

PM opens Swadhinata Stambha

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia inaugurated and laid foundation stones of four establishments, including the Swadhinata Stambha, in the capital yesterday.

She unveiled the plaque of Swadhinata Stambha or independence memorial at Suhrawardy Udyan after laying the foundation stone of a multistoried BTMA

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Babar sees peace after power handover

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar believed that the law and order situation will be good after handing over of the power by the present government.

"We have developed a system to maintain the law and order, and if the next government follows it, the law and order situation will be good," Babar said when a group of

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'N Korea won't stage second nuke test unless provoked'

AFF, Seoul

North Korea has promised not to stage a second nuclear test unless it is "harassed" by the United States, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported yesterday.

It quoted diplomatic sources in Seoul as saying the communist state's leader Kim Jong-Il gave the assurance during a meeting in Pyongyang last week with a high-level Chinese delegation led by State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan.

"Kim said during a meeting with Tang that North Korea would not conduct an additional nuclear test unless the US harasses the North," Yonhap quoted one source as saying.

"Kim also promised North Korea would return to the six-way talks in the near future as long as the US

promises to lift financial sanctions after the talks reopen.

"Kim's first vice foreign minister Kang Sok-Ju confirmed Kim's remarks in a briefing held after the meeting," the source said.

Officials at South Korea's unification ministry told AFP they had no related information on the report. On Friday Yonhap quoted a diplomatic source in Beijing as saying Kim had told his visitors there would be no additional nuclear test.

Tang, the first foreign official to meet Kim since North Korea sparked world outrage and UN sanctions with its first atomic test on October 9, said in Beijing Friday his trip had not been a waste of time.

"Fortunately my visit this time has not been in vain," Tang told visiting US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing also reported some positive results, saying the prospect of quickly resuming the stalled six-party talks on the North's nuclear programme had been discussed.

North Korea agreed at the talks in September 2005 to scrap its nuclear programmes in exchange for energy aid and security benefits. But it boycotted the forum two months later in protest at US attempts to curb its access to overseas banks.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso was quoted as saying Friday his country has information that Kim promised Tang there would not be another test.

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Saifur doubts contributions of Prof Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Emphasising the BNP-led government's achievements, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman yesterday cast doubt on contributions by Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and microcredit to the country's development.

"What did microcredit do regarding life expectancy, women literacy and reserve of foreign exchange?" Saifur asked while addressing a farewell programme at the finance and planning ministry. Officials of his ministry organised the programme at the ministry auditorium as the government's tenure expires on October 27.

The minister sarcastically remarked that the government has established thousands of schools

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Mufti Hannan, brother put on remand again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again placed Mufti Abdul Hannan, operations commander of banned Islamist outfit Harkatul Jihad (HuJI), and his brother Mahibullah alias Mafizur Rahman - also a HuJI member - on a four-day remand, after police showed them arrested in a murder case.

The case was lodged with Sutrapur Police Station in connection with the killing of Arif Prakash alias Mohammad Ali on November 5, 2001.

Earlier, completing a 10-day remand with the help of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), the Criminal Investigation

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PHOTO: STAR

Passengers heading home for Eid help a child get on a jam-packed Jamalpur-bound train through its window at Tongi Railway Station yesterday while others get themselves onto the roof.

Prisons directorate faces writ petitions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a rare instance, the prisons authorities on Thursday came under High Court (HC) rulings twice in a day following writ petitions filed for its "arbitrary" and "illegal" actions.

Jail sources said a process is underway for more similar legal actions against the jail authorities.

An HC division bench issued a rule against the jail authorities for collecting money in the name of a "common fund" violating prohibition of such practice from the home ministry and the previous prisons

administration.

The authorities at each jail have been collecting money from the visitors for the newly formed "common fund", which the inspector general of prisons defended saying that the sum is being collected as they are "providing a service by supplying printed forms to the visitors".

Following a writ petition filed by a jail official, the HC bench on Thursday issued a stay order on the activity and asked the prisons

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Demand for 6th wage board award by today

BSS, Dhaka

Leaders of the Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmachari Oikyo Parishad in a statement yesterday urged the government to announce the 6th wage board award for journalists and newspaper employees by today.

They also warned of a tough action programme to realise the 'just' demands of the members of the newspaper industry.

The chairman of the 6th wage board submitted the award report

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Advertisement for Mahindra MaXX pickup truck. Text: 'Means MaXimum', 'RANGS MOTORS LIMITED', 'Phone: 8814180-1, 01713142092, 01713142094'.

Table for Sehri, Iftar timing. Columns: Ramadan, Oct, Sehri, Iftar. Rows: 29, 30.

Table for Prayer Timing. Columns: Azan, Oct 23. Rows: Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib, Esha.



Court rejects Shaniram's bail petition

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday did not entertain the bail petition of Shaniram Mondol, an accused in the Shazneer murder case, as its proceedings were earlier stayed on an order of the High Court (HC).

After the hearing from the defence lawyers on Thursday, Judge SM Mujibur Rahman of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday said that he had no jurisdiction to pass any order on the bail petition, as there was an HC order staying the proceedings of the case.

Moving the petition on

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Unfit buses, launches pressed on service ahead of Eid

SURANJITH DEABNATH

Around 100 unfit launches and 300 unfit buses have been put back into service in the name of 'special Eid service' despite the government's warnings of stern actions against the people who put the lives of passengers at risk.

Thousands of middle class and working class people have no other option but to travel on these vessels and vehicles risking their lives as tickets for the fit launches and buses are not available. Scalpers, however, are selling the tickets for fit buses and launches at prices three times higher.

Taking the advantage of the Eid rush, around 150 unfit buses from Gabtoli Bus Terminal, 80 from Saidabad, 50 from Mohakhali and 15 from Gulistan have already started to

ply on different routes, sources said. GM Siraj, president of Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners Association, said around 1,400 fit buses usually run on different inter-district routes but the number has been raised by 20 percent due to the Eid rush.

He also said a number of city service buses will be added to the fleet of inter-district buses from today in bid to ease the rush. He, however, claimed that there were no unfit buses plying.

On the other hand, around 100 unfit launches, including 63 declared unfit by the Department of Shipping, trawlers and other vessels are gathering at the Sadarghat Launch Terminal under the very nose of law enforcers, sources said.

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