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Opposition got frustrated for destructive politics

PM tells JS

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday told parliament that the opposition got frustrated and divided due to their "destructive politics".

"People are not with those who want to ruin the economy and push the country backward by creating chaos and unrest," she said.

Replying to a supplementary question from BNP lawmaker Fazlul Huq Milan during the prime minister's question-answer session, Khaleda said the people want peace and development through uninterrupted work and education.

"People will evaluate and give verdict in favour of those who are working to ensure development, education, peace and progress of the country," she said.

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Govt retreats from move to amend constitution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Just three days into its decision, the government yesterday retreated from amending the constitution incorporating a new provision for not holding by-election to a vacant seat if the tenure of parliament remains for 180 days or less.

Completing all arrangements for passing the bill, including even extension of the current session of the House, government policymakers asked the Speaker to suspend the process regarding the bill okayed by the cabinet last Monday.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed

told parliament that he will not place the bill.

Following the government decision, the current session was prorogued last night without witnessing the placing of the much-talked-about bill although it was enlisted in the day's order.

The government's sudden retreat from passing the amendment bill has now put the Election Commission (EC) into trouble as it will have to conduct by-elections to two parliamentary seats -- Dinajpur-3 and Comilla-8.

The seats fell vacant following the deaths of ruling BNP lawmakers Khurshid Jahan Haque and Col

(ret'd) Akbar Hossain recently.

Lawmakers in the House were stunned by the sudden decision for not extending the tenure of the session.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar said they were not interested in extending the tenure of the current session as they wanted to stay in their constituencies ahead of the next parliamentary elections.

"The bill to amend the constitution would not have been passed even if the tenure of the session had been extended for another week because it was sent to a parliamentary standing committee for

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Hasina terms constitution change move unconstitutional

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday termed the BNP-Jamaat alliance government's move to amend the constitution "unconstitutional" and said they (government) are conspiring for not participating in the upcoming election.

"The alliance government has brought a bill in the parliament proposing amendment in the Constitution for holding by-election in vacant seats within 180 days instead of 90 days. It's a clear violation of the constitution," claimed Hasina.

The AL chief was speaking at a close-door discussion with the party's grass-roots level leaders from Bogra and Chapainawabganj districts at her Dhanmondi office in the capital.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



Security personnel check a train compartment at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday as the government has heightened security measures at railway stations and diplomatic zones following the Mumbai serial blasts on Tuesday.

MP Shahidul apologises to journalists for attack

UNB, Dhaka

BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam yesterday regretted and apologised for the attack on journalists in Kushtia on May 20.

He assured of withdrawing two cases filed against the journalists of Kushtia.

The apology and assurance of the ruling party MP came at a meeting with State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar and leaders of Sangabadi, Karmachari and Sramik Oikya Parishad at the ministry.

Deputy Information Minister Abdus Salam Pintu, Mehedi Ahmed Rumi MP, Reza Ahmed Bachehu Mullah MP and Inspector General of Police (IGP) Anwarul Iqbal were present at the meeting.

After fruitful discussion, Babar directed the local administration to take necessary security measures to enable resumption of publication of daily Andoloner Bazar of Kushtia.

He also directed the local administration to ensure security for the journalists who had fled Kushtia in the face of death threats.

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Traders of Tongipara in Munshiganj produce curds in unhygienic environment on the bank of the Padma to supply to big sweetmeat houses in the capital.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

KARNAPHULI BRIDGE

Ministry forcing RHD to sign construction deal despite faulty design

SHARIEF KHAN

Ignoring the reservations expressed by various authorities, the communications ministry is forcing Roads and Highways Department (RHD) to sign a Tk 338 crore contract today with a Chinese company for the construction of faultily designed Karnaphuli Bridge.

The Kuwait government funded 900-meter long bridge will not serve the actual purpose, waste the fund and cause heavy siltation in the river.

But it will help the ruling party during the election campaign in Chittagong region, plus it will make way for a river dredging project with a highly inflated budget which will ensure a huge amount of kickbacks to certain officials and policymakers, sources said.

RHD sought for a suspension bridge over the Karnaphuli River. If the construction of such a bridge is

too costly, RHD tender for the bridge allowed bidders to quote for a cheaper bridge with a maximum of three piers. But the communication ministry is now making RHD swallow a bridge designed with eight piers, which is to be constructed by China Major Bridge (CMB) company.

CMB's design was found to be faulty by the project's Japanese consultant. Then a committee comprising experts from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) was assigned to review the design. The BUET committee also rejected CMB's design saying that no bridge with more than four piers should be allowed on this river. Piers cause high level of sedimentation and should be avoided as much as possible considering the importance of the river, the experts said.

