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Today's Focus

Special report
on abduction of
Kalpana Chakma



The Daily Star Staff Correspondent Morshed Ali Khan back from Rangamati gives eyewitness reports on mysterious abduction and non-recovery of a young woman's rights activist of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

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Announcement

Today's National Page contains profiles of the Prime Minister and her cabinet members on Page 9.

NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina visits party office

Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, who returned home yesterday ending a state visit to Saudi Arabia, went to the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the evening. Hasina stayed at the party office for about half an hour and talked with the party leaders about her first state visit abroad, during which she performed holy Umrah.

Khaleda to visit N dists from July 22

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia is likely to begin tour of northern districts from July 22. A source close to Begum Zia, Leader of the Opposition, told UNB that she would go to Bogra as part of her visit to the constituencies from where she was elected in June 12 parliamentary polls.

BNPPP meets today

The meeting of the parliamentary party of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is scheduled to be held at 7:30 pm today at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, according to a party press release. Begum Khaleda Zia, the chairperson of the BNP, will preside over the meeting, the press release added.

Impact of reforms limited: WB Banking sector still fragile, inefficient

By R M Titumir and Inam Ahmed

Although some critical reforms were initiated under the Financial Sector Reform Programme (FSRP), implementation of some of those are yet to produce the desired results, leaving the banking sector "still fragile and inefficient," according to a recent World Bank assessment.

In view of the "mixed" outcome of the FSRP, which was completed last month, the government is finalising its technical assistance project proposal (TAPP) to prepare the biggest ever scheme in the financial sector — Financial Sector Development Project (FSDP), official sources said.

The World Bank has obtained a 986,000 US dollar

Japanese grant for the government to conduct preparatory study on a bank restructuring project under its Commercial Banks Restructuring Credit, they added.

Assessing the outcome of the FSRP, the World Bank said, "The impact of the reforms has been limited, so far, and the banking sector is still characterised as fragile and inefficient."

Commenting on the outcome of the FSRP, the Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank Mahbubur Rahman Khan said, "As a result of modernising the accounting system, we can now get the real idea about the actual health of the banks. The banks used to show their ap-

proved income which did not reflect their actual position. The Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCBs) had been laden with government loans and later the government had to recapitalise them taking responsibility of these loans."

The programme has been able to set some reforms in the financial sector, but most of the pertinent issues relating to the quality of loan and the financial health of the banks still remain unattended, noted a banking sector expert.

Following the completion of reports by the Government's Commission on Money, Banking and Credit in 1986, headed by Prof M N Huda and

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Mother, wife and son of Raza burst into tears after getting the news of his death yesterday. — Star photo

Legal reforms needed to ensure justice to people : Khasru

By Nurul Kabir



Abdul Matin Khasru

State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs

Abdul Matin Khasru strongly feels the need for legal reforms that should include updating the old laws and legislating some new ones to ensure justice to the people.

Separation of Judiciary from the Executive wing of the state was also a pre-requisite for a sound democratic political system in the country, he noted.

The state minister expressed these views in an interview with The Daily Star at his official residence Tuesday evening.

An ardent supporter of left-wing student politics in the sixties, Khasru said: "It is impossible for a government to ensure justice with the laws of the country being obsolete, and sometimes inconsistent as well."

Continuing he said, "We have a large number of old laws, of which some are inherently inconsistent and some are even inconsistent with the spirit of the country's Constitution, that required to be rewritten at least two decades back. On top of all, we must update the old laws."

Replying to a question, the minister said that he was going to move a bill in the first ses-

sion of the Seventh Jatiya Sangsad (JS) seeking formation of a law reforms commission. The proposed commission, after adequate study of various basic laws, would suggest amendments to those within a stipulated time for each particular legislation.

A practising lawyer in the High Court until he took over as state minister, Khasru said that the commission, a three-member body, would be

headed by a retired Chief Justice, while the other members must have the qualifications of being Judges of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

When asked whether he has any thinking regarding repeal of the black laws like Special Powers Act, the minister said, "The Law Commission would be free to propose repeal of any law which is contradictory to the fundamental rights of the citizens."

