METROPOLÎTAN/NEWS

Accept reform proposals and let's see whom people want

Hasina tells Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday has thrown down a challenge to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to hold a free, fair and neutral election after implementing reforms in the caretaker government and the Election Commission to find out who really turns out to be the winner in the upcoming election.

"If you have the courage, refrain from conspiring: accept the reform proposals and hold a free. fair and neutral election, let's see whom the people want," Hasina, also the president of Awami League (AL) said while having an exchange of views with the party's grassroots activists from Sunamganj district at her Dhanmondi office in the capital.

In response to the prime minister's remarks on Tuesday that the opposition went insane to come to power, the AL chief said, "It is not the opposition, rather Khaleda Zia who has been crazed for power and for rigging the next election. ...she can never come to power

ised the discussion.

Absorption Rule

2006 protested

Teachers of government colleges

under the banner 'BCS General

Education Association' yesterday

observed a sit-in-programme in

front of the Shikkha Bhaban in the

city protesting a move to amend

They also submitted a memo-

randum to the prime minister and

held a protest rally in front of

Shikkha Bhaban to press their

Leaders of Bangladesh Civil

Service General (BCS) Education

Association alleged that cadre

teachers, who are recruited

through PSC, will face trouble if

the absorption rules are

the Absorption Rules 2000 to

bring the non-cadre teachers of

government colleges under a

common government rule.

Education ministry has already

sent the amendment absorption

rule to the establishment ministry.

non-government colleges into

government colleges where all of

the teachers were adopted. Most

of the adopted teachers will be

senior to the teachers who were

recruited through PSC if the

amendment rule is passed," said

Prof Iftekhar Ahmed Khan, presi-

dent of the association. while

Masum Rabbani Khan, secre-

tary general of the association,

said promotion of around 10000

BCS teachers will be interrupted if

Government should recruit the

adopted teachers through PSC,

the government passes the rule.

addressing the rally.

"Government has turned some

The government formulated

the Absorption Rules 2000.

eight-point demand.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

শিল্পে ন্যুনতম মজুরী ও কর্মপরিবেশ

without stealing votes.'

The AL president reiterated that the Chief Election Commissioner has forged the voter list ignoring the Supreme Court directives and no free, fair and neutral election would be held with 'this' voter list. "Tens of thousands of people are still to be included in the current voter list."

Hasina again demanded for an accurate voter list with photographs of voters and transparent ballot boxes at every polling booth. It is easy to make a voter list with photographs in this digital age by using only 3,000 digital cameras in around 29,000 polling centres in the country, she

The Al chief claimed that the BNP-Jamaat alliance has chosen KM Hassan as the chief justice only to implement their secret plot of engineering the election under his jurisdiction.

Hasina accused the prime minister of destroying discipline and politicising all sectors including the judiciary by allowing per-

Fahmida Khatun addresses a discussion on 'Fixing minimum wage in the garment sector and working atmosphere'

at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On her left are Khondoker Golam Moazzem, CPD Executive Director

Debapriya Bhattacharya, Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar MP and Shajahan Khan MP. Centre for Policy Dialogue organ-

Move to amend | Pro-BNP businessman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

costly trees, locals said.

likely to be felled today.

Earlier, he felled 13 trees

The self proclaimed occupier of the

state owned Rajshahi Town

Protection Embankment is now

felling a total of 21 large, ancient and

Out of at least 20 costly Mehgani

and Koroi trees at the VIP zone on

the embankment, some 3 were

already felled and some more are

nessman Joinal Abedin Dulal

employed a number of labourers

who have been involved in felling of

were contracted for felling 21 trees.

have been sold to local saw mills

and its branches were given to fuel-

The employees informed they

The felled trees were learnt to

As newspapers ran reports, local

BNP aligned influential busi-

plans to fell 21 trees

manent appointments to 17

Hasina said the government has approved a number of proiects at the eleventh hour of its tenure only for plundering public money. "They want to come back to power for looting public money again and they have finalised all conspiracies to rig the next elec-

Speaking on militancy, Hasina said the government earlier had imposed a ban on the militant outfit Harkatul Jihad, but now this banned organisation is being seen openly in the political arena and they are consulting with the alliance government. How this militant outfit is doing politics after being banned unless the government supports them, questioned

Senior AL leaders including Syeda Zohora Tajuddin, Abdul Jalil, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury, Kazi Zafarullah and Obaidul Quader were present among others at the meeting.

