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'BNP a terrorist party that kills people'

PM tells event marking inauguration of 150 bridges, 14 overpasses

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said BNP is a "terrorist party that kills people".

"The government has no objection to BNP's movement but will take tough action against any arson or violence."

She said this while addressing a programme arranged in Sarak Bhaban in the capital's Tejgaon to mark the simultaneous opening of 150 newly constructed bridges in 39 districts and 14 newly constructed overpasses under the Roads and Highways Department.

In her speech, Hasina said, "I don't have any objection if they [BNP] wage their movement ... But they can't be allowed to cause any harm to the people ... I've asked all, including police and intelligences, to take instant action in case of any arson or violence."

She added she has nothing other than the people of the country.

"I lost everything -- my parents and brothers. I have nothing to lose. My only goal is to ensure welfare of the people of my country and we've [the AL government] tirelessly been doing so."

She added she will not call BNP an "opposition party".

"My only goal is to ensure welfare of the people of my country and we've [the AL government] tirelessly been doing so."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina



as it has no representation in parliament.

Noting that BNP secured only 29 seats in the 2008 general election and later another in the by-polls, she said its 30 seats out of 300 constituencies reflected the sorry state of the party.

150 BRIDGES, 14 UNDERPASSES

In less than one year since the simultaneous inauguration of 100 bridges across the country, the prime minister yesterday opened 150 more bridges -- 40 bridges in Mymensingh division, 32 in Dhaka, 27 in Chittagong, 22 in Rajshahi, 12 in Khulna, eight each in Barishal and Rangpur and one in Sylhet division.

Of the 14 overpasses, eight are in Rajshahi division and six in Rangpur.

She also unveiled the foundation stones of 1,100-metre Kewatkhal Bridge and 1,471-metre Rahmatpur Bridge over the Brahmaputra in Mymensingh.

She opened the newly constructed DTCA Bhaban, the BRTA's Automated Motor Vehicle Fitness Test Centre, BRTC's Bus Depot and Training Centre and also inaugurated the compensation programme for road accident victims.

The PM inaugurated the infrastructures virtually.

At the event, a total of 162 road crash victims or family members -- 42 people from Dhaka Division, 39 from Chittagong, 26 from Rajshahi, 18 from Rangpur, 11 from Khulna, 10 each from Mymensingh and Sylhet, and six from Barishal received the financial compensation.

In her speech, she requested drivers of motor vehicles to stop the "overtake races" on the road in order to prevent accidents and protect the lives of the people.

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US joins UK in anti-graft campaign in Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US is now partnering with the UK to bolster the anti-corruption campaign in Bangladesh.

On October 17 in Dhaka, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) signed an agreement with the British High Commission to provide \$10 million to support the Participatory Action Against Corruption: Towards Transparency and Accountability (PACTA) project.

Transparency International Bangladesh is implementing the project.

The five-year project's total budget is \$31.4 million, of which USAID's contribution is \$10 million, while the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office provides £7.5 million. The remaining members of the consortium are Sweden, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

"Without strong watchdog institutions, impunity becomes the

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THE TIMID TURTLE

An Indian roofed turtle in the capital's Botanical Garden. Shy and timid creatures, it gets its name from the visible "roof" on its outer shell. What makes it more distinguishable is the striking red or orange in the bony underbelly. Found in major rivers of South Asia, this quiet water turtle prefers living near streams, canals, ponds and brackish coastal waters. It is an extremely exploited species and is often the victim of illegal animal, meat or medicine trades and habitat loss. With its numbers plummeting, the IUCN has listed it in the "vulnerable" category of its Red List.

PHOTO: MOHAMMAD RIDWANUR RAHMAN

SC powerful enough to pass any judgement

Says chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan yesterday said the Supreme Court is empowered enough to deliver any appropriate order.

"We will pass orders considering all the legal aspects," he said this while presiding over a five-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC for hearing two petitions, including a contempt of court petition, against Jamaat-e-Islami.

