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Inside Today

Article
Courting Investment from Newly Industrializing Nations
Column: Along My Way
by S B Choudhuri
Page 4

International
Congress seeks guru's blessing to win polls
Kumaratunga sends message to restart talks with Tamil Tigers
Page 5

Business
Proposed Jamdani Estate at Tarabo awaits approval
Record tea crop likely in Lanka this year
Pages 6, 7

Health
Introducing laser therapy in Bangladesh; Doctors nearer to a leprosy vaccine
Page 8

Metropolitan
Dhaka Day by Day

Regal Ways of Road
Page 2

Opposition's dismay faxed to Emeka

Star Report

The Opposition yesterday conveyed its dismay to Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Emeka Anyaoku regarding Sir Ninian Stephen's statement in Dhaka Sunday.

A letter on behalf of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina was faxed to Chief Emeka in which implications of his envoy Sir Ninian's press statement were pointed out.

The letter also mentioned Sir Ninian's 'violation' of the terms of reference of the dialogue and the mandate given to him. Opposition sources said.

The contents of the letter to Emeka also came up for discussion at the Awami League Working Committee meeting yesterday where the party lead-

ers endorsed it.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina also expressed her strong reservations about Sir Ninian's statement when the latter made a farewell call on her yesterday morning at her Minto Road residence.

When contacted, AL leaders refrained from disclosing details of the letter to Emeka, but said that the Commonwealth chief was apprised of the Opposition's view on Sir Ninian's statement as well as their stance on the caretaker government issue.

Under the set terms of reference and guidelines, Sir Ninian cannot make any proposal as he stated in his press statement, Opposition sources said. He came here to facilitate

a dialogue between the government and the Opposition, but he cannot make a proposal, they pointed out.

The sources alleged that there was an agreement that no statement other than any joint statement agreed upon by the government and the Opposition could be issued, but the agreement was also violated by Sir Ninian. "And all these were communicated to Commonwealth Secretary General," one source said.

Sir Ninian met Sheikh Hasina at 11 am and stayed there for about 65 minutes. Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdu Samad Azad, the AL chief's political adviser SAMS Kibria, Abul Hasan

See Page 12 Col 7

Massive NATO air strikes on Serb-held airfield

SARAJEVO, Nov 21: NATO launched a massive 30-plane attack on a Serb held airfield in Croatia today which it called a "necessary response" to Serb air raids into Bosnia, reports Reuters.

British, Dutch, US and French warplanes took part in the attack on the Udbina airfield, NATO said.

NATO southern commander Admiral Leighton Smith said the raid had been successful and had also destroyed Serb anti-aircraft installations and a surface-to-air missile site in the area.

All aircraft had returned to base, he added.

The raid, launched from Italy, came after Serb aircraft attacked targets in the Bihac enclave of northwestern Bosnia last Friday and Saturday.

The Yugoslav news agency Tanjug initially reported two raids but UN officials said the attack had lasted a long time.

Serb media said villages around Udbina airport had also been hit and that a general alert had been sounded in nearby parts of Bosnian Serb territory.

Western military sources said NATO aircraft had orders to hit runways and air defences at Udbina, but not aircraft on the ground; in order to minimise casualties.

In Zagreb, the UN special representative in former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, said the strike was aimed at preventing further use of Udbina.

"The air action today was a necessary and proportionate response to the continued use of this airfield for hostile air attacks against the Bihac pocket of Bosnia-Herzegovina," Akashi said in a statement.

Akashi first authorised a strike on Sunday but the aircraft were called back to base because of bad weather.

"It must be recalled that three air raids have been launched in the past two weeks from the airfield at Udbina. These air raids have included the use of napalm and cluster bombs and have caused civilian casualties and have hit the Bihac 'safe areas,'" Akashi's statement said.

"I hope that today's NATO air attack will deter any further attack on the Bihac safe area and its surroundings or on UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force) personnel within Bihac."

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said he had authorised the use of air power in Croatia to defend the town of Bihac, a UN "safe area."

In Moscow today, President

See Page 12 Col 8

Dhaka asks UN to ensure safety of troops in Bihac

Bangladesh expressed grave concern over the latest air and missile attacks by the Serbs on Bihac and asked the United Nations to make all necessary arrangements to ensure safety of the Bangladeshi troops in the besieged Bosnian town, reports UNB.

Dhaka also asked the world body to resume fresh supplies to the contingent, deployed there under the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

"Since the Bangladeshi troops are currently under the UN command, it is absolutely essential to ensure their security and resume supplies to them urgently," Foreign Secretary (FS) Mufleh R Osmayn told foreign envoys in a meeting in Dhaka Sunday.

