

Opposition out to protect war criminals: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the opposition's threat to the government is intended to protect the war criminals. "They have adopted the same way to protect the war criminals as they did to save the killers of Bangabandhu. Their only task is to protect the offenders," she told a group of journalists led by Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) leaders who called on her at Gono Bhavan yesterday.

BNP and the caretaker government. Hasina said BNP and Ershad regimes had been in power during 29 years of the country's independence and posed question why they did not mind to tackle the problems now facing the nation. Recalling the past, she said former law adviser Barrister Mainul Hussein, also owner of the daily Ittefaq, had formed the political party 'Progosh' with Bangabandhu's killers Maj (ret) Huda and Maj (ret) Shahriar and the daily gave the party wide coverage. And BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia made Col (ret) Rashid opposition leader after the fake elections on Feb 15, 1996, she added. Returning to the vexing power crisis, Hasina said BNP had been in power for five years and the caretaker government two years and people are suffering from problems created by the past regimes.

The prime minister said her government has adopted plans to resolve the power crisis but it would take time. Hasina said a section of the media is carrying fabricated reports everyday. She wanted to know from the union leaders of journalists what government response should be to such false and fabricated news. Referring to the statement of Press Club President Shawkat Mahmud who is now an adviser to Khaleda, the prime minister sought views what can be done to bring back discipline to journalism. The prime minister said journalists were more repressed during the BNP-Jamaat rule. BFUJ President Iqbal Sobhan Mahmud, Secretary General Altaf Chowdhury, DUJ President Shah Alamgir and General Secretary Abu Zafar Surjya led the journalists to the meeting.



Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman speaks at a seminar titled 'Integrity pledge: Participatory governance through social accountability' organised by TIB at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday. On his right are TIB Chairman M Hafizuddin Khan, Prime Minister's Adviser Alauddin Ahmed, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad and Prof Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman.

PM's Adviser Alauddin slams bureaucrats for neglect of duty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT Prime Minister's Adviser Alauddin Ahmed yesterday came down heavily on bureaucrats for their sluggishness in work, saying that files are being piled up in their offices and major portion of jobs remains unfinished, but none is held accountable. "There has been a record of maximum top level meetings, and files are piling up. Every file is stuck... How can a country run this way?" said the adviser on education, social development and political affairs at a seminar. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised the seminar titled 'Integrity pledge: Participatory governance through social accountability' at Brac Centre Inn in the city. The administration is not working very well, as the system itself is inher-

ently defective, he said, adding that nobody is accountable to anyone, not even to himself/herself, in the in-built bureaucracy. Once a file goes to the secretary, it is sent to all levels of officials down to the administrative officer and then it goes up again, Alauddin said, adding: "This system needs to be stopped." He suggested that there has to be some officers responsible for particular jobs and accountability has to be ensured. Criticising the perception that politicians have destroyed the country, he said it is the secretaries and military rulers who have mostly abused power. There was also misuse of power by Anti-Corruption Commission during the last caretaker government, who tried to politicise the country, he said. The present government formed all

the parliamentary committees to oversee the jobs of different ministries in a bid to reduce corruption. Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, a trustee of TIB, said it is very difficult to work against corruption in a society where wealth and consumerism get priority and social and political intolerance is high. Therefore, only the support of grassroots people can help reduce corruption, he noted. Urging the lawmakers, Prof Ahmad said, "You better raise question about the transparency in budget implementation, instead of condemning or appreciating anyone in parliament." TIB Chairman M Hafizuddin Khan, Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman, Prof Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman, some lawmakers and TIB officials also spoke.



Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam enters the DB office in the city last night. (Story on page 1)

Govt recommends withdrawal of 340 more cases

UNB, Dhaka Chittagong City Corporation Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury and ex-lawmakers Abdul Rahman Bodi, Abdul Gaffar Biswas, ABM Afsar Uddin and Syed Mohsinul Arif are among those whose cases have been withdrawn. The meeting, however, rejected the plea for withdrawing cases against two former BNP MPs Mahmudul Huq Rubel and Zahed Ali on grounds that the district review committees concerned did not recommend withdrawal of their cases. The government yesterday recommended withdrawal of 340 more cases filed against mostly political leaders during the army-backed caretaker government. State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam who chaired a meeting at the home ministry to review the outstanding cases told reporters that the meeting has recommended withdrawing 325 criminal cases and 15 corruption cases initiated by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

JCD faction burns effigies of its leaders

DU CORRESPONDENT A rebel faction of Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal, the student wing of BNP, burnt the effigies of its president and general secretary at Dhaka University yesterday and declared them unwanted on the campus. Around 50 leaders and workers of the group burnt the effigies of JCD President Sultan Salauddin Tuku and General Secretary Amirul Islam Alim in front of the Arts Building at around 12:30pm. The rebel leaders alleged that Tuku and Alim awarded posts to incompetent persons in the organisation by black-mailing BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia. They also alleged that Tuku, who has a link to militancy, cannot lead the student body. The rebel faction burnt the effigies a day after the leaders loyal to Tuku-Alim committee entered DU campus and brought out a procession on Saturday after two and a half months. Members of Tuku-Alim committee were out of the campus since January 18 this year following a fierce clash with the rebel faction. Since the clash, the rebel faction remains on the campus under the shelter of a section of Bangladesh Chhatra League leaders.

Navy to be developed as 3-dimensional force: PM Govt to procure submarines, missiles, frigates

UNB, Dhaka Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday revealed the government's mega plan for building Bangladesh Navy as a deterrent, three-dimensional force by incorporating submarines, helicopters, missiles, new frigates and other necessary modern equipment and vessels. Addressing the officers and sailors at the Naval Headquarters' Multipurpose Hall, she said soon two more frigates will be included to Bangladesh Navy. Besides, as a long-term plan of the government to modernise the Navy, three old British frigates will be reset in the force. The prime minister further said that during her recent China visit, she had requested the Chinese government to provide Bangladesh Naval Force with two newly constructed frigates, including helicopter, and the Chinese government gave its consent to this. Besides, naval ship Bangabandhu, which was decommissioned during the last BNP-Jamaat government on political grounds, will be fully operational again, she said. She further disclosed that signing of agreement has already been completed to buy two helicopters and missiles while the process for procuring two offshore patrol vessels from the United Kingdom is at the last stage. Moreover, work is also proceeding to procure a Hydrographic Survey Vessel from UK and the process is underway in China to equip two Large Patrol Craft with missiles, Hasina said. Besides, she said the government is also trying to procure maritime patrol aircraft, modernise four missile boats and two patrol aircrafts by adding missiles, develop special Naval force SWADS, the Navy's fleet air system by incorpo-

rating surface to air missiles and air defense system. The prime minister said that these plans and programmes will be implemented by 2012. "We also have a plan to equip our Navy with submarine with base facilities to build it as a deterrent force by 2019," she said. Within this time, the government will take all necessary steps for setting up the naval force's own air base, jetty for ship berthing, training school and accommodation facilities for officers and sailors, she said. "If the plan, which has been chalked out for modernisation of Navy, continues, Insha-Allah you will advance much to build a three-dimensional force by 2021," she added. The prime minister urged the members of Bangladesh Navy to maintain the chain of command and work with utmost sincerity, honesty and punctuality to safeguard the country's maritime boundaries and other valuable resources. Earlier, the prime minister separately addressed the officers of Bangladesh Navy when she thanked the Navy for protecting the country's sovereignty, sea resources and vast population of the coastal areas with limited number of vessels and work force. The prime minister expressed her happiness as two naval ships of Bangladesh Navy are very soon going to join the UN peacekeeping mission. Bangladesh becomes the first country in South Asia to send two warships - BNS Osman and BNS Madhumati - to the UN Peacekeeping Mission, UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon). The warships will leave Chittagong seaport for Lebanon today.

