

EU wants  
Parties should  
accept polls  
results without  
'ifs and buts'

UNB, Dhaka

The European Commission delegation here requested the political parties to shun violent confrontation, support the holding of peaceful election and gracefully accept its results.

EC Head of Delegation Ambassador Antonio De Souza Menezes made the suggestions in an interview with UNB yesterday just a week ahead of the crucial parliamentary elections on October 1.

Expressing concern over unabated political violence, he said

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EU team to visit  
Islamic states  
from today

AP, Brussels

A high-profile European Union delegation is beginning a weeklong diplomatic tour through Islamic countries to garner support for the international coalition against terrorism and search for ways to revive the Middle East process.

The tour opens in Islamabad, Pakistan, today and will also stop in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

The delegation will be led by Foreign Minister Louis Michael of Belgium, which holds the EU presidency, and EU special representative Javier Solana. EU External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten and Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Pique are also part of the mission.

At an emergency summit on

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Nepal to let US  
use its land,  
airspace

AFP, Kathmandu

The Nepalese government has decided to give the United States overflight rights and allow it to use its territory to land and refuel US aircraft, state-run radio said yesterday.

The Nepali Congress government, headed by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, has pledged its support to the US in any action against the ruling Taliban in Afghanistan.

The US is a major aid donor to Nepal, helping in various fields of development, including health services, man-power training, rural communications, forestry and construction of economic infrastructure. America and Nepal have had diplomatic relations since the early 1950s.

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A time for introspection not war  
Column: Perspectives  
MAbdul Hafiz

Focus: Election 2006

Suranjit faces hard contest in  
Sunamganj

Sun Rises Sun Sets

Sept 24 5-53 pm

Sept 25 5-48 am

Prayer Timings

Sept 24

Azan Jamaat

Fajr 4-45 5-15

Zohr 12-45 1-15

Asr 4-30 4-45

Maghrib 6-00 6-06

Esha 7-45 8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

## 8 killed as bombs go off at Sk Helal's rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

At least eight persons were killed and over 30 injured, 12 of them seriously, as two powerful bombs went off at a public meeting of Awami League at Mollahat in Bagerhat district yesterday afternoon. Seven of the victims died on the spot and the other succumbed to injuries minutes after admission to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH), sources said.

AL candidate in Bagerhat-1 constituency (Fakirhat-Mollahat-Chitalmari) in the coming election Sheikh Helaluddin was also slightly injured as the bombs exploded at about 5 pm soon after he reached the meeting venue, Khalilur Rahman College ground, the sources said.

He was escorted to a safer place by security personnel. He reached Bagerhat town at about 7 pm, it was learnt.

Some witnesses claimed that the bombs were planted earlier. Sheikh Helal was the chief guest at the meeting.

Five of the dead were identified as Polash, 24, Amiya Mondol, 27, Noor Islam, 30, Musa Mondol, 30 and Poton Khan, 35. Polash died at

KMCH.

The three unidentified victims were aged about 30, 32 and 40.

Of the injured, 21 were admitted to Mollahat Upazila Health Complex, one to Fakirhat Health Complex and eight to KMCH. The death toll may rise, sources said.

Panic gripped Mollahat, paralysing normal life. Mobs went on rampage protesting the incident, which they termed an attempt on the life of Sheikh Helal.

They damaged vehicles and looted several shops and houses. The BNPF office at Fakirhat was ransacked.

Security measures were stepped up immediately with deployment of army, BDR and riot police at Mollahat.

Top officials of civil and police administrations from Bagerhat reached Mollahat on receipt of the information.

Bagerhat AL leaders claimed that the dead and the injured are sup-

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## Armed gang attacks Tofail's car 2 Bholo Awami League activists murdered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Two Awami League activists were murdered in two upazilas of Bholo district on Saturday night.

Unidentified miscreants shot dead Mahe Alam, 35, of Tulatali village under Sadar upazila at midnight.