Official sources said yesterday the FS met with ambassadors of all five countries who

See Page 12 Col 7



Commonwealth emissary Sir Ninian Stephen met Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her Minto Road residence in the city yesterday. — Star photo



Commonwealth Secretary General's Special Envoy Sir Ninian Stephen made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday prior to his return home. — PID photo

Opposition discusses next programme

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of the parliamentary opposition yesterday had a preliminary discussion on their next course of action following the failure of the Commonwealth-brokered talks between the ruling party and the Opposition.

The opposition leaders met at the Sangsad Bhaban last night and later explained to the press the reasons behind the failure of the talks.

At the meeting, the opposition leaders maintained that they were now left with no option but to resign from the Parliament for realising the demand for a non-partisan caretaker-government for holding general elections. "But most of the leaders present at the meeting felt that time for submitting the resignation to the Speaker is yet to be ripe," one of the leaders said.

They could resign only when the entire nation got ready to unseat the BNP administration through a mass agitation, he added.

The issue of submitting the resignation to the Speaker would be taken up seriously at a meeting this evening.

UNB adds: Briefing newsmen after the meeting, leaders of opposition parliamentary groups blamed BNP for fanning the dialogue and warned of a tougher agitation for realising the demand for non-party neutral caretaker government.

They alleged that the government is pushing the country to a constitutional crisis by ignoring the opposition demand.

The leaders gave a brief resume of the abortive dialogue and the government-opposition proposals placed to Sir Ninian.

See Page 12 Col 4

BNP's obstinacy aborted dialogue, says ALWC

The Bangladesh Awami League yesterday made it clear that a neutral non-party caretaker government is the only means to ensure a fair and credible parliamentary election, reports UNB.

It blamed the government for failure of the dialogue, saying the Opposition tried to make it a success, but the ruling party's stand to stick to power by any means and its obstinacy turned the dialogue abortive.

A resolution adopted at an emergency meeting of the party's working committee (WC) termed the ruling BNP's formula for power sharing as unrealistic and non-functional and said it would only lead the country to an abyssal crisis.

"The Awami League never sought to share power, we wanted a non-party neutral caretaker government" to ensure

See Page 12 Col 8

Ninian leaves for home

By Staff Correspondent

Commonwealth envoy Sir Ninian Stephen who facilitated a dialogue between the government and the opposition but failed to bring about a negotiated settlement to the current impasse left the country yesterday afternoon.

Sir Ninian and Lady Ninian left by Singapore Airlines flight for Australia.

The Commonwealth emissary who stayed for 37 days in Dhaka was seen off at the airport by acting Foreign Secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed.

Also present at the airport were Australian High Commissioner Kenneth William Aspinall, Pakistan High Commissioner Anwar Kemal and Canadian High Commissioner Jon J Scott. Among politicians only Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain was present at the airport.

Prior to his departure Sir

See Page 12 Col 7

Armed Forces to be modernised: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said the present government is working to build up the country's armed forces a skilled and modern one, reports UNB.

"Our armed forces are for national defence. Our objective is to ensure utmost security to the country's independence and sovereignty. But Bangladesh will continue to work with other countries for global peace. This is one of the cornerstones of our foreign policy," she said.

The Prime Minister was addressing a reception held at the Senakunja last night at Dhaka Cantonment arranged on the occasion of the Armed Forces Day.

Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni, ministers, political leaders,

diplomats, senior officials and the elite attended the reception.

The Prime Minister recalled the sacrifices of the valiant soldiers for the motherland and prayed for salvation of their souls. She also expressed gratitude to the family members of the martyrs.

Begum Zia said the armed forces are the pride of the nation. Apart from safeguarding the country's independence and sovereignty, they are also keeping significant contribution to nation building activities and to face natural calamities.

"Our armed forces have earned worldwide reputation," she added pointing to their participation in different UN peace-keeping missions and their role in the Gulf War and in rebuilding of war-ravaged

See Page 12 Col 3

Govt under non-party man is main issue

Kibria explains Opposition's case

Star Report

The Commonwealth-brokered talks between the government and the opposition parties failed because of the ruling party's refusal to respond to the fundamental concern of the Opposition to set up a non-partisan, neutral

Star Report

...tive results because the government has unfortunately not moved from its basic position of a party government to be in power during election time," he said.

On the other hand, he added, the Opposition have always asked for a government which would not be headed by any political party and certainly not the BNP. "Because this is, in our view, a fundamental issue. The disagreement of this aspect of the whole issue has led to the failure of the dialogue."

In an interview with The Daily Star at his Dhanmondi residence, Kibria, a former diplomat-turned politician termed the latest ruling party formula for a caretaker government as "impractical and unworkable" while highlighting the merit of the modified version of the Opposition's proposal and describing it as "moderate and constructive".

He also responded to questions about making concessions on the Opposition's part, the negotiation process and about the third formula claimed to have been proposed by the Commonwealth envoy Sir Ninian Stephen.