police rushed to the scene vester-

day, but they returned following

intervention of local ruling party

leaders and WDB officials, said the

incident, but none of them dared to

protest it. The police and WDB offi-

cials also did not take any initiative to

Rahman Minu told reporters that it is

WDB who can take actions. "But

they (WDB) are keeping mum

anonymity informed that WDB had

nothing to do following intervention

the land last year following WDB

request, but he reoccupied the land

as political leaders are busy over

upcoming elections", said a WDB

Humidity in

percentage

Evening

82

Morning

80

A few WDB officials seeking

"The occupier was evicted from

Rajshahi city Mayor Mizanur

resist felling of the trees.

of ruling party leaders.

mysteriously'

Local people are anxious over the

According to the prosecution, a

Freedom Fighters' Rehabilitation Society of Central Command Council M A Samad Sarker brought out a procession protesting hartal called by BNP on April 15, 1998. A group of BNP leaders and activists led by Khoka hurled bombs on the procession in front of Modhumoti Cinema Hall in the city's Motijheel area that left 10 freedom fighters injured. Later, a case under the Explosive

Substances Act against Khoka and others were filed with Motijheel Police Station the same day.

Court closes deposition of witnesses **COURT CORRESPONDENT**

BOMB BLAST CASE

AGAINST KHOKA

A Dhaka court yesterday closed deposition of witnesses in a bomb blast case filed against Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Sadeq Hossain Khoka, DCC Ward Commissioner Mirza Khokon and five others following a written petition by the prosecution.

The other accused are Major (dismissed) Jahangir, former secretary to the late president Ziaur Rahman, Abdur Razzak, Mohammad Ibrahim, Sona Miah Mondol and Dilip. Of them, Razzak is now on bail

Judge Mohammad Aman Ullah of the Fifth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order, even though Khoka and five others are absconding in the case since their bails were cancelled on August 2, 2003.

The court cancelled their bails as they were absent from the court during the time of framing charges against them.

Additional Public Prosecutor Sultan Naser told the court that it was a long pending case. All the steps were earlier taken for producing witnesses before the court.

Moreover, two witnesses had already been appeared before the court. At this stage, there is no possibility of witnesses' appearance before the court. So, deposition of witnesses should be closed, the pp

After the plea from the PP, the judge closed deposition of witnesses and fixed September 10 for crossexamination of the accused, even though Khoka and five others are

group of freedom fighters led by founder chairman of Bangladesh

COLLEGE STUDENT MURDER

Two to die, 3 others get life term

CU CORRESPONDENT

persons to death and three others to life term imprisonment in the college student Firoz Hossain Musa murder

First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court gave the verdict in their The convicts with death are

Kanchan of Fatikchhari and Nuruddin Ahmed Chowdhury alias Sujan of Comilla while Suman of Chandpur, Sajjad Ahmed Al Imran of Noakhali and Roni of city's Lalkhan Bazaar were given life in jail According to the prosecution of the

case, the convicts shot dead Musa, a student of Pahartali College, in a building at city's Nasirabad C&B Colony on February 5, 1996. They brought the body to the emergency department of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) and fled.

Musa's maternal uncle Advocate Abdus Satter, also Public Prosecutor of Chittagong Metropolitan Court, filed a case with Double Mooring Police Station.

A charge sheet was submitted on August 21, 1996 in this regard and charges were framed against them on March 2, 2000.

The court pronounced the verdict esterday after cross-examination of

Advocate Sattar expressed his satisfaction over the verdict and said he was happy as the killers were

Pakistan provides computer lab for Vigarunnisa Noon School

The government of Pakistan has provided a fully equipped computer lab for Vigarunnisa Noon School, Azimpur branch, says a press release.

The lab equipment included computers with printers and furniture.

The High Commissioner of Pakistan in Dhaka Alamgir Babar inaugurated the Computer Laboratory at a simple ceremony yesterday. Rohina Hussain, Principal of the school, officials of Pakistan High Commission, faculty members of the school and the schoolchildren were

present at the ceremony.

