

PM condemns terrorist attack on church in Islamabad

UNB, Dhaka
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a church in Pakistan capital, Islamabad.
In a message to Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf the Prime Minister yesterday said, "I am deeply saddened by the news of the grenade attack in a church in Islamabad, causing death to some and injuries to many others. I strongly deplore such an act of terrorism."
"My government has constantly spoken out strongly against terrorism in all its manifestations. Your commitment to bring to justice the perpetrators of such violence enjoys our full support," said the Prime Minister in her message.
Khaleda Zia expressed her confidence that the government and people of Pakistan would be able to meet such challenges.

Cabinet okays poly ban plan

REZAUL KARIM
The cabinet yesterday agreed in principle to amendments to laws for permanent ban on production, marketing and use of all types of polythene shopping bags.
To ensure the ban on polythene bags, the cabinet approved amendments to the Bangladesh Environment Preservation Act, 1995 and the Environment Court Act, 2000, which propose stringent punishment to law-breakers.
The amendment proposes a maximum of 10 years in prison and Tk 10 lakh in fine for production and marketing of all types of polythene shopping bags.
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the cabinet members overwhelmingly supported the move to introduce the new laws, sources said.
However, the cabinet rejected a proposal to impose a token fine of maximum Tk 500 for the use of polybags as this may subject foreigners to harassment, sources said.
The foreigners may carry polybags on arrival at the airport, which may

Maid jumps to her death to escape torture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A minor domestic help died and another was injured when they fell from a multistoried building at Rankin Street in the city yesterday morning while trying to flee the house to escape alleged torture by their employer, police said.
The deceased was identified as Manuli, 11, and the injured as Fatema, 13, both from Gaibandha district.
They were working as domestic help at the residence of industrialist Ansar Ahmed for several months.
His wife Kohinoor Begum was picked up by police last night on charge of torturing the two girls.

Proshika staff get bail but not released

COURT CORRESPONDENT
The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday granted bail to two staff of Proshika, arrested under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).
Magistrate Mohammad Shahidul Islam passed the order upon a bond of Tk 500 with two guarantors.
The arrested Proshika staff are Omar Tareq Chowdhury, a deputy director of Proshika and Ajharul Haque, a messenger of the same NGO.

AL to meet next week on resignation move

REAZ AHMAD
The Awami League lawmakers are likely to meet early next week to finalise the submission of their resignation letters.
Following last week's dramatic decision to resign from the parliament in protest at a government move to remove Bangabandhu's portrait from all government, semi-government and autonomous bodies and 'unabated repression', the AL members of the parliament (MPs) are now supposed to deposit their resignation letters with party chief Sheikh Hasina.
Party sources said the 58 AL MPs would submit the letters to

Vietnam to reopen Dhaka mission

UNB, Dhaka
Vietnam has decided to reopen its resident diplomatic mission in Dhaka at the earliest.
The visiting Vice-Foreign Minister of Vietnam, Le Cong Phung informed this when he called on Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan at his office yesterday.
Welcoming the decision, the foreign minister said, "It would provide added impetus to the consolidation of bilateral relations between the two countries."
The foreign minister recalled with gratitude that Vietnam was one of the first countries to recognise Bangladesh and expressed his



A bulldozer rolls over heaps of cabbages during a drive to evict illegal vendors from Karwan Bazar yesterday. The DCC move comes on the eve of a country-wide cleanliness drive that the prime minister inaugurates at this city business centre tomorrow.

Accent on greater media role to bolster democracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A seminar has stressed a greater role for media for sustainable development and strengthening democratic values in the society.
It observed that the media should be unbiased to any political party or quarter to help bring about significant change in the governance.
In the absence of an effective parliament and presence of turbulent political situation, people's expectation from the media is very high, the seminar said.
Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) organised the seminar as part of its four-day long discussion on Sustainable Development in Bangladesh at the Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM) auditorium in the city yesterday.
Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, chaired the session while journalist Afsan Chowdhury presented the keynote paper on media in the time of sustainable development.
BUP Chairman Dr Qazi

When life ebbs in flames

NAIMUL HAQ with ARUN DEVNATH
Twenty-year-old Nilufar now ponders over whether she would ever get to see her six-year-old child now in custody of her husband, her right arm melted with forearm and twisted left hand.
The only fault of Nilufar, now mother of two, was that her poor parents had defaulted on payment of Tk 50,000 in dowry.
Nilufar, pregnant and emaciated, fainted when her mother-in-law and husband beat her up nearly throughout the night. The mother and her son lent a cruel edge to the incident by pouring kerosene on a bleeding Nilufar and set her aflame.
In trauma at the Barisal Medical College Hospital, Nilufar was threatened with death by her in-laws, while being treated for burns.
About one and a half years ago (on a Friday night) Nilufar was beaten mercilessly as she failed to pay the full amount of money her parents promised to.
Earlier, her parents living in a thatched house at Charmushura in Munshiganj sold property and paid Tk 20,000.
A few months later, Nilufar's husband Shamsuddin, a rickshaw-puller of Lashkarpur village in Barisal, mounted pressure on her. And she had to beg though for the time being.
Worse still, her mother-in-law pressed for separation in case of her failure to pay the dowry.
"I urged my husband to drop the demand as my parents are not in a help of my daughter who was held back by my husband," she said recalling the most horrible moments in her life.
"My sister-in-law living next door rushed with a bucket of water to douse the fire. She was the only person to help me. She along with other neighbours took me to the nearest hospital," Nilufar said.
Released after 15 days from jail, the mother-in-law threatened her with death.
After about three months at the Barisal Medical College Hospital, an expectant mother, Nilufar, fled with her mother to Munshiganj leaving behind her only daughter Ayesha with her husband.
"I got home the same day. After three months, my parents decided to take me back to my husband hoping that things would change," said Nilufar.
Nilufar delivered a son at her parents' home. She met with similar torture in Barisal again. She had been given only one meal a day and slept on the floor with her newborn and daughter.
"I was treated like a slave and could not take shower due to my disability," said Nilufar in tears.
She continued, "I had to beg



Nilufar position to pay. My husband often beat me up and I got used to beating. If I protested, he would not let me eat. So I didn't raise my voice against them. But my six-year-old daughter burst into tears and asked me why I didn't protest," sobbed Nilufar
"I regained consciousness to the heat of flame and cried out for

Rejoinder and our reply



Chandrashila Suvastu Tower

Following a report and a set of pictures published in The Daily Star on March 13 under the caption, "High rise chaos..... some buildings in the city with grossly inadequate or no parking space", SUVASTU Development Ltd, SHELTECH and NOOR Tower sent us separate letters claiming that their buildings were constructed as per construction rules. They said that they have adequate parking spaces.
Upon receipt of these letters, The Daily Star conducted a second investigation into the matter and has decided to answer each letter separately.
Nazmul Haque Khan, Director of SUVASTU DEVELOPMENT LTD, in his letter said that the report published on the front page and the photograph of Chandrashila Suvastu Tower on the back page regarding grossly inadequate or no parking space is not true.
He said that they have '39 covered parking spaces and 15 guest parkings' in front of their building.