

News

What's on today....

Work shop: DFID, UK in association with the government will inaugurate the workshop on a portfolio project on 'Organisational Review - Ministry of Commerce.' An exchange of opinion views meeting titled 'Prospect of revitalising the share markets in Bangladesh.' Venue: Federal conference room, Federation Bhaban, 60 Motijheel C/A. Time: 10:00 am and 3:30 pm respectively.

Seminar: A seminar on 'Human Resources Development and Cont inued Education' will be held as part of the weeklong programmes to mark the Adult Literacy Week. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 10:00 am.

Catalogue show: Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) in cooperation with the US embassy will inaugurate its two-day long catalogue show on 'Pollution prevention and control.' Chief guest: Tofail Ahmed, Minister for Commerce and Industries. Venue: DCCI auditorium. Time: 10:00 am.

Certificate giving ceremony: Russian Cultural Centre will hold the certificate giving ceremony of the Russian Language Courses held at the Centre. Some Scholarships will be awarded. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre. Time: 5:00 pm.

Seminar: A seminar on 'Opportunity of Young Engineers in the Next Millennium' will be held. Venue: Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh seminar room. Time: 6:30 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Rally: A rally will be held as part of the programmes on Adult Literacy Week. The closing ceremony of the programme will also be held later in the day. Venues: Central Shahid Minar to Osman Udyana and Osmani Memorial auditorium respectively. Time: 8:00 am and 11:30 am respectively.

Weather

Temperature likely to fall

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Rajshahi, Chittagong, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Dhaka and Khulna divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Day temperature may fall by 1 to 2 degree Celsius over the country during the period, Met Office said.

The country's highest temperature was recorded at 34.5 degree Celsius at Chuadanga and Tangail yesterday and the lowest 24.0 degrees at Sitakunda.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:11 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:42 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.7	26.5	75	79
Chittagong	33.0	26.5	88	86
Rajshahi	33.8	27.4	84	79
Khulna	32.5	26.5	80	80
Barisal	31.8	26.4	92	79
Sylhet	32.5	25.9	72	85
Cox's Bazar	32.5	26.2	80	82



A meeting was held between Preben Nielsen, head of ADB's Water Supply, Urban Development and Housing Division and Chief Engineer, LGED, Md. Monowar Hossain Chowdhury yesterday at the LGED HQs regarding possible approach in connection with processing of the 3rd Urban Development Project of LGED. The Deputy Resident Representative of the Asian Development Bank, Dhaka, Dr. Omkar Shrestha (right) was also present during the meeting.

Obituary

JS to discuss

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country's economic interests. We're at the negotiating stage. We'll go for the arrangement only when it is found beneficial to our economy," he told the House.

"Come and speak in the House, not outside it and make us understand how the proposed transhipment can jeopardise the country's sovereignty. If you can prove that it would not be worthy for the nation, we will definitely consider your suggestions."

Quoting from the Constitution, he said the government was not bound to place in parliament for discussion a Cabinet decision like the one taken about the transhipment. But the government has agreed to do so for the sake of transparency.

"As we're agreed to discuss the transhipment issue in parliament, the opposition now demands cancellation of the 'transit agreement' with India. How can we cancel an agreement which we have not yet signed in the first place?" he wondered.

Tofail bitterly criticised BNP chief and leader of the opposition in parliament Khaleda Zia for launching an agitation with the 'anti-liberation forces' to safeguard independence and oust the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. "Our government will complete its full five-year term," he announced.

The minister gave a resume of Bangladesh's trade agreements with India since 1972 and blamed the BNP for providing transit and transhipment facilities to that country through the 1980 trade deal and the SAPTA in 1993.

"BNP is now opposing transhipment for petty political interests," he said.

He also refuted the BNP claim that the 1980 accord was a follow-up of the 1973 trade accord signed by the Sheikh Mujib government. The 1972 agreement was ratified in 1973, but it was not renewed later. Hence the 1980 deal was a fresh one, the commerce minister contended.

A patrol team of Sadarhat police arrested Raja and Litan Biswas from Shah Amanat City Corporation market area and seized one foreign made pistol and some bullets from them. The trade agreement between the two countries in 1972 was a balanced one that provided equal opportunities for export and import to both the parties, he said.

The boy was killed as a sequel to previous enmity, police said. A case was filed but none was arrested till writing of this report.

Kidnappers kill teenage boy in Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 6: A teenage boy was murdered by kidnappers here on Sunday evening.

