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## Convoy with aid for troops enters Bihac

ZAGREB, Nov 24: A UN aid convoy arrived in the embattled Bihac enclave today bringing aid to more than 1,000 besieged Bangladeshi peacekeepers. UN spokeswoman Claire Grimes said, reports AFP.

Grimes said the convoy had entered the northwest Bosnian Bihac pocket and was still some 50 kilometers from Bihac town. The United Nations has been unable to supply the Bangladeshi troops since they arrived about a month ago.

Earlier Michael Williams, spokesman for UN envoy Yasushi Akashi, said the 10-vehicle convoy — mostly armoured personnel carriers — had left from the Croatian city of Topusko en route to the Muslim-held enclave, where more than 1,000 Bangladeshi UN peacekeepers trapped by fighting are desperately short of supplies.

Williams said the convoy was carrying 'urgently needed rations, fuel and winter supplies.'

Akashi said Croatian Serb separatist leader Milan Martić had agreed to allow convoys to resupply 1,200 UN Bangladeshi troops in the Bihac area during talks in Belgrade Wednesday.

Tens of thousands of Muslim refugees from the embattled Bihac were also stranded today in fetid chicken sheds, cut off from outside aid by escalating fighting.

Meanwhile, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic said there was heavy fighting around Bihac today and government forces lost high ground near the town to attacking Serb forces.

Silajdzic told Reuters that the Serbs had offered a ceasefire only as a means of buying time and he appealed to NATO to intervene to stop Serb attacks on the town.

Akashi had offered to arrange a Bihac ceasefire and



Young Muslim girls from the east side of Mostar city say their evening prayers Wednesday in a mosque damaged in the Bosnian fighting. — AFP photo

## Top-level Japanese team due today

By Staff Correspondent

A fifteen-member high level Japanese delegation arrives in the capital today for annual consultations on the existing and future economic cooperation between the two countries.

The Japanese team will comprise representatives from the ministries of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Industry, Finance, the Economic Planning Agency and the Ministry of Construction. The delegation would also include officials of the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) and the Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund (OECF).

The Japanese mission comes

## Ninian had no partisan role, says Emeka

ISLAMABAD, Nov 24: Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku said today his envoy had not been partisan in mediating an end to Bangladesh's political crisis and said he might go there personally to revive the mission, reports Reuters.

The Bangladesh political Opposition made the charge of partisanship in a letter to Anyaoku on Tuesday after special envoy Sir Ninian Stephen ended his mission without achieving a political dialogue between the government and Opposition.

Anyaoku told a news conference Stephen had been in touch with him during his mission and "at no point did I have reason to think that he deviated from the strict path of impartiality and the extreme concern with what would help Bangladesh, and the parties concerned."

He said all the Bangladeshi parties, including the Opposition, had cooperated with Stephen and he was sorry to hear the charge of partisanship.

Anyaoku was in Islamabad to attend a three-day Commonwealth senior officials' meeting that ended today. He said he had no plans to go to Dhaka for at least the next 10 days and had not received an invitation from the Bangladeshi government. But he said he would not rule out the possibility of going there later. "The Commonwealth will not turn its back on Bangladesh," he said.

Stephen arrived in Dhaka on October 13 to try to mediate the dispute, in which the Opposition has demanded the government resign and hold fresh elections under a neutral caretaker administration.

The opposition parties have boycotted Parliament since February and held repeated strikes and street protests to back their demand, which Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has rejected as unconstitutional.

## Khaleda, Gayoom for promoting SAARC causes

MALE (Maldives), Nov 24: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom here yesterday agreed to work together for strengthening ties between the two countries as well as promoting the SAARC causes, reports UNB.

They reaffirmed their conviction that the SAARC as a forum of regional cooperation could contribute significantly towards strengthening relations among the member-states in the interest of regional peace, progress and wellbeing of the nearly one billion people of South Asia.

In the official talks, held in the cabinet room of Presidential chamber in the afternoon, in a most cordial atmosphere, the two leaders discussed economic issues, bilateral trade, economic cooperation, manpower export and other regional and international issues of common concern.

