

PM for law

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said, adding that public security will have to be given topmost importance in all construction works.

Referring to the significant contribution of the engineers in the country's development, production, construction and innovation, Khaleda Zia said that sincere and skilled leadership of engineers is very urgent in the present technology-dependent globalisation era.

"Acquire the latest technology and utilise for the necessity of the country - this is our expectation," the prime minister told the engineers present at the function from all over the country.

Over 2,000 engineers attended the function.

Khaleda Zia called upon them to reach the technology to the doorstep of common man through fair and planned management. The prime minister also urged them to help attain quick and sustainable economic growth through ensuring best utilisation of country's natural and human resources.

She also informed the function that the demands of the engineers are under active consideration of the government.

The demands include providing selection board to non-cadre engineers, creating engineer cadre, resolving inter-cadre discrimination and providing balanced and equal dignity to all officers of cadres and services.

Judiciary separation

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objection by a voice vote and the law minister tabled the bill, proposing deputation of BCS (Administration) officers as judicial magistrates for seven years from enactment of the law to avoid any inadequacy in the judicial magistracy.

"There is also a provision in the bill allowing the deputed BCS officers to return to Administration cadre in phases," Moudud told parliament in a written statement.

The House sent the bill to its standing committee on law and judiciary affairs, asking it to scrutinise the bill and report within two months. The report is likely to be placed in the next session of parliament slated for April.

The committee will also seek opinions from a cross-section of people including legal experts and civil society members about the bill, the minister told the House.

He said the Article 22 of the Constitution ensures separation of judiciary from the executive and termed it the basic principle of democratic governance. With this objective, a ministerial committee has already circulated a judicial service regulation and set up a judicial service commission, he added.

PARALLEL MAGISTRACY
According to the tabled Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2006 the district magistrates (DMs), additional district magistrates (ADMs), apazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) and assistant commissioners (ACs) will be assisted with executive magistracy.

In parallel a number of judicial magistrates will be posted in each district under a chief judicial magistrate.

In metropolitan, metropolitan magistrates will work as judicial magistrates under the chief metropolitan magistrates alongside executive magistrates working under the DMs. The DMs, ADMs, UNOs and ACs

PM accuses opposition

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I asked them to strengthen BNP's hands and work for the re-election of BNP. If BNP is given the people's mandate once again it will turn Bangladesh into a self-reliant country," she said.

The PM asked Juba Dal leaders to get prepared for the upcoming elections and directed them to work for the party's nominees.

The rally drew thousands of BNP leaders, activists and supporters to Paltan Maidan from all over the country. The slogan-chanting BNP and Juba Dal supporters thronged the meeting venue in small processions carrying portraits of the party's founder late president Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman as well as the national and party flags.

Slogans like "Resist opposition's conspiracy and save democracy," "Khaleda Zia, you move on, we are behind you," "People are the source of power and BNP is the torch-bearer of development" were painted on the chests and backs of some activists.

They were also carrying sheaves of paddy, BNP's election symbol, and holding banners, placards and festoons. Many of the processions included musical troupes.

BNP Secretary General also LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said before the last elections 64 lakh false voters were incorporated in the electoral roll. He said people know who are responsible for the misdeed. He urged the people to remain vigilant to ensure that no false voter is enlisted this time around.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Khandakar Mosharrar Hossain said the opposition is in fact out to foil the elections in the name of reforms.

PM's Political Secretary Haris Chowdhury termed the opposition's reform proposal as 'insane' and urged them to first 'reform their brains'.

BNP's Joint Secretary General Goyeshwar Chandra Roy said if the opposition has to reform the system of caretaker government it should first propose cancellation of the system.

Hasina

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on Saturday.

They returned to parliament and placed reform proposals only for the interest of the people, Hasina, also president of the main opposition Awami League (AL), said, adding, "Let's see what reply she [prime minister] she gives us in the House."

She asked why the government is so hesitant to implement the reforms that aim at ensuring free and fair elections.

Asked what she would do if the government does not carry out the reform proposals, the former prime minister said finally the government will have to meet the demands when people take to the street and force the government to do it through mass upsurge.

The government has politicised the administration and the EC to rig the upcoming elections, Hasina said, adding that people must remain united and alert so that their votes are not snatched away.

She accused the government of patronising the militants.

The opposition leader said there is no rule of law in the country while fertiliser, power and diesel crisis, price spiral of essential commodities, poor law and order situation, and corruption brought misery to the people.

Criticising the raise in diesel price by Tk 1 per litre for the northern region, she said the government wanted to separate the northern Bangladesh from the rest of the country.

