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PM for AL's active role in JS bodies

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said fulfillment of commitments of the political parties given to people is only possible through parliamentary democracy.

She hoped that political parties would work together to institutionalise parliamentary democracy for the welfare of people without opposing for the sake of opposition.

The prime minister, also Leader of the House, was exchanging views with the chairmen of five parliamentary standing committees at her office yesterday.

Mohammad Mojaheer Hossain, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on women and children affairs ministry, Harun-Al-Rashid, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on public accounts, Prof MA Matin, Chairman of parliamentary standing committee on textiles ministry, Abdus Sobhan, Chairman of parliamentary standing committee on government's assurances and Redwan Ahmed, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on commerce ministry met the prime minister.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury said the chairmen of the standing committees apprised the prime minister of activities of their respective committees.

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Viral epidemic hits Bagerhat shrimp hatcheries

Farmers count Tk 100 crore in loss, 800 shrimp beds infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Shrimps and fry of about 800 hatcheries of Baroipara in Bagerhat have died due to virus infection and white spot disease, causing Tk 100 crore loss to over 6000 shrimp farmers.

Hatchery owners and workers of Baroipara village, known as 'Mini Kuwait' of Bangladesh, are incurring huge loss due to the epidemic-like diseases, local sources said.

Akbar Azad, president of Baroipara Shrimp Cultivators' Welfare Association, said Bagerhat district alone has been the country's second highest foreign exchange earner from shrimp exports since 1980.

However, the lucrative export industry of Bagerhat recently suffered a setback and is about to collapse because of the government's indifferent attitude, he added.

He also urged the government to set up a laboratory in Bagerhat, where over 12000 acres of land is used for shrimp cultivation, to detect the nature of the disease in the hatcheries.

Local shrimp farmers also asked the authorities concerned to exempt them from bank loan interest as they lost their investment in the recent viral outbreak.

"We have been incurring huge financial loss every year since 1995 due to virus-related shrimp diseases," said Sardar Mohiuddin, general secretary of the association.

MA Salam, vice president of Khulna unit of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association, said that the government would lose huge foreign exchange earnings from shrimp export this year due to an outbreak of white spot disease in Bagerhat.

AL walks out in protest at PM's comment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmakers of the main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday walked out of parliament yesterday protesting Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's doubt over death threat to Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and demanding immediate withdrawal of her 'irresponsible remarks'.

They also demanded discussion on the premier's remarks adjourning other businesses, but the treasury bench shrugged off the demands and tried to fend off the opposition onslaught with junior deputies, prompting the furious AL legislators to storm out of the House.

Khaleda questioned the truthfulness of the threat to the life of Hasina in parliament on Wednesday.

"I came to know the matter from newspaper reports, but questions have arisen among us as the threat came abroad," she said, adding: "We've launched a probe and found out nothing of its kind so far."

After the AL deputies left the House, the deputies of the ruling BNP seized the chance to lend support to the leader of the House's comments and flay the opposition.

"They (AL) joined the session with an well orchestrated plan to walk out and they worked to their design using the prime minister's speech as an excuse," Local Government, Rural Development

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PHOTO: STAR

The graffiti on an ancient building makes clear the intent of the residents of Panam Nagar in Narayanganj district not to vacate their houses in line with a government order that declared the old town as an archaeologically preserved site.

Panam Nagar's fate in limbo

Residents vow not to vacate city declared as preserved site, build new structures

PINAKI ROY

The residents of Panam Nagar remained unbent on vacating their houses and many of them continued throwing up new structures 15

months after the government declared the old town as an archaeologically preserved site.

Panam Nagar, known as 'Haveli Sonargaon' at the height of its glory, is now home to 50 opulent ancient

buildings made of small bricks on both sides of a road surrounded by a trench in Narayanganj district.

In the face of continued demands from archaeologists,

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18 Rohingyas rescued from traffickers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Motijheel police yesterday rescued 18 Rohingyas and arrested three alleged human traffickers, who brought the Myanmar nationals to Dhaka for trafficking them out to Saudi Arabia with Bangladeshi passport.

Police raided room numbers 78, 87, 89 and 91 of Lucky Boarding in Fakirer Pool and rescued four boys, as many girls, four women and six males. They were gathered from Kavarbil, Alitang and Balukhali of Mangu district in Myanmar. They all had Bangladeshi passports.

Police also seized unconfirmed air tickets from the traffickers — Morshed Alam, Kamal Uddin and Saker — who were arrested on charges of illegally entering Bangladesh by producing false papers.

Police yesterday arrested Mahbub Alam, owner of a travel agency, for his alleged involvement with the human trafficking racket.

The rescued Rohingyas are Abul Kalam, 50, Mohammad Rafiq, 20, Sanjida Begum, 30, Sabu Alam, 8, Noor Mohammad, 7, Siree Jahan, 35, Syed Ullah, 10, Humayara Begum, 5, Kawshar Bibi, 10, Hossain Ahmed, 20, Sulatan Ahmed, 30, Noor-e-Alam, 40, Mohammad Hossain, 16, Alam Reza, 35, Umme Kawshar, 13, Sada Hussain, 7, Fatema Khatun, 30 and Noor Kaba, 5.