The other victim identified as Bashir Howlader, 31, was slaughtered by armed miscreants in Lejapata village under Daulatkhan upazila at about 11:30pm the same night. The

gang hurled bombs at his private car, injuring two AL activists - Babul, 20, and Kanchan, 22.

The incident occurred when Tofail went there to visit the burnt-down election camps. The gang fled the scene, as police fired shots to control the situation.

The Bholo Awami League blamed the BNP for the killings and the attack on Tofail's car.

UNB adds: The attackers moved to Tofail's village, Daulkhin Dighaldi and unleashed a reign of terror by firing gunshots that left AL activist Mahe Alam dead and one Rony, 17, injured.

Local AL leader Abdul Aziz

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Attack on Mahbub's car: Mockbul, 54 others sued, granted bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Fifty-five people including Alhaj Mockbul Hossain, AL candidate for Dhaka-9 JS seat, were granted bail in two criminal cases yesterday.

The Court of Metropolitan Magistrate Biman Bihari Barua granted them bail upon a bond of Tk 5,000 each with two guarantors.

Mockbul Hossain and others along with their lawyers appeared before the court and prayed for bail.

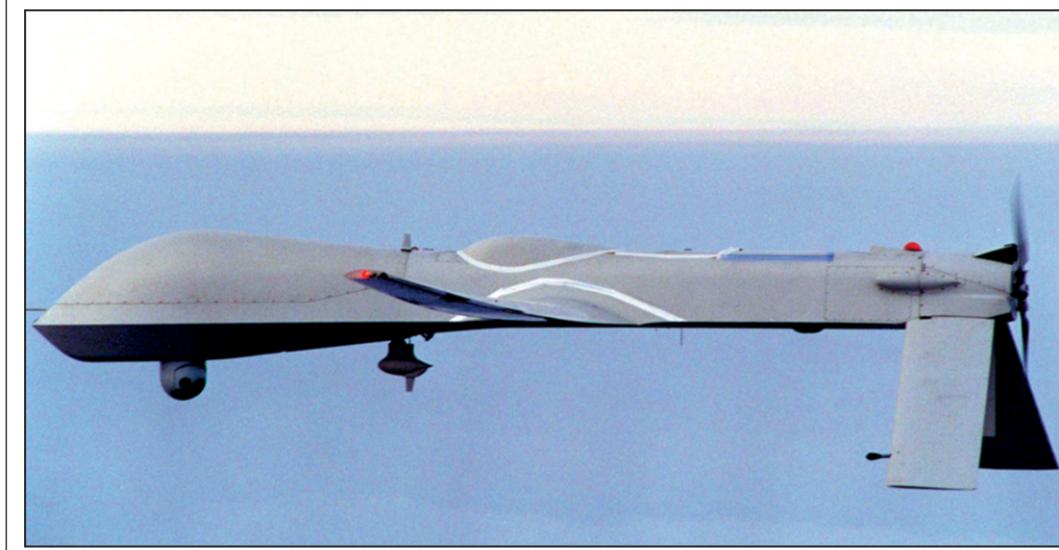
The prosecution side opposed the petitions.

After hearing both sides, the court granted them bail.

In the first case, it is alleged that at the instruction of Mockbul

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## US strike looks imminent Russia agrees to deployment of forces in Central Asia



A US Department of Defense file photo shows an unmanned Predator surveillance plane flying some 100 miles off the California coast during a simulated Navy reconnaissance flight on Dec 5, 1995. Afghanistan's Taliban militia claimed on Saturday, they had shot down an unmanned spy plane in the northern province of Samangan.

### SAF Games called off

AFP, Reuters, Islamabad

Pakistan yesterday called off the South Asian Federation (SAF) Games due to take place here next month as a result of the current crisis over possible US military action against neighbouring Afghanistan.

"We announce with regret that due to recent happenings, the SAF Games are postponed for the time being," said SK Tressler, minister for sports, tourism and cultural affairs.

An aide, however, said Games could be rescheduled for February or March next year.