On her way to Dhaka, she addressed wayside rallies at Ambari of Tirr Bandar and Fulbari Bazar while thousands of party workers greeted their party chief throughout the streets.

AL Joint Secretary General Obaidul Quader, Organising Secretary Akhteruzzaman, Juba League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanok, Barga district AL President Mantaj Uddin, General Secretary Majibur Rahman Majnu, were present, among others, at the press conference.

Moudud

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clarification against any words that have been expunged from the House proceedings," Moudud told the House.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar last Thursday allowed ruling BNP lawmaker Helen Zerin Khan to clarify her position against the words used by AL lawmaker Shajahan Khan although those words were already expunged from the House proceedings.

Taking the floor, Helen Zerin also made a verbal attack on Shajahan Khan, using unparliamentary, offensive and defamatory words that triggered off a fierce protest among the AL lawmakers.

The speaker, however, did not interrupt Helen's indecent aggressive speech but later expunged those words from the proceedings of the House.

Senior lawmakers of both the ruling and opposition benches opposed the speaker's decision to give floor to Helen Zerin to counter Shajahan Khan's words already expunged from the House proceedings.

They also said use of such aggressive words tarnishes the image of the House.

Moudud Ahmed criticised the speaker, saying, "If you had interrupted a lawmaker starting to use unparliamentary and aggressive words in speech, the question of expunging those words would not have arisen."

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said, "Not only the present generation, the future generation will not forgive us for using such indecent words in parliament."

Rajuk in dark

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have a fund for the inspectors, thus we can modify anything of the structure," said the developer.

When Anwarul Islam (not his real name), of Dhanmondi Madhu Bazar went the Rajuk for the approval of a six-storey building plan, officials first rejected the prayer saying the road in front was much narrower than what is required by law for a six-storey structure. But the same official readily offered an alternative package for the aspiring homeowner. Islam is now demolishing his tin-shed house to prepare for the construction.

He showed a Rajuk-approved plan, signed and sealed by officials. "I paid Tk 35,000 for the package and got it in 15 days," he said.

Meanwhile, Islam has put aside the 'approved plan' and made a second building plan with the help of an engineer to suit his needs. He intends to start construction within a week.

The Minister for Housing and Public Works Mirza Abbas told The Daily Star it is a matter of great concern how crudely buildings are being built in the city. He said his ministry has just completed a new building code introducing stringent construction rules and he would put it forward in the parliament soon. The new building code was prepared in collaboration with Buet, Institute of Architects, Bangladesh and Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa).

Architect Iqbal Habib of BAPA alleged an important provision for action against illegal structures has been left out of the code. "We had suggested in the code that illegal or vulnerable buildings be identified and then if necessary demolished or strengthened through modification," Iqbal added.

Another body

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electrician from Shantinagar of Pabna, came out of the debris around 2:30pm.

With the two, 47 people were so far rescued alive.

Sumon was taken to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) while Shakil left for his house from the spot. Sixteen of the injured were undergoing treatment at DMCH, one of them in critical state.

Doctors said they amputated the left leg of critically wounded labourer Tofazzel Hossain, 50, yesterday.

HUNT FOR THE RESPONSIBLE

Police on Saturday night arrested Rezaul Karim Faruq, manager (finance) of Phoenix Fabrics that was once housed in the collapsed building. They also conducted several drives until yesterday afternoon in different parts of the city in search of the building's owner Deen Mohammad, but could not arrest him.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Khalilur Rahman of Tejgaon Police Station had filed a case accusing eight people, including Deen Mohammad, under sections 304(A)-negligence leading to murder, 427-mischief, and 109-abetment of the penal code.

The other accused are Shoyebur Rahman, MA Mazid, Dr Jahangir Alam, SA Hasan, Delwar Hossain, Sirajul Islam and Rezaul Karim Faruq.

SUFFERINGS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Around 100 families living around the site of collapse are facing serious trouble as supply of water and electricity to their houses remained snapped as of yesterday evening.

They also had to remain almost entirely confined in their houses as the law enforcers have sealed off all the roads in the area.

City dwellers also suffered severe traffic congestion as the Tongi Diversion Road was closed for vehicular movement yesterday.

POLITICAL LEADERS VISIT THE SITE

Leaders of the 14-party opposition combine led by Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jaill visited the site yesterday. AL leader Tofail Ahmed and Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon accompanied him.

They spent some time there and observed the rescue operation.

HOME MEETING
State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar yesterday said the law enforcement agencies have

Pirate leader

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piracy cases, police said.