Expressing his "determination" to meet the ruling Awami League's election pledge for separation of the Judiciary from the Executive, the state minister said: "An independent judiciary is a pre-requisite for a sound democratic polity. We shall move a bill in Parliament to this effect within the next six months."

He hoped that after a Constitution amendment bill seeking an independent Judiciary is adopted in parliament, the transfer, posting and promotion of the judges would directly be controlled by the Supreme Court authorities.

There would be a Supreme Court secretariat with adequate logistics so that the SC can control the entire system on its own, the minister said, adding, the World Bank had al-

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Flood situation in Sunamganj, Lalmonirhat worsens

By Staff Correspondent

The flood situation in Lalmonirhat and Sunamganj worsened yesterday while it remained unchanged in Sylhet district.

Our Staff Correspondent from Sylhet said, the overall flood situation remained unchanged in Sylhet district yesterday while it worsened in Sunamganj.

The Surma swelled further in Sunamganj while both the Surma and the Kushiya were still flowing above danger levels at different points in the region.

Road communication between Gowainghat thana and with the district headquarters of Sylhet remained snapped for the second day yesterday. Flood waters were still over-flooding Sari-Gowainghat road.

Different areas of Companyganj thana headquarters were also under water, though it

started receding from some areas. Thousands of marooned people in Companyganj, Jaintapur, Gowainghat and Kanaighat thanas await food supplies. There has been an acute scarcity of food in all these thanas.

In Sunamganj 200 mm rain was recorded during the last 24 hours while the Surma was flowing 77 cm above the danger-level at 6 pm yesterday.

About one lakh people in five thanas of the district have become marooned with inundation of new areas during the last 24 hours. The thanas are: Chhatrak, Doarabazar, Biswambharpur, Jagannathpur and Sunamganj sadar.

Flood waters have also entered many houses in Sunamganj town. Several hundred people from adjoining areas have taken shelter in the educational institutions. There has

been acute scarcity of drinking water as the tubewells have gone under water.

Lalmonirhat

Rise in water levels of Teesta and Dharla rivers caused by heavy downpour worsened the overall flood situation of Lalmonirhat district, leaving some 2,500 families marooned yesterday, according to UNB.

Ten more unions have been affected due to the water-level rise and the flood situation may deteriorate further if the water continues to rise at the current rate.

The newly affected unions are: Barakhata, Gaddimari, Patikapara, Sindurna and Deuabari in Hatibandha thana, Bhotemari union in Kaliganj thana, Mohishkocha union in Aditmari thana, and Khunia-gachh union in Sadar thana.

We won't follow donors' advice by every dot, says Kibria

By Reaz Ahmad

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria yesterday said the agriculture sector needs government support for at least a certain period for development.

"We are not going to follow donors' prescriptions by every dot, comma and semi-colon. We will not compromise on our national interest and the interest of our farmers," the Finance Minister said while talking to some newsmen at the Zia International Airport when his attention was drawn to donors' reported reservation about subsidy.

Kibria was at the airport to receive the Prime Minister upon her return home from a visit to Saudi Arabia.

Evading a direct reply regarding subsidy to agriculture, in the budget for fiscal 96-97, the minister said, boosting production in the sector was a

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Murder at marriage ceremony

By Staff Correspondent

One young man was shot dead by some unidentified youths during the marriage ceremony of his younger sister at Kauranbazar in the city yesterday, police said.

Amir Hossain alias Rana, 25, of West Tejuri Bazar at Tejgaon, shot in the head and chest, died on way to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The youths, numbering about five, ghaored Rana, fired shots and fled away when the bride party reached the venue of the marriage ceremony near a local hotel, police said. The body was sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Police said they suspected that the killing was sequel to a conflict between two groups of youths in Tejgaon area.

Rana worked for a wholesale trading house in Kauran Bazar.

Rana's father filed a case with Tejgaon thana in connection with the killing. None was

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PM's gift for Khaleda

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday presented a set of 'jainamaz' and 'tasbeeh' to BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia as a token of good wishes on her return from Saudi Arabia after performing umrah and Ziarat at the Rauza Mubarak of the Prophet (SM), reports BSS.

