

Politics not for killing, burning people: PM

UNB, Dhaka
Recalling the horrible days of the BNP-Jamaat's indefinite blockade and hartal last year, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said those who killed people through arson attacks cannot expect public support.
"How can they [BNP-Jamaat] expect people to support them after killing people through arson attacks?" she questioned.
The PM was addressing a function after laying the foundation stone of Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in the city.
Taking a swipe at BNP-Jamaat for their blockade and hartal, the premier said it seemed that killing people through arson attacks was their movement.
"But we do politics for the welfare of people and upholding their interests...politics is not for killing and burning people," Hasina mentioned.
Stressing the importance of providing world-class healthcare in the country, she said the government is working

to that end so people do not have to go abroad.
"A section of people go aboard for their medical treatment...I've no objection if the rich people go abroad, but I don't believe the same standard of treatment can't be provided in the country," she added.
About the burn institute, the premier said it will be a centre of excellence for burn and plastic surgery treatment. She reiterated her commitment to set up a separate burn and plastic surgery unit at every medical college hospital across the country.
She said the government took all steps to set up Chittagong and Rajshahi medical universities to create scopes for higher education and research.
Health Minister Mohammad Nasim, State Minister for Health Zahid Maleque, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon, Chief of Army Staff Gen Abu Belal Muhammad Shaful Huq and Project Director of the institute Dr Samanta Lal Sen also spoke at the programme.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveiling the foundation plaque of "Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery" at Chankharpul in the capital yesterday.

Amnesty sees rise in global executions

AFP, Islamabad
The total number of known executions worldwide rose by more than half last year to 1,634, the highest figure recorded since 1989, Amnesty International said yesterday as Pakistan sent three more men to the gallows.
The surge was largely fuelled by Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, the London-based human rights organisation said in its annual report on death sentences and executions worldwide.
The 1,634 figure does not include China, which is thought to have killed thousands of its own citizens.
Death penalty data is "treated as a state secret" by Beijing, Amnesty said, as it is by Vietnam and Belarus.
Recorded executions were up by 54 percent on 2014's figure of 1,061.
Just three countries -- Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia -- were responsible for 89 percent of the total of 1,634.
"The rise in executions last year is profoundly disturbing," said Amnesty Secretary General Salil Shetty.
"Not for the last 25 years have so many people been put to death by states around the world.
"Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have all put people to death at unprecedented levels, often after grossly unfair trials. This slaughter must end."
Pakistan lifted a six-year moratorium on the death penalty following a

school massacre by Taliban insurgents in December 2014.
Initially it brought back hanging just for terrorist killings but later extended it to all capital crimes.
It hanged three convicted murderers including a pair of brothers yesterday, a senior prisons official told AFP.
"Over the past year, Pakistan has vaulted to the number three spot for recorded state executions in the world - a shameful position no one should aspire to," Champa Patel, director of Amnesty's South Asia office, told AFP, adding the majority were not convicted of terror offences.
Pakistan executed 326 people in 2015 while Saudi Arabia put 158 people to death.
MAJORITY OF COUNTRIES ABOLITIONIST
Iran's execution of at least 977 people is at odds with its opening up to the West after striking a deal with world powers last year on its nuclear ambitions, Amnesty said.
"Western countries are starting to build commercial ties and trade missions," said James Lynch, Amnesty's Middle East and North Africa deputy director.
"However, human rights has been absolutely left in the margins," he told AFP. "That risks undermining all these efforts."
For the first time ever, the majority of the world's countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

