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SIX DAYS TO BENGAL FEST

Star writes on Baha'uddin Dagar and Parveen Sultana

PAGE 11

PURSUING GREEN

Today's Wide Angle features works of architect Rafiq Azam

PAGE 16

Consensus on Polls

Int'l pressure looming

REZAUL KARIM

Failing to move the two main political parties through persuasion, the international community may now turn to pressure tactics to make the two leaders reach a consensus for the holding of credible and participatory polls in Bangladesh.

situation and might decide to apply indirect pressure on the political forces, especially the government, for holding a peaceful and fair election, according to sources.

The UN, the US and the EU were discussing the Bangladesh

However, the international community is yet to consider issuing a warning like it did in 2007 that Bangladesh's participation in UN peacekeeping missions would be affected if the government opted for a one-party election, said the sources.

"What happened in Bangladesh in 2007 will not repeat [itself]. Trust me on this," a senior UN official told The Daily Star yesterday on condition of anonymity.

The UN was very concerned at the way the government was going ahead with its plan to hold the election unilaterally, said the UN diplomat.

Top officials at the UN headquarters yesterday discussed the developments and the current situation in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, the US Congress expressed grave concern SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



New hope for talks

PM tells Fakhrul to sit with Ashraf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday talked to BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir in person and urged him to sit for a dialogue between the Awami League and BNP to end the political crisis.

"Please come. Let's sit and discuss. And let's hold the election together," Information Minister Hasanul Huq Inu quoted Hasina as saying to Fakhrul at Senakunja of Dhaka Cantonment.

The three were attending a programme marking the Armed Forces Day.

Seeing Fakhrul at the programme, Hasina went up to him and initiated the conversation.

She enquired why leader of the opposition Khaleda Zia had not come to the programme. To this, Fakhrul simply gave her a smile, said Inu, who was beside them during their conversation.

Pointing out that the BNP had not SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Worried About Bangladesh

US fears further instability, rise of extremism

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concern over the political crisis in Bangladesh, the US Congress at a hearing yesterday said further instability might lead to the expansion of extremist groups threatening regional security.

The Congress also expressed worry over shutdown, violence, attacks on religious minorities and uncompromising position of the ruling and opposition parties before the upcoming general election.

The 90-minute hearing titled "Bangladesh in Turmoil: A Nation on the Brink?" was held at Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, DC, early yesterday.

The Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs organised the event with US Representative Steve Chabot in the chair.

Ed Royce, chairman of the foreign affairs committee; Prof Ali Riaz, public policy scholar at Woodrow Wilson

PM picks 28 to run polls-time govt

Some controversial ministers dropped, some stay

M ABUL KALAM AZAD and PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday formed a 29-member polls-time cabinet, keeping some poor performing ministers while dropping several outstanding achievers.

The ruling Awami League has kept all the key ministries like the



MK Alamgir

home, public administration, law, foreign, LGRD and finance. Hasina holds the cabinet and armed forces divisions and the defence, public administration, information and communications technology and power and energy ministries.

HM Ershad's Jatiya Party, a major player in the upcoming election, has got · regular member of the council of minissix ministries -- commerce, health, civil aviation and tourism, water : ters during their stay in office. resources, youths and sports and women and children affairs. These minis- : tries, however, have nothing much to do with the election.

Despite creating series of controversies, Shipping Minister Shahjahan: function and jurisdiction of her SEE PAGE 2 COL 4 FULL LIST OF POLLS-TIME CABINET SEE ONLINE SEE PAGE 2 COL 3 .

NEWS ANALYSIS

POLLS-TIME CABINET

Too big for routine job'

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The tasks the caretaker governments accomplished with ease not once but thrice, the newly reconstituted Hasinagovernment would do with four times

Though it was a public presumption that the polls-time administration would be much smaller in size compared to the regular council of ministers, it appears to be rather biggish. The question arises what its functionaries would do while : having a limited task. They will, however, · enjoy the status and all the benefits of a

As per the prime minister's announce-· ment in parliament on Wednesday, the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3

ACC law to spark mass protests

ACC chief says anti-graft body made subservient

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The countrymen would wage a movement against the amended Anti-Corruption Commission law, as it made the graft watchdog subservient, acting ACC chairman Mohammad Shahabuddin said yesterday.

He said the move to give government officials impunity and protection would not see the light of the day.

According to the new law, the ACC requires government permission before filing cases against any public servant, including the magistrates and judges. "An unholy alliance has been instrumental in making

the bill into a law," said Shahabuddin while addressing the founding anniversary of the anti-graft body in the capital's Shilpakala Academy.

His comments came a day after President Abdul Hamid had signed the much-talked-about bill into law.

"The citizens of the country cannot be divided into two groups," he said, posing a question to government officials,

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir exchange pleasantries at Senakunja on the Armed Forced Day yesterday. PHOTO: BSS

Nepal polls in a shambles

Maoists claim fraud, reject result AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Maoist leader, who swapped arms for politics when his "people's war" ended in 2006, threw the country's elections into doubt yesterday by claiming the poll was rigged following big losses for his party.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal, better known as Prachanda, SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

18-party mulls longer hartal

RASHIDUL HASAN

The BNP-led 18-party opposition alliance last night discussed enforcing a week-long or even longer nationwide hartal if the election schedule is announced before the government agrees to their demand for a non-party caretaker government.

Sources, however, said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia would have the final say about the duration of the hartal. SEE PAGE 17 COL 3

"Congratulations"



Honorable Prime Minster Sheikh Hasina hands over National Export Trophy for the year of 2010-2011 to Abdul Momin Mondol, Managing Director of

Montrims Ltd. (a concern of Mondol Group).

We convey our Heartiest Congratulations to Abdul Momin Mondol, Managing Director of Mondol Group for his excellent leadership & such fifth time national recognition & achievement.

Appollo Fashions Ltd.

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