"I believe that the dialogue has failed to produce any pos-

See Page 4

JCD forces out Shibir activists from BAU halls

MYMENSINGH, Nov 21: Activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) stormed seven residential halls of Bangladesh Agricultural University Sunday night and today and forced out Shibir supporters, reports UNB.

Campus sources said JCD activists broke open the doors of 30 rooms belonging to Shibir supporters and trashed furniture in the seven dormitories, including Suhrawardy, Shamsul Haq, Nazmul Hasan and Shahjalal Halls.

They also set fire to 13 rooms of the Shibir activists apparently in protest of Sunday's killing in Chittagong of two JCD activists. Police and fire brigade men rushed to the halls and extinguished the fire.

The sources said JCD activists forced out Shibir workers and occupied their 22 rooms in different halls today.

Meanwhile, Fulpur Degree College was closed today till November 25, following a clash between two factions of JCD during a freshers' reception.

Koirala resigns

KATHMANDU, Nov 21: Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala today tendered his resignation to King Birendra at the royal palace following a humiliating defeat of his party by opposition communists, a source close to the premier said, reports AFP.



PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat addresses supporters in Gaza City Sunday, in his first appearance since 15 people died in clashes in the Gaza Strip. — AFP photo

Arafat, Hamas for ending violence

GAZA, Nov 21: PLO leader Yasser Arafat and the Muslim militant group Hamas appeared to have made some progress on lowering tension after inter-Palestinian clashes in Gaza in which 13 demonstrators died.

Talab al Sane', an Arab member of the Israeli parliament who has been mediating an end to the worst Palestinian civil strife since self-rule began in May, said on Sunday night Hamas had dropped a demand that Arafat accept blame for Friday's violence.

Sane' said Hamas accepted a clause that would empower a 20-member factfinding mission with "all facilities" to investigate the bloodshed, though it was still unclear whether the Islamic group would join the inquiry.

The two sides hotly dispute how the shooting started.

Witnesses said police opened fire on stone-throwing demonstrators but the Palestinian self-rule authority headed by Arafat said the first shots were at police.

In New York, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin reaffirmed his commitment to his peace deal with Arafat, telling Israeli reporters covering his

US visit: "The process with the Palestinians must continue... Israel has no other partner."

Arafat, meeting some 100 Palestinians from Jerusalem in his Gaza headquarters, suggested that outsiders may have taken part in the shooting.

He held up X-rays for his health minister Riyadh al-Zanoun to point out wounds from dumdum and plastic bullets. "Who has dumdum bullets, my brother? Who has plastic bullets?" Arafat asked several times.

Dumdums are soft-nosed bullets that expand on impact, causing gaping wounds.

Income tax collection falls short of target

A meeting to review the performance of the income tax department was held at the NEC Bhaban yesterday with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair, according to an official handout, reports BSS.

Chairman NBR, concerned members of the NBR and other senior officials of the income tax department attended the meeting.

The meeting was informed that during the first four months of the 1994-95 fiscal year ending in October 1994 a total of Taka 288 crore was collected as income tax.

The amount fell far short of the targeted Taka 444 crore fixed for the same period. The

See Page 12 Col 2

Bangladeshi killed in BSF firing

JESSORE, Nov 21: The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) entered into Bangladesh territory and shot dead a Bangladeshi youth in Machla border area of Chougachi thana today, reports UNB.

BDR sources said the BSF men entered about 500 yards into Bangladesh territory through Machla border and fired 10 rounds of shots this morning.

The youth killed in BSF firing was identified as Sahidul Islam, 18 of Luxmipur village in Chougacha thana.

The body was sent to Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Train link with Sylhet snapped for 12 hours

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 21: Train communication with Sylhet remained suspended for about twelve hours following the derailment of four bogies of a goods train near Sylhet Railway Station early hours today.

Official source informed that a goods train from Kulaura while on its way to Chhatrak Paper and Pulp Mills derailed near the home signal of the Sylhet Railway Station at about 3.30 am today.

The derailment of four bogies of the train caused damage to the bogies and the track. It also blocked traffic for 12 hours.

The inter-city train Jayantika Express and a local train were suspended while all other trains ran twelve hours behind schedule.

However, communication was resumed after a relief train from Kulaura repaired the line at 3 pm.

Lathials start onslaughts in coastal dists

From Arup Talukder

BARISAL, Nov 21: Stick-wielding musclemen (Lathials) hired by jotedars (landlords) clashed with police in Bhola Friday while similar onslaughts by landgrabbers are feared in other coastal districts including Borguna, Barisal, Protopur, Patuakhali and Laxmipur.

The lathials have become active in the char areas as the harvesting of Aman crop have just begun.

The jotedars hire these

See Page 12 Col 2

16 die as buses collide in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 21: Sixteen people were killed and 35 were injured when two buses collided head-on in southern Brazil early today, Brazilian television reported. The collision occurred near the city of Porto Alegre. Globo television said, reports Reuters.