

Khaleda conspiring to go to power: PM

UNB, Dhaka



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is trying to create such a situation that will put her in power, alleged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday. "They're trying for one thing....somebody will come and put her in the throne," she said. Hasina was addressing a discussion organised by Bangladesh Awami League, marking Victory Day at the capital's Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh. She also said nobody will come to put her in the "magical chair". "That hope is far away...those from whom you have the expectation, they won't respond to your call either, you've tried but they didn't come," she said without elaborating further. The premier asked Khaleda to practise the democratic norms if she really believed in democracy. The PM said she has the confidence that people will reject her party in the next election. "If we're voted to power again, will be able to continue the trend of development. Or else, war criminals, Razakars, Al-badrs and killers will commit genocides as they did in 1971."

Hasina said Khaleda's BNP was defeated in the election and also in politics. "They (BNP) know it very well people

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Artistes at a musical soiree at the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday. Star Melodies of the newspaper organised the second installment of its tribute to 25 great composers of Bangla Nagorik songs, where Iffat Ara Nargis, Tanveer Alam Shawjeeb, Alope Sen, Muhin, Aniruddha Sengupta, Suptika Mondal and Eva sang timeless Bangla songs by legendary composers like Hemanta Mukherjee, Manna Dey, Shyamol Mitra, Salil Chowdhury, Khondokar Nurul Alam and others. Alauddin Ali, the only living composer among the 15 honoured, was also present.

Raped girl 'commits suicide'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The schoolgirl, raped by her school staffer six weeks ago, has "committed suicide" at her maternal uncle's house at Bali village in Godagari upazila following "hate from the family and villagers over a false propaganda against her". Khaleda Khatun, a class VII student of Digram High School, took pesticide on December 9 and died on Friday evening at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, said Sub-inspector Abdul Latif of Godagari Police Station. "The girl could not return to her family since she was raped as her father did not accept her," he said. She was staying at her maternal uncle's house,

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Dust a huge health threat to Dhaka dwellers

Winter compounds problem due to perpetual dev work, brick kilns

HELEMUL ALAM

Based Ahmed Khan, a resident of Uttara, took his nine-year-old daughter Upoma to hospital recently for a medical check-up, not because she suffers from asthma but her health condition deteriorated. He has observed that the same happens to the girl every winter. "My daughter has been suffering from asthma for four years but her health condition usually gets worse in November and December as presence of dust during this time remains high," Based said. A third grader of Uttara High School and College, Upoma could not sit for her ongoing annual examination due to bad health. Based said the road and surface drain development work of Dhaka

North City Corporation (DNCC) was going on in front of his house for the last one month, which was generating a huge amount of dust. It is not only the north of Dhaka city that is producing dust and causing health complications, the same problem exists in the south. A resident of Taliroad of Rayerbazar, Parvin Mita, has been allergic to dust for eight years. But in the last three weeks, the problem became compounded because of dust near her house. In fact the whole family of Parvin, including her husband and son, is facing this health condition. Doctors advised them many times to protect themselves from dust, but it was next to impossible for them because the development work of utility service organisations appar-

ently is never-ending, she said, adding that one started after another while some took too long to finish. Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) had cut Taliroad and its adjoining streets last year to set up water supply lines, for which they suffered for around one year but sewerage pipe installation work has been going on in the area for the last one month again, Parvin said. She said many families of her neighbourhood were having similar health complications due to dust. Experts have long complained of Dhaka city's increasing air pollution caused by dwindling greenery, with perennial construction and development work compounding the problem. While these works make people suffer by restricting their

mobility in the overcrowded city, these are also taking a toll on public health as testified by the victims like Upoma and Parvin. Doctors say the high level of air pollution had increased the number of patients with coughing and breathing problems in winter. The capital's air is thick with dust due to construction of residential buildings, flyovers, metro rail, elevated expressway, and digging of roads by the utility service organisations. Locals in different city areas have said most of these "development works" are done without spraying any water to minimise dust. Chairman of Save the Environment Movement Abu Naser Khan said road digging without any

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Couple 'commits suicide' one after another

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman allegedly committed suicide leading her husband to do the same by hanging himself from a ceiling fan in their Mirpur house in the capital yesterday afternoon. Motahar, 40, a vegetable vendor; and his wife Shiuly, 30 -- left three children Arif, 16, Mukta, 10, and Abid, 5, said police. It was apparently over family feud, Darussalam Police Station Officer-in-Charge Selimuzzaman told The Daily Star. Motahar killed himself after bringing down his wife's body, he added. Locals found out after rushing in hearing Abid's screams. The bodies were sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