Police arrested Bachchu's brother Shafiq from Mahipal in Feni early Saturday. Following his information, police later captured Bachchu from a house in Bandar Sramik Colony in Chittagong.

Bachchu was brought to Bhola Saturday afternoon and acting on his confessional statement, police Shajahan Khan's words already expunged from the House proceedings.

As soon as the law enforcers along with Bachchu reached the spot, his cohorts opened fire forcing the police to retaliate. Police claimed Bachchu was caught in the shootout and killed on the spot.

Officer-in-charge (OC) Rabiul Islam of Tajmuddin Police Station, SI Liton, SI Monir and constable Sohail also sustained bullet injuries during the shootout.

A gun and three bullets were recovered from the scene.

Police said Bachchu was a fisherman and had become a pirate two years ago. He created a reign of terror in the coastal shoal areas and looted a number of fishing trawlers in river Meghna.

Cellphone firms

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registration process within the shortest possible time.

Earlier, BTRC gave two months time to the service providers to complete the registration process, the first step of the controversial tele-tapping ordinance, as they have a huge backlog of nearly 11 million subscribers. Existing and new subscribers will have to provide their fingerprints on prescribed forms.

The telecoms regulator also made mandatory a 'certificate' issued by an elected public representative or a first class government officer for new subscription. Those who have passports, driving licenses, gun licenses or other forms of photo identity will not require the certificate.

If any subscriber provides false information in personal details, the official or the public representative attesting the form will be taken to task. Connection of an existing subscriber will be snapped in case of failure to register with the operators within the scheduled time and will only be restored after registration.

The operators earlier requested the commission to give at least six months to complete registrations of around 11 million subscribers, of whom 90 per cent are pre-paid clients. BTRC assured them of considering the time extension after reviewing the progress within the two-month deadline.

The operators fear that manda-

been asked to arrest the owners of Phoenix Fabrics.

"We have given clear instruction to the police to arrest the owner of the collapsed building," Babar told reporters after an inter-ministerial meeting at his ministry.

He admitted that the fire brigade lacks sufficient rescue equipment for facing situations like building collapses that took place in Tejgaon and Savar.

"A proposal from the disaster management ministry in this regard is awaiting approval at the planning commission," he said.

Babar also referred to the passage of the Building Construction (Amendment) Bill 2006 in parliament to ensure standard building code to avoid such accidents in future.

The executive engineer of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkho (Rajuk) yesterday told the BBC that the building collapsed as some changes were made in its structure to convert it from a garment factory into a hospital. The building owners, however, had permission for garment factory, he said.

IDENTITY OF DEAD VICTIMS

Apart from Abdul Berek and Nabiullah, the identity of nine deceased could be learnt until yesterday. They are ansar security guard Billal Hossain, 22, Shajahan, 35, son of Sonu Mia of Tejkanipara, Kazi Harunur Rashid Pappu, 38, son of Kazi Yusuf of Shikkakuli Lane, Kotwali, Swapan, son of Shafiqullah of East Nakhalpara, Shabela, 7, daughter of Shahin of East Nakhalpara, Amana Begum, wife of Latu Mia of East Nakhalpara, Anwara Butt of Halaughat, Mymensingh, Shahjahan, 35, and Billal, 20.

The other victims include three men, a 4-year-old girl, and women.

Electricity crisis

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operation yesterday, PDB officials said.

Globeleq manager Reaz Uddin, however, told the news agency that the plant is scheduled to resume generation from March 12.

"But we are trying our best to resume operation as early as possible... even the operation might resume late tonight," he said.

RMG workers

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garments in Chittagong and Phoenix garments in the capital and other garment factories across the country.

BGWTC leaders demanded Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami's removal from his post as he failed to take proper steps against the garment factory owners, government officials, and organizations responsible for the accidents.

The fire in KTS garments in Chittagong and the collapse of Phoenix garment's building in Dhaka left at least 73 workers dead.

Addressing the rally BGWTC President Idris Ali said, "For the well being of the garment factories throughout the country Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami has to resign."

He demanded immediate compensations to the victims' families and implementations of factory and institution laws, labour laws and International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions in every garment factory of the country.

BGWTC General Secretary Ruhul Amin, and leaders Sadekur Rahman Shamim and Iqbal Hossain, Communist Party of Bangladesh leader Abdul Zaber and Krishak Samity leader Sazzad Jahir Chandan also spoke at the rally.

Judge Chunnu

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comprising Justice Awlad Ali and Justice ZinatAra passed the order.

During hearing of the petition yesterday, counsel for Chunnu barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan requested that the HC bench exclude the matter from the trial proceedings in that bench, since he did not feel easy in conducting the case in that bench.

