

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 vocation 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 Women in Bogra to facilitate higher education for women.

Convocation speaker Prof M Shamsur 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 Israeli 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 again.

Iraqi number two Ezzat Ibrahim earlier embraced Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz and greeted Kuwaiti First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah.

Palestinian delegation head Faruq Qaddumi had earlier told the summit that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat feared an imminent Israeli reoccupation of the city of Ramallah, following a suicide attack which killed 20 Israelis.

Qaddumi said he was asking the summit to "adopt measures for a unified and decisive position to guard against all future eventualities."

Arafat had expressed fears for

his personal security, a senior Arab official also said.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, who attended the summit, called Thursday for an "immediate" ceasefire between the Palestinians and Israel, which was reportedly surrounding Ramallah with hundreds of tanks, a UN statement said.

"I have just spoken to both Prime Minister (Ariel) Sharon and Chairman Arafat," Annan said in the statement. "I urge the leadership of both peoples to stay the course and continue the quest for peace."

The summit had reconvened some three hours later than scheduled after a delay caused by wrangling over a clause on Palestinian refugees in the Saudi initiative.

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 raised 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 UN 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 headline 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.

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.

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 BNP.

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

Among others, Information Minister Tariqul 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, Mashhur Rahman MP and Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rumi also addressed the meeting.

President of JCD CU unit expelled

CU CORRESPONDENT

Sujauddin Suja, president of JCD Chittagong University (CU) unit, has been expelled from the organisation.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of JCD CU unit at the CUCSU building at 11am yesterday.

Chaired by Nasir Uddin, vice president of the unit, the meeting was attended by 67 out of 111 executive committee members. They condemned the attack on the JCD activists by a gang of Shibir terrorists led by the JCD president Sujauddin while placing wreaths at the altar of the independence sculpture on the campus on March 26.

At the meeting, the members observed that the image of JCD was tarnished throughout the country due to the attack led by JCD president.

Meanwhile, the JCD in another meeting has threatened to enforce a strike on the campus on April 8 if the authorities fail to arrest those involved in the attack. At least five JCD activists were injured.

3 BCL leaders

FROM PAGE 1
Publicity Secretary Rafiqul Islam Kotwal, International Affairs Secretary Nazrul Islam Babu and central unit members MA Momin Patwary.

Dhanmondi police produced the three arrested leaders before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka with two forwarding reports.

The first forwarding report said they were involved in the killing of Kamal at Kalabagan in the city on December 6, 2001.

Later, Peyara Begum, victim's mother-in-law, filed a murder case with Dhanmondi Police Station two days after the incident against unidentified miscreants.

The second forwarding report said the arrested persons might be involved in the killing of Shahin Gazi alias Mona at Bhuter Gali on January 3 this year.

Amnul Islam, victim's father, filed a murder case with Dhanmondi Police Station the following day against unidentified miscreants.

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 Sadar 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 (ret'd) Akbar Hossain inaugurated the exhibition, first of its kind in the country.

Graft

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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.

Attack on AL meeting

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to vacate the place. Police officials were shown the written permission given to AL by the authorities concerned for holding a rally at that venue, but they defiantly declined to accept any reasoning.

The baffled opposition leaders and activists then left the spot peacefully and tried to gather at the Bangabandhu Avenue, police chased them, forcing them to take shelter here and there near the party office.

AL presidium member Suranjit Sengupta asked police officials what was the reason behind their action, but ignoring that police lobbed at least 10 teargas shells at around 4 pm.

Motia Chowdhury and some party workers were injured at that time while city AL chief and mayor Mohammad Hanif tried in vain to stop police from such action.

Police then announced through megaphones that none should stand on the road and must leave the place immediately.

The injured include party workers Lipi, Shikha, Maria, Helen, Mokles and Abdus Sattar. They were given first aid.

At around 4:15 pm, an AL procession from Zero Point areas tried to move towards Bangabandhu Avenue to join other party men. Police chased them away.

But in the next 15 minutes, a sizeable crowd gathered on Bangabandhu Avenue. This time police in riot gear started lobbing teargas shells from three directions.

As the AL leaders and workers ran for cover, a number of activists were injured in the stampede. Police encircled the party office and lobbed more than 30 rounds of shells. For the next one hour, a thick layer of smoke engulfed the party office building, creating a suffocating atmosphere.

A few minutes later, senior AL leaders including Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman and Tofail Ahmed tried to address the crowd who regrouped. A contingent of riot police marched up and down Bangabandhu Avenue to keep the entire road clear.

At this stage, Hanif again approached police officials led by DC (East) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Noor Mohammad, but to no avail. Immediately afterwards, he told this correspondent, "They (police) gave me five minutes to ask my partymen to disperse and warned of fresh teargas attacks if it is not done."

Then Zillur Rahman addressed the party workers for two minutes, urging them to build resistance against the "fascist government" and asked them to leave the place before police swoop on them again.

Talks offer

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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 informed newsmen that all the 58 AL lawmakers had handed over their resignation letters to the party chief as per an earlier decision.

Angered by frequent police attacks on the AL programmes, AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed described the assault on his party as revenge by the defeated forces of 1971 on the pro-liberation camp.

Young man slaughtered in Savar

UNB, Dhaka

A young man was slaughtered by unidentified assailants at Safeur village under Savar upazila early yesterday.

On information, police recovered the body of Mamun, 22, son of Mohammad Ali from Begunbari area of the village and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Meanwhile, two youths were injured critically in separate bomb explosions in the city yesterday. Police said Mafizur Rahman, 24, a grocer, was injured in a bomb blast in the city's Karwan Bazar area while Amran, 20, in another explosion at Green Road.

Both the injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Khoka's agenda

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Bangladesh-2000 has recorded 266 inland, 442 marine and 76 estuarine fishes; 22 amphibians; 109 inland and 17 marine reptiles including two crocodiles; 22 inland and five marine turtles and tortoises; 18 lizards; 67 inland and 12 marine snakes; 388 resident and 244 migratory birds; and 110 inland and three marine mammals.

Recent surveys on seven selected areas made new records of 88 fishes, four reptiles, 28 birds and nine mammals, he added.

Thirteen vertebrate species have become extinct from the country, 64 species are critically endangered, 86 endangered and 51 vulnerable, Prof. Mahmud-ul-Amin said.

The setting up of a zoological museum or a natural history museum is urgently required for regular surveys, inventory and preservation of specimens and monitoring of animal diversity, he said.

Besides, an integrated mosquito management is a must to control the mosquito menace, he suggested.

CHT caught

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weapons. But the gunmen managed to escape.

After the kidnapping of the foreigners, there had been a spate of abduction of the locals, both tribals and settlers. A number of them were killed as ransom was not paid. But no action could be taken against the culprits.

Besides, an attempt was made to kidnap an Australian tourist at Kaukhali on February 28 this year. Security forces foiled the bid. Two tribal youths were taken into custody in this connection.

Records show that Kaukhali has become a haven for elements involved in kidnappings for ransom. The kidnapped Europeans were freed from a jungle hideout in the same area. A police havilder was killed by terrorists at Kaukhali last year, a week after the foreigners were freed.

When contacted, officials at the CHT ministry admitted that law and order in the CHT is yet to improve. They also admitted the emergence of armed groups at various places in that region. "These groups are responsible for deterioration of law and order there," one official said, preferring anonymity.

JS practically inoperative

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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.

Analysis of speeches by leaders

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.

Akhtaruzzaman 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."