Apon, aged about 13, and a student of Class Seven of Koirji High School, was abducted by the miscreants from Thuthiahat on Saturday.

Apon's body was recovered from a paddy field with marks of injuries. His father Asgar Ali is a local BNP leader.

The boy was killed as a sequel to previous enmity, police said. A case was filed but none was arrested till writing of this report.

City's chaotic traffic: Armed forces deployed to tame

By Staff Correspondent

Armed Forces personnel have been deployed again yesterday to tame the city's chaotic traffic.

Troops from the Bangladesh Rifles also joined in to assist in managing the traffic as part of a drive by the authorities.

Police beefed by the services were seen mounting extra vigilance, some on horseback in their efforts to control the traffic at different intersections.

As the new traffic enforcers arrived on the scene at major intersections like Science Laboratory, Farm Gate and Makhali, they found a formidable force to reckon with the hawkers and illegally parking vehicles, blocking the traffic.

City's police chief Shamsuddin told UNB that the military and border guards would help the traffic situation.

Police sources told The Daily Star that the military would stay for an indefinite period.

They have been drafted to bolster the thin ranks of the regular traffic corps in the police to cope with an ever increasing number of road users — push cart pushers, animal hauled vehicles to pedal rickshaws and automobiles which contribute chiefly to the traffic jams, one official said.

The military would gradually be deployed at other crossings in the city, the sources said.

Biman: Overbooking leads trouble

By Special Correspondent

Reported overbooking led to trouble at the Biman Bangladesh Airlines check-in counter yesterday as some passengers demanded seats for the BG-041 to Kuwait, forcing airport authorities to summon police to maintain order.

According to witnesses, the flight was scheduled for Sunday night. But due to aircraft shortages the flight was delayed. At the same time Biman reportedly booked 480 instead of the normal capacity of 274 seats on the DC-10-30 aircraft.

At one stage of the row with check-in counter personnel, some passengers demanding their seats tried to prevent the airline crew to board the aircraft.

Police later brought the situation under control, airport sources added.

Unocal firing

From page 1 would abide by Occidental's Production Sharing Contract (PSC) commitments, work programmes, and accept its liabilities. Such action is breach of that commitment."

He further said, foreign oil companies keep minimum Bangladeshi employees although the PSCs dictate that at least 50 per cent of their employees should be Bangladeshi during a "PSC extension period" and 60 per cent during "production period."

"Both Occidental-Unocal and Cairn-Sheil are now going through production period. To our knowledge, none of these companies are employing Bangladeshi as per the PSC. The recent move by Unocal to fire Bangladeshi employees reduces the ratio further," he commented.

On July 25, Unocal officially informed the government about its deal with Occidental, expressing its "full support to the PSC with Petrobangla." It had also said in the official letter that the names of OBL and OEBL would not be changed and these would continue to function as before, he said.

Cabinet

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meeting told The Daily Star last night that bill was unlikely to be tabled in the current session of the parliament. "This will be sent to the Law Ministry now for vetting," he said.

Sources also confirmed that decision on the media-related section of the proposed Act was deferred for more discussion in the Cabinet later.

It was proposed in the Act that public prosecutors would be able to file cases against newspapers on behalf of victims if those publish baseless reports against any VIP.

The Cabinet also approved the Privatization Act, 1999 and endorsed in principle the draft Low-Cost Goods Smuggling Prevention Act, 1999.

The smuggling prevention Act has provision for mobile courts to give on-the-spot punishment to smugglers found guilty of smuggling goods worth upto Tk 50,000.