The HC bench wanted to know the reasons for his not feeling easy in moving the case in that bench but Ziaur Rahman Khan did not make any reply.

The court asked him to file application to the Chief Justice if he has any grievance regarding hearing of the case in that bench.

On February 13, following a writ petition filed as public interest litigation, by advocate Khairul Alam Piplu, a lawyer of the Supreme Court, the HC bench imposed an ad-interim two-week ban on judicial activities of Rezaul Karim Khan Chunnu for his alleged participation in the political activities of the ruling BNP.

The HC bench also issued a rule upon the government to show cause within two weeks as to why it (government) should not be directed to take legal action against Chunnu for his alleged misconduct under government service rule.

On February 14, Rezaul Karim Khan Chunnu filed an appeal petition in the Supreme Court seeking stay on the HC order that imposed injunction on him in discharging judicial functions.

A full bench of the Appellate Division on February 16 dismissed the appeal and asked Chunnu to face the HC.

Advocate M Enayetur Rahim moved for the writ petitioner before the court.

Government's

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proved, by foiling anti-Ahmadiyya zealots' attempt to capture our mosque in Narayanganj, Sathkira and Mymensingh, that it has full capacity to control and stop the fundamentalists," Abdul Awad Khan Chowdhury, central Ahmadiyya missionary, told reporters after the meeting.

Chairman of the Commission Mical Comatie led the delegation, which also included Vice Chairman Felice D Gaer, Commissioner Preetia Bansal, Executive Director Joe Crapa, Deputy Director Policy Tad Stahnke, Senior Policy Analyst Steve Snow and Political In-Charge Denise Jobin Welch.

Ahmadiyya National Ameer Mobasherur Rahman, Nai'b National Ameer Prof Meer Mobashsher Ali, central committee members Meer Tariq Ali, Ahmad Tabshir Choudhury and Bashir AK Chowdhury attended the meeting with the delegation.

As the US delegation referred to the Bangladesh government's claim that it had banned two organisations for anti-Ahmadiyya agitation, the Ahmadiyya leaders pointed out that the organisations were banned due to their involvement in militant activities including bombings across the country.

The Commission members also mentioned the claim of Bangladesh Embassy in the USA that the Bangladesh government imposed ban on Ahmadiyya publications in January 2004 to save the Ahmadiyyas from the wrath of zealots.

The Ahmadiyya leaders then said the ban ultimately encouraged the zealots who later intensified persecution on the Ahmadiyyas across the country.

They demanded rescinding of ban on their publications and return of Ahmadiyya mosques that are now under the capture of anti-Ahmadiyya zealots.

Jamaat, Shibir

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Uddin said, "Whether Salehi is involved or not, he must not be implicated in the murder case."

"Implication of Salehi will undermine Jamaat-Shibir and the ruling alliance. He is a part of the alliance and this issue may accelerate the fall of the ruling coalition."

Nazrul Islam Bulbul, another former Shibir president, demanded exclusion of Salehi's name from the charge sheet. "Salehi's name should be dropped for the sake of the alliance," he demanded.

"If Shibir decides, the peace in the country will be destroyed," he said calling upon the alliance leaders to force police to drop Salehi's name from the charge sheet.

The police officials who will fail to find the real killers would be taught a good lesson, said another former Shibir president Motiur Rahman Akhand.

Commenting on the outrageous speeches, a top police official speaking anonymously said, "They can say whatever they wish. If they are really brave and honest, they should present Salehi in public and prove him innocent at court."

The police have already gathered sufficient pieces of evidence of Salehi's involvement in addition to the confessional statements of the three killers, he said.

A number of Shibir teams on Saturday night raided RU halls and forced resident students to sign a signature campaign that claims Salehi is innocent.

"Shibir men have threatened Eti of Munnujan Hall as she refused to put her signature," said a resident student asking not to be identified.

Waking up in grave

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not only renews his energy but also rekindles hopes for survival. But as time passes, Sumon's hope again starts to melt away. He starts to cry and call Allah for help.

After 27 and a-half long hours of the Tejgaon building collapse, as a group of rescuers digs him out, the first thought that comes to him is: "I have received a new lease on life."

The rescue team found Sumon lying on his belly on the vacant first floor. Chan Mian, stationmaster of Sadarghat Fire Brigade unit and one of the team members, who rescued him, tells The Daily Star.

Another construction worker, Shamim was lucky to make his way out of the rubble one and a-half-hour after the building collapse on Saturday. But he made several attempts to enter the doomed structure yet again yesterday to find his younger brother still trapped inside.