Health minister visits ICDDR,B

STAFF CORRESPONDENT Health Minister Dr AFM Ruhul Haque yesterday visited the diarrhoea patients at the International Center for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B). The minister said diarrhoea has broken out earlier this year due to excessive hot weather. Ruhul suggested that people living far off ICDDR,B should take their patients quickly to the nearby hospitals as dehydration deteriorates the patient's condition. He also said private and public hospitals are experienced enough to handle the diarrhoea patients. Source said at present some 38 patients are coming to ICDDR,B for treatment every hour. Most of the patients are from Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Rampura, Badda, Khilkhet, Bashabo, Narayanganj and Demra.

Husband beats wife for dowry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT A cruel husband beat up his wife mercilessly and left behind her at Mirpur, some 12 kilometre off their residence at Babubazar, in the city yesterday as she failed to fulfil his demand for dowry. Identified as Naznin Rahman, 19, a first year student of Dhaka Nursing College, she was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in a critical condition. DMCH sources said the victim received severe injuries to her head as her brutal husband Abul Kalam Azad who owns a photocopy machine at Babubazar in the old part of the city. The victim's mother Akhter Zahan said her daughter Naznin and Azad locked in a love marriage some six months ago. "Azad and one of his associates left the victim on the road in front of Mirpur Ansar camp near our residence around 11:00am in an unconscious state," she told The Daily Star. For the last four months, Azad has been pressing her to collect Tk 10 lakh from her parents for going to Ireland and also tortured her often, the victim said. "In the morning, my husband caught hold of my hair and hit my head repeatedly with the wall of his house at Babubazar," Naznin said, adding: "At one stage, my husband forcibly took me by a CNG-auto-rickshaw and left me on the road near my parents' house." The victim's mother said they informed Mirpur police of the matter and will file a case within days.

Save a mother

STAFF CORRESPONDENT Aparna Rani Pramanik, a mother of three children, is a resident of Maheshpur Pourashava in Jhenaidah. She went through a long and arduous struggle to bring up her two sons and a daughter after her husband died 26 years ago. The 50-year-old mother has now been suffering from cancer. She is undergoing treatment at the National Institute of Cancer Research Hospital at Mohakhali in Dhaka. Her family has already spent Tk two lakh on her treatment. According to doctors, she needs more treatment, which involves about Tk 5 lakh. Her younger son, Tushar Kanti Pramanik, is a low-paid employee. It is not possible for him to manage such a huge amount. So her children have appealed to generous people to extend a helping hand to save their mother. Contributions can be sent to Tushar Kanti Pramanik, Savings Account No. 2574, Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited, Panthapath Branch, Dhaka. Interested persons can also call at 01721-112892 to contact her family members.

Bela Nobi passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT Bela Nobi, noted women rights activist and one of the presidium members of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, passed away at a city hospital on Saturday at the age of 74, says a press release. She had been suffering from cancer for long. Bela left behind her husband, two sons, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn her death. Different organisations have expressed deep shock at the death of Bela. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad in a statement said Bela had been a dedicated activist since its birth.

