opposition leaders had a meeting with Abdus Samad Azad in the chair.

Meanwhile, sources close to the opposition leaders who attended yesterday's talks with the Commonwealth emissary, told this correspondent, Ninian made the opening

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Khaleda apprised of dialogue process

Star Report

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday held a meeting with her senior cabinet colleagues to know the latest political situation and the process of dialogue to end the present political impasse.

The meeting at her Hare Road office lasted about an hour. The ruling party negotiators informed the Prime Minister of their discussions with Commonwealth emissary Sir Ninian Stephen and his aides during the last three days.

Begum Zia returned home yesterday afternoon after a four-day official visit to Malaysia.

A senior minister who attended the meeting told The Daily Star late last night, she did not make any comment or suggestion at the meeting but okayed the party negotiators' position.

The minister said the ruling party negotiators had ex-

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Dispute marks Nobel Peace Prize Honour for great courage

OSLO, Oct 14: PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli leaders Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres shared the Nobel Peace Prize today for signing last year's peace accord, even as the Mideast was facing in a new crisis, reports AP.

The committee hailed the men's courage despite their controversial pasts. But one

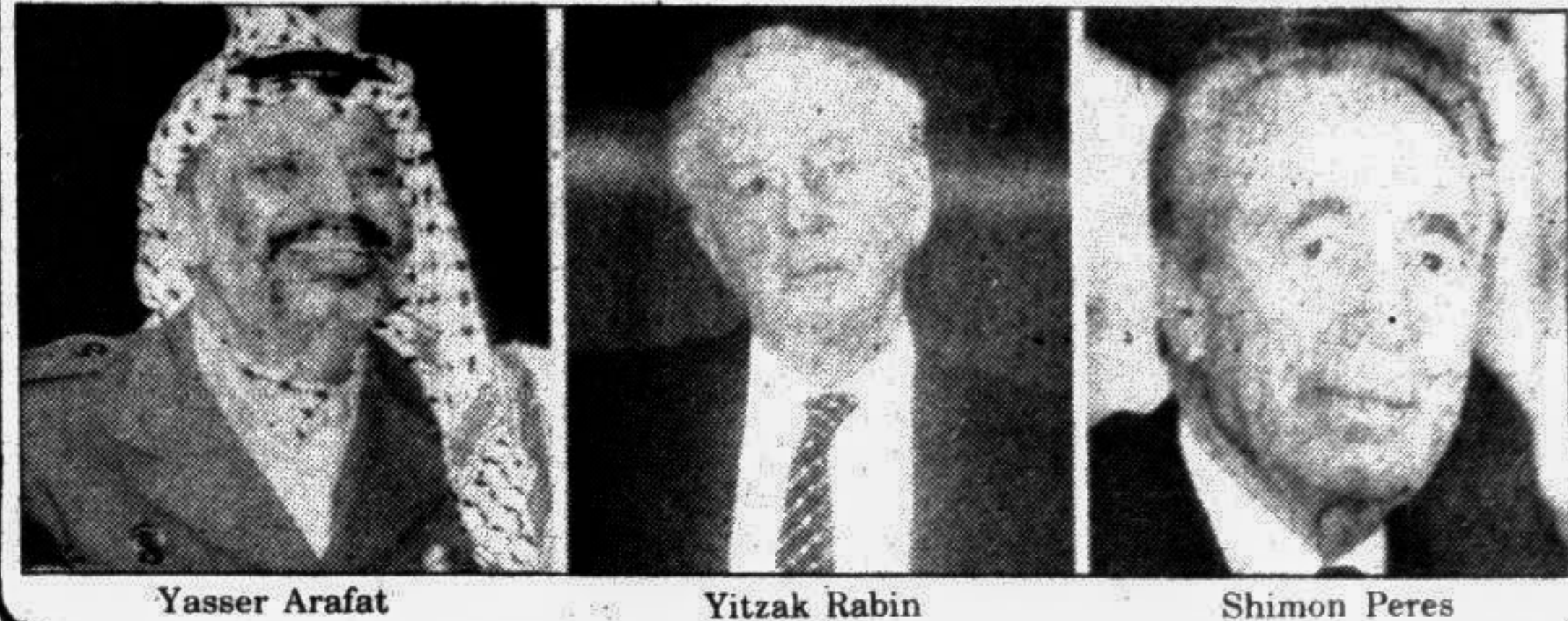
committee member, outraged that Arafat was included, immediately submitted his resignation, in one of the ugliest disputes over the prize in years.

The choice has been highly controversial, especially following the kidnapping this week of an Israeli soldier by Palestinian extremists. Rabin

has demanded Arafat reign in the extremists, throwing the peace process into its worst crisis since the 'treaty was signed last year.

"The kidnapping is deeply tragic and fills us with sadness and anxiety," said Francis Sejersted, chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize award

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Yasser Arafat

Yitzhak Rabin

Shimon Peres

PM back home from Malaysia 'Visit has created ground for huge investment'

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said yesterday that her visit to Malaysia had prepared the ground for enhanced economic cooperation between the two countries.

