

PM addresses IU convocation Cooperation of all sought to stop cheating in exams

UNB, Kushtia

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday announced her government's plans for making its tenure memorable through promoting and modernising education for serving the needs of the time.

She also sought cooperative of all, including teachers, guardians and students, in removing irregularities from academic arena and stopping unfair means in public examinations.

"Besides general education, we are also giving emphasis on technical and vocational education for rearing skilled manpower," she said addressing the third convocation of the Islamic University.

This varsity was established by Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman to impart modern and effective higher education to students graduating from madrassah education system.

Khaleda Zia said her government was taking effective measures for introducing a people-oriented education system in the university.

She reminded the graduates of their responsibility to the people because it is their tax money that helps run the educational institutions in the country.

The PM urged them to vow to work for socioeconomic emancipation of the people and the country. "Your main objective should not be just certificates but progress of humanity, welfare of the people and above all developing a sense of responsibility to society and the

country," she said.

She recalled the contribution of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman who established the university for rearing skilled human resources and modernising madrassah education in the country.

She said the Islamic University was established studying and researching the relationship between religion and Islamic education and science.

Khaleda expressed the hope that the university, alongside research, would help build skilled manpower to cope with the changed global scenario and also contribute to achieving national prosperity.

The Prime Minister stressed on putting an end to cheating in all examinations and mentioned the steps taken by her government in this regard. She acknowledged the assistance of the teachers, guardians, students and all others concerned in this regard.

Observing that the intensity of copying was less in the ongoing secondary school certificate examinations, Khaleda Zia, however, said there is no scope for contentment and that unfair means must be stamped out altogether.

She urged the teachers, guardians and all others concerned to make the students understand that certificate is not the main thing for attainment, it is knowledge that counts.

"There is no shortcut to education. Hard labour and perseverance are needed to earn knowledge," she told her audience from the campus.

She also reminded the teacher that imparting education is a great and sacred profession and should not be tainted.

The Prime Minister reiterated her government's priority to education and mentioned various steps taken, including free education for girls up to higher secondary level, stipend for meritorious girls students, free primary schooling and a decision to provide cash support for poor students.

She mentioned her meeting with the vice-chancellors of all the universities aiming to remove problems from higher education.

The PM mentioned a plan for setting up Asian University for men in Bogra to facilitate higher education for women.

Convocation speaker Prof M Shamsher Ali of Dhaka University suggested uniform education system at least up to secondary level, blending ethics and morality with traditional education.

Earlier Khaleda Zia, the Chancellor of the university entered the Shah Azizur Rahman Auditorium in a ceremonial convocation parade.

Later she distributed certificates among honours graduates and post-graduates, and handed over gold medals to students with extraordinary talent.

Education Minister Dr Osman Faruque also spoke while vice-chancellor of the university Dr Mustafizur Rahman chaired the certificate-awarding session.



PHOTO: STAR
Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina briefly addressing partymen in front of the party central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city after repeated police action on them yesterday.

Arab summit adopts Saudi peace plan amid warnings of Israeli offensive

AFP, Beirut

The Arab summit ended here yesterday with a ground-breaking plan offering Israel peace and security in return for its pullout from territory occupied since 1967, amid warnings of a new Israeli offensive on the Palestinian headquarters in the West Bank.

The offer was contained in a final statement called the Beirut Declaration read to the closing session of a summit full of dramatic incidents, including no-shows by heavyweight leaders, a Palestinian walkout and the beginning of reconciliation between Iraq and Kuwait.

The declaration said a committee would be set up to pursue the Saudi peace initiative, which was unanimously adopted by the summit, including with the United Nations Security Council.

The declaration also "categorically rejects" any military strike against Iraq, which had earlier pledged never to invade Kuwait or its departure.

The Saudi plan stipulates a satisfactory resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem, but Lebanon, which hosts 350,000 refugees, was holding out for tighter wording to ensure that it could insist on their departure.

The Palestinians returned to the plenary session after walking out on Wednesday in a furious reaction to a ban by the chairman, Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, on the live broadcast of a speech by Arafat from Ramallah to the summit via a satellite hook-up.

Wednesday's atmosphere of disarray injured US concerns that the Saudi peace initiative was losing steam, as the suicide attack dealt a potentially fatal blow to US efforts to secure a truce between Israel and the Palestinians.

The attack stirred Israeli rage at the Palestinian Authority and tough US demands for Arafat to crack down on militant groups.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal told a post-summit

press conference, "These are losses that we do not condone" but he added, "If I mention one death here, do I mention another death there?"

