

## End terrorism for talks

Syed Ashraf responds to Khaleda's media confce  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A day after BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's call for talks which she termed the sole way for an inclusive election, the ruling Awami League said it could be given a thought only when the party paves the way for a peaceful situation by stopping terrorism, killings, hartals and blockades.

"It is not possible to meet your demand while you keep the whole nation hostage," AL General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam told a press conference in the AL chief's Dhanmondi office in the capital yesterday.

"None across the globe holds talks with militants and criminals and it will not be held in Bangladesh. Holding talks with terrorists mean patronising them," he said.

Ashraf, also the LGRD minister, said the way the world resists criminalism would also be applied here. "Time has come to declare war against the criminals to uproot them from this soil."

About BNP's ongoing movement, he said it was no more for an election, rather it was to establish an atmosphere similar to what Islamic State was trying to instate.

"No democratic movement can be launched by killing people," he said, alleging that Khaleda only wanted to assume power.

On Khaleda's demand for midterm polls, Ashraf said future elections would follow the last parliamentary one which was held as per constitutional provisions and boycotting those would cause Khaleda, not people, to bear the responsibilities.

AL leaders Mahabub-ul-Alam Hanif, Dipu Moni, Ahmod Hossain, Abdus Sobhan Golap, Asim Kumar Ukil and Sujit Roy Nandi were present.



Smoke billows out of a seven-storey commercial building in the capital's Motijheel after a fire broke out in it around 3:20pm yesterday. Nine firefighting units were trying to douse the smouldering fire till 1:00am. The reason behind the fire could not be ascertained immediately.

PHOTO: STAR

## Fire breaks out in Motijheel building

Smouldering fire was beyond control for more than 9 hours; damage couldn't be ascertained till 1:00am  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire broke out in a seven-storey commercial building in the capital's Motijheel yesterday.

The blaze started around 3:20pm from the Bangladesh Industrial Finance Company Ltd office on the first floor of the building, Motijheel police told The Daily Star.

The reason behind the fire and loss caused by it could not be ascertained immediately, fire service sources said.

Nine firefighting units were trying to douse the smouldering fire till filing of this report at 1:00am.

Rafiqul Islam, a fire service official, was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital after he fell sick from smoke inhalation, DMCH sources said.

## City corporations must be independent for effectiveness

Say urbanisation experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Future mayors of Dhaka city will be able to serve residents better if the city corporations as local government work independently, separate from the central bureaucracy, said urbanisation experts at a seminar yesterday.

A planned city with all basic civic services is not possible irrespective of who is elected as mayor until uncoordinated intervention by various agencies is brought to an end under a single authority, they said.

There are 56 government departments that take on development works

for Dhaka city without any sort of coordination among each other, said Mubasshra Hussain, former president of the Institute of Architects.

"Moreover, about a dozen members of parliament are elected from Dhaka city each of whom behaves like a mayor of their respective constituency," he added.

Anisul Huq, former president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, an aspiring mayoral candidate of Dhaka North City Corporation, organised the seminar "Dhaka Today and Tomorrow" under the banner of his election cam-

paign "Amra Dhaka" at Bangladesh Institute of Planners in the capital.

The speakers said the primary goals of a mayor of Dhaka city should be to recover footpaths, parks, playgrounds and open spaces from illegal occupation to make a breakthrough in city management.

"Make the sidewalks safe for women, the elderly and children," said Prof Nazrul Islam, honorary chairman of Centre for Urban Studies.

"Dhaka city is sharply divided into the rich and the poor," said Sarwar Jahan, a professor of urban planning at Buet.

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## Accord gallantry awards to unrecognised war heroes

Discussants tell Journey seminar; HT Imam says Avijit's murder right under police's nose unacceptable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Discussants at a seminar yesterday suggested that the government recognise and honour with gallantry awards like Bir Srestha, Bir Uttam, Bir Bikram and Bir Pratik people whose significant roles and valiant contributions to the Liberation War were yet to be recorded.

Many police, teachers, professionals and rural women contributed immensely to achieve independence. But their sacrifices are yet to be documented in history and get state recognition, said HT Imam, political adviser of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"So I support reconsidering the issue," he viewed at "Contribution of police in libera-

tion and role of police in protecting democracy and human rights", organised by non-government social organisation Journey at the Dhaka University's senate building.