## Dhaka, Male agree to bolster cooperation

Bangladesh and the Maldives have agreed to bolster cooperation in the economic, cultural and educational fields to the mutual benefits of the two countries, reports UNB.

The agreement was reached during the two-day official visit of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to the Maldives, according to a joint communiqué simultaneously issued in Dhaka and Male at the end of the visit yesterday.

During the visit, Begum Zia held wide-ranging talks with President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, covering the entire gamut of bilateral matters, and regional and international issues of common concern, the communiqué said.

Reviewing the bilateral relations, the two leaders expressed their determination to further enhance the existing friendly ties between the two countries and observed that there was a great scope for further expansion of mutually beneficial cooperation in the fields of trade, industry and manpower.

The concerned authorities of both the countries and the private sectors should take specific steps towards expanding and diversifying the bilateral trade, increasing the scope of investment and exporting more skilled and unskilled manpower, the communiqué said.

The two leaders agreed to elevate the Bangladesh-Maldives joint committee, established in May, 1983 at the levels of Foreign Secretaries and Foreign Ministers to further promote and widen the scope of bilateral relations between the two countries.

They agreed that the first meeting of the ministerial level joint committee will be held in Dhaka early next year.

The joint communiqué said that Male had lauded Dhaka for facilitating the import of man-

## No compromise on caretaker issue, says Hasina

TUNGIPARA, Nov 24: Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina today said the people would not compromise on the demand for a caretaker government in order to protect their voting right, reports UNB.

Addressing a crowd at the Bangabandhu's mazar premises this afternoon, she said there is no alternative to election under a caretaker government to break the present crisis.

"A caretaker government is now a popular demand and the people will realise it through mass agitation," the Awami League President added.

Referring to the BNP proposal for a multiparty interim government, Hasina said the Opposition is struggling for the people's rights and there can not be any compromise on it.

"We don't believe in power politics, and so we turned down the BNP's power-sharing formula," she told the gathering.

About 2,000 BNP workers led by Ferdous Zamadar, former BNP president of Madaripur district, joined the Awami League at the meeting.

## 65 FAP projects likely to be implemented in a decade



## Peace move with Tigers on, but economy stagnant

Waruna Karunatilake writes from Colombo

(The Daily Star is happy to announce the appointment of its correspondent in Sri Lanka.)

NOVEMBER 24: Chandrika Kumaratunga has made initial moves to re-start peace talks with Tamil separatist rebels after sweeping to an unprecedented victory in the Presidential election earlier this month. However she is yet to make significant progress on the economy which has made both local and foreign investors nervous.

The mammoth victory has been described by analysts as a mandate to continue the peace process initiated by Mrs. Kumaratunga to end the decade old bloody Tamil separatist war in the north and east of the island. The war has killed over 30,000 people most of them civilians and cost the country billions of dollars.

On Sunday last the President wrote to the rebels asking for a one week ceasefire to which the government said it would reciprocate with a two week ceasefire. This is seen as a necessary pre-condition by the government to re-start talks with the rebels.

"There appears to be a shift in the emphasis as far as strategy to peace is concerned. One could expect the government's efforts to be more strongly directed at sustaining the confidence of the civilian population in the north and east in the president's commitment to peace," says Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, lecturer on international relations at the Colombo University.

In the President election Mrs. Kumaratunga polled heavily in the minority dominated

## Lack of quorum holds up JS

By Staff Correspondent

If thin attendance of the legislators and dullness of the proceedings have been the characteristic features of the current session of Parliament, yesterday's sitting was perhaps the dullest.

The attendance was so poor that a lack of quorum forced Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Pannu to resume yesterday's sitting nearly an hour late.

The House was scheduled to convene at six in the evening but no MP was present at the appointed hour. Only five legislators were seen inside the House at 6:06 pm, 16 at 6:15 while three more entered over the next three minutes.

The number rose to 47 at 6:45 with still no quorum.

In the 330-member Parliament, a minimum of 60 MPs meet the quorum.