He told the Israelis, "If you want genuine peace, you must respond in kind."

In his speech, delivered from Ramallah where he has been penned up by the Israelis for nearly four months, Arafat had also made a strong pitch for the Saudi plan.

The initiative is unlikely to make much headway with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who has described the land-for-peace provisions as dangerous, while Israel has long refused a blanket return of Palestinian refugees.

But analysts see it as being aimed at helping turn Israeli public opinion against Sharon, whose hardline policy has failed to deliver the security he had promised his people.

And while the final declaration hailed the Palestinians' 18-month intifada, or uprising, and backed their struggle for their rights, the tone was relatively moderate.

However, delegates at the summit said the Saudi plan had been undermined by a record absence of leaders, including heavyweight moderates, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordan's King Abdullah II.

Mubarak said he was boycotting the meeting over Arafat's absence, while health reasons were given for Abdullah's no-show.

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Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal told a post-summit

Two children burnt alive at Barguna

UNB, Barguna

16 AL men sued in Bagerhat

UNB, Bagerhat

A case was filed against 16 leaders and workers of local Awami League for their alleged involvement in an attack on BNP leaders and workers at Morelganj upazila on Tuesday.

The case was filed with Morelganj thana on Tuesday night and police arrested Morelganj thana Awami League leader Abdul Jalil from his house.

Local Awami League leaders alleged that terrorists attacked their Independence Day procession at Morelganj Bazar, leaving 15 people injured.

Police on Wednesday arrested Titu from Mohammadpur area for his alleged involvement in the killing.

Mockbul's son taken on remand

BSS, Dhaka

Ahsanul Islam alias Titu, son of former MP Alhaj Mockbul Hossain were taken on a two-day police remand yesterday in connection with the killing of a ward commissioner candidate in the city's Mohammadpur area on Tuesday night.

Mohammadpur police produced him before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Al Mamun with a prayer for a seven day remand. The Magistrate granted a two day remand, rejecting a bail petition.

Police on Wednesday arrested Titu from Mohammadpur area for his alleged involvement in the killing.

JS practically inoperative

FROM PAGE 1

the government to resolve.

Eventually, a ruling party initiative, mediated by the speaker, brought the BNP lawmakers back to the House after 190 days of continuous abstention.

However, things went awry again in June 1999 when the BNP once again began boycotting the parliamentary proceedings over a reported government move to give transhipment facilities to India and never came back until the tenure of the seventh parliament expired on July 13, 2001.

The main opposition of the eighth parliament, the AL, has so far stayed away from the parliament in protest at 'vote rigging' in the October 1 general elections. It has attributed "lack of congenial atmosphere" as a reason for not joining the parliamentary proceedings.

"As the opposition themselves are staying away, the parliamentary democracy has become a one-party rule," said Professor Chowdhury.

Hamid believes that the government must take the first step by

of the two major parties makes it clear that they find the atmosphere in the Jatiya Sangsad favourable while in power and unfavourable while in opposition.

During the Awami League regime from 1996 to 2001, Sheikh Hasina called upon the main opposition to join the parliament to make Jatiya Sangsad centre of all activities.

Khaleda Zia made a similar call to the opposition lawmakers to discharge their constitutional responsibilities during her tenure as the prime minister from 1991 to 1996. She has renewed the call since taking over as leader of the eighth Jatiya Sangsad.

Instead of sorting out impediments on the way to making the parliament centre of all activities, the ruling and opposition parties have consistently blamed each other for retarding parliamentary democracy.

Hamid believes that the government must take the first step by

changing its attitude towards opposition parties and people to reach consensus on critical issues of governance.

The former speaker identified three impediments to effective parliament - frequent boycott by the opposition, repressive actions by the government and absence of a democratic attitude.

The thirteenth amendment to the constitution, on which almost every political party had reached a consensus, provides that the Jatiya Sangsad would be centre of all activities and its oversight functions would ensure accountability and transparency of the government.

Akhteruzzaman doubted whether the ministers were actually accountable to the parliament although the constitution makes them so. "Lawmakers on the treasury bench have to face difficulty, if they ask 'undesirable' questions to any minister."

The available statistical evidence says that the EC validated the candidate of 1,000 aspirants, of them 278 have criminal records, in Dhaka, for the posts of ward commissioner. Also validated were 309 aspirants in Rajshahi and 345 in Khulna.

For the mayoral post, the EC validated candidates of 23 aspirants in Dhaka, seven in Khulna and six in Rajshahi.