"Several times I tried to enter the rubble, but each time the rescuers held me back. How can I sit just here and watch while my brother is dying inside?" Shamim tells between sobs. He looks so weak and traumatised that he cannot even speak clearly.

Six people were working at a corner on the second floor when the disaster struck. Five of them, including Shamim, 21, managed to come out, not his 18-year-old brother, Humayun Kabir. Despite injuries in his hands and legs, Shamim came to the building a few hours after his release from Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

He is sitting despondently on the rubble. About 15 yards off, his parents—60-year-old Shajahan Jomadder and Ambia Begum, 50—are crouching, staring at the remains of the once-six-storey

Blocked road

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Other than the roads leading towards Rampura via Biswa Road, PMO and Dhaka Cantonment, there has been virtually no other alternatives for diverting the rush hour traffic, which otherwise would have taken the temporarily off-limit path of Tongi Diversion Road.

Things aggravated further due to halting of traffics, up to 30 minutes at places, for ensuring smooth passage for the prime minister's entourage. Khaleda Zia had two programmes in the city yesterday -- one at the Institution of Engineers at midday and the other at Paltan ground in the afternoon.

Vehicles and pedestrians on old Airport road, Bijo Sarani, Pantha Path, Farmgate and other streets got stranded for the passage of prime minister's motorcade.

As a cascading effect, many busy thoroughfares of the city witnessed a build-up of huge traffic jam for best parts of the day yesterday.

Marines

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Miranda, who was officially replaced for "personal reasons", was believed to be still inside the building and did not speak to a large media group broadcasting live from the scene.

Querubin and two other senior officers were relieved of their posts on Friday over what the government called a coup plot by "military adventurists" in alliance with communists and members of the opposition.

Inside the Marine compound, confusion reigned as another officer, a battalion commander also angered by Miranda's sacking, lined up a platoon backed by three armoured vehicles.

"We are demonstrating our anger over the sacking of our commander," shouted the lieutenant-colonel, who asked not to be named.

"Marines, don't shoot at fellow Marines," he told his men.

The Marine compound is in Fort Bonifacio, which borders the country's most exclusive housing area, including ambassadors' residences.

Brigadier-General Nelson Aliaga, the freshly sworn-in replacement for Miranda as Marine commandant, told reporters Querubin was an "internal matter" and vowed to arrest any rebellious officers.

Ricardo Saludo, a senior Arroyo adviser, insisted that Querubin would be "taken into custody" and said there were "no unauthorized movements" of troops.

Earlier Sunday, Philippine authorities warned of more arrests while the opposition vowed to legally challenge emergency powers assumed by Arroyo.

"Mopping-up operations are ongoing. Individual conspirators will be prosecuted and brought to justice," presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

Presidential guards maintained a high alert around the presidential palace. Its main approaches had been barricaded since Arroyo declared the state of emergency on Friday.

The emergency declaration came on the eve of the 20th anniversary of a bloodless military-backed popular revolt that ended the 20-year Marcos regime.

Since the 1986 revolt, a series of coup attempts has hobbled the country.

President Joseph Estrada was overthrown in January 2001 in a bloodless army-backed popular revolt and Arroyo, his vice president, was installed as his successor.

Arroyo survived a brief military mutiny in July 2003 and overcame an impeachment complaint in the legislature last year over charges she stole the May 2004 presidential election.

building with tears rolling down their cheeks. They have come all the way from Nalchhiti in Jhalakathi yesterday morning hearing the misfortune.

From time to time, Ambia wails, "Where are you, my son. O Allah, give back my child to my lap."

US starts to play a role in Kashmir solution: Bush

PTI, Islamabad

US President George W Bush has said he has "started to play a role" in resolving the Kashmir issue by calling for a solution agreeable to all parties and emphasised the need for "tangible progress" on the issue.

Bush, who will be visiting India and Pakistan next week, said he would use his upcoming trip to urge the leadership of the two countries "to continue solving this (Kashmir) issue, with the idea that it can be solved."

"I started to play a role in my speech and spoke out on the issue and encouraged the President (Pervez Musharraf) and Prime Minister (Manmohan Singh) to continue down the road of solving the issue with a solution acceptable to all sides," Bush told PTV in an interview when asked what role he planned to play during his visit to resolve the Kashmir issue.

Bush was referring to his speech two days ago at Asia Society in Washington where he urged India and Pakistan to look for a bilateral solution of Kashmir issue acceptable to all sides. Bush arrives in Islamabad on March 3 on a two-day visit.