

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

created for setting up industries in Bangladesh with total overseas investment.

The Prime Minister reminded all of the liberal industrial policy of the present government and said all but five sectors were now open for private investment in Bangladesh.

Rebate in taxes for industrial investment, the security guarantee for foreign investment and the improvement of law and order situation have attracted more foreign investors, she said.

Begum Zia mentioned the special preference given by different countries, including the United States, European Commission, Canada and Japan, regarding import of Bangladesh goods. "This is also a favourable environment for foreign investors."

The Prime Minister said her government had taken up expanded programmes for enhancing buying capacity of the common man. "Besides agro-based industries in the rural areas, massive development has occurred in poultry, pisciculture and dairy sectors," she added.

Begum Zia mentioned the self-employment programmes for the unemployed youths and credit programmes for distressed women.

Begum Zia hoped that the recommendations emerging from the two-day deliberations in two technical sessions of the conference, would add a new dimension to the economic development activities of the country.



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.

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 Emeke Anyaoku and in pursuance of the three-point proposal submitted by Emeke 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 Emeke 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 Minto 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 Anafu, is due to leave for London today.

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

Chief Emeke

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Chief Emeke 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 Emeke 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."

Diplomats

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"It is not a moment to be optimistic."

The French Ambassador in Bangladesh, commenting on the failed dialogue said: "It is very disappointing."

Continuing, he said, "I am not a Commonwealth envoy, but having followed closely the dialogue, it is difficult to understand why it was not possible to arrive at a settlement on how to organise elections."

Ambassador Jean-Michel Lacombe thought that the issue of political stability is likely to figure prominently before the donors at the Paris Aid Club meeting next April.

"It will look odd to come to Paris with the country in turmoil," he said.

Kenneth William Aspinall, the Australian High Commissioner in Bangladesh, said, "I really do not want to comment. However, it is my hope that a political solution will happen in the future. But I think Bangladeshis politicians should reach out to solve the problem themselves. Australia would always support any positive move."

German Ambassador to Bangladesh Jurgen Gehl told this correspondent, "At this stage I would not like to comment. We are, however, keenly observing the developments that are taking place in the political arena."

Many other Western and Commonwealth envoys, when asked for their reactions on the failed talks, expressed disappointment and concern at the future of democracy in Bangladesh.

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.

Shocked public remain hopeful

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Those more optimistic said an acceptable solution could still be reached "without a trained lawyer like Sir Ninian."

But that depends entirely on the sincerity of the political leadership, they were quick to add.

Some, however, feared that the breakdown in the parity would further aggravate the political climate and affect

economic growth, further discouraging foreign investors.

This is very unfortunate," commented Professor Emajuddin Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University. "I don't know how the whole nation is going to react to it," he said.

"As an immediate result, the uncertainty in the political arena would deepen," the VC told The Daily Star while giving his immediate reactions to the news of the failed dialogue.

"I was never very hopeful about the success of the talks," said Prof. Amirul Islam Chowdhury, Vice Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University. "I am not surprised that nothing much has come out."

However, he added that the political organisations must continue their process of negotiation for the greater interest of the country.

"The collapse of the dialogue has upset me... I wish it had succeeded," said Prof. Talukder Muniruzzaman of the Dhaka University's Political Science department.

Prof. Hasanuzzaman Chowdhury said he was opposed from the very beginning to bringing "foreign elements into our talks."

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

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

"The whole question of democratic practice now hang 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 politics.

"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 Siddiqui, 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?"

Ninian's proposal

From Page 1 Col 4

Republic in an interim capacity and with the assent of the majority of the Cabinet. In reckoning such majority each minister and the Prime Minister shall have one vote.

3. The Prime Minister and the ministers may, in common with other candidates, contest the general election 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, except for the purposes of security and protection. They will not in any way interfere with the election process or with the function of the Election Commission.

4. The Prime Minister and the ministers shall continue in office until the outcome of the general election is known officially and shall thereupon resign. Whoever may thereafter be appointed Prime Minister by the President pursuant to S. 56(3) of the Constitution shall then proceed to designate Cabinet members, ministers of state and deputy ministers.

B. The Leaders further agree that:

1. There shall be established a National Consultative Committee comprising 10 Members of Parliament (5 from government side and 5 from the Opposition) which may be chaired by the Speaker of the Parliament whose purpose will be to discuss in detail:

Jamaat

From Page 1 Col 5

that the government would have to take all the blame if the country's current political crisis took a serious turn.

"The dialogue has failed at last... the government proved its failure in every sector and is pushing the country towards a debacle," said Khan, the senior nayeb-e-ameer of Jamaat.

He added that not only Islam but also the independence and sovereignty of the country have come under threat during the reign of the BNP government.

