

More foreign missions to be set up

M ANWARUL HAQ

Some new foreign missions are likely to be set up in the capital in the near future.

Nigeria recently started full-fledged operation of its embassy in Dhaka. All consular operations began from its Dhaka mission last week. Earlier, Nigeria, a member of D-8, conducted its diplomatic activities with Bangladesh from New Delhi.

With opening of the Nigerian mission, the number of foreign resident missions in Bangladesh now stands at 47.

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Poultry entrepreneurs criticised for not supporting farmers

US slowdown fear looms over today's G7 meet

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Feb 17		5.55 pm
Feb 18	6-31 am	

Prayer Timings

February 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	5-30	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-00	6-05
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

Nafees toys with Singapore

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Bangladesh registered their second successive win in the GrameenPhone Under-17 Asia Cup when they trounced tiny Singapore by 345 runs in their Group B match at the Jagannath Hall ground of Dhaka University yesterday.

Elsewhere, holders Sri Lanka whitewashed United Arab Emirates by 234 runs in a Group A engagement at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium and in Group B last year's runners-up Pakistan, defeated

Election anytime if opposition leader demands it in JS: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday offered to announce general election 'anytime' provided the Opposition leader comes to parliament and tells when she wants the polls.

"Let her (opposition leader) come to the parliament and tell when she wants election and I will announce election," she said during informal talks with heads of foreign missions and international organisations at her official residence Ganobhaban.

Hasina, however, told the diplomats that opposition BNP does not want election, they want fall of the government. "I don't know what the opposition leader is looking for, sidetracking elections."

The Prime Minister invited the diplomats and their spouses to a tea party.

The ambassadors, charge d'affaires and chiefs of international organisations and their spouses and children attended the party held at 4:30 pm at the north plaza of the Ganobhaban.

They exchanged views with the Prime Minister and her cabinet colleagues mainly on the current political situation in the country. The tea meet lasted one hour and 45 minutes.

During the discussion the Prime Minister responded to various queries from the diplomats, particularly about the current political developments, hartal and violent incidents before the general elections.

The Prime Minister said she had offered to hold elections last year thinking that if elections could be held in quick succession, people would be able to exercise their franchise in a fair atmosphere and elect the government of

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Bid to forcibly drop Dipu's name from FIR?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Uttara police filed a General Diary yesterday accusing "some influential persons" who allegedly compelled the complainant in Taraj Uddin murder case to give an undertaking that Dipu Chowdhury was not present during the killing.

Sources claimed that a state minister and his wife went to Dakkhinpara under Uttara police station and "forcibly took an undertaking" from the complainant, Nurul Islam, brother of Taraj.

Immediately after the incident, villagers from Dokkhinpara went to Uttara thana and informed police about the incident.

Sub-inspectors Golam Masud and Abul Kashem went to the spot to investigate.

Later SI Golam Masud filed the GD accusing "some influential persons".

Meanwhile, the complainant went to Uttara thana and submitted an application to drop three names

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The four-party alliance brought out a procession in the city yesterday to mourn the killing of four in firing at Malibagh Crossing during hartal hours on Tuesday.

Opposition for more hartals if tomorrow's sit-in foiled

REZAUL KARIM

Although a series of hartals in the last fortnight disrupted the Opposition's campaign for its planned sit-in around the Secretariat tomorrow, BNP is going ahead with its preparation to make the programme a "grand success", party sources said.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia announced the programme at a public meeting at Bandarban on January 30 to intensify the on-going "oust-government movement".

Tomorrow's sit-in is going to take place at the height of Opposition's current spate of anti-government agitation, marked by hartals and resultant violence, killings and arrests in the past two weeks.

On September 12, 1999, a separate sit-in by BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote around the Secretariat was marred by police action, bomb explosions and firing of shots.

There are speculations of violence centring the sit-in as the government has banned rallies and processions around the Secretariat from midnight tonight to Sunday midnight.

The sources said the Opposition Alliance has decided to announce a series of hartals and other tougher programmes if the government tries to foil the "peaceful" programme as

in 1999.

There may be a country-wide hartal on Monday if the government foils the sit-in, sources said.

The Central Liaison Committee of the Alliance sat yesterday with BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair and chalked out the strategy for the sit-in. It will sit again today to finalise the next course of programmes, the sources said.

Held at Khaleda's official residence, the meeting was also attended by Shamsul Islam and Sadek Hossain Khoka of BNP, Nazir Rahman Manjur, Kazi Feroz Rashid, Saifur Rahman and Maidul Islam of JP, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mozahid of Jamaat, and Abdul Kader of IOJ.

