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BEN ALI SENTENCED

The ousted Tunisian president has been sentenced to 35 years in jail
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NO MORE CHEMICALS

Bio-control agents emerge as an alternative to chemical pesticides
PAGE B8

TAYLOR TO CAPTAIN NZ

Batsman Ross Taylor becomes New Zealand cricket skipper
PAGE 17

BNP takes hard line

Vows to resist constitutional amendments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has decided to resist any move to scrap the constitutional provision for caretaker government system, as the party says it is aimed at holding a "far-farical election" under the political government.

The National Standing Committee, the highest policymaking forum of the party, took the decision last night at a meeting that discussed the proposed amendments to the constitution approved by the cabinet on Monday.

Party chief Khaleda Zia chaired the meeting at her Gulshan office in the capital.

"On the one hand, the government is talking of dialogue with the

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CARETAKER ISSUE

Door not yet shut for talks

Insist AL lawmakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The door is not closed for talks on the caretaker government issue even though the cabinet has approved the draft bill for constitution amendments, some ministers and ruling Awami League lawmakers said yesterday.

They also said the door will rather be wide open once the bill is placed in parliament.

The AL leaders and ministers made the remarks in and outside the House apparently in response to BNP leader Moudud Ahmed's comments following cabinet approval of the bill on Monday. All the doors have been closed for discussions, Moudud told journalists.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said yesterday, "It is not correct that the opportunity for talks is over. There is no alternative to discussion in a democratic polity."

He urged BNP to join parliament sittings to talk on the issue.

The draft bill will be placed in parliament, and then it will be sent to the parliamentary standing committee concerned for scrutiny.

"Therefore, the opposition has scope for discussion at every stage of the constitution amendment process," the minister told journalists after attending a view-exchange

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A breath of wind could send these chunks of concrete stuck to the iron rods tumbling down on pedestrians oblivious to the danger from above. A mobile court yesterday demolished the unauthorised extensions of the building in the city's Madhya Badda scattering debris on the street.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

All she wants is punishment

Rumana weeps, tells how she forgave husband upon numerous tortures



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After doctors in Bangladesh and India have failed to restore Rumana Manzur's eyesight, the Dhaka University teacher now has just one option open: waiting for a miracle.

"I don't know what will happen with my eyes. Now everything depends on Allah," a crying Rumana said yesterday.

She was talking to journalists at capital's LabAid Hospital, where she was readmitted on Monday after her return from India. She demanded punishment of her assaulter husband Hasan Sayeed Sumon.

An assistant professor of International Relations Department at DU, Rumana sustained severe injuries as Sumon pushed his fingers into her eyes at their Dhanmondi residence in the city on June 5.

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Discuss best ways to develop Bangladesh

EU-German delegates ask govt, opposition

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

European Union and Germany representatives yesterday said the government and opposition should discuss the best ways for development of Bangladesh as it has all chances to become a middle-income economy by 2021.

This view was expressed by German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Dirk Niebel, and EU



Dirk Niebel

Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs during a press conference at Sonargaon Hotel last evening.

The two arrived here yesterday on a four-day visit in a joint mission.

On the first day of their trip, they called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Finance Minister AMA Muhith and State Minister for

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MORE ON B1

Govt working for peaceful Bangladesh
PM also tells EU delegates how democracy disrupted

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed her government's firm commitment to protect the voting right of people, saying "people will decide who will run the country".

"We have total

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ELECTORAL REFORMS

BNP rejects talks with EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition BNP has formally rejected the Election Commission's invitation to sit a dialogue with it over electoral reforms, terming the commission "controversial".

In a letter sent to the secretary to the EC Secretariat yesterday, the BNP accused the incumbent chief election commissioner and two other election commissioners of playing a "partisan role" since their assumption of office.

"The tenure of the present election commissioner is

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STATE ON WANE INDEX

Bangladesh improves

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh has moved down one notch to 25th from the 24th position last year in the rankings of 'failed states', the prestigious US based Foreign Policy magazine said in its latest annual ranking.

Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka are also featured in the list of the most failed

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Spinners thrown in a spin

Cheap yarns coming from China, India to cause heavy loss

INAM AHMED

Islam, who would not disclose his full identity fearing it would affect his loan eligibility, is the owner of one of the giants in textiles, and was expecting a good profitable year until things started tumbling a few months back.

He now stares at a \$70 million loss as India and China have started supplying cheap yarn. For Islam this comes on top of an acute gas crisis.

Most spinners like him are on a



spin today. For them it was a double whammy -- only at the end of last year they had a nightmarish experience with cotton price spiralling out,

and now this glut of cheap imported yarn.

To make their woes worse, the European Union has offered in January this year generalised system of preference (GSP) with single-step conversion, which means a garment exporter will get duty-free export facility if he now just imports fabric and makes apparel. Earlier he had to go through a two-step conversion -- he had to import yarn to turn it into

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BUDGET DISCUSSION

Absence of key ministers irks speaker, MPs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Abdul Hamid and a number of lawmakers yesterday expressed resentment over wholesale absence of ministers, especially the finance and planning ministers, during discussion on the proposed budget.

The speaker even

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