The rally, arranged in observance of the "Caretaker Day", was also addressed by Maulana Matmur Rahman Nizami MP, Mohammad Kammaruzzaman, Saifur Alam Khan Milon, Abu Taher Mohammad Masum and Mohammad Aminul Islam.

According to Jamaat leaders, on this day in 1983 they first proposed to the nation the concept of caretaker government.

Jamaat parliamentary group leader Matmur Rahman Nizami said that BNP had created a constitutional crisis and would have to pay for this. He urged the government to accept the demand for caretaker government to overcome the present crisis.

the spirit of the Opposition demand for a non-partisan administration," Nasim asserted.

Referring to Sir Ninian's appeal to the people of the country yesterday, "not to go down the roads of violence and uproar", the Opposition leader asked if it was within his jurisdiction.

Nasim said there is no reason for any confusion over 'struggle for democracy' and 'violence'.

Earlier, the leaders of the opposition parties and groups had a meeting with Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Gas goes to Gafargaon

GAFARGAON, Nov 20: Gafargaon, an important thana in Mymensingh district, has been brought under the gas supply network, reports UNB.

Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain today inaugurated the gas supply at Gafargaon thana headquarters, about 40 kilometres from Mymensingh town.

Titas Gas Company, a subsidiary of Petro-Bangla, has connected Gafargaon with natural gas by constructing 6,830 metres of pipe lines at a cost of Tk 4.23 crore.

Some 5,427 consumers of different categories in the thana will be supplied with natural gas by next five years. Of them 666 consumer will get connection a year, official sources said.

Armed Forces Day

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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 Jahangir, Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Kamal, Shaheed Sepoy Hamidur Rahman, Shaheed Mohammad Ruhul Amin, Shaheed Flight Lieutenant M Matmur Rahman, Shaheed Lance Naik Munshi Abdur Rauf and Shaheed Lance Naik Noor Mohammad Sheikh.

Chiefs 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 on the occasion.

Similar receptions will also be hosted by the Chiefs of Staff of the three services in their respective headquarters.

Chiefs of Staff of the three services will pay courtesy call on the President at Bangabhaban and on the Prime Minister at her Armed Forces Division office at Dhaka Cantonment.

A grand display of military hardware will highlight the day's programmes.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas will inaugurate the grand exhibition at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. It will remain open for the members of the public from 2 pm to 5 pm on the day and from 8 am to 5 pm from November 22 to 25.

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 Reuters.

BNP blames Opposition

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tell the nation about our sincerity to find a solution within the constitutional framework. But at the same time, we feel equally uncomfortable because there is no solution to the problem," he said.

Prof Chowdhury narrated the entire dialogue process and the efforts of the ruling party in resolving the political impasse through its proposals of the interim government.

The BNP's final proposal, which was handed over to Sir Ninian, on November 17, said the incumbent prime minister, following the resignation of all ministers before the expiry of the Fifth Parliament by effluxion of time, would select in their place nine members of Parliament for appointment by the President to a cabinet as ministers without portfolio, four of whom would be nominated by her and five by the Leader of 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 may, 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

Hasina

From Page 1 Col 8

present government had failed in running the country in last three and a half years. The party in power has politicised the administration resulting in stagnation in all spheres of life, including in economy, she alleged.

Hasina said there is no security in society due to unabated acts of terrorism. Some 50 businessmen, 55 students and a number of housewives were killed during the BNP rule, "but the culprits were not brought to book."

She said 86 per cent of the population are now living below the poverty line while 69 per cent are landless. The number of educated unemployed rose to two crore.

JCD activists

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damaged over 100 vehicles, witnesses and police said. They also exploded cocktails and fired blank shots creating panic in some areas.

The situation was brought under control by police. Police, however, could not arrest any one of the assailants.

The JCD organised a protest rally in the evening in front of the Biman office here and called for immediate arrest of the killers.

The namaj-e-janaza of Jamir and Farid will be held tomorrow at 11 am at Laldighi maidan.

Business leaders

From Page 1 Col 4

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, layers, 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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THE SEASON'S MEENABAZAR

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চিটাগাং চেম্বার অব কমার্স এন্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি-এর উদ্যোগে ZDH/TA এর সহায়তায় দেশীয় পণ্যের ব্যাপক প্রচার ও বিপণনের লক্ষ্যে অনতিদূর হচ্ছে

চট্টগ্রাম শিল্প পণ্য মেলা '৯৪

স্থান: চট্টগ্রাম টেডিয়াম স্টেজের পিছনে জমিনসিয়ায় ও তৎসলপু এলাকা

তারিখ: ২০-২৬শে নভেম্বর '৯৪

সময়: প্রতিদিন সকাল ১০টা থেকে রাত ১০টা

আপনারা স্বাগত

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