Jail, fine for pvt tuition

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society members and other professionals. Bringing some changes in it, the ministry again put it on the website in October last year.
The draft act slaps a ban on publishing guidebooks for primary or secondary levels. Publishing notes and guidebooks will be regarded as a punishable offence and the violators will face similar punishment like the ones giving private tuitions.
It says students will not be subjected to any form of corporal punishment at the educational institutions. People breaching this provision will be fined Tk 10,000 or awarded three months' imprisonment or both.
However, the penalty for indulging in corporal punishment at primary level will be a fine of Tk 50,000 or three months' jail or both.
According to the draft, there will be four levels of education in the country - pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education.
The pre-primary and primary education will be free and compulsory. "These levels will be regarded as children's right," says the act.
The duration of pre-primary will be two years while primary education will be up to class VIII from class I, it adds.
The subjects that students at primary level will study include Bangla, English, mathematics, religious and moral education, Bangladesh studies, Introduction to world, information technology and science and paribesh parichiti by the National Curriculum

and Textbook Board (NCTB).
Except the textbooks fixed by the NCTB, the schools will not include any other book in the syllabus. For violating this provision, the head of the schools or the publisher of the book will face six months in jail or Tk 2 lakh in fine or both, says the draft act.
Students from class-III to class-VIII will have to sit for a half-yearly and a terminal exam. The government through its executive order or rules will decide the number and methods of public exams at primary level. However, there will be a public exam at the end of class-VIII, according to the act.
The secondary level will be from class IX to XII and Bangla, English, Bangladesh studies, mathematics, and ICT will be compulsory in general, madrasa and vocational streams of this level.
However, at O- and A-levels, two subjects -- Bangla and Bangladesh Studies -- will be compulsorily and that the teaching activities at O- and A-levels will have to be conducted with the government's approval, the draft mentions.
Violating this rule will be regarded as a punishable offence and the violators will be fined highest Tk 3 lakh or jailed for six months or both, it adds.
To establish and operate English medium schools, registration from the education board is a must. The managing committees will fix students' tuition fees in consultation with the board and considering the schools' standard of education and

infrastructural facilities.
The governing bodies of the schools having English version will fix the students' monthly tuition and other fees considering their expenses and get it approved by the education board. Anyone defying this provision will be fined highest Tk five lakh or jailed for one year jail or both.
About higher education, the draft act said no foreign university will open branches or operate study centres in Bangladesh without the approval of the authorities concerned.
Violation of this provision will mean jail term for five years or a fine of Tk 10 lakh or both, it said.
The act said the government will form a "regulatory commission" to "logically" fix the tuition and other fees of the students of higher educational institutes.
The government in June 2012 formulated a policy for teachers to curb unauthorised coaching practice at their educational institutions.
But defying the rule, this practice is still going on unabated in metropolitan cities. A number of parents in Dhaka alleged that some teachers force the students to either take tuitions from them or attend pre and afterschool coaching classes; otherwise they will not evaluate them properly.
The policy, however, said teachers can provide tuition at their houses to a maximum of 10 students of other institutions per day upon receiving prior permission from their respective heads of the institutions.

Hartal passes off peacefully in Banshkhali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg
A dawn-to-dusk hartal in Banshkhali upazila of Chittagong enforced by the Banshkhali Chhatra Oikya Forum demanding arrest and punishment of the killers of four people during a clash in Gondamara union passed off peacefully yesterday.
The hartal was announced from a human chain formed in front of Chittagong Press Club on Tuesday.
All educational institutions, offices and roadside shops in the upazila remained open. A number of vehicles were seen plying the roads.
No picketing was seen in most part of the upazila, said locals.
Shahnewaz Chowdhury, convener of the forum, could not be reached for comments yesterday despite repeated attempts.
Meanwhile, no further untoward incident occurred in Gondamara union.
Contacted, Swapan Kumar Majumder, officer-in-charge of Banskhalhi Police Station, said no fresh arrest was made yesterday in connection with Monday's incident.
On Monday, four people were killed and 30 others injured in a clash between law enforcers and locals in Gondamara union over installation of a coal-based power plant.

