

Hasina discusses political situation with WB chief

UNB

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina had an extensive meeting with World Bank President James D Wolfensohn in New York on Tuesday.

They discussed political and economic situation in Bangladesh.

The meeting was held during a working dinner on the sidelines of an international seminar on "Shaping the Future Global Policy" sponsored by the Council of Women World Leaders at Manhattan.

During the hour-long meeting, Hasina discussed various economic reforms and micro-credit schemes taken by her government. She deplored that many of the projects hit snags under the present government.

The World Bank president praised the reforms and micro-credit programmes of the Awami League government that contributed to the emergence of the capital market.

On the August 21 grenade attack on her rally, the World Bank chief expressed grave concern over the dastardly act.

Hasina chaired second session of the seminar on Tuesday where the World Bank president delivered a keynote speech.

A founder-member of the Council of Women Leaders, established by former US secretary of state Madeline Albright, Hasina highlighted steps of her government in setting up infrastructures, telecommunications, expanding education, attaining food security and expanding the micro-credit operations to

contribute to the emergence of the capital market.

Secretary General of the Council and Senior Advisor of Goldaman, Facks and Co. Laura Liswood, Vice-chair Robert B Hormats and Head of the Council for Capital Market and Economic Security Suzane Nora Johnson also spoke at the seminar.

Tell which country's dictates AL follows

Saber asks Tareq Rahman

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League leader Saber Hossain Chowdhury yesterday asked Tareq Rahman to tell categorically which country's dictates Awami League follows in politics.

"This is a serious allegation," Saber said in a statement.

To divert the attention of disappointed party leaders and workers and protect them from criticism, the BNP leader raised a serious allegation that Awami League does politics at the dictate of another country, he said.

"After such remarks, people

expect that Tareq Rahman speak precisely what he has tried to mean by 'another country' and present documents in support of his contentions before the public," Saber said.

Insisting on his point, Saber said if Tareq failed to do that, he should withdraw his "untrue and motivated" remarks by expressing regret and showing respect to democratic norms.

On reported discontent among BNP grassroots level workers over quirky price hike of essentials, Saber said that terrorism and extortion got institutional shape under the three-year rule of BNP-Jamaat coalition. "Even the business community has also attributed extortion as the main reason for the price spiral of essentials," he said.

Gen Ikramul new envoy to Saudi Arabia

BSS, Dhaka

Major General (Retd) SM Ikramul Haque, former Chief of General Staff of Bangladesh Army, has been appointed Ambassador of Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia.

Born in 1949 in Lakshmipur, Ikramul Haq passed his degree examination from Pakistan Military Academy in 1971. He obtained masters degree in Defence and Strategic Studies from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Ikramul Haq held various positions in military service.

JAMUNA TV

HC order stayed for one month

BSS, Dhaka

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday stayed the High Court order for one month regarding the private Jamuna TV.

Full court of the Appellate Division comprising Chief Justice Syed J R Mudassir Husain , Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim , Justice M A Aziz and Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury passed the order upon a provisional leave petition moved before the court by Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

Earlier, a division bench of the High Court issued rule and directed the concerned authorities to allow the Jamuna TV for opening L/C for importing necessary equipment.

Senior Counsel T H Khan appeared on behalf of BTRC while Barrister Rafiqul Haq stood for Jamuna TV.

Women's bodies demand direct election to reserved seats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty women's rights organisations staged a demonstration yesterday demanding direct election to the parliamentary seats reserved for women.

They strongly opposed the bill regarding the women's seats the government is going to pass in the current session of parliament, saying that the bill is not consistent with the constitution.

The organisations formed human chains in front of the High Court and Muktangan under the banner of Samajik Protirodh Committee and Sammilita Nari Samaj.

The women leaders said they would not accept any law that give a chance to the major political parties to share the reserved seats.

They also called on all political parties to reject the bill.

Shamsunnahar Joytsna, general secretary of Alliance Women's Forum, said the government always lays emphasis on empowerment of women, but, on the other hand, it undermines the legal and constitutional rights of women.

Rekha Chowdhury of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad said the ruling BNP,

in its election manifesto, pledged to ensure direct election to the women's seats but now it has backtracked.

Karmojibi Nari, Ain O Shalish Kendra, Trade Union Kendra, Nari Pragati Sangha, Mohila Muktioddha Sangstha, Hunger Project, Samata and Mohila Ainjibi Samiti took part in the demonstration.

Int'l confce on aquaculture begins today

BSS, Dhaka

A two-day international conference on Aquaculture production and marketing of shrimp and fin-fish will begin at Sonargaon Hotel today.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the conference.

It will be jointly organised by Info-fish, an inter-governmental organisation of the Asia Pacific region for development of fisheries resources, Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association (BFFEA) and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.