On rise of militancy, Imam said if Prof Humayun Azad's attackers had been tried following a proper investigation, the killing of Avijit Roy would not have taken place.

Avijit's murder, right under the nose of police, is not acceptable, he added.

"Besides, I know some incidents when people sought help from nearby on-duty police, but police did not come. They are the black sheep in your service. Identify these black sheep and try them," he told the inspector general of police who was present

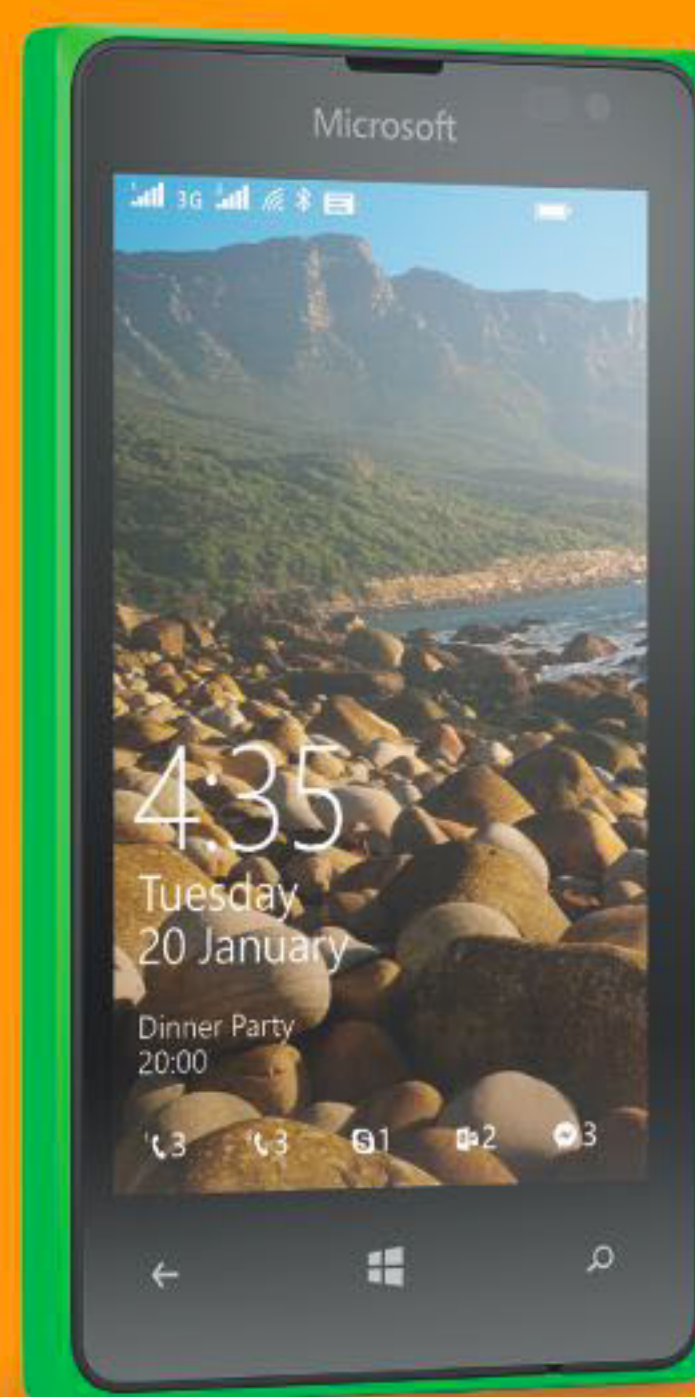
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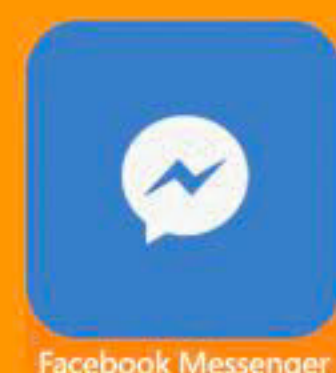


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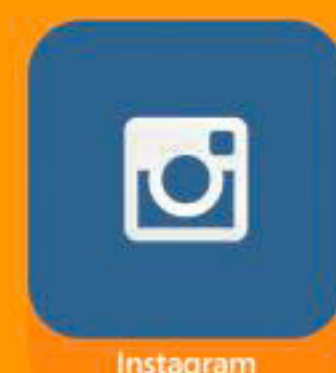
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