American dream ruined for 27

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Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico.
They each paid between Tk 10 and Tk 30 lakh to manpower brokers for getting them to the US.
"We faced obstructions from the law enforcers in many countries. They detained us for illegal entry. Later, they released us on our request and confirmation that we were going to the US to seek asylum," said Monjur, who was deported early yesterday from the US after serving 14 months in a US jail since March last year.
He was among 27 Bangladeshis who reached Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday after serving jail in the US for illegal entry.
Of them, 11 returnees hail from

Noakhali, eight from Sylhet, three from Dhaka, two from Munshiganj, one each from Barisal, Madaripur and Comilla.
"We were hand-cuffed in the air for more than 72 hours of our journey. Besides, we were not allowed to speak with them," Monjur, who hails from Noakhali, told The Daily Star.
When this paper contacted the US embassy in Dhaka via email for comments, its public affairs officer said, "While I cannot comment on specific cases, noting that the US Department of Homeland Security is the lead US government agency on deportation and asylum, I would like to affirm our understanding that the cases you [this correspondent] are referring to were handled appropriately under US

law."
"The people involved were afforded numerous procedural protections including, but not limited to, the right to be represented by an attorney, to contest any charges of deportation, and to present evidence and to examine any evidence against them," the US embassy official further mentioned.
After their entrance to the US, Monjur along with seven other Bangladeshis surrendered to the US immigration officials in California and sought help in staying in that country as political asylum seekers.
"We had no other option other than surrendering to the police. Besides, we believed that we might be considered as asylum seekers," he said.

But the officials detained them and sent them to jail. Later, the Bangladeshis were produced before a US court for several times.
Finally, the court rejected their appeals based on the US immigration department's objections last year.
Rasel Ahmed, 30, another victim from Sylhet, echoed Monjur and alleged that the local brokers allured him into taking the risky journey.
"We have been ruined. We have lost our money. We lost everything," he said.
Earlier, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal at a press conference on March 31 informed reporters that the US would be sending back 30 Bangladeshis following a US court order.

Day of the underdogs

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"You can't really help people if you don't know how to do what you say you want to do," Clinton said on MSNBC's "Morning Joe." "I think he hadn't done his homework and he's been talking for more than a year about doing things that he hasn't really studied or understood."
Sanders has won six of the last seven states, but still faces a difficult task to overtake Clinton as the nominating race moves to New York on April 19 and to five other Eastern states on April 26. Still, his victory was another sign that a sizable group of Democrats are not sold on the viability of Clinton's candidacy.
Cruz's win on Tuesday injected fresh energy into what had been a flagging anti-Trump movement and showed the real estate magnate has work to do to repair damage done by remarks about abortion that hurt him with Republican women voters.
For Trump, the pressure is on to respond with some decisive victories in coming primary votes to show he is still on the way to assembling the 1,237 delegates needed for the Republican presidential nomination.
If no candidate reaches that number, the Republicans' choice for the Nov 8 election will be made at a contested convention - picked by delegates gathering in Cleveland in July.
Trump needs to win 55 percent of the delegates that remain to be awarded. Cruz needs to win more than 80 percent of the remaining delegates up for grabs to secure the nomination - a difficult task even with momentum.
Trump has 740 delegates so far, and Cruz 514, with Ohio Governor John Kasich trailing well back with 143 delegates, according to an Associated Press count.
Trump is heading to favourable turf in the Northeast and is already predicting victory in New York.
"It's very important for Trump to bounce back strong. The sense of his inevitability is one of his strengths,"

said David Yepsen, director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Center at Southern Illinois University.
"If he looks weak, others will pile on and some may be tempted to leave him."
"WORSE THAN A PUPPET"
Trump, who had campaigned heavily in Wisconsin, responded to the defeat with a blistering attack on Cruz, saying he had been aided by Wisconsin conservative talk show radio hosts and millions of dollars in ads spent by an anti-Trump Super PAC, or independent funding group.
"Ted Cruz is worse than a puppet - he is a Trojan horse, being used by the party bosses attempting to steal the nomination from Mr Trump," Trump's campaign said.
Trump retreated to his home base in New York on Tuesday and planned an event on Long Island yesterday, followed by a West Coast swing, including a news conference in the Los Angeles area, on Friday.
His campaign is taking steps to reflect greater seriousness of purpose, with plans for Trump to deliver a series of policy speeches intended to give him a more presidential image.
The Wisconsin primary followed a difficult week for Trump, who was forced to backtrack after saying women who had abortions should face punishment if the procedure is outlawed, and who voiced support for his campaign manager after he was charged with misdemeanour assault for allegedly grabbing a reporter.
Cruz is heading out from Wisconsin to two days of campaigning in New York in a sign he is not going to cede Trump's home state to his rival. He was scheduled to visit a charter school in New York City yesterday and hold a rally at a Christian academy in upstate New York today.
A Reuters/Ipsos poll on Tuesday showed Cruz about even with Trump nationally, as his recent gains mark the first time since November that a rival has threatened Trump's standing at the head of the Republican pack.