Meanwhile, a cabinet sub-committee at a recent meeting

Anarchy, chaos on the street won't be tolerated: PM

UNB, Kushtia

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday categorically said anarchy, chaos and damage to public property would not be allowed on the street in the name of democratic movement.

"We are not against democratic programmes as well believe in democracy, but chaos or anarchy on the street would not be tolerated in the name of democratic programme. Stern action will be taken against it," she said, indicating violence during agitation by the Awami League in the capital.

Her warnings came at a public meeting she addressed at the Kushtia Government High School ground in the afternoon after attending the convocation of Islamic University earlier in the day.

"The people have rejected the Awami League through general election in October as they did not work for the development of the country and its people," she said.

The prime minister said the AL lawmakers should go to parliament

and solve their problems through discussions, but "they are letting loose chaos on the street" instead.

Directing the law-enforcement agencies to nab trouble-mongers, she said, "Ensure safety and security of the people by arresting terrorists."

"Shun the path of terrorism, down arms and follow right path; the government will provide you with employment," she said at the public gathering in Kushtia where all four MPs have been elected from the BNPs.

This is one of the southwestern districts reportedly in the grip of underground outlaws and trouble-makers.

Among others, Information Minister Tariful Islam, Forest and Environment Minister Shahjahan Siraj, BNP chairperson's advisor Rezaul Karim, State Minister for Post and Telecommunications Ahsanul Haq Mollah, Sohrabuddin MP, Professor Shahidul Islam MP, Mashirul Rahman MP and Syed Meheddi Ahmed Rumi also addressed the meeting.

Storm lashes Laxmipur: 50 hurt, 800 houses damaged

UNB, Laxmipur

At least 50 people were injured and over 800 houses damaged when a nor'wester lashed eight villages in Sador upazila on Wednesday.

Local sources said the storm hit South Mandari, Amin Bazar, Wapda Bazar, Dighli, Rajapur, Charmahi and Bhabaniganj villages in the afternoon, injuring 50 people and damaging over 800 houses.

Standing crops on vast tract of land have been damaged.

Preliminary official report, however, said the nor'wester damaged 550 houses and injured 25 people.

The district administration allocated 6 mts of rice and Tk 5,000 for the victims.

Maritime exhibition begins in Ctg

UNB, Chittagong

A two-day Maritime Exhibition-2002 began here yesterday with an objective to expand job opportunities for Bangladeshi seamen at home and abroad.

Some 22 government and non-government organisations working in maritime sector are taking part in the exhibition, organised by Seamen Training Centre.

Shipping Minister Lieutenant Col (retd) Akbar Hossain inaugurated the exhibition, first of its kind in the country.

Graft

FROM PAGE 1

member Bill of Quantity (BOQ) Committee finalised a proposal for installation of 27,136 additional digital telephones for US\$ 98.89 lakh. The additional lines were awarded at a very high rate.

BAC said according to the agreement, US\$ 256 was fixed for switching each line in the project. However, Turkish company Netas, through an agreement signed almost at the same time after inviting international bids, agreed to do the switching work for each digital telephone line for US\$134. Thus, an additional US\$122 was spent for switching each line, BAC concluded.

BAC Inspector Monayem Hossain filed the case.

EC to tighten security

FROM PAGE 12

Rajshahi cities. The commission will also deploy members of the armed forces on April 25, the polling day, to hold stern action against criminals.

With the election schedule announced, discord popped up among the aspirants for the posts of ward commissioner, mostly belonging to the ruling coalition. The discord at its worst dragged them into armed clashes.

The recent killing of two commissioners in the city is an unpleasant reminder of the attack on a victory procession at Lalbagh on January 31, the day after the city polls in 1994, which left seven people killed.

As some most-wanted criminals fled candidates for the polls, the EC officials apprehended that the situation may worsen during the period of officially permitted electioneering between March 31 and April 23.

The available statistical evidence says that the EC validated the candidate of 1,000 aspirants, of them 278 have criminal records, in Dhaka, for the posts of ward commissioner. Also validated were 309 aspirants in Rajshahi and 345 in Khulna.

For the mayoral post, the EC validated candidates of 23 aspirants in Dhaka, seven in Khulna and six in Rajshahi.

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Talks offer

FROM PAGE 1

the AL chief said the government does not believe in democracy and cannot stand opposition in the country.

To a question, the AL chief said her party would continue agitating against the 'misrule and persecution' by the BNP-led coalition government.

Zillur Rahman addressed the party workers for two minutes, urging