Official sources said the government

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Commercial use of Dhanmondi Lake Investors keep away fearing political interference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A well-laid plan to lease out the 26 commercial components of Dhanmondi Lake Development Project has failed to attract investors, who fear that 'political interference' might disrupt commercial activities, sources concerned said.

Participation of bidders in response to the government's recent tender was so poor that the DCC is now floating another 'letter of invitation' for bidding.

Despite commercial viability of the components situated in the heart of the city, genuine investors are yet to come forward, one source said.

Project officials said they have taken all possible precaution to eliminate possibilities of "politically influenced terrorist gangs" getting into the commercially promising business in the area.

A prospective bidder is required to submit technical and financial proposals separately. The technical proposal must demonstrate the company's thorough understanding of the business, its services and maintenance. The proposal must also clarify the company's 'approach and methodology' for conducting the services.

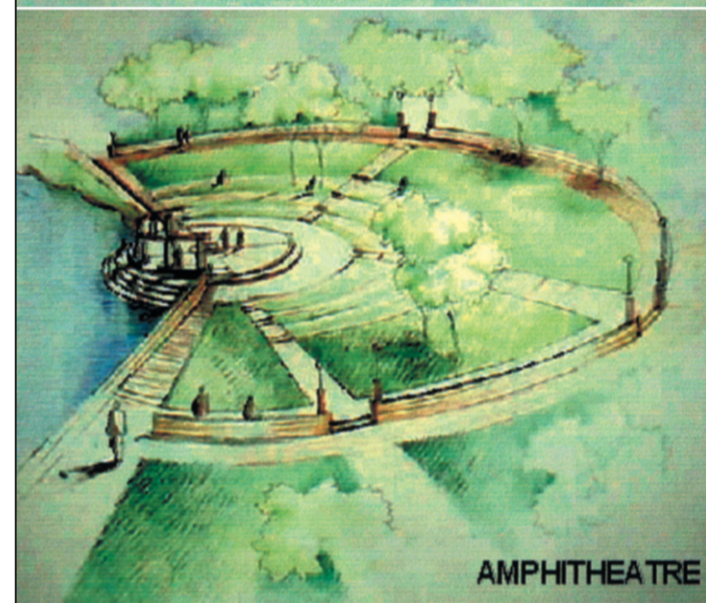
"What we want to make sure is that the company that takes over one of the eight zones or the entire project, has a vision and technical know-how," said an official.

The aspirant company's technical proposal for each zone would then be evaluated on the basis of 100 marks. For instance, while marking, the authorities would value the company's original capability, logistic facility, experience, vision, academic qualifications and competence of team members and

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BOAT CLUB



AMPHITHEATRE

An artist's view of the Dhanmondi Lake project's proposed boat club and amphitheatre.

Recognise talents sinking coterie interest

President tells writers' confce in city

BSS, Dhaka

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday stressed the need for giving recognition to real talents sinking coterie interest for the sake of promoting creativity of the writers in order to build a resourceful nation.

"Time has come to accord recognition to the real talents discarding group interest," he said while opening the "Bangladesh Writers Conference-2001" in the National Museum auditorium here.

Terming the writers as "symbol of conscience and humanity," President Shahabuddin said they play the role of torch-bearer for

society and nation. He underlined the utmost responsibility of the writers towards society and the nation and said it is the duty of the writers to provide a sense of direction to overcome backwardness, economic disparity, tension and inconsistency in the country.

Presided over by President of Bangladesh Writers Club Rahat Khan, the inaugural function was addressed, among others, by Director General of the national museum Shamsuzzaman Khan, poet and writer Syed Shamsul Huq, poets Nurul Huda, Mohan Raihan and Kamal Chowdhury. Extending his sincere wishes to the partici-

pants at the third conference of the writers association, the President said the pen of writers should inspire the nation besides entertaining the people. The President said they should also guide the nation towards the right path and play a pivotal role in upholding human values awakening the people against superstitions and social ills.

"The writers depict the real picture of a peaceful society through their pen and uphold the human values against war, turmoil, communalism and other social disparities," he added.

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Zeaul Huq Tulu passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Zeaul Huq Tulu, Chairman and Managing Director of Ori-Oxi and Director in the IPDC and KAFCO, died at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore yesterday. He was 66.

A former president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Employers' Association, Huq had been suffering from kidney and liver ailment for long.

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