They were brought to Dhaka five

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DCC ups outlay to fight mosquito

Khoka needs more money to tackle menace

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has enhanced budgetary allocation to Tk 17.50 crore in fiscal 2004-05 from Tk 12 crore in the previous fiscal to combat mosquito menace, especially Aedes mosquito that causes the dreaded dengue fever.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday announced a Tk 922.01 crore budget for 2004-05, of which 522.25 crore will come from government funds and foreign aid for projects.

The DCC needs at least Tk 50 crore a year for mosquito control and government assistance is a must for this, Khoka said.

The new budget earmarked a development expenditure of Tk 676.47 crore, about 73 percent of the total budget.

Khoka also presented a revised budget of Tk 641.08 crore for fiscal 2003-2004. The original budget for the year was Tk 762.96 crore.

The revised budget and the new budget were unanimously passed



Sadeque Hossain Khoka

earlier at a general meeting of ward commissioners on June 24, the mayor said.

The DCC has set a target of Tk 391.01 crore revenue earning in the current fiscal year against Tk 305.82 in last year. Its earning stood at Tk 238.21 crore last year.

The corporation estimates an earning of Tk 200 crore in taxes, Tk 30 crore in trade licence fees, Tk 20 crore from advertisements, Tk 20

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

NON-DEPLOYMENT OF ARMY IN BY-POLL EC would have gone to HC if BDB did not: Acting CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Acting Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Safiur Rahman yesterday said the Election Commission would have moved the High Court (HC) for violation of the constitution and court directives on army deployment in the July 1 by-polls had the Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) not already done so.

The Acting CEC disclosed this when the EC yesterday heard both sides on the appeal filed by BDB candidate Abdul Mannan challenging the validity of the Dhaka-10 by-election held in violation of the High Court's order on army deployment in each polling centre during Dhaka-10 by-election.

The BDB leader on July 6 sued three secretaries and the acting principal staff officer of the Armed Forces Division for contempt of court for not providing army in each polling centre.

After the hearing, the EC directed Mannan's counsel to submit an affidavit by July 15 on the allegation that their polling agents were driven

out of polling centres. It also asked the counsel for Mosaddak Ali Fala to submit a counter affidavit by July 18. The EC will fix the date to deliver its order on the issue after receiving the affidavits.

During the hearing, both counsels traded allegations of misleading the EC by providing false information, sparking a spell of heat at the EC. The acting CEC and election commissioners M Munif Ali and AK Mohammad Ali heard both sides.

Fala's counsel Advocate Mahbubur Rahman said if army personnel were deployed in each polling centre, his candidate would have bagged more votes. He said the election was held in a free and fair manner. They (BDB) should go to the High Court with their election dispute case, he said.

Mahbubur asked the EC whether it wants to interfere with the High Court as a similar writ petition is pending before the court.

Mannan's lawyer Advocate MK Rahman said everyone knows the election was not free and fair. The

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US firm hired to advise on Sonali Bank

UNB, Dhaka

A US-based consulting firm has been hired for Tk 24 crore to advise measures for smooth operation of the state-run Sonali Bank under a donor-driven financial reform recipe.

The Ministry of Finance and the firm, International Business and Technology Consultant Inc, signed an agreement to this end here yesterday.

As per terms of reference, the consultants will suggest measures to improve the bank's health, an official told the private news agency.

Eight experts from home and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

UK envoy talks shrine attack with FM

Both remain tight-lipped about probe progress

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury yesterday discussed with Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan status of the probe into the grenade attack at Hazrat Shahjalal shrine in Sylhet.

Choudhury, who had a hour-long meeting with Morshed at the foreign ministry, termed 'unfortunate' the May 21 bomb attack that killed three and wounded 70 including him. He however did not make comment on who were behind the blast or when

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Anwar Choudhury

Zia first proclaimer of independence, reprinted Liberation War history says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A reprint of Swadhinota Juddher Dollipatro, the official history of Bangladesh's Liberation War, came out yesterday with an insertion that names former president Ziaur Rahman as the proclaimer of independence.

A new chapter titled 'The First Proclamation of Independence by Major Zia' has been added at the beginning of the third volume of the 15-volume book that compiles a mass of Liberation War documents.

Although the date of Zia's radio announcement was mentioned as March 27, 1971, a footnote says: the Eighth East Bengal Regiment led by

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Independent MP accuses BNP lawmaker of making threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Independent lawmaker MM Shahin yesterday in the Jatiya Sangsad accused a ruling BNP lawmaker of issuing a threat on him at a recent publically.

Shahin did not name the BNP lawmaker but pointed to Naser Rahman, son of Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman.

Taking floor in a point of order, Shahin showed the House a CD (compact disk) describing it as a record of the accused lawmaker's public speech and demanded the speaker to send the matter to the privilege committee as his life is under threat.

Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar asked the independent lawmaker to give a notice to the committee on the

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Announcement

The Daily Star launches "Strategic Issues" on page 4 today. The special page on strategic and security issues will come out on alternate Fridays now onwards.

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