"Their impression about Bangladesh has completely changed after our visit. They are impressed at the development here and the opportunities we created in the past three years. So we are expecting huge investments from Malaysia," Begum Zia told newsmen at Zia International Airport on her return from Malaysia after a four-day official visit.

"They expressed their willingness to invest in Bangladesh. It was a very successful visit to improve bilateral relations between the two

countries," the Prime Minister said.

Earlier, a special flight of the Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the Prime Minister and her entourage landed at the airport at 2 pm. Cabinet members, chiefs of the three services, diplomats and high officials were present at the airport to receive the Prime Minister.

Begum Zia, clad in a light green chiffon saree, came straight to the VIP lounge to brief the press on the outcome of her visit.

The Prime Minister said that during her talks with her Malaysian counterpart Dr. Mahathir bin Mohammad, the two sides agreed to boost bilateral trade and narrow down

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Business leaders see prospect of Malaysian investment

Bangladesh business leaders, who accompanied Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia during her four-day visit to Malaysia, have said the visit had created a new and positive interests among the Malaysian investors and entrepreneurs about Bangladesh.

"Positive interests have been generated among the Malaysian investors and entrepreneurs for investing in Bangladesh and increasing trade after the visit," Latifur Rahman, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, told BSS on board Biman yesterday afternoon on the outcome of the Prime Minister's trip to Malaysia.

Rahman headed the 23 member team of the businessmen, entrepreneurs and

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Commonwealth emissary Sir Ninian Stephen (2nd from R) met the opposition leaders at the Sangsad Bhavan yesterday. Also seen (from L-R) are Matiur Rahman Nizami of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Suranjit Sengupta of the Ganatantri Party, Moudud Ahmed of the Jatiya Party and Abdus Samad Azad of the Awami League. — Star photo

JS Sectt project moves at snail's pace

By Ashuzzaman

A Tk 1.2 crore project to modernise and improve the functional capacity of the Parliament secretariat has made little headway in one and a half years.

The project funded by the Asia Foundation needs 35 permanent staff and 10 consultants which appointment of whom is being delayed because of official formalities, sources concerned said.

The three-year project started in March 1993 but the Parliament Secretariat is yet to receive the necessary equipment as planned under the project.

One of the main objectives of the project is to train the secretariat staff to improve of their skill so that they can effectively help conduct legislative business in a modern system.

The Parliament Secretariat became a separate one following the passage of a bill on May 17 last. Since then, the Parliament Secretariat Commission headed by Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali has been working to complete the

process including recruitment of about 300 staff for the secretariat.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina are also in the five-member commission.

The commission appointed a four-member committee to finalise the guidelines and rules for the new secretariat. Parliament Secretary Abul Hashem, who heads the committee, told The Daily Star that the guidelines had been finalised and would be approved at a meeting on return of the Speaker, now in Canada.

Recruitment process will begin following the final approval, he added.

An Asia Foundation source said so far two observation programmes were undertaken — one in Thailand and the other in South Korea — and some equipment were supplied to the authorities concerned.

In reply to a question what will they do with the fund if it is not utilised timely, the

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Silver in Asiad kabaddi

Sports Reporter

Country's kabaddi players gave a little silver lining to the hitherto ineffably long grey grind of the huge Bangladesh contingent in the Twelfth Asian Games when they settled for the silver after losing to the eventual champions India on Thursday in Hiroshima.

Bangladesh who had to take on two mighty opponents like India and SAF gold winners Pakistan, within four hours had to wait till yesterday to know their fate.

Only after the postponed match between bitter rivals India and Pakistan was played to conclusion with the former winning the match to ensure an all win record in the round robin format, Bangladesh knew that they had retained their status as runners up.

Bangladesh won silver in 1990 Beijing Asiad.

Unconfirmed reports from Hiroshima had it that had the Bangladesh officials not made an exhibition of themselves by being taken in by the strategic

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DCC female commissioner polls today

By Staff Correspondent

The election of the 18 female ward commissioners for the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) will be held today at the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka. The DC, Dhaka will conduct the election as Returning Officer.

Some 90 directly elected ward commissioners and the Mayor will vote to elect the female commissioners. The balloting will begin at 8am and continue till 4 pm.

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its arch-rival Awami League nominated candidates for all the 18 posts and till filing the report both sides were trying to rally support in favour of their candidates.

Durga Puja ends

The five-day Durga Puja, the greatest religious festival of the Bangalee Hindu community, ended yesterday with the immersion of the images of goddess Durga, reports BSS.

In Dhaka, thousands of Hindu devotees watched the ceremonial immersion in the river Buriganga.

Aristide returns to Haiti today

WASHINGTON, Oct 14: Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, on his last day in exile, said today his return would enhance democracy throughout the world and



move his country from misery to poverty, reports AP.