Babar in his speech commended the school for its significant contribution to female education in the country. He said the computer centre had been established in the school to support the education of girls in Bangladesh. Principal Rohina Hussain thanked the envoy for providing this modern facility would greatly benefit

'Right to info law to strengthen democracy, curb corruption'

Speakers say at consultation meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a consultation meeting vesterday observed that ensuring the right to information would go a long way to strengthening democracy and curbing corruption through establishing transparency in the administration

They called on the people to forge a countrywide movement for immediate enactment of the Right to Information Act.

They also urged the political parties to include the issue in their election manifestoes and work actively towards establishing the right to know

Management and Resources Development Initiative organised the consultation meeting on 'Draft Law on Right to Information' prepared by a law core group facilitated by Manusher Jonno Foundation.

Dr Atiur Rahman, chairman of Unnayan Samannoy, presided over the meeting at Brac Centre Inn in Dhaka while Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, discussed the context of the draft law.

The draft law was made on the basis of a working paper on the proposed Right to Information Act 2002 prepared by the Law

The commission recommended promulgating a law to make provisions for people's right to have access to records of the government, statutory bodies and the registered NGOs, enable the people to hold the government accountable for their actions and have access to information for redress of their grievances and to cast a duty on the government and NGOs to proactively keep people informed on issues important for their well-

"There is no law in force in the country to recognise specifically people's right to information and providing a procedure for its implementation. Rather, there are certain prohibitory acts and rules to block the information," said Barrister



Barrister Tanjib ul Alam speaks at the consultation meeting on 'Draft Law on Right to Information' at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday. On his left are Unnayan Samannoy Chairman Dr Atiur Rahman, Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam and Dr Asif Nazrul.

Tanjib ul Alam, who played the key role along with Dr Asif Nazrul and advocate Shahdeen Malik in drafting the law.

Giving examples of such acts, he mentioned Official Secrets Act 1923, sections 123 and 124 of Evidence Act, 1872, Rule 28 (1) of the Rules of Business 1996, Rule 19 of Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979 and Oaths (affirmation) of secrecy under the Constitution.

Dr Asif Nazrul presented the recommendations of the meetings on 'Right to Information Draft Law' held in Khulna and Chittagong

Defining the 'right to information', the draft law says every person shall have the right to information held by or under the control of any public authority. "The public authority shall maintain all its records and make

available to any citizen requesting information from it and shall not withhold any information or limits its availability." The draft has separate sections

on publication of information by public authority, duties of information officers, procedure for access to information, procedure for providing information, exemptions from disclosure of information, rejection of information, partial access to information, public interest disclosure, constitution of information commission, its powers and functions, appeal against information commission and penalty for refusing

The draft law says there shall be no obligation to provide information of some particular kinds, including those which may affect the sovereignty and integrity of Bangladesh, security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the state or relations with a foreign state or lead to incitement of an offence.

It proposed that the president would appoint a chief information commissioner and up to five information commissioners to constitute an information commission and that a fine of maximum Tk 25,000 may be imposed for delay in providing

At the meeting, lawyers, journalists. NGO representatives and human rights activists said ensuring access to information will not only benefit the press but also ensure empowerment of the people as well as improve their livelihood.

The next consultation meeting will be held in Rangpur on August 30.

Strong, neutral EC a must for free, fair election

corrupt millionaires.

Speakers say at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The electoral process should be reformed and a strong, independent and neutral Election Commission (EC) must be formed in order to ensure a free and fai election, speakers at a roundtable discussion said vesterday.

They were speaking at a discussion on 'Probable nature of the next election and the parliament' organised by Society for Peace and Progress at the National Press Club in the city with Lieutenant General (Retd) M Harunur Rashid in the

Speaking at the discussion. former adviser to the caretaker government M Hafizuddin said High Court verdict regarding voters' eight-point right to information should be implemented immedi-

Criticising the Members of the Parliament (MP), he said the MPs have become feudal lords and except law making, which is their key responsibility, they do every-

President of Bangladesh Manobadhikar Samannay Parishad HM Noman said an Election Care taking Management Commission should be formed comprising different professionals and political leaders together.

Expressing discontent over the present system of election, former Vice Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Saleh Ahmed said only the corrupt people would be elected with this system and the care taker system of government is also a corrupt process as the chief of the care taker government comes through a corrupt way.

