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TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS

Opposition to play active role in JS, on streets

Khaleda tells editors
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said the opposition led by her will play an active role both in the parliament and on streets while giving the incumbent government more time to prove itself.

She also said they do not want return of any unconstitutional government in the country.

"We want constitutional governments, and for that we also want cooperation from the government, so the opposition may play its due role in strengthening of democracy," she said at a views exchange meeting with editors and senior journalists of newspapers, news agencies, television channels, and radio stations.

Most of the editors and senior journalists urged the leader of the opposition in parliament to return to the House immediately, and to refrain from calling hartals and blockades.

In reply Khaleda said they will return to the parliament as the country's interest is their first priority.

Referring to her guests' SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Licensed to break law

Vehicle owners display licence plates as they wish, get away with the offence right under traffic men's nose

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

Car licence plates have become a symbol of utter disregard for law as the vehicle owners tamper with the plates by using varying typefaces and designs in violation of the rules that strictly prohibit such practices.

In the wake of increasing numbers of fatal street accidents and vehicle thefts, traffic police officers say altering the plates makes it difficult to make out the registration numbers. They are concerned that vehicles involved in crimes or hit-and-run cases can be difficult to trace.

"It has become a trend to have attractive number plates to go along with a new car where the designs, spacing and typefaces of number plates are freely altered. This makes registration numbers virtually unreadable from afar," said Jahur, a traffic sergeant at Mirpur-1.

"Increasing use of English letters in plates is also alarming," he said, adding, "A simple change in letter spacing can make 13 look like B. The letter O can look like D, 12 can look like 15 and the letter S can get confused with the number 5."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



The large image on top is the only plate that follows the rules. A huge number of vehicles on the streets use plates that have not been made following the rules. Some plates are smudged and obscured while a few vehicles are seen on the streets with no plates at all.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

WARRANT OF PRECEDENCE SC stays HC verdict for 6 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed for six weeks the High Court verdict that declared the existing warrant of precedence illegal.

Md Muzammel Hossain, chamber judge of the Appellate Division, passed the order in response to Attorney General Mahbubey Alam's petition for a stay on the HC verdict.

The chamber judge asked the government to file a regular leave-to-appeal petition within the six weeks.

In its verdict on February 4, the HC directed the government to issue a new warrant of precedence, an order that determines precedence in terms of ranks of officials in the executive, legislative and judicial organs of the state.

It said the district judges and equivalent judicial officers must be given precedence over secretaries and chiefs of the armed forces.

The attorney general yesterday told The Daily Star that the SC stay means the existing warrant of precedence will remain in force.

During hearing on the petition, he told the court that by placing the district judges' position above that of the SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

New CJ asks lawyers to help poor get justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim yesterday proposed that the Supreme Court (SC) lawyers conduct a case for free every month for the poor and destitute litigants, who otherwise would have no access to justice.

The willing members of the SC Bar Association (SCBA) will have the opportunity to pick cases from the SC registrar, and the Office of the Chief Justice will publish an annual SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Kuwait to invest more

Pledges to expand trade during Hasina's talks with emir, PM; manpower, climate issues also discussed

UNB, Kuwait City

The State of Kuwait is eager to provide all-out support for different development projects of Bangladesh and expand the bilateral trade between the two Muslim countries.

The assurances came when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid separate calls on Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah and Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah here yesterday.

During the meetings, the Emir and the PM of Kuwait greeted Hasina on her party's landslide victory and on her

election as the prime minister of Bangladesh through the last general election held in a free, fair and peaceful manner.

They expressed hope that parliamentary democracy would be consolidated and have a firm footing under her able and prudent leadership.

About her role in dealing with climate-change issues, the Emir of Kuwait said Bangladesh has come in the forefront of world leadership to stand beside the most vulnerable countries for the prudent leadership of Sheikh Hasina.

The Kuwaiti leaders also mentioned the role of Father of the Nation and the

greatest Bengali of all time Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and her vision towards building a poverty and hunger-free prosperous Bangladesh.

The PM held series of meetings with Kuwaiti government and business leaders examining newer avenues of cooperation yesterday.

During the meetings, the two sides discussed matters of bilateral interest and expansion of trade and business for the benefit of the two peoples, officials from both sides said.

"Manpower export from Bangladesh, SEE PAGE 2 COL 5
MORE IN STAR BUSINESS, PAGE 2

Deported workers yet to get arrears

PORIMOL PALMA

Kuwait has not yet paid the arrears of several hundred Bangladeshi workers who were arrested and deported following a protest there one and a half years ago against low wage and non-payment of salaries.

"The deported workers submitted their passports and legal documents of working in Kuwait. We have promised them to recover their arrears, but till date we did not receive the money from Kuwait," said an official of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET).

