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People's Right to Know

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BARAPUKURIA SCAM

Khaleda denies graft links to ACC man

UNB, Dhaka

Denying any wrongdoing in awarding the coalmine deal, detained former prime minister Khaleda Zia yesterday told the investigator of the Barapukuria graft case that she had just acted as per law, procedures and the decision of the purchase committee.

"I acted following law, procedures and the decision of the purchase committee. I did it and anybody else would have done the same. People in my place would do the same in future," she was quoted by her lawyer Shimul Biswas as telling the investigating officer of the graft case filed against her.

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Deputy Director Monirul Haque, the investigation officer of the case, went to the sub-jail to question the immediate-past prime minister in connection with

Khaleda's two lawyers--Barrister Mahbubuddin Khokon and Shimul Biswas--were present during the questioning from 4:00pm to 5:15pm,

The case has been filed "illegally to harass me", Khaleda was quoted

Asked if there was any discussion about politics, Shimul said there was no scope for having any political discussion due to the presence of government officials.

On February 26, ACC Assistant Director Shamsul Alam filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station against Khaleda, 10 former ministers of her cabinet and five others on charge of causing a loss of about Tk 159 crore to the exchequer through awarding Barapukuria coalmine deal to the highest bidder instead of the lowest.

Former finance minister Saifur Rahman, ex-BNP secretary general SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

1 killed, 20 hurt as CNG cylinder of microbus explodes

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

At least one person was killed and 20 others were injured in yet another explosion of a gas cylinder of a CNG-run microbus yesterday in Panchabati area of Narayanganj.

The deceased was identified as Bakul Chandra Mandal, 40, a worker who was walking past the parked microbus.

A fireball from the explosion fell on a nearby garments factory igniting it too and burning valuables worth about Tk 10 lakh, claimed the proprietor of the factory.

Another 10 to 12 nearby shops were also damaged due to the explosion.

Ten of the injured were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), three of whom were admitted to the burn unit with critical injuries.

The government launched a clampdown on unauthorised CNG conversion workshops in February, in the wake of repeated fatal blasts of CNG cylinders installed in converted motor vehicles claiming numerous lives.

The unauthorised workshops are engaged in fitting motor vehicles with faulty and sub-standard SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



This heap of twisted metals was once a people carrier. The vehicle caught fire at Panchabati of Narayanganj yesterday and when locals were trying to douse the flames the CNG cylinder of the vehicle exploded leaving one person dead and 20 others injured.

Home for security council to fight terrorism

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The home ministry has suggested forming a Cabinet Committee on National Security, a National Security Council (NSC) and a Joint Intelligence Unit to counter terrorist threats in a coordinated way.

Its proposal on Counter Terrorism Strategy in Bangladesh, submitted to different ministries for their feedback, also suggested sial survey conducted by the fourcreation of a Central Inter-agency party alliance government on Counter Terrorism Coordination determining educational back-Cell to coordinate and monitor ground of arrested militants in activities of counter-terrorism cells 2006, and says, "Madrasa educain all intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The proposal includes an organogram on this cell.

"The structures of these proposed bodies will be decided following opinions given by the ministries," said a home ministry

The ministries are expected to give their feedback by May 30.

The home ministry prepared the proposal as part of global initiatives against terrorism under the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy endorsed by

member states in September 2006. The focus of this anti-terrorism initiative will be based on four principal strands -- prevent, pursue, protect and prepare.

The proposal recommends upholding democratic governance through the rule of law both at national and local levels to prevent terrorism.

The ministry uses a controvertion has long been a subject of profound blame, to be a breeding ground for terrorism in Bangladesh. But recent trends in terrorism in Bangladesh reject any significant correlation between madrasa education and its linkages with terrorism. Only 19 percent of those who were arrested for terror-

ism were drawn from Madrasas." It however recommends that madrasa curricula should be revised and modernised along with that of mainstream education.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

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No party to sign nat'l charter

the case.

Says Delwar

election.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said that the caretaker government wants to stay in power for a long period without holding the parliamentary

"As per the constitution, the caretaker government's only responsibility is to assist the Election Commission (EC) in holding a free and fair general election within 90 days, but this government seems to be hanging on to power through various

The BNP chairpersonappointed party secretary general

schemes," he alleged.

DIALOGUE

Govt in unofficial parley to persuade AL, BNP

ASHFAQ WARES KHAN

Concerned about the uncertainty surrounding the participation of the three largest political parties in the ongoing dialogue, the government has started unofficial negotiations to persuade them into the much-hyped pre-poll talks.

(AL) and BNP told The Daily Star that they had been contacted chiefs are released from jail. separately through unofficial SEE PAGE 15 COL 1 | channels to find ways to bring

them to the dialogue.

But both the government and the political parties did not disclose the details of any possible deal between the two sides.

The efforts came as the success of the dialogue, which enters second day today, hangs in the balance with the AL, BNP and Jamaat-e-Sources in the Awami League Islami not yet agreeing to participate in the talks unless their party

> Senior government officials SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

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Local govt commission to be set up soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

moved to form the muchanticipated Local Government free local government administracentral government's whims.

forming the commission and hope it will be formed as soon as possitold The Daily Star yesterday.