The first bell rang until 6:45 pm when the Deputy Speaker entered the House.

## Door open for fresh talks, says BNP SG

By Asiuzzaman

Ruling party Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar said yesterday that the door remains open to resume the aborted dialogue since Sir Ninian Stephen's proposal is still on the table.

"The proposal of the Commonwealth Secretary General's special envoy is on the table. We can start discussion on the proposal at any time," Talukdar, one of the members of the four-man government negotiating team, told The Daily Star in an interview at his Hare Road official residence.

"But there must not be any precondition in the dialogue," he added.

He held the opposition parties responsible for the failure of the Commonwealth-brokered talks and cautioned "The BNP will face the Opposition's street agitation politically."

"As a political party which won the people's verdict during the last general elections, we have to face any situation politically," he added.

He, however, was quick to explain that the ruling party's political actions would not be confrontational. The BNP would organise a series of programmes to muster the people's support against the Opposition's activities, Talukdar said.

He said his party would start its political mobilisation programmes soon from Barisal which would continue in other



Salam Talukdar

## Waste dumping Legal notice served on 3 ministries

By Staff Correspondent

Environmental lawyers of the country have threatened legal action against three ministries, the Deputy Commissioner of Narayanganj and the owners of a paper and board mills for allegedly dumping industrial waste in the Fatullah area.

In a legal notice, the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (BELA) gave the ministries as well as the owners a week's time to take corrective measures.

A statement issued yesterday said, the BELA had investigated the alleged waste dumping by the factory and gathered enough proof of pollution in the Fatullah, Dharmaganj, Enayettanagar and Panchohati areas in Narayanganj district.

## 40 chargesheeted in Farhad murder case

By Court Correspondent

A chargesheet against 40 persons, accusing them of their involvement in the sensational Farhad murder case, was submitted to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) yesterday.

Hasanul Farhad, a sub-inspector of police (sargeant), was killed on March 5 this year during a gunfight among two feuding groups of students of the Jagannath University College.

Of them, 27 are now detained in the Dhaka Central Jail while the rest 13 are absconding.

The investigating officer, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Detective Branch) Akhteruzzaman Bhuiyan, while submitting the chargesheet, recommended that three persons — Ahmad Hossain, Abdul Aziz and Iqbal Khan — be exempted from the charge of involvement in the crime.

Thirty witnesses were examined during preliminary investigation into the case filed by the Officer-in-Charge of Kotwali thana, Mujibur Haq.

## Shops gutted in city

By Staff Correspondent

A big fire gutted two shops of Fuji Color and Bata in the city's Elephant Road yesterday evening.

The fire, which is believed to have broken out in the Bata shop around 5:30 pm, immediately spread to its top floor — the Fuji Color laboratory and sales centre.

The fire service men, who reached the spot reportedly half an hour late, brought the blaze under control after an hour-long battle. Six fire engines worked to douse the flames.

The Bata shop turned to ashes while a part of the Fuji premises was saved. But most of the machinery, photographic papers and chemicals of the laboratory were damaged.

A Fire Service spokesman said the cause of the fire was yet to be ascertained.

Witnesses said, the fire broke out from a short circuit of a concealed wiring in the ceiling at Bata.

Nasir Uddin, a shopper who was present at the time of occurrence, claimed it was he who first noticed smoke coming out of a false ceiling, probably made of styrofoam. He immediately ran to phone the Fire Service, he said.

As the flames raged, police blocked the road to traffic and cordoned off the affected shops to facilitate the fire extinguishing work.

Habibur Rahman Chowdhury, Director (Operation) of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, said the firemen rushed to the spot as soon as they got the information.

A salesman at Fuji Color Laboratory, Ilyas Ahmed, said he informed the Fire Service but they were late. "If they had come in time, the devastation could have been minimised," he charged.

None of the officials of Bata and Fuji could immediately assess the extent of loss.



A model displays a uniform for flight stewardesses at a fashion show organised by Biman Bangladesh Airlines at a city hotel yesterday to mark the current tourism month. — Star photo