Ibrahim Hossain Khan, Assistant Personal Secretary to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina carried the gifts to the cantonment residence of Begum Zia. Begum Zia's Personal Secretary Mosaaddeq Hossain Fala received the gifts on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition.

Ruling party politicising admin:BNP

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday accused the ruling party of politicising the government administration, reports UNB.

"Non-partisan officials and employees are being transferred and harassed," he said while addressing a meeting of the Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal at the BNP central office.

Mannan Bhuiyan alleged that the Awami League started the politics of revenge and the people who did not vote for boat in the last general election, were being repressed.

The BNP secretary general said: "We took oath as MPs to join parliament to make it more effective, but the government is pushing us to

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Police constable suspended for taking bribe

By Staff Correspondent

A police constable of Lalbagh thana in the city was suspended for allegedly taking bribe yesterday, according to police.

The constable, a wireless operator, was decoyed by a team of the Detective Branch police who offered him a one hundred taka note for filing a general diary with the thana at about 6:30 pm, said a senior police officer.

An Assistant Commissioner of the DB who led the team caught the constable red handed when he accepted the money.

A Deputy Commissioner of police told this correspondent last night that such acts would continue to make the police department corruption free.

7th JS goes into first session tomorrow

The first session of the Seventh Jatiya Sangsad begins tomorrow with the Awami League sitting in the treasury bench for the first time after a gap of twenty-one years, report agencies.

The business of the inaugural session will be marked by the election of Speaker, Deputy Speaker, panel of chairmen, address by President Abdur Rahman Biswas and adoption of Obituary reference.

The outgoing Speaker Sheikh Razak Ali will preside over the opening session until the election of a new Speaker. Fourteen to fifteen ordinances will be placed in the House for approval in the opening session.

After the address of the President the House is likely to be adjourned for two days. Awami League emerged as the largest party in the Seventh Parliament through the

June 12 general election, pushing the former ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) to the opposition bench.

Leader of the majority party Sheikh Hasina has been elected Leader of the House and was sworn-in as the country's 10th prime minister while former prime minister and BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia was made the Leader of the Opposition.

Immediately after assuming the office of prime minister Sheikh Hasina pledged to run the affairs of the state on the basis of national consensus.

The new prime minister also made it clear that transparency and accountability will be the hall mark of her government.

BNP Chairperson and the Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia has said that her party would play a positive role and introduce a new trend of Opposition in the Sangsad.

The 330-member parliament is expected to witness the strongest ever opposition with a total of 110 members so far. Awami League formed the government with 169 MP, including 27 women members.

Former president and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad is likely to be released from jail on parole today to enable him attend the Sangsad session.

Jatiya Party with its 30 MPs, including three women members elected from the reserved seats, and Jatiya Samaita ntrik Dal (JSD-Rob) with its lone member lent support to Awami League to form the government and shared the Cabinet. Both JP and JSD (Rob) have one member each in the cabinet.

It is for the second time that both the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition are women. Break-up of partywise representation: See Page 12 col 7

Trip to Saudi Arabia successful' Hasina again seeks BNP's cooperation

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has reiterated her call to the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) to extend cooperation for smooth running of the country.

"Play a constructive role for realising peoples' aspirations for building an exploitation-free society and economically strong country," Hasina urged BNP while talking to newsmen at the VIP Lounge at Zia International Airport (ZIA) on her return from Saudi Arabia early yesterday afternoon.

She flew back by a special flight of Saudia at 12:45 pm via Karachi in Pakistan, on conclusion of her first foreign visit as Prime Minister.

My trip is very successful. King Fahd assured Bangladesh of all sorts of cooperation. I also sent a goodwill message to

the Pakistani Prime Minister during my brief stopover at Karachi today," said Hasina.

The Prime Minister had left for Saudi Arabia on July 18 to perform Umrah and offer lateha at the rauza mubarak of Hazrat Mohammad (SM).