He said his ministry is now commission. looking for an office for the LGC.

provisions designed to strengthen local government institutions, and quent orders and directives. to make them dynamic and

accountable to the people.

The new law empowers the The caretaker government has commission to draw up recommendations for strengthening the local government system. It also decentralisation of power. Commission (LGC), in an effort to allows the commission to probe alleged financial and administrations from absolute subjugation to tive irregularities in the system, "We have started the process of to take actions against the accused. ties that limit the central govern-

discussed since 1992, but no those local government adminisble," LGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal elected partisan government since trations. then initiated any step to form the

Against such a backdrop, the

current military backed caretaker government made its move to strengthen the local government system in an effort to ensure proper

The caretaker government already incorporated provisions in newly promulgated laws governing and to ask the central government city corporations and municipali-Formation of an LGC was being ment's supervisory power over

According to those laws, the LGRD ministry, which is the custo-Rather, successive elected dian of the local government sys-President lajuddin Ahmed on governments in the last 15 years tem, will have to consult with the May 11 promulgated an ordinance slapped numerous unwarranted LGC before issuing any instruction regarding formation of the LGC with restrictions on local government or before formulating rules regardadministrations by issuing fre- ing functions of city corporations and municipalities.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

REPORTING ON BRIBE

Star reporter beaten up by jail guards

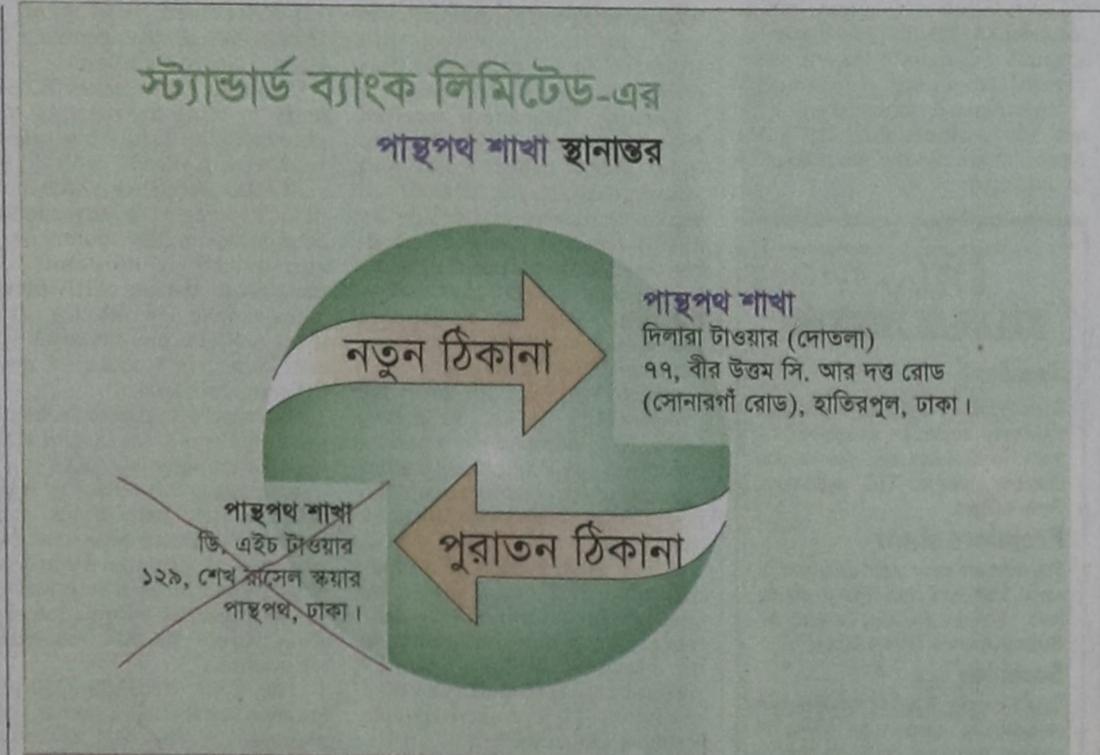
STAR REPORT

Star was beaten up by jail guards yesterday while working on a report on harassment of visitors

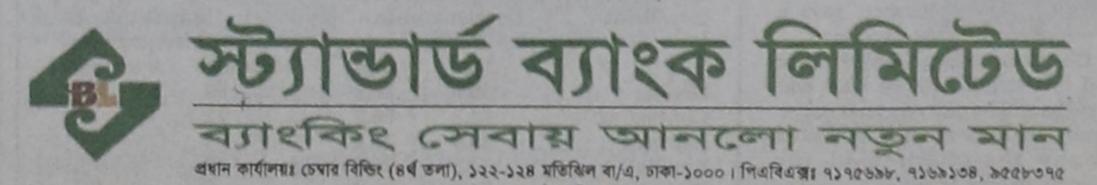
and corruption at the local prison. Mirza Shakil, the reporter, was Tangail correspondent of The Daily admitted to hospital with severe injuries in the chest, back and neck. Witnesses said he went to the SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



Mirza Shakil, left, critically injured by jail guards. One of the attackers, right, of The Daily Star correspondent.



পাছপথ শাখা দিলারা টাওয়ার (দোতলা) ৭৭, বীর উত্তম সি. আর দত্ত রোড (সোনারগাঁ রোড), হাতিরপুল, ঢাকা।



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