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The Daily Star

R 3, 6, (8) (11) 14, (15), (16) 22, (24)

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REGD. NO. DA 781