TAX EVASION CASE AGAINST BABAR Hearing of charge framing adjourned

COURT CORRESPONDENT A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned until May 25 the hearing of charge framing against detained former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar in a tax evasion case. Judge Nasiruddin Mahmud of the Special Judge's Court-5 passed the order after defence lawyers submitted a petition seeking adjournment of the charge hearing of the case. In the petition, Advocate ABM Sharfuddin Khan Mukul said their client would file an appeal with the higher court for quashing the proceedings of the case. So, they prayed for adjournment of the charge hearing. On February 14, Deputy Tax Commissioner Syed Zakir Hossain of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) filed the case against Babar, now in police custody on various criminal charges. NBR, in its case statement, mentioned that Babar, director of Master Electronics Industries Limited, evaded Tk 2,65,44,122 in income tax on his income of Tk 8,06,80,122 from 1999-2000 to the fiscal years from 1999-2000 to 2008-2009. Babar repeatedly provided false information about his real income and expenditure, even though he was an influential person and a leading businessman, the NBR said in the statement. The former state minister was earlier arrested on charges of amassing a huge amount of money through illegal means during the last caretaker government. Later, he was sentenced to 17 years' rigorous imprisonment for possessing illegal firearms and ammunition. He was shown arrested in the August 21, 2004 grenade attack case and remanded several times. He was also shown arrested and taken on remand for interrogation for his alleged involvement in the killing of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria.

Dr Md Fazle Rabbi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT Dr Md Fazle Rabbi has been suffering from acute liver and kidney diseases. He is now undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU). The doctors said he needs to undergo a liver transplant and referred him to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in New Delhi, India. But such treatment costs about Tk 70 lakh, which the young doctor could not afford. He has not requested generous and well-off people to extend a helping hand to save his life. Dr Rabbi passed MBBS in 1991 from Chittagong Medical College and received MCPS degree in child health from Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons. Contributions can be sent to Dr Md Fazle Rabbi, savings account No. 108.101.271981, Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited, Shantinagar Branch, Dhaka. For details, please call at 01819494531.

WEATHER TODAY Thundershowers likely UNB, Dhaka Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Sylhet division in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today. Weather may remain dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said. Severe heat wave is sweeping over the region of Rajshahi and mild to moderate heat wave over the regions of Ishwardi, Khulna, Mongla, Jessore, Kushtia, Dhaka, Faridpur and Srilmongal may continue. Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, it said. The sun sets in the capital at 6:19pm today and rises at 5:39am tomorrow. Yesterday's highest temperature of 41.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Rajshahi and the lowest of 21.4 degrees at Sylhet. The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were: City/Town Temperature in Celsius Humidity in percentage



Buddhist Peace Confce executives

METRO DESK DP Barua and Goutam Arindam Barua have been elected president and secretary general of Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP), Bangladesh National Centre for the next four years on Saturday, says a press release. DP Barua is former chief editor and managing director of BSS while and Goutam, also known as Shelu Barua, is vice president of National Bank Ltd. Other office bearers include Vice Presidents Prof Jino Bodi Bhikku, Jibananda Barua, Hiralal Barua, Dr Benu Proshad Barua, Dr Provat Chandra Barua, Dr Sumongal Barua, Principal Sukumol Barua, Ashoke Barua, Shilabrata Barua, Parimal Mithshuddi and Sakya Priya Barua. Deputy Secretaries General Satu Barua and Palash Barua, and Secretary Finance and Treasurer Roymohan Barua.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT Today is the 12th death anniversary of Mohiuddin Ahmed, a veteran of the language movement and one of the organisers of the liberation war, says a press release. He was also a parliamentarian and a close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. On the occasion, Mohiuddin Ahmed Smriti Sangsad will place wreaths at his grave at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in the city in the morning. A milad mahfil will also be held at his residence at Dhanmondi in the city after Asr prayers.

DU students demand publication of results

DU CORRESPONDENT The law students of Dhaka University yesterday formed a human chain and also vandalised pots of flower plants in the department demanding immediate publication of the results of their year-end examinations. Over 200 students, who sat for their second, third and fourth year-ending examinations last year, organised the programme on the faculty premises around 12:00 noon. The students of three sessions at the year-end examinations finished their law department examinations in July and August last year but did not get their results in the last eight months. The 2nd year students under session 2006-07 finished their year-end exams in July 2009 while the students of third and fourth years completed their exams in July and August last year respectively. Later, the agitating students ransacked around 20 pots of flower plants on a corridor of the department. Law Faculty Dean Dr Borhan Uddin Khan said, "The results would be published within April 20."