

Administrator of UNDP arrives today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Administrator of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Mark Malloch Brown arrives today on a three-day visit to observe UNDP-supported development initiatives and post-flood rehabilitation undertakings.

He is expected to call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan Thursday and the members of parliament, NGO chiefs and members of international community later on.

During his tour, Brown will observe UNDP-supported initiatives for good governance in parliament and visit community development programmes in Chittagong Hill Tracts and the flood recovery projects.

He is likely to hold several discussions including one on the role of the UN in today's world after joining other UN staff to commemorate the first anniversary of the UN

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Cop stabbed, 1 bullet-hit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals stabbed a police constable in Kanchpur in Siddhirganj and a vegetable vendor was hurt in crossfire between two groups of criminals in Mohakhali in Gulshan yesterday.

Police said two criminals stabbed constable Saidur Rahman, 40, of Kanchpur Police Box twice in his leg on Kanchpur Bridge when he was returning to the box at around 4:00am.

He is now receiving treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Police could not identify or arrest anyone.

In Mohakhali, Mohammad Akkas, 22, received a bullet in his abdomen when he was near Wireless Gate carrying his vegetables to Mohakhali TV Gate Bazar by a rickshaw at around 9:30am.

Police admitted the incident but could not give any detail.

Prayer Timing		
August 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-38	6-41
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

Village policemen demonstrate at Muktangan in Dhaka yesterday demanding of the government to absorb 42,000 village policemen into the pay scale and rehabilitation of their 20,000 flood-affected colleagues.

JS body for naming officials liable for Tk 19cr ICD loss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday asked the finance ministry to identify the officials involved in financial irregularities leading to losses of over Tk 19 crore to the Inland Container Depot (ICD) in Kamlapur in fiscal year 2000-01.

The Public Accounts Committee yesterday at a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban also expressed dissatisfaction as a portion of the embezzled money was recovered but the officials responsible for anomalies were not yet brought to book.

"We asked the internal resources division under the finance ministry to probe the corruption to find out the culprits and come up with the report in a month," Advocate Harun Al Rashid, chairman of the committee, told The Daily Star yesterday after the meeting.

If the officials are found guilty of embezzling public money, the committee will recommend punitive action against them, the chairman said.

The office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in 2000-01 audit reports raised 38 objections involving Tk 19.1 crore. The reports suggest officials at the ICD were involved in various irregularities including not fixing supplementary taxes and accurate prices of the commodities. They

often fixed low rate for foreign currencies.

The parliamentary body yesterday discussed 10 objections concerning about Tk 3 crore.

Officials of the finance ministry apprised the meeting of recovering about Tk 1.5 crore embezzled by different officials. Committee members still slammed the ministry for taking steps so late, after four years.

"Had we not sit to review the audit objections, the amount of money would not have been recovered," Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal, committee member and a ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) lawmaker said at the meeting.

Committee chairman echoed the view and said the ministry should immediately initiate steps to detect the culprits responsible for anomalies in the ICD.

Besides, the parliamentary body also asked the office of the CAG to audit the ticketing system of Bangladesh Biman in a month.

But Comptroller and Auditor General Asif Ali citing lack of modern technology in his office said it would not be possible to complete the audit within a month, rather it would take at least three months. The committee then extended the time frame.

DoE top shot suspended for 'graft'

REZAUL KARIM

A director of the Department of Environment (DoE) has been temporarily dismissed from his post following allegations of corruption and inefficiency.

An official notification issued on August 4 and signed by the Ministry of Environment and Forest secretary, stated that Mohammad Abdus Sobhan, director (technical) of the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Foreign office DG sent to retirement for 'graft'

BSS, Dhaka

Director General (special duty) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ahmed Rahim has been forced into retirement for his alleged corruption with effect from August 11, said an official handout yesterday.

The action was taken under section 4(3) (B) of the government employees (disciplinary and appeal) rules 1985, as the allegation of misuse and misappropriation of public money against him was proved, the handout added.

Clashes continue to rage thru' Najaf

3 GIs, 5 Iraqis killed in fighting, American journalist kidnapped

AFP, Najaf

Clashes broke out in Najaf ahead of an expected major military assault on Shia militiamen, as a key national conference decided yesterday to send delegates to the holy city in an effort to bring rebel leader Moqtada Sadr back from the brink.

And in a hint of the possible cost of an attack by US and Iraqi government forces, the US military said that three US marines were killed "as a result of enemy action" in Najaf province Sunday.