Leak sparks backlash against tax dodges

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countries that include Panama in 'grey lists'," Alvaro Aleman, the minister for the presidency, warned France in a news conference.
The retaliatory measures can include blocking foreign investment or withholding public tenders.
PANAMA HITS BACK
Panama had earlier lashed out OECD head Angel Gurría, saying his description of the country as the last major tax haven impenetrable to law enforcement was "unfair and discriminatory".
Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca is at the centre of the scandal after its papers were obtained from an anonymous source by German daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung and shared with more than 100 media groups by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).
After a year-long investigation, the ICIJ and other international media on Sunday published the first wave of revelations, detailing the offshore financial activities of 140 political figures.
Many of those identified insist they have done no wrong.
Offshore financial dealings are not

illegal in themselves, though they may be used to hide assets from tax authorities, launder the proceeds of criminal activities or conceal misappropriated or politically inconvenient wealth.
The Group of 20 advanced economies has backed a series of tax crackdowns since 2009.
That has led to a weakening of international banking secrecy, with 19 countries committing to automatically exchange clients' financial information by 2018.
'INSIDIOUS'
One of the founders of the firm, Ramon Fonseca, told AFP it had lodged a criminal complaint with Panamanian prosecutors over the breach which he blamed on a computer hack launched from abroad.
"Nobody is talking of the hack, and that is the only crime that has been committed," he said.
US President Barack Obama said wealthy individuals and corporations were "gaming the system" by making use of tax code loopholes to which average taxpayers had no access.
He also labelled "insidious" the growing practice of US companies merging with foreign firms just to cut

their tax liabilities.
"A lot of it is legal, but that's exactly the problem," the US leader said.
Iceland's Prime Minister Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson was the biggest casualty so far, quitting his post Tuesday after it emerged he and his wife invested millions of dollars in an offshore company that had stakes in three Icelandic banks that collapsed in 2008, tipping the country into a deep recession.
He denies any wrongdoing, but bowed out on after thousands took to the streets.
POWERFUL FIGURES
Other more powerful figures are implicated in the Panama Papers, which come from around 214,000 offshore entities and cover almost 40 years.
They purportedly reveal a web of financial transactions by associates of Russian President Vladimir Putin's associates and relatives of Chinese President Xi Jinping.
The Kremlin suggested a US plot after the leaks put a close friend of Putin's at the top of an offshore empire worth more than \$2 billion.
Beijing refused to respond to "groundless accusations" that eight

current or former members of the ruling party's most powerful body concealed their fortunes through offshore havens, as well as relatives of Xi, who has overseen a much-publicised anti-corruption drive.
Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif pledged to create a commission to investigate after three of his children were named in the papers.
KEY REVELATIONS
Also among other revelations from the Panama Papers:
-- New FIFA president Gianni Infantino signed TV rights contracts for football tournaments in 2006 and 2007 using a company headed by two defendants in the body's corruption scandal. He denied any wrongdoing and told AFP he was "dismayed" by the claims.
-- Argentina's President Mauricio Macri said he had declared an offshore company registered to him, his brother and father to tax authorities and "there was nothing strange about the operation."
-- Prime Minister David Cameron's father ran an offshore fund that paid no tax in Britain for 30 years. A government source told AFP the premier did not have any such funds.

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