

No evil force can foil our development plans: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday declared that no evil force can obstruct the programmes aimed at the people's welfare and economic development of the country, reports UNB.

"Flourishment of the people's power and economic emancipation are our main objectives... Global situation and internal intolerance at times create obstacles on this path. But those are transient," she pointed out inaugurating a two-day 5th National Conference of Chartered Accountants CAs at a local hotel.

Begum Zia told the CAs that her government was making relentless efforts to bring about discipline, accountability and transparency in all tiers of the administration. "We are pledged to expand literacy, establish political stability, protect environment and free the people from the chains of poverty, hunger and diseases," she said.

Referring to the theme of the conference — "the Challenges of Market Economy" — the Prime Minister said the present government had ensured free market to accelerate economic development of the country.

Begum Zia stressed the need for building an economic infrastructure to attract foreign investment in the present competitive global market.

"In the last three and a half years, we created a congenial environment for foreign investment in the country," she said mentioning the scope

Mass agitation

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net headed by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

The opposition chief whip said acceptance of the ruling party formula would have amounted to betrayal with the people longing for a fool proof electoral process. Besides, "If we now accept a partisan interim government for holding elections, the long boycott of Parliament proceedings and sacrifice already made by the opposition leaders and activists during the last several months of agitations would be meaningless," he added.

He also said that the Opposition had no room for making any concessions on the demand for holding general elections under a non-partisan administration.

The people had always realised their major political demands through struggles and they would definitely realise the demand for a caretaker government the same way.

Referring to Sir Ninian's press statement made yesterday morning, Nasim said, "We have no knowledge of the Commonwealth envoy putting forward any formula for a negotiation between the government and the Opposition. The latest formula handed over by Sir Ninian to the Leader of the Opposition on November 13 was, to the best of my knowledge, a ruling party sponsored one," he added.

Even if the formula was worked out by Sir Ninian, the Opposition had been left with no option but to reject that because the plan did not reflect

Armed Forces Day

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sent on the occasion.

A reception to the next of kin of the soldiers who received the gallantry award "Bir Shrestho" will be held at the Prime Minister's office, Armed Forces Division at the Dhaka Cantonment.

Begum Khaleda Zia will meet the nearest ones of the seven Bir Shresthos — Shaheed Captain Mohiuddin Jahan, Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Kamal, Shaheed Sepoy Hamidur Rahman, Shaheed Mohammad Ruhul Amin, Shaheed Flight Lieutenant M Matir Rahman, Shaheed Lance Naik Munshi Abdur Rauf and Shaheed Lance Naik Noor Mohammad Sheikh.

Chief of Staff of the three services, Defence Secretary, Director General of Bangladesh Rifles and other senior armed forces officers, including Principal Staff Officers, will be present.

চট্টগ্রাম চেম্বার অব কর্মস এন্ড ইভার্টি-এর
উদ্যোগে ZDH/TA এর সহযোগিতায়

দেশীয় পণ্ডিতের ব্যাপক প্রচার ও বিপণনের লক্ষ্যে অন্যত্ব হচ্ছে

চট্টগ্রাম
শিল্প পণ্ড
মেলা '৯৪

ঘন চট্টগ্রাম টেক্নিয়াল সিজেকেল জিমনেসিয়াম
ও টেক্নিক্যাল একাডে

তারিখ: ২০-২৬শে নভেম্বর '৯৪

সময়: প্রতিদিন সকাল ১০টা থেকে রাত ১০টা

আগমনিক মাসিত

Technology
EXPOSITION

D-1176



The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Opposition held separate press conferences at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday. Seen from right to left Abdus Salam Talukdar, Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury, Khandaker Delwar Hossain of the BNP and Mohiuddin Ahmed, Sajeda Chowdhury and Mohammad Nasim of the Awami League. — Star photo

Ninian disappointed

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Continuing, Sir Ninian said, "In recognition of this, I have regretfully come to the conclusion that my continued presence in Dhaka will serve no purpose."

Bangladesh is at a crucial stage in its development. "And you need conditions of peace, social stability and political harmony" which were required "to concentrate on building, for the present, and for generations to come security, prosperity and fulfillment which Bangladesh deserves," he said.

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Speaking about his disappointment at the failure of his mission he also hoped that there could still be a "peaceful and speedy resolution of the issues that today divide your political parties."

