

Crimes against women
Cabinet approves
draft bill seeking
'special provisions'
for punishment

By Staff Correspondent
The cabinet yesterday approved a draft bill seeking "special provisions" for punishment for crimes against women and children and terrorism, cabinet sources said.

The bill is likely to be introduced in the current session of parliament.

The weekly cabinet meeting was scheduled to be held on Monday last, which was the Jail Killing Day. The meeting was rescheduled for yesterday, a minister told The Daily Star.

The cabinet meeting, which was chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also fixed the procurement price of Aman paddy, Aman rice and wheat.

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Hartal had no link with Aid Group meet, says Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chief Begum Khaleda has said that yesterday's hartal had no link with the ongoing Aid Group meeting in the city.

"It (the hartal) had a specific purpose of protecting fundamental democratic rights (of the people) and the independence and helping consolidate those... As the largest patriotic political party, BNP always places national interests, development and democratic struggle above all", she said in a statement last night.

The Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad accused the present "autocratic" government of using police and ruling party "terrorists" to foil the

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Raising forex reserve main challenge: Kibria

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria told the donors that the government has taken up a fairly heavy agenda for reforms which cut across the political and administrative systems as well as economic policies, reports UNB.

"The government will focus on improving the institutional capacity for economic management," he said in his opening statement at the annual meeting of Bangladesh Aid Group that began in the city yesterday morning.

The Finance Minister told the meeting that the government would continue implementation of structural reforms, pursue the necessary adjustment policies and maintain macroeconomic stability.

"The main policy challenge for FY 1998 is to raise foreign

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City BNP jt meet today

An emergency joint meeting of Dhaka City BNP will be held at 4 pm today at 29 Minto Road, the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, reports UNB.

City unit presidents and general secretaries of the party front organisations, all three BNP presidents and BNP-backed DCC ward commissioners will be present at the meeting.

The Daily Star
on the Internet
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Aid Group meet begins in city

Donors unhappy over growing political intolerance

Star Report

Bilateral donors yesterday voiced their concern at the "increasing growth of political intolerance, violence and intimidation in the country" at the annual Aid Group meeting in the capital to determine the quantum of aid for the next fiscal year.

The present confrontation between the current government and the opposition appears to be ushering in a new cycle of violence, intimidation and instability," the country's 15 bilateral development partners noted in a joint statement issued on the first day of the two-day meet.

"Violence in the universities, which is condoned and even encouraged by political parties, is another manifestation of this climate of intolerance," they said.

The development partners sincerely hoped that all members of political parties will res-

pect the call of the Honorable President of Bangladesh for tolerance and accommodation in the interests of the country as a whole, and settle their differences in Parliament, and not by violence.

The statement was signed by heads of the delegations of US, UK, Japan, European Commission, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. It was submitted to Chairperson of the meeting Meiko Nishimizu, the World Bank's Vice-President for South Asia.

The meet reviewed the macro-economic situation in the country on the first day.

The donors almost unanimously suggested that the government should improve its foreign exchange reserve position by adopting a more flexible

exchange rate management, check borrowing from the banking system, improve its aid utilisation capability and expedite privatisation programme.

They also called for improvement in law and order and also in the customs and revenue departments.

The donors suggested that the government should have a stated policy on privatisation.

In reply, the government side said its main emphasis is on maintaining a low inflation level and assured the donors that steps are being taken to improve foreign exchange reserve.

It also said steps have been taken to remove procedural and institutional bottlenecks in project implementation.

Highlighting its outlook for FY '98, Finance Minister SAMS Kibria said the government will

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