At a White House sendoff by President Clinton, Aristide repeated his pledge to say 'no to violence, no to vengeance, yes to reconciliation' when he regains control of his govern-

ment after three years of military rule.

Aristide, who leaves for home tomorrow, invited Clinton to visit Haiti after his restoration to office.

Clinton, speaking to an audience on the White House lawn that included members of Congress and families of US soldiers in Haiti, said Aristide's return will "mark the end of one stage of a long and difficult journey and the beginning of a new era of hope for the people of Haiti."

Haitians were enthusiastically sprucing up in port-Au-Prince for the president's triumphal return. But the celebratory mood was tempered with the fear that jubilation could erupt into violence.

For the first time in weeks, gunfire echoed repeatedly through the capital's Pacot neighborhood Thursday night. Before the US intervention, angry anti-Aristidists would fire off their guns at night as an intimidation.

Naguib Mahfouz stabbed

CAIRO, Oct 14: A man stabbed Nobel prize-winning novelist Naguib Mahfouz in the neck here today, police said. The Egyptian writer was hospitalised in satisfactory condition, reports AP.

A doctor at the hospital where he was taken said the 83-year-old writer had undergone surgery and his bleeding had stopped. Mahfouz was getting out of his car in front of his Cairo home when a man came up and stabbed him in the neck. Dr Heba Al-Sirgani said.

Unscheduled flight

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Oct 14: Biman Bangladesh Airlines, has reportedly incurred financial loss because of an unscheduled Dhaka-Sylhet-Dhaka flight.

A local BNP leader, who is also in the central committee of the party, along with 45 of his companions had made the trip on board a 70-seater ATP aircraft.

Biman authorities arranged the special flight (BG-402) which landed at Sylhet at 1 pm.

The passengers of the special flight then went to the circuit house here and reportedly stayed at the VVIP cottage until evening.

The group returned to the capital at 7 pm.

When contacted, an official of the Biman, on condition of anonymity said the special flight had caused a huge loss to the national airlines. It had also disrupted moral schedules of some domestic flights, he said.

Campbell first woman to walk around world

JOHN O'GROATS, Scotland, Oct 14: A British woman, who left home at the age of 16 on an epic global trek, entered the record books today as the first woman to walk around the world on foot, reports Reuters.

Flyona Campbell, 27, strode into this small village on the northern tip of Scotland just before 8am (0700 GMT) and 11 years after she left to cross Europe, Australia, the United States and Africa.

Lankan govt, Tigers agree to swap POWs



A four-member Tamil Tiger guerrilla delegation (L) Head of the Jaffna political section Hamperadi (1st from L), LTTE's deputy political leader Karikalan (2nd from L), rebel administration head Dominic (3rd from L) and chief of the Tiger economic division Ravi (4th from L) sits across from a Sri Lankan government delegation for peace talks Thursday. Navin Gooneratne (1st from R) and secretary to the prime minister Kusumsiri Balapatabendi (2nd from R) are also present. — AFP photo

JAFFNA, Oct 14: The first round of peace talks between the Sri Lankan government and Tamil Tiger guerrillas ended today in this rebel-held northern town with both sides agreeing to swap prisoners of war, reports AFP.

The warring factions were upbeat after two days of discussions focusing on economic issues affecting territory dominated by the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Political issues are to be taken up later.

"Today we had good reason to believe that both parties are on the right path to peace," a government delegate, Lionel Fernando, said here after opening discussions at the LTTE's main political office.

As the delegation returned to the main military complex located nearby there were indications of a one-to-one prisoner swap with the government arranging the first release of 18 LTTE suspects

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US, Russia differ over handling of Gulf crisis

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 14: The United States and Russia disagreed today on how to handle the Iraqi crisis, with Russia rejecting a US call for an early UN Security Council vote on new measures to curb Iraqi threats, reports AFP.

The US delegation insisted on a vote tomorrow on a resolution calling on Baghdad to pull back troops from the border with Kuwait and barring Iraq from any future buildup in the area, diplomats said.

Russia said it will not vote before Sunday, when Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev is to address the Council, and has threatened to use its veto if Washington insists on going ahead Saturday, the diplomats said.

In Kuwait City, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said today that Iraq had now in principle recognised Kuwait, but the United States and Britain said it was

not enough to lift UN sanctions.

"The sovereignty of Kuwait is now recognised" by Iraq, Kozyrev told reporters on arrival from talks in Baghdad with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

In a joint statement issued with Russia on Thursday, Iraq said it was prepared to recognise Kuwait and their common border set by the United Nations after the 1991 Gulf War.

"I have good news for the people of Kuwait," Kozyrev said.

"In fact Iraq has just recognised the sovereignty and independence of Kuwait, and this decision must now be endorsed by the United Nations."

"In the meantime everyone should remain on guard," he said in response to questions on the US military buildup in the Gulf.

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