The decision to postpone the regional games, which had been due to take place October 6-15, had

### Downed 'drone' spied for CIA?

AFP, CNN, Washington

US government sources indicated to the CNN that the unmanned spy plane downed by the Taliban on Saturday was providing intelligence for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia claims its forces shot down an unmanned spy plane in Samangan and a helicopter in areas where opposition fighters had launched an attack.

Abdul Hanan Himat, head of the Taliban's official Bakhtar news agency, said the plane allegedly shot down had crashed a few kilometres outside the Samangan provincial capital Aibak, about 120 kilometres southeast of the Uzbek border.

According to Taliban sources quoted by AFP, a team of technicians dispatched to the area recovered two cameras and moved the wrecked plane to a secret location.

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## US polls monitoring team cancels visit

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The polls observer team from Washington led by former US President Jimmy Carter has cancelled its scheduled visit to Bangladesh in view of the recent terrorist attacks in the United States.

The 30-member team from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Carter Centre was due to arrive on September 28.

During his visit to Bangladesh early last month, Carter had obtained pledges from chiefs of major political parties that they would play a responsible role in parliament, shun hartal and support moves for more women's empowerment even if they are in the opposition.

Observers say cancellation of the visit is a setback as regards these objectives.

The European Union observer mission, which is already in the

country, will now comprise the most significant component of foreign observers.

The local office of NDI through a press release and at a briefing with OCAB yesterday said, "The tragedy of the terrorist attacks of September 11 and subsequent events forced cancellation of the mission".

However, observed, "We are very much concerned about the incidents of pre-election violence and express our sincere hope that violence will be curtailed so that Bangladeshis can go to the polls."

"Our pre-election delegation was stuck by the enthusiasm of Bangladeshi people for democratic elections."

The NDI expressed the hope that it would "continue to work" with the people of Bangladesh "as they consolidate their representative institutions and democratic political process."

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## Atmosphere still not conducive to peaceful polls, says BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With only seven days left for the general election, the BNP says that the atmosphere is still not conducive to holding the election peacefully.

A three-member BNP delegation led by party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan met Chief Election Commissioner M ASyed at his office yesterday.

The delegation demanded 'effective role' of members of the armed forces already deployed throughout the country in aid of the civil administration.

"Armed forces personnel have been deployed, but their terms of reference are not clear. They

should be engaged in the drive for recovery of arms and arrest of criminals to ensure a peaceful atmosphere ahead of the election," Bhuiyan told newsmen after the meeting.

A spokesman of the Election Commission (EC), Kairuzzaman Chowdhury, replying to questions from newsmen later said the terms of reference of the armed forces have already been fixed. Asked whether the EC would consider BNP's demand, he said, "The Election Commission alone cannot decide this. It can only make a request in this regard."

According to the latest amendment to the Representation of

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## Over 200 injured in pre-polls clashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 200 people were injured in pre-election clashes between the activists of Awami League and BNP in different parts of the country yesterday and on Saturday night.

Of the injured, 70 were in Jessor, 25 in Rajshahi, 20 in Manikganj, 17 in Noakhali, 15 in Mymensingh, 20 in Narayanganj, 26 in Patukhali and 18 in Chittagong.

In Jessor, about 70 people were injured in violent clashes between Awami League and BNP activists at

Mongalkote union in Keshobpur Upazila on Saturday night.

Over 100 houses and shops were ransacked during the period.

Witnesses said the trouble ensued when the supporters of independent candidate Maulana Shakhawat Hossain assaulted the headmaster of Golaghat High School and his wife Friday.

In a sequel to the incident, the BNP and Awami League workers fought fierce battles with each other during those two days. The BNP men assaulted AL worker Dailiuddin and

separate cases were filed.

When a BNP procession was heading towards the local

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Our correspondent from Rajshahi reports: At least 25 people were injured, five of them seriously, in a violent clash between the activists of Awami League and BNP at Dewlia More area under Baghmara upazila in the district last night.

According to police and witnesses the supporters and activists of both the parties brought out election processions at the area at about 8.30 pm.

When a BNP procession was heading towards the local

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