The chief justice said this after Jamaat's lawyer Joynal Abedin Tuhin sought eight weeks' time from the apex court for hearing the petitions and the petitioners' counsel Tanya Amir opposed it.

Lawyer Joynal said senior lawyer AJ Mohammad Ali,

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A father embraces the body of his 3-year-old daughter during her funeral, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

STORY ON B1

Israel hints at Gaza ground invasion

Gaza pounding continues as death toll rises to 3,785

AGENCIES

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant yesterday told troops gathered at the Gaza border that they will soon see the Palestinian enclave "from inside", suggesting an expected ground invasion with the aim of annihilating Hamas could be nearing.

Israel kept pounding Gaza yesterday as the death toll in the besieged enclave rose to at least 3,785.

Since the conflict erupted on October 7, Israeli strikes have levelled entire city blocks. Israel has also laid a siege to Gaza cutting water, food and power supplies.

Israeli troops also killed nine Palestinians in multiple clashes across the occupied West Bank yesterday, the Palestinian health ministry said.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak yesterday followed US President Joe Biden with a visit to Israel to demonstrate Western support.

In Gaza's north, footage obtained by Reuters from the Jabaliya refugee camp showed residents digging with their bare

hands inside a damaged building to free a small boy and girl trapped under masonry.

The body of a man was pulled out as residents tried to light up the site with their mobile phones.

Meanwhile, Egypt took steps to let in aid with first deliveries not expected before today, amid deteriorating conditions.

Biden flew home on Wednesday night after an eight-hour visit, having pledged to stand with Israel but achieving only limited success in his mission to get aid to Gaza.

The second half of his itinerary - a planned meeting with Arab allies - was called off in response to a blast at a Gaza hospital, which Palestinians called an Israeli air strike but Israel said was caused by a failed rocket launch by militants.

Biden backed the Israeli account.

Meanwhile, the US State Department yesterday announced a worldwide alert "due to increased tensions in various locations around the world, the potential for terrorist attacks, demonstrations or violent actions against US citizens and interests".

It advises US citizens overseas to "exercise increased caution".

CPD suggests ways to tackle economic uncertainty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Centre for Policy Dialogue yesterday urged the central bank to curb high inflation, ensure proper management of the foreign exchange rate and the foreign currency reserve, and introduce reforms in the banking sector to address the volatility in the economy.

"The fiscal and monetary policies should be employed in a coordinated manner," said Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the think-tank.

Fahmida spoke to The Daily Star after meeting with Governor Abdur Rouf Taltukder and other senior central bankers at the Bangladesh Bank headquarters in the capital.

Prof Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the think-tank, was also present.

For the last one month, the central bank has sat with noted economists and think-tanks to find ways to deal with the current economic uncertainty.

The central bank's presentation showed that the new interest rate-setting mechanism has started to yield expected outcomes, Fahmida said.

"We have urged the central bank

Scientists surprised by source of largest quake detected on Mars

REUTERS, Washington

Nasa's InSight lander detected the largest quake yet recorded on Mars on May 4, 2022. The tremor was one with a 4.7 magnitude - fairly modest by Earth standards but strong for our planetary neighbour.

Given Mars lacks the geological process called plate tectonics that generates earthquakes on our planet, scientists suspected a meteorite impact had caused this marsquake. But a search for an impact crater came up empty, leading scientists to conclude that this quake was caused by tectonic activity - rumbling in the planet's interior - and giving them a deeper understanding about what makes Mars shake, rattle and roll.

"We concluded that the largest marsquake seen by InSight was tectonic, not an impact. This is important as it shows the faults on Mars can host hefty marsquakes," said planetary scientist Ben Fernando of the University of Oxford in England, lead author of the research published this week in the journal Geophysical Research Letters. "We really thought that this event might be an impact."

"This represents a significant step forward in our understanding of Martian seismic activity and takes us one step closer to better unraveling the planet's tectonic processes," added Imperial College London planetary scientist and study co-author Constantinos Charalambous, co-chair of InSight's Geology Working Group.



Says chief justice

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