'Abducted' doc's father dismayed with cop probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The father of a doctor apparently abducted on October 15 yesterday expressed disappointment over police investigations not focusing on real issues and not being able to identify till date a seemingly police pick-up van tailgating the abductors' microbus. Addressing a press conference in the capital's Bangladesh Crime Reporters' Association, AKM Nurul Alam claimed that the identification was a matter of one or two days for police and also the first thing necessary for tracing Muhammed Iqbal Mahmud. CCTV footage showed seven to eight people taking the medical officer of the Directorate General of Health Services into the microbus at the Science Laboratory intersection soon after he alighted from a bus. The tailgating vehicle caused Nurul to believe that the abductors were law enforcers. "They would have obviously taken immediate steps if anyone else picked him up," he said. "We are living on hope as we in the past have seen that abducted people were shown (arrested) even after one year," he said, protesting two reports of a Bangla daily linking Iqbal to militancy. The case's investigation officer, Detective Branch Inspector Ariful Hogue, said Criminal Investigation Department was working on getting the number plate and they on passengers of the bus to see if Iqbal was being followed.



Lt Gen (ret'd) GS Sihota, who is leading an Indian delegation of war veterans fighting for Bangladesh's 1971 Liberation War, speaks at a meeting to share the wartime memories at a Dhaka hotel yesterday. The 28-member team is in Bangladesh to join the Victory Day celebrations.

PHOTO: STAR

Safe water options, awareness a must

Suggest experts for mitigating arsenic problem

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Raising awareness on the effect of arsenic, speakers at a discussion yesterday stressed the need to find alternative sources for safe drinking water, which can also mitigate arsenic problem in the country. The discussion titled "Khabar Panite Arsenic Dushon: Dui Joog Por Fire dekha" (Contamination in drinking water: Evaluating last 24 years) was organised by the Bangla daily Prothom Alo in an auditorium of the capital's CA Bhawan. Dr Shyamal Chowdhury, an associate professor of School of Economics of The University of Sydney, said arsenic contaminated water caused cognitive problem and reduced the IQ level of children. Also, people do not buy water filter because of high price, he mentioned, adding, subsidies from the government is required to lower its price. According to Dr Shyamal, his university and IZA Institute of Labor Economics conducted a research on the country's 150 villages recently that shows 81 percent house-

hold use contaminated water above the tolerable limit of arsenic determined by the World Health Organization (WHO) and 55 percent use contaminated water above the limit determined by the government. He claimed since 2003 the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) did not conduct any census on the number of arsenic contaminated tube-wells. "The use of organic elements as pesticide in agriculture can mitigate absorption of arsenic contaminated water in vegetables," said Dr SM Imamul Haq, vice-chancellor of University of Barisal. Sifat E Sayeed, associate professor, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, stressed on creating mass awareness among the rural people. Dr Md Abdul Matin, general secretary, Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), said in 2009, the High Court gave a verdict to save the rivers from pollution but the authorities concerned did not take any action. "As a result surface water is still polluted but it could be a good source of

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Shahed Reza re-elected Dhaka Club president

CITY DESK

Former ambassador Syed Shahed Reza was re-elected president of Dhaka Club Ltd for 2016-17 yesterday. Reza is the managing director of SMP Trading Co. The club's 10-member executive committee also includes Altamas Kabir Mishu, Waqar Ahmed Choudhury, Prof Jahangir Chowdhury, Rahel Ahmed, Abdus Selim, Nawzia Islam, HM Morshed, Monir Ahmed, Shahidul Haq Sikder Litu and Rezaul Karim.

HONOURING FREEDOM FIGHTERS BD role exemplary

Says head of visiting Indian war veterans' delegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The way Bangladesh looks after its freedom fighters is exemplary, said Lt Gen (ret'd) GS Sihota, the leader of an Indian delegation of war veterans who fought for liberating Bangladesh in 1971, yesterday. Talking to reporters at a Dhaka hotel, he also lauded the country for its development -- both in economic sectors and security forces. The 28-member delegation is in Bangladesh to join the Victory Day celebrations. Sihota said they were able to meet a number of freedom fighters. "When we talked to them, then we realised that what they went through we had no knowledge about it... And what they went through was much more than just a soldier fighting a war. The risk factor taken by them was immense." He said he was happy to see that the entire nation is taking care of the freedom fighters. He praised the initiatives to give them the opportunity to be a part of the government, look after their needs, their families, their children and their education. "I think it is an example for the rest of the world..." About the country's military strength, he said, "Not many countries can do the things such a short period... we were impressed. The entire delegation was impressed because it's a very young nation."

About Bangladesh-India relationship, he said more and more engagement, greater economic venture, and greater

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