Many of the workers were hired for 50 Kuwaiti dinars per month, but later the contracts were changed. Their salary dropped at 40 dinars a month which was further reduced to 20 dinars, the BMET official told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that non-payment of salaries and low and irregular payments often prompted strikes by Asian workers there.

Some of the protesters vandalised several vehicles on street SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

28 BDR men appeal for retracting confessions

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-eight Bangladesh Rifles members yesterday appealed to a Dhaka court to let them retract their confessional statements given earlier on the February 2009 at the BDR headquarters in Pihkhana.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Dr Abdul Majid directed the authorities concerned to keep the petitions into the case file.

The petitioners alleged that SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

3 cops sued for death in custody

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A murder case was filed against the incumbent officer-in-charge, a sub-inspector and an assistant sub-inspector of Keraniganj police station yesterday following the death of an accused in the custody.

Victim's father Adu Mia, the complainant, alleged in the statement that Manik Mia alias Lutfar, 38, died following torture in the custody of Keraniganj police station sometime between January 27 and February 1.

Adu Mia filed the case with a Dhaka court against OC Md Asaduzzaman, SI Zahidur Rahman and ASI Harun-Rashid.

Judicial Magistrate Sahriar Arafat recorded statement, SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Bangladesh midfielder Atiqur Rahman Mishu heads in the opening goal against Afghanistan in the football final of the 11th South Asian Games at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Soccer gold hosts'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh capped off their best-ever performance in the South Asian Games with a dream gold in football at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday where the men's team thrashed Afghanistan 4-0 in the final much to the delight of a packed home crowd.

Bangladesh scored twice in each half to make sure they end a decade of gold-drought in the most prestigious event of the regional sporting carnival since their first triumph in the 1999 Katmandu Games.

It may be the most one-sided final in the 26-year history of the Games, but the victory of the booters will definitely relieve the pain of the SAFF Championship two months ago when the same side were eliminated from the semifinals stage.

The gold in football was an icing on the cake for the hosts on the penultimate day on which they claimed two gold in boxing and another at wushu. Already having 11 gold in their coffers before the start of the day, Bangladesh raised their tally to 18 gold, 23 silver and 55 bronze, a

feat they have never achieved before.

The only disappointment for the home side was the failure to make any lasting impression in the track and field events. India might have dominated athletics, but the two the men's team thrashed Afghanistan 4-0 in the final much to the delight of a packed home crowd.

blue riband events -- 100m sprint of men and women -- went to Sri Lanka and Pakistan respectively. Sri Lanka's 20-year-old Shehan Saeruwana Abeypitita beat his more experienced and illustrious competitors to become South Asia's fastest man with 10.46 seconds while 23-year-old Naseem Hameed created a piece of history when she became the first Pakistani woman to win the 100m dash with a time of 11.81 seconds.

At the newly-built Mohammad Ali Boxing Stadium, Bangladesh's two boxers Jewel Ahmed and Abdur Rahim made sure the hosts fulfill a pre-Games projection of 17 gold by winning the lightweight 60kg category and light welterweight 64kg category gold respectively after Masbah Uddin won the gold in wushu away at the Sylhet BKS.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Secretaries to visit districts to see dev work

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Secretaries of the government at a meeting yesterday decided to work in a coordinated way to speed up the administrative activities for fully implementation of its development programmes.

The meeting, held at the cabinet division of the Secretariat, decided to prepare a detail work plan to fulfil targets set by the government in food, energy, healthcare, information technology and education sectors.

divisions decided to visit districts regularly for supervising and monitoring activities of the field administration," Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder told The Daily Star last night. Apart from a comprehensive work plan, individual ministry will also make its plan to implement the targets, he said.

"Immediate recruitment in the vacant positions in public service was one of the major issues of discussion," Sobhan said adding a large number of posts in different ministry have remained vacant. SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Contempt rule on Jamuna Builders MD

Asked to appear in HC Feb 22

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the managing director of Jamuna Builders Ltd to appear before the court on February 22 in connection with a contempt of court charge.

The court also issued a rule upon Shamim Islam, MD of SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

25 lakh ultra poor families to get rice at Tk 22

Govt to introduce fair price cards for 3 months, plans Feb 21 start

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With Open Market Sales (OMS) hardly stabilising rice prices, the government in yet another move yesterday decided to introduce fair price cards for 25 lakh ultra poor families across the country.

Under the programme, families with no permanent income or land and not

enlisted for any social safety net programmes would receive 20 kilogrammes of rice per month at Tk 22 a kg for three months, said Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque.

He said the families maintained by women would have priority in obtaining the cards. Each family would be issued

one card and the applicant member of the family must have a national identity card, he added.

The programme would start from February 21 after preparing a list of the beneficiaries at all the divisional and district headquarters, the minister told newsmen at his ministry's conference room. SEE PAGE 15 COL 10