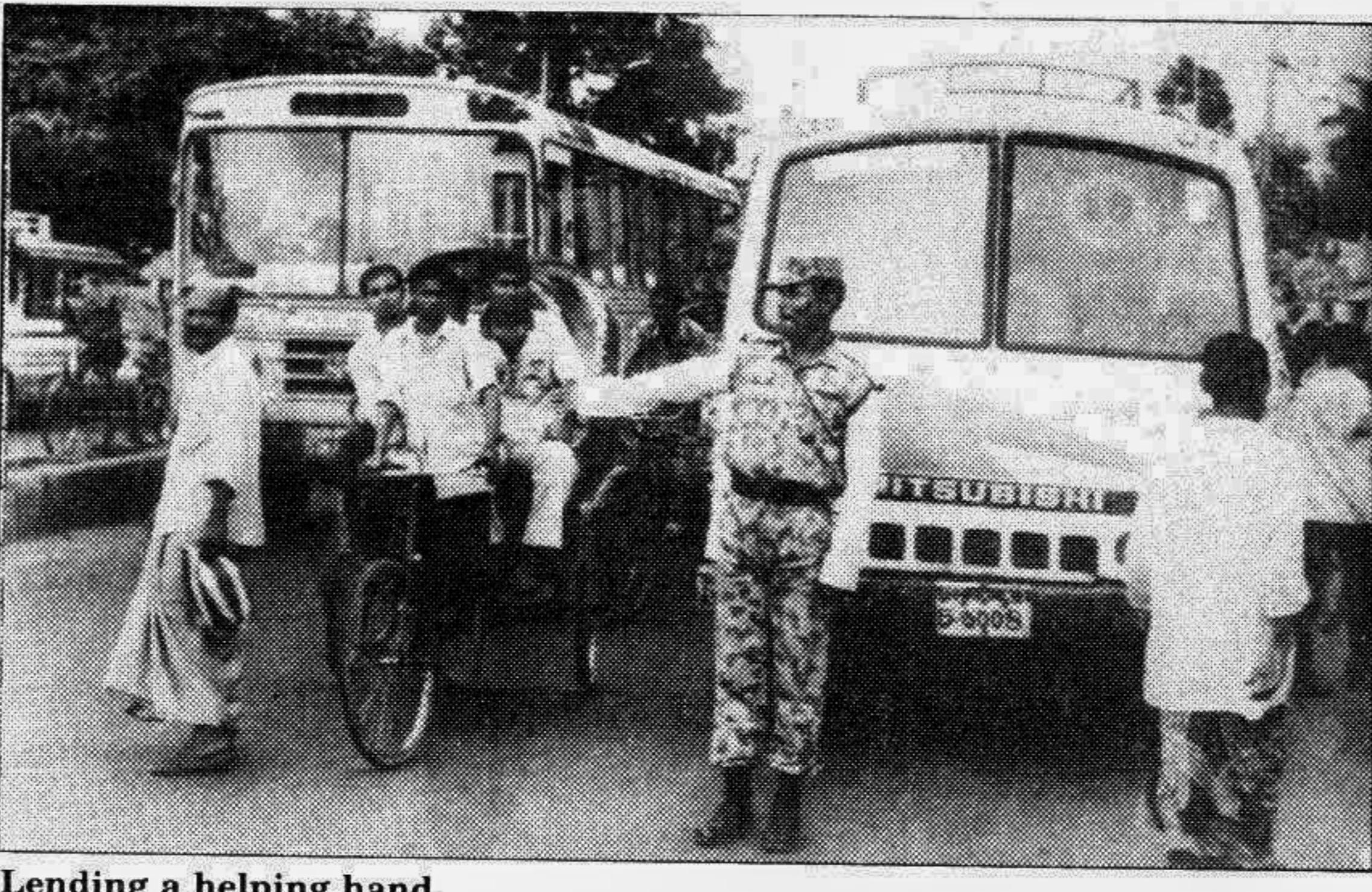
The idea is to save time in discharging cases of small smuggling, which generally take long periods for disposal, explained one source.

39 arrested in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Sept 6: Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) arrested 39 people including a terrorist wanted in six criminal cases, from different areas of the city today, reports BSS.

Pahartali police, on a secret information arrested alleged terrorist and extortionist Arif alias Hat Katai, 27, from Akbar Shah Colony, Pahartali Thana registered six criminal cases and three GDs against him from 1994 to this date.

A patrol team of Sadarhat police arrested Raja and Litan Biswas from Shah Amanat City Corporation market area and seized one foreign made pistol and some bullets from them.



Lending a helping hand

BDR has been deployed at different corners of the city to help ease the traffic jams that are created on the roads everyday.

Next C'wealth SG

From page 1 Farooq Sobhan was Chairman of the Group of 77 at the United Nations from October 1982 to October 1983. He was Chairman of the Third World Forum's Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developed Countries from 1983 to 1984 and also Chairman of the United Nations Commission of Transnational Corporations from 1991 to 1992. He was also closely associated with setting up of the South Commission, which was chaired by Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania.

When Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina first mooted the idea of fielding a Bangladesh candidate for the post of Commonwealth Secretary General at Edinburgh, it was none other than Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad who said that if Dhaka put forward Farooq Sobhan as its nominee, his country would endorse it without hesitation. Mahathir, like so many politicians and diplomats who know Sobhan's adroitness, was speaking from his personal experience.

Farooq Sobhan has already spoken about his vision and mission if he is elected Secretary General. He has proposed setting up of a Permanent Commonwealth Election Commission that could help monitor elections in different countries and create expertise in election monitoring.

He also speaks of an image problem facing the Commonwealth, which he intends to "rectify as much as possible". He also wants to "activate the unofficial Commonwealth" which comprises innumerable government organisations and groups to create a larger civil society.

What are the chances that the Bangladesh candidate will win?

The answer to that question lies with the 53 voters (Tuvalu being a non-voting associate member). Of them, the largest group belong to the African countries which have 19 votes. Caribbean countries have 12 votes. Pacific island nations two and Asia countries eight. Mentionably, the South Asian region comprising Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, The Maldives and Sri Lanka has a total population of 1.7 billion out of 1.7 billion in the Commonwealth.

Four other countries which traditionally dominate the politics of the Commonwealth and are known as A, B, C and N countries are Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand. Out of three posts of Deputy Secretary General, two are, as a matter of rule, reserved by Canada and Britain. These countries, known as the Old Commonwealth, also dominate major bureaucratic posts.

Since 1965, the post of Secretary General has never been held by an Asian country. The first Secretary General of the Commonwealth was Sir Arnold Smith of Canada, who served two terms. The second, Sir Sridath Ramphal of Guyana, was from the Caribbean and served three terms. The incumbent Secretary General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, is from Nigeria and is retiring after serving two terms. This time there is no candidate from the Caribbean or Africa.

Begum Zia bitterly criticised the government leaders for what she said adverse comments on the judges and the judiciary and said the ruling party and its men have no respect for the judiciary and do not believe in democracy and rule of law.

She reiterated her allegation that from the very beginning, this government has been selling out national interests to India and is now trying to give corridor to that country as per its pre-election commitments.

"Providing corridor is part of a conspiracy to hand over Bangladesh to India," she said and vowed not to allow the government to implement this suicidal decision.

The government might use the Army, Navy and Air Force personnel to clear Indian vehicles after giving corridor. It is now giving traffic training to members of the armed forces by deploying them on the roads with the motive of using them in future," she observed.

BNP secretary general Abdul Marjan Bhuiyan in his speech strongly protested the government's move to introduce Anti-Terrorism Act to suppress the opposition and the press.

He warned of a "civil disobedience movement" in the country if the government enacts the law.

Former finance minister M Saifur Rahman said none from abroad will come to invest a single paisa in Bangladesh if the bank is hijacked in broad daylight.

Presided over by BNP joint convener Mirza Abbas, the meeting was also addressed by, among others, Khandaker Dewar Hossain, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Kursheed Jahan Haq, Tarique Islam, city BNP convener Sadek Hossain Khoka and joint convener Abdus Salam.

BNP observes hartal in Gaibandha

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Sept 6: The district BNP observed a dawn-to-dusk hartal here today protesting arrest of its general secretary Anisuzzaman Khan Babu.

Babu and two others went to court in connection with a murder case but the judge cancelled their bail and ordered to take them to custody.

Train and bus services were

normal during the hartal.



The 2nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Bangladesh-German Business Forum (BGBF) was held yesterday. Seen in the picture are (from right) Jürgen Schrod of the German Embassy, Syed J. Haider, chairman, BGBF, Nasir A. Chowdhury, Treasurer, BGBF and Iftekharul Alam, Chairman, Counsel & Arbitration Sub-committee, BGBF.

There is no government spokesman for him.

For Bangladesh, winning the post of Commonwealth Secretary General is not an easy task unless more concerted efforts are made immediately by the Foreign Ministry, its missions in Commonwealth countries and the Prime Minister himself. The upcoming trip of the Prime Minister to the United Nations could be utilised to seek bilateral and multilateral support for Bangladesh's candidature.

The heads of missions of Commonwealth countries in Dhaka should also be approached for getting their country's backing in making a developing democratic nation's candidate the next Commonwealth Secretary General.

Attempts should also be made to endorse Bangladesh's candidature by at least a few states with which Dhaka has friendly relations. That effort should specially be directed towards our neighbours.

Chief Anaykou Emeka, the outgoing Secretary General from