Partisanship started to grip the judiciary since the system of caretaker government was introduced, said Barrister Tania Amir adding that militancy as well as corruption is the two main barriers in establishing democracy in the President of Fair Election

Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) Munira Khan said implementation of electoral laws is a must and all political parties should be registered with the While reading a keynote paper,

Lieutenant General (Retd) Harun said politics has been criminalised totally and people who can afford to invest Tk 10-20 crore for electoral purpose get elected.

would turn the parliament to a

chamber of the dishonest and

He urged the civil society to play its due role and continue movement for a free and fair election.

developmental activities should be drawn immediately, he added. Economist Dr Monwar Hossain, Costa, General Secretary Jamaluddin Ahmed, Engineer Golam Mohammad Anwar, Editor of the daily New Nation Mostofa Kamal Majumder, Editor of the daily Desh Bangla Ferdous Ahmed Quoreshi and Film Director Chashi Nazrul Islam also spoke on the



occasion.

PHOTO: STAR

Lieutenant General (Retd) M Harunur Rashid speaks at a roundtable at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are Peace Society President Albert P Costa, General Secretary Jamaluddin Ahmed, former adviser to the caretaker government M Hafizuddin and Bangladesh Manobadhikar Samannay Parishad President HM Noman.

Non-govt teachers' sit-in postponed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers of non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas yesterday deferred their grand rally and indefinite sit-in-programme from August 26 to September 20 considering the second term examinations of the students.

National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTE), a platform of 11 organisations of teachers and employees of non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas, called the grand rally and indefinite sit-in-programme in the city protesting the condition of depositing tuition fees to the government exchequer.

After observing a month long strike, government on August 6 condition that teachers have to students to the government fund. NFTE Chief Co-ordinator and

deposit tuition fees collected from

Convenor Prof Quazi Faruque said they decided to defer the rally and indefinite sit-in-programme as second term examinations will be held till September 19.

"We have changed out stern programme for the greater interest of the students but government did not consider our plight," Faruque said yesterday while addressing at a press conference at NFTE central office in the city.

He also said that they will continue rallies, processions, human chains at district and divisional levels in support of their September 20 grand rally and indefinite sit-in-programme in the

Retired army officer seeks govt help to recover land

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A retired army officer, whose land was allegedly grabbed by criminals. urged the government to take immediate step to help recover his land and save his life.

Major (Retd) Mohammed Yaqub at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city vesterday said he has been living at a house at section-7 in Pallabi in the city for 26 years after getting a lease

from the government. But, he alleged, Rustam Ali Matubbar alias Alam, his son Mamun and some of his hired goons in connivance with some members of law enforcement agencies occu-

pied most of his land. He said breaking the locks of the gate, the criminals entered his house and beat up his family members on August 4 and asked them to leave the house. At that time, a team of Rab was patrolling the area but they did not come to help them, he

He also alleged that the criminals again forcibly entered his house on August 5 with a truck laden with bricks and sand and occupied two thirds of his land. Two people wearing Rab uniform were with them and threatened his wife to leave the

place immediately, he added. While reading out a written speech, he also said when he went to file a complaint with the Pallabi Police Station, the Officer-in-Charge (OC) refused to take his

complaint. "When we went to local ward commissioner, he blamed the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of west zone for the incident and when we went to DC, he blamed the Rab officials," he said, adding, "Finally, when we went to Rab office, they told us to go to the court.'

He appealed to the government to lease the land for 99 years to save his life from the criminals

Obituary



Hussain, World War II veteran and retired district registrar, passed away in his sleep in the early hours of August 15 at the age of 85, says

Munshipara Graveyard in Rangpur the same day

daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was laid to rest at the

He left behind his two sons, three

97 25.9 85 31.9 If the present situation continues, announced 100 per cent salary for 28.9 26.3 91 89 he said, the musclemen and crimi-25.8 25.6 the teachers of non-government 28.6 nals would play the vital role and 82 28.6 high schools, colleges and would try hard to rig vote, which madrasas but attached a new to the school from which the students

Light to moderate rain likely

Rangamati.

City/Town

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at most places over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

major cities and towns yesterday were:

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places over the country during the period, Met Office said. Country's highest temperature 32.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 24.0 degree Celsius at

Temperature

The sun sets in the capital at 6:24pm today and rises at 5:37am tomorrow. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some

26.0

25.0

Max Meanwhile the association Dhaka 29.0 also announced a series of agita-31.5 Chittagong tion programmes. Raishahi They will form a human chain in Khulna front of their colleges across the Barisal country on August 28 and observe Svlhet Cox's Bazar work abstention from September 2 to 7 to press their demands.