Violent but sporadic fighting erupted early afternoon between Sadr's Mehdi Army and US-backed Iraqi forces closing on the rebels'

stronghold in the city's shrine area.

Tank and automatic gunfire could be heard throughout the Old City as plumes of smoke spewed into the sky, on the second day of intermittent clashes after talks broke down between Sadr and the Iraqi government.

"A major assault by forces will be launched quickly to bring the Najaf fight to an end," interior ministry spokesman Sabah Kadhim said late Sunday.

Prime Minister Iyad Allawi has insisted that the militia disarm and quit Najaf for there to be any peaceful solution to the crisis.

On Sunday, foreign and Iraqi journalists and cameramen were ordered out of Najaf by local police, as

authorities said their safety could not be guaranteed.

One person was killed and two wounded Sunday when US troops fired on pro-Sadr demonstrators near the cemetery, a surgeon told AFP.

Bullets also hit the northern wall of the Imam Ali shrine, eyewitnesses said.

In Baghdad, the national conference decided to send a delegation to urge Sadr to withdraw his fighters from Najaf and turn his militia into a political party, on the second day of the meet.

Participants approved by a show of hands the proposal put forward by a relative of Sadr, Baghdad Shia cleric Sheikh Hussein al-Sadr.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

World oil prices spiral to \$47

AFP, Singapore

World crude oil prices spiralled to a new high of 46.91 dollars a barrel in Asian trading yesterday as a nervous market ignored producers' assurances that there was enough oil to meet demand, dealers said.

At 2:40pm (0640 GMT), New York's benchmark light sweet crude contract for delivery in September had retreated to 46.71 dollars a barrel in electronic trading but was still above its previous all-time high of 46.65 dollars and

Friday's close of 46.58 dollars in New York.

"The market remains extremely nervous, judging that supply will be hard pressed to satisfy rising demand despite Saudi Arabia's statements that it possesses immediately, available spare capacity of 1.3 million barrels a day," French bank Societe Generale economist Deborah White said in a report.

Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) President Purnomo Yusgiantoro's assurance over the weekend that the oil cartel had spare

capacity of two million barrels a day failed to cool prices.

The world's leading oil producer, Saudi Arabia, has declared its readiness to boost output by 1.3 million barrels per day, the OPEC president said.

"Saudi Arabia has already given their report," Yusgiantoro told journalists at his office, adding that other producers were still determining their spare capacity but may have an additional two million barrels per day available.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Decision to make two Dhaka roads rickshaw-free postponed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Transport Co-ordination Board (DTCB) has postponed its decision to make two more city roads off-limit to rickshaws from today considering the floods that affected most parts of the country including the capital.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Maldives detains MPs, ex-Saarc secy gen

Emergency rule continues, curfew eases

AFP, BBC ONLINE, Male

A curfew in the capital of the Maldives was eased but parliament sessions were put off indefinitely and emergency rule continued following last week's riots, officials and residents said.

State television in the Indian Ocean atoll nation, a luxury tourist destination, said yesterday the curfew now came into force in Male at 11.30pm, two hours later.

Shops, offices and schools also opened yesterday in a sign of a return to normality after Friday's unrest linked to pressure on President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom to bring in democratic reforms.

Scores of people suspected of being anti-government activists were kept in custody. The authorities said 185 suspects were detained, but activists put the figure much higher.

Among those detained were Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, former secretary general of the seven-member South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) and a parliament member and former Maldives attorney general, Mohammed Munavvar and four other parliament members. The detained members of Citizens' Special

Majlis (MPs) are Ibrahim Ismail, Gasim Ibrahim, Mohamed Shihab and Dr. Mohamed Munawwar.

Four dissidents wanted by the government were arrested overnight, residents said. However, there was no confirmation from the police or the National Security Service, which is spearheading the crackdown.

The parliament announced overnight that its regular sittings would not be held and gave no reason for the indefinite postponement, but residents said at least five members of parliament had been arrested for supporting dissent.

The Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), which is campaigning for a multi-party democracy in the tiny, one-party nation, said Gayoom loyalists continued to intimidate the population.

"My daughter has been beaten up in prison," MDP spokesman in Colombo, Mohamed Latheef, told AFP. "They feel they have brought the situation under control and they can now do anything they want."

The MDP called on the international community to take action to prevent the country of 270,000 Sunni Muslims from slipping into

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6