Mentioning the proposals that he had made and the government side's acceptance of some of those, Sir Ninian em-

phasised that "the primary responsibility for resolving the political crisis here will, as ever, remain with you, the people of Bangladesh."

Sir Ninian noted that when he arrived here "the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition had seized a significant opportunity to promote the success of the dialogue. That opportunity remains."

He, however, added, "Suspicion and mistrust are both deep and strong. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the parties did come together and did conduct a rational debate."

He pointed out that he had come to Bangladesh as the envoy of Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Emeka Anyaoku and in pursuance of the three-point proposal submitted by Emeka and subsequently accepted by both sides.

In what seemed to be a note of warning, Sir Ninian said,

Violence and uproar will achieve nothing. I urge the people of this country not to go down that road, which only leads to anguish and despair."

Sir Ninian hoped that through discussions between the parties, the prevailing atmosphere of confrontation and tension "can still be dispelled, normal political activity can still be restored and confidence in the institutions of democracy can still be consolidated."

He said he will recommend to Secretary General Chief Emeka continued close monitoring of the situation in Bangladesh.

"While my own role may have come to an end, I know that the Commonwealth still stands ready to assist the people of Bangladesh and your political parties," the former Australian judge-turned Governor General said.

Ninian leaves Dhaka today

By Staff Correspondent

Commonwealth emissary Sir Ninian Stephen and Lady Stephen are scheduled to leave Dhaka today for Singapore en route to Melbourne by a Singapore Airlines flight at 4 pm.

They will be seen off by senior officials of the Foreign Ministry.

Sir Ninian is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at 9:30 this morning at her Tejgaon office. He is also due to meet Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her Mint Road residence at 11 am.

The meeting with Sheikh Hasina was originally scheduled for yesterday at 5 pm but was re-scheduled at her request because of her pre-occupation.

One of the two aides to Sir Ninian, Christopher Childs, left for London yesterday afternoon while the other, Dr Ananu, is due to leave for London today.

Sir Ninian attended a private lunch at the residence of British Ambassador Peter J Fowler yesterday.

Chief Emeka

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Chief Emeka Anyaoku is presently in Islamabad attending a meeting of senior Commonwealth officials. The meeting will continue for a few more days.

It could not, however, be confirmed if the Commonwealth Secretary General will come to Dhaka from Islamabad or return to London and come at a later date.

Sir Ninian is learnt to have sent the summary of the dialogue and a detailed review to the Secretary General's office in London over the past several days. Christopher Childs, an aide to Sir Ninian, who left for London yesterday also carried updated report of the developments here. Sir Ninian is also learnt to have contacted Emeka in Islamabad.

In his statement to the press yesterday Sir Ninian said, "I will be recommending to the Commonwealth Secretary General that the Commonwealth should not only closely monitor the situation here but should also remain ready to assist the parties in their search for a peaceful settlement."

Dr. Muhammad Shahiduzzaman of the International Relations department expressed his surprise at the abrupt breakdown in the negotiations.

He hoped the Opposition would be more thoughtful in

charting their future campaign programmes while the ruling party must be more prudent in responding to those.

"The whole question of democratic practice now hangs in the balance... one false step may spoil everything," he added.

Giving her immediate reaction as a development worker, Khushi Kabir of the NGO Nijera Kori suggested that now was the time to weigh opinion from the people on how to shape the future course of policies.

"When the talks were initiated and the Commonwealth envoy brought in, people were neither informed nor consulted," she said, "yet people have to bear the brunt of any disappointment caused by the activities of the politicians."

Farukh Ahmed, an employee of a private business house at Motijheel, observed that people, particularly those living in the rural areas, hardly cared for the success or the failure of the dialogue.

"You see, they have different priorities... a farmer has to worry more about the price of his produce, his fertiliser and supply of irrigation water."

"Why waste so much time on petty political issues," asked Selina Siddiqua, a housewife in the capital's Shahjahanpur area.

"We know we are poor and the country's economic condition is not that good," she said. "We also know how these problems could be solved. Yet we do not do that."

However, when reaction was sought from an elderly rickshawpuller, Hafizuddin Mia, he said, "Who is Ninian, sir?"

He said both the ruling party and the Opposition could have been more accommodating in their negotiations.

"Because politics of the present day involves give-and-take," he added.

Dr. Muhammad Shahiduzzaman of the International Relations department expressed his surprise at the abrupt breakdown in the negotiations.

