

Govt now looking to the East: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said her government has added a 'new dimension' to its foreign policy and is 'now looking to the East' for the benefit of the people and the country.

"In addition to the existing relationship with the West, now we are looking to the East. The East, West, North and South are now totally open to us. We have realised that we will be benefited if we proceed to the East and thus our foreign policy and diplomacy are concentrating on benefit of the country and its people," she observed.

The BNP chief was addressing a

big students gathering at the Ramna Shatayu Angan in the city yesterday, organised by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) to mark its 24th founding anniversary.

Khaleda said her government wants to maintain good relations with all and will pursue an independent foreign policy, not a policy dictated by any country.

"We will definitely strengthen our relations with the countries which will give us honour and importance," she said.

The prime minister mentioned that heads of state and government of several important countries visited Bangladesh in the last one year, which clearly proved the coun-

try's importance in the world. This shows the success of the present alliance government's independent foreign policy, she said.

Khaleda accused the previous Awami League (AL) government of destroying the national economy, pursuing a subservient foreign policy, spreading corruption and crime. The alliance government has greatly succeeded in salvaging the country from the ruins and is now steering it to a bright future.

"Now we have almost freed the country from crime and we are now fighting corruption. We shall step up the drive against corrupt people and eliminate corruption from the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Looking to the East

FROM PAGE 12

country at any cost," she said.

Turning to student politics, she said there is a common public perception that student politics mean crime, toll extortion, capture of halls etc. But students must put an end to this and restore their past glory by ousting all undesirable elements from the student bodies.

The BNP chief categorically said criminals would not have any place in her party or its front organisations. "Such elements must leave BNP and its front organisations right now," she warned.

Referring to opposition warning to dislodge the present government within a year, she claimed, "The BNP and along with its allies will be in power at least for the next 15 years."

Khaleda asked leaders and activists of the JCD to build it as a 'genuine student-based organisation' and emphasised regular holding of its annual conference so that new leadership emerges each year.

The BNP chief advised them to devote themselves to study to make themselves capable of facing the challenges of the 21st century.

Speaking at the occasion, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said JCD would comprise regular and genuine students only. Those who have completed studies should move to Juba Dal and other front organisations of the BNP, he added.

Chaired by JCD Convenor Shahabuddin Lahu, the gathering was also addressed by, among others, incumbent and former leaders of JCD, ministers and Mps.