



TRAFFIC TROUBLE

Article discusses how underpasses can be a remedial measure

PAGE 7

MYTH AND SPIRITUALITY

Ronni Ahmmed goes to Italy fest with thought-provoking artworks

PAGE 19

BLOW TO BERLUSCONI

A Milan court orders a two-year political ban for the ex-Italy PM

PAGE 8

Opposition to defy rally ban

Khaleda to attend pro-BNP professionals' convention today; rallies, processions at district HQs to protest ban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Defying the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's ban on all political gatherings, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will attend a pro-BNP professionals' convention in the capital today, said sources in the BNP.

The decision came hours after the DMP slapped an indefinite ban on political meetings, rallies, human chains, demonstrations, sit-ins and processions in the capital from 6:00am today.

Khaleda will speak as the chief guest at the convention, organised by Bangladesh Sammilito Peshajibi Parishad, a pro-BNP platform of professionals. The programme is scheduled to begin at 2:00pm at Bangabandhu International Convention Centre.

The main opposition party will also stage demonstrations and hold rallies at all district headquarters today to protest the ban. It made an announcement to that effect from its standing committee meeting last night.

Asked if the Peshajibi Parishad would be allowed to hold the convention, a top DMP official replied in the negative.

The opposition might go for tougher programmes like shutdowns if police obstruct the convention or bar Khaleda from attending it, said

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

DMP BAN

- Applies to political meetings, rallies, human chains, demos, sit-ins, processions in the capital
- Takes effect from 6:00am today
- To be in force for an indefinite period



City dwellers return to the capital in large numbers after spending their Puja and Eid holidays. The photo was taken at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday morning.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BNP to roll out counter formula

Views PM's proposal as a 'trick to confuse people'

RASHIDUL HASAN

The BNP considers the prime minister's proposal on the polls-time government a "trick to confuse people", and it will place a counter proposal within two or three days, said senior leaders of the main opposition party.

The party has also decided to stage an indefinite Dhaka siege programme if it is not allowed to hold a rally in the capital on October 25.

The decisions were made at the BNP standing committee meeting chaired by Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office last night, according to two senior leaders.

Khaleda will today sit with the leaders of the 18-party alliance to discuss the next course of action as well as the PM's proposal for an all-party polls-time government.

Neither the BNP acting secretary general nor any standing committee member who attended the meeting would comment on record about the party's stance on the PM's Friday address.

Wishing anonymity, a senior leader said they view the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Restriction ruins talks prospect

Eminent civil society members and jurists, while talking to The Daily Star's Pankaj Karmakar and Tuhin Shubhra Adhikary, said the prime minister's proposal for an all-party polls-time government had opened a window for dialogue, but the ban on political programmes in Dhaka ruined that prospect.



HAFIZUDDIN KHAN

The indefinite ban on processions and rallies in Dhaka would "destroy the opportunity" of dialogues created through the PM's proposal, said Hafizuddin Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government.

"Slapping a ban on rallies four to five days

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



RAFIQUE-UL HUQ

Eminent jurist Rafique-ul Huq said the government had made things "complicated" by imposing ban on political activities in Dhaka.

"An easy situation has been made complicated by this decision; an opportunity has been

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



SULTANA KAMAL

Rights activist Sultana Kamal said seeing BNP's reaction it seemed to her that they were not interested to respond positively to the PM's proposal for discussion.

"Now, the ban has created an opportunity for the BNP to say that the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



IFTEKHARUZZAMAN

The prime minister's proposal for an all-party polls-time government was a step forward towards solving the political deadlock, said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Respond to PM's offer

Business leaders urge opposition, say proposal opened door for talks

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The businesses yesterday welcomed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's proposal for forming an all-party election-time government, hoping it would end the political uncertainty and protect the economy.

Leaders of chambers and trade bodies said the prime minister's proposal would open the door for dialogues even though they were unclear of her proposed form of government.

They urged the leaders of the opposition parties to respond to Hasina's proposal and continue dialogues so that any political uncertainty could be avoided.

"We are afraid of what might happen on October 24 and 25. The prime minister's proposal is a step forward for reducing political tension," Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Hold talks to narrow down gaps

Foreign diplomats upbeat after PM's offer

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign diplomats in Dhaka are looking forward to a dialogue between the ruling Awami League and the main opposition BNP for resolution of the current political stalemate.

Commenting on the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

PM's PROPOSAL Ershad to meet Hasina to have 'a clear idea'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad would meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today to seek clarification about her proposal for forming an all-party election-time government.

JP, a key component in the ruling Awami League-led grand alliance, yesterday at a meeting termed the premier's "unclear about proposal" "unclear

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

HAZARD ON HATIRJHEEL



Nearly 10 months into its inauguration, Hatirjheel has become a major recreational area for Dhaka residents. Many people throng the place on weekends and holidays with family members. But pollution is already taking a toll on its environment. In this photo taken yesterday, a thick layer of garbage and liquid waste is seen on the surface of the water at the eastern end of Hatirjheel canal. The pollution also sends out an unbearable stench in the area.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

HIGH LEVEL OF LEAD US recalls PRAN turmeric powder

Company to seek FDA re-examination, collect samples for test

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US authorities have detected high level of lead in PRAN's turmeric powder, prompting recalls by stores that purchased the product to sell it to consumers there.

Already, four stores in New York, Dallas and Detroit have recalled the turmeric powder, after the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the New York State Health Department and private laboratory tests detected excessive lead in it.

The latest was a voluntary recall by Fahman Enterprises Inc. Dallas, said the FDA, in a statement on October 17.

It said the turmeric powder, packaged in transparent plastic flexible bags (400g), contained 48 parts per million (ppm) of lead.

Earlier, tests into PRAN's turmeric powder in plastic packages and plastic jars found the spice contained lead ranging from 28ppm to 53ppm, according to the FDA.

The permissible limit of lead in the product in the US could not be immediately known, but it is 2.5ppm in Bangladesh.

The limit may vary in different countries but it can never exceed 2.5ppm in any country, said a top official of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI).

Experts say intake of excessive lead cause various health problems and it is particularly dangerous for infants, children and expecting mothers.

"Lead can accumulate in the body over time. Too much

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2