He hoped the Opposition would be more thoughtful in

strengthening the Election Commission such that it will have the powers, procedures, staff, resources and independence necessary to ensure that future general elections are free and fair;

(b) the content of a legally binding Code of Conduct to guide political activity.

2. The National Consultative Committee decision will be reached by consensus. In case of failure, the Chairman of the Committee will discuss the issues with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to arrive at a decision.

3. The leaders expect the National Consultative Committee to produce an agreed interim report within one month of its inaugural sitting. All sitting will be in the Parliament.

C. On agreement to the above by the Government and Opposition, all opposition parties will return to Parliament and normal parliamentary activity will resume.

D. These proposals are made in the expectation that the Commonwealth will provide appropriate technical assistance for the above process and in other appropriate ways assist and facilitate the implementation of the understanding, if required.

E. As regards amendment of the Rules of Procedures it will be dealt with in accordance with the provision of the Constitution and the procedure laid down in the Rules of Procedures of the Parliament.

Speaking on condition of anonymity many diplomats expressed frustration and despair and hoped that the parties would be flexible and attempt at a reconciliation through mutual dialogue.

The ambassador, of a friendly developing country observed: "It is best to set your house in order yourself. No outside negotiator can do what you can do yourself."

The Midnight File

Arafat calls for national unity

GAZA CITY, Nov 20: PLO chief Yasser Arafat called for national unity today in his first public appearance since the Palestinian clashes in Gaza City which have led to 19 deaths. "Despite all that happened, we call for national unity," Arafat said in a speech to 500 supporters outside his Gaza City headquarters, reports AFP.

Fighting in Angola despite peace accord

SAO TOME, Nov 20: Government troops and UNITA rebels were fighting in southern Angola today even as the two sides signed a peace accord, UNITA radio said. The radio, monitored in the island state of Sao Tome and Principe, said government forces had suffered heavy casualties in clashes around the cities of Cuito Cuanavale and Menongue in southern Cuando Cubango province, reports Reuter.

BNP blames Opposition

any government employee or transport and local protocol except for security purposes and protection.

It said they "will not, in any way, interfere with the election process or with the functioning of the Election Commission."

It further said the prime minister and the ministers would continue in office until the outcome of the general elections "is known officially and shall thereupon resign," it said, "whoever may thereafter be appointed Prime Minister by the President in conformity with the country's constitution shall then proceed to designate cabinet members, ministers, ministers of state and deputy ministers".

It was further proposed that a national consultative committee comprising 10 members of Parliament with an equal number of five each from the government and the Opposition,

The prime minister would exercise executive powers in an interim capacity and with the assent of the majority of the cabinet until the expiry of the Fifth Parliament. In reckoning such majority each minister and the prime minister would have one vote, the proposal said.

It further said the prime minister and the ministers, in common with other candidates, contest the general elections for the Sixth Parliament and campaign both for themselves and for their parties but "shall not, for that purpose, employ any government employees or use any government transport and local protocol".

The proposal said the ministers of the interim government would refrain from using

the proposal said that the Speaker of Parliament, be established with the purpose to discuss changes required to strengthen the Election Commission, a code of conduct to guide political activity and to produce an agreed interim report within one month of its inaugural sitting.

The proposal, if agreed by the government and the Opposition, all opposition parties "will return to Parliament and normal parliamentary activity will resume."

Storm kills 30 in Somalia

MOGADISHU, Nov 20: At least 30 people were killed and hundreds more injured in a cyclone that whirled through northern Somalia for 19 hours, an official of the faction controlling the area said today, reports AP.

Business leaders

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believe that on this occasion too, the national interest will take priority over other considerations", Rahman said.

He further expressed his belief that in the interest of the economy and the country as a whole, what right now appears to be a looming crisis, would be resolved satisfactorily.

Abdur Rob Chowdhury, President of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), talking to The Daily Star said that although Sir Ninian is leaving the country, talks between the government and the Opposition should continue.

Non-partisan and respectable persons from all professional groups including the business community, lawyers, teachers and journalists can mediate a fresh dialogue, because he felt, under the present situation, the opposing political camps cannot resume talks on their own.

Chowdhury also requested the parties to ensure that the situation does not lead to violence or jeopardise people's lives. Even if agitations continue, those should be without disturbing public life, he said.

The DCCI President, however, felt that any crisis can be resolved easily, if the parties remain respectful of each other's opinion.

GULSHAN LADIES' COMMUNITY CLUB

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