They said by putting eight piers instead of two or three, CMB suc-

ceeded in becoming the 'lowest' bidder, but such a low bid is not desired.

"In addition to causing the river to lose navigability, this bridge will bring in environmental catastrophe in the long run," said an expert. Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) also raised its objection. In a letter to the ministry it said if such a bridge is built, the cost of maintaining Karnaphuli's navigability through regular dredging will become very high.

Meanwhile, Chittagong City Mayor Mohiuddin Ahmed formed a committee Monday and announced that the committee will resist this project by all means and will make sure that a suspension bridge, as per the recommendation of experts, is constructed in its place.

However, the communication ministry brushed aside these objections. A policymaker spearheading

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Babar, IGP, 200 cops sued for Milon murder

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered judicial inquiry after a woman filed a murder case against state minister for home, around 200 police officials including the former and present IGP, and a forensic expert.

Ayesha Akhtar Rekha, wife of DCC ward-19 Swachchhasebak League activist Golam Mostafa

Milon who was killed in Dhaka during the opposition's July 2 blockade programme, lodged the case with the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday.

Taking the case into cognizance, Metropolitan Magistrate Syed Mujibul Haq ordered to conduct judicial inquiry.

The accused include State

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Graft reports made in scientific method

Says TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday explained the method of its corruption database saying that it was merely a compilation of 2,128 corruption incidents published in 24 leading Bangla and English newspapers in 2005.

The question of withdrawal of the report does not arise as the corruption database only put the newspaper reports together and the authenticity lies on the news-

papers concerned, said Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, chairman of TIB trustee board while addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

The TIB is not against the government but it is unfortunate that whichever party remains in the power tries to undermine it, he said, adding that the ruling parties also try to tarnish the image of the TIB trustee board members.

Publishing database on the basis of newspaper reports is a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

PM, Hasina shocked at Mumbai blasts

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has strongly condemned the train bombings at Mumbai in India that killed around 190 people and injured several hundred others.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday said Bangladesh always stood against terrorist acts in all its forms and manifestations.

He said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in a message to the prime minister of India expressed her shock and horror at this terrorist attack and expressed her deep sorrows at the colossal loss of life.

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MUMBAI BLASTS

Massive hunt on as death toll rises to 200

AFF, Mumbai

Indian police said yesterday the bombs which ripped through trains in Mumbai on Tuesday bore the hallmark of Islamic militants.

The death toll from seven coordinated blasts rose to 200 with more than 700 injured, Maharashtra deputy chief minister RR Patil told the state assembly yesterday.

"According to the information that we have received, the death toll is right now at 200 with 714

injured," he told the assembly in Mumbai.

Investigators picked through the debris of Tuesday's rush-hour strikes seeking clues to the country's worst attack in more than a decade. It took aim at the city that has come to embody India's growing role in the world.

"The modus operandi appears to be similar to Lashkar-e-Taiba," Maharashtra state police chief PS Pasricha told reporters.

The militant group is banned in India and Pakistan and dubbed a

terrorist organisation by the United States.

"I cannot categorically say that it was them as those (forensic) reports have yet to come in," he added. Police said no arrests had been made.

The latest attack on the transit system of a major city -- after the 2004 Madrid train bombing and last July's London Underground attacks -- was "well-coordinated and well-planned" and backed by a "big power", anti-terror squad

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Nagorik Committee holds 6th meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The sixth meeting of the Nagorik Committee 2006 held on Tuesday at the CPD Dialogue Room in the capital reviewed the recent outcomes of the regional dialogues organized in Sylhet, Rangamati and Chittagong.

It decided to release the specific recommendations on 'electoral and political reform' gathered from the seventh regional dialogues held so far through a press meet on July 17, 2006.

A review on the progress of the Vision 2021 was done in the meeting. A sequence of Expert Group Consultations will be held on the goals of the Vision in August.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



Dumped waste in front of Shantinagar market has become a nuisance for people and causes regular traffic congestion.

PHOTO: STAR

Law enforcers on high alert

UNB, Dhaka

The law enforcement agencies have been put on high alert in the country following Tuesday's serial bombings in Mumbai that claimed around 190 lives and injured several hundred others.

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar apprised the journalists of the precautionary measure at his office yesterday.

"Since a neighbouring country is under attack, we should take all possible measures to avert such incident," said the minister.

"Law enforcement agencies have been directed to remain alert, and stringent security measures have also been taken at all key-point installations across the country," Babar informed the newsmen.

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