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PM accorded warm reception in Tokyo

AGENCIES, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia was accorded a hearty reception at Haneda International Airport as she reached the Japanese capital yesterday on a four-day official visit aiming to boost bilateral relations and economic cooperation.

Japanese Senior Vice-minister for Foreign Affairs Shuzen Tanigawa received the Bangladeshi prime minister.

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Matsuhiro Horiguchi, Bangladesh Ambassador to Japan Sirajul Islam, senior Japanese government officials and leaders of Bangladesh community in Tokyo were present at the airport to welcome the prime minister.

A Bangladeshi girl presented a bouquet to Khaleda.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

College quota for mediocre students planned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry plans to introduce a quota system to reserve seats for mediocre students in the country's quality educational institutions to raise the standard of those students.

About 20 percent seats in colleges with better academic records might be reserved for the students with GPA (grade point average) in between below 5 and above 4, said an education ministry source.

"The ministry would set a modus operandi in this regard at a meeting soon," said a senior official of the ministry.

Capacity crisis at different colleges across the country is set to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

AL won't join polls without reforms

ALCWC meet reiterates position on caretaker govt, EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) will not participate in the next general elections without reforms in the caretaker government and electoral systems, a meeting of the party's central working committee decided yesterday.

"Taking part in the next election under a chief adviser hand-picked by the present government will be useless," Obaidul Quader, acting

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Borrowing binge

Govt loans from banks shoot up by 203pc in FY05

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government's bank borrowing in the last fiscal year (FY) shot up by a staggering 203 percent from the previous year, solely due to heavy borrowing in May and June.

The net borrowing of FY2004-05 was Tk 3,630 crore, which was Tk 1,196 crore in the previous year.

But, until April 2005, the borrowing status was negative, with the government paying back Tk 630 crore to banks. It means, the government took more than Tk 4,000 crore from banks in the last two months alone.

On June 30, the last day of FY05, the government borrowed Tk 407 crore.

The borrowing exceeded the Tk

3,601-crore target fixed in the revised budget of FY05.

Sources at the Finance Division said the government has to borrow excessively from the banking sector in the last fiscal quarter, as the bulk of the annual development budget is usually spent in that period.

In FY05, only 43 percent of the development budget's local component were spent in the first nine months and the remaining 57 percent in the last quarter. It explains the borrowing craze in the fag end of the last fiscal year.

A finance ministry source said in June last, there were days when the Finance Division released more than Tk 500 crore development funds a day.

A huge deficit in revenue (around

Tk 550 crore in NBR portion) and shortfall in sales of savings instruments were two other factors forcing the government to borrow more from banks, he added.

Until April 2005, the government could realise only Tk 2,183 crore of the Tk 3,017 crore revised net sales target of savings instruments. The figure was Tk 3,467 crore in the corresponding period in FY04.

The government revised the FY05 development expenditure from Tk 22,000 crore to Tk 20,500 crore and it could not even implement the revised amount. But still the bank borrowing increased due to rise in revenue expenditure and shortfall in revenue collection, a finance ministry source said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

AL calls 6-hr countrywide hartal Aug 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) will observe a six-hour countrywide hartal on August 15 to protest the coalition government's cancellation of 'national mourning day' on the day Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated way back in 1975.

The main opposition party will mark the first anniversary of the August 21 grenade attacks on an AL rally, bringing out an 'anti-violence procession' from the Central Shaheed Minar to reach its central office on Bangabandhu Avenue where the carnage took place.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC) held at the party's Dhanmondi office yesterday

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Framing for money

A glimpse of how some policemen detain, threaten innocent people with implicating them in robbery cases

SHARIFUL ISLAM

It was 1 o'clock at night on April 25. A team from Pallabi Police Station knocked on the door of Mohammad Wasim, owner of a CD shop at Pallabi. With eyes half-closed he answered the door and was taken aback seeing the policemen. Sub-Inspector Abdur Rahim, who led the team, asked Wasim about the whereabouts of his cousin Dipak. Failing to say,

Wasim was asked to go to the police station.

The next day SI Rahim, also the investigation officer (IO) of a robbery case, showed Wasim arrested as a suspect in a robbery case.

Pallabi police also picked up more than a dozen people, including schoolboys, vegetable vendors, garments workers, shopkeepers and a construction worker after three incidents of

robbery took place in a span of six days from April 24 at Block B in Pallabi.

Many of them bribed their way out of the 20-hour confinement, paying the police between Tk 1,500 and Tk 4,000 each. Wasim, however, was not allowed to go.

"Wasim was not released as we did not offer the police a bribe," said Wasim's brother-in-law, Rafiqul Islam Khan, a graphics

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



The Tk 81.75 crore Khilgaon flyover, second of its kind in the capital, gets waterlogged after rain because of poor drainage system.

Costly dollar makes essentials dearer

JASIM UDDIN KHAN and ASHIQUR RAHMAN

A nagging dollar crisis impeding opening of letters of credit (LC) by importers has pushed up the prices of essential commodities recently, market sources said.

Prices of garlic, onion, lentil, edible oil and sugar rose last week due to lack of adequate supply from international markets, importers at Moulvibazar and Shyambazar in

Dhaka said.

Contradicting the real picture, the prime minister on Sunday said the prices of essentials have not increased that much. She said a section of newspapers are reporting on the issue 'for nothing'.

"Repeated devaluation of taka against dollar in the floating market created an uncertainty in the export-import trade, posing a serious

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Britain on highest ever alert

Church of England warns against scapegoating Muslims

AFP, London

Britain is on its highest ever state of alert amid fears of more attacks such as those which killed at least 52

people on London's transport system last week. The Times newspaper said yesterday.

Security services, military and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

DEAD BANGLADESHI Govt to bring back bodies from KSA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will bring back the bodies and seek compensation from the employers of the Bangladeshi workers who died in a fire incident in Saudi Arabia on Saturday.

Confirming that the cause of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Sweden to give 53m euro in medical aid

AFP, Stockholm

The Swedish government said yesterday that it would provide Bangladesh with a record 500 billion kronor (53 million euros, 63 million dollars) in aid for its healthcare system, with stress on the need to improve the lot of women.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

\$500m investment plan for railways

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government plans to invest \$500 million for restructuring the railway in view of the proposed investments of Tata Group, and also to revitalise the Chittagong port.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said this against the backdrop of challenges facing state-owned Bangladesh Railway (BR) due to its dwindling

passengers and shortfall in revenues.

He was talking to reporters following a meeting with representatives of the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) at his Gulshan house.

The WB and ADB have jointly proposed to contribute a major portion of the investment, the minister said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

NOAB, BSP for duty cut on newsprint, rise in ad rate

BSS, Dhaka

Leaders of Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Parishad (BSP) and Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (NOAB) yesterday called on Information Minister M Shamsul Islam at his Secretariat office.

They apprised the minister of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

কোটি কোটি টাকার নিশ্চিত পুরস্কার

প্রতি ২৫ ব্যাগ কিং ব্র্যান্ড সিমেন্ট কিনলেই পাবেন একটি ফ্ল্যাচ কার্ড

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