"I am happy about my performing Umrah. I also took the opportunity to seek the blessing of Allah for rendering the services I promised the people of my country," said Hasina, flanked by a number of her cabinet colleagues.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman and Industries and Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed received the Prime Minister at the airport. Chiefs

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Charles and Diana pose for photographs after their engagement on February 24, 1981. — AFP file photo

The 'fairy-tale marriage' will be over Aug 28

LONDON, July 12: Britain's Prince Charles and Princess Diana today agreed the terms of their divorce, ending a 15-year royal marriage that once thrilled the world but which has ended in bitter public wrangling, reports Reuters.

Lawyers for the Prince and Princess said divorce proceedings would begin on Monday and the marriage would finally be over on August 28.

"The Prince and Princess of Wales have concluded settlement terms for their divorce," lawyers Farrer and Co and Mishcon De Reya said.

In a statement that appeared to leave Diana as a semi-detached member of the Royal family, Buckingham Palace said the Princess will no longer be addressed as the Royal Highness and will in future be known as Diana, Princess of Wales.

Technically, after the divorce, Diana will no longer be a member of the Royal family.

But she will be regarded as such by Queen Elizabeth and her ex-husband, the statement said.

It shed no light on speculation that Diana will receive up to 17 million pounds (26.40 million US dollars) from the Prince, saying only that financial terms of the settlement remain confidential.

Buckingham Palace said the Princess would retain her apartments in Kensington Palace in Central London and she would be allowed to entertain guests in St James's Palace, attend some Royal functions and use aircraft of the Royal squadron.

A future public role for Diana, who last year said she wanted to be the "queen of peoples' hearts," will essentially be for her to decide, the Palace said.

Agreement on the divorce follows weeks of wrangling by the couple and their lawyers. See Page 12 col 8

Rallies, carrying of arms banned, in & around JS

The authorities have banned carrying of firearms and explosives in the Sangsad Bhaban and its adjacent areas from midnight tonight to ensure peace and order during the first session of 7th parliament which begins tomorrow, reports UNB.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Mohammad Salam also prohibited holding of rallies and processions in the areas until the end of the first session of parliament, said a DMP press release yesterday.

The areas are: From Old Airport of Mymensingh Road to Bangla Motor crossing, from Western part of Bangla Motor link road to SAARC fountain crossing on Sonargaon Road, from Shyamoli Cinema hall at Mirpur Road to Dhanmondi-16 (old-17) link road, from Agar-gaon link road to Rokeya Sarani link road through Shishu Melay (now, Rokeya Sarani to Bejoy Sarani crossing through Ninth Division (Old) crossing, from eastern part of Indira Road to western part of Manik Mia Avenue and the restricted areas of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban and roads and lanes within the areas.

Ershad may be granted parole today

By Staff Correspondent

The Law Ministry has given favourable opinion on the release of jailed Jatiya Party chief and former president H M Ershad today on parole, for attending the first session of the Seventh Jatiya Sangsad, according to officials concerned.

The Ministry gave its opinion under Section 401 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

According to officials of the Ministry, Ershad may be granted parole with certain restrictions.

Ershad had returned from all the five constituencies he contested in the June 12 parliamentary election. He also returned from five seats in the 1991 elections.

The JP had requested the Home Ministry for the release of Ershad on parole today to enable him to attend the parliament session. The Home Ministry sent the prayer to the Law Ministry for scrutiny.

Five kill in city incidents

By DMCH Correspondent

At least five persons were killed in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

A motor bike rider was seriously injured when a speeding tempo knocked his vehicle at Jatrabari crossing early hours yesterday.

The victim, identified as Mizan, 17, died after admission to the Dhaka Medical college Hospital (DMCH).

In another road accident, a pedestrian was run over by a speeding truck near the Kazla petrol pump at about 8 am yesterday.

The victim Jewel, 16, was seriously injured and admitted.

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35 hurt as bus owners, workers clash in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, July 12: At least 35 people were injured, nine of them bullet-hit in a three-hour gun battle between bus owners and transport workers at Hajiganj in the district Thursday night.

Over hundred cocktails were blasted and at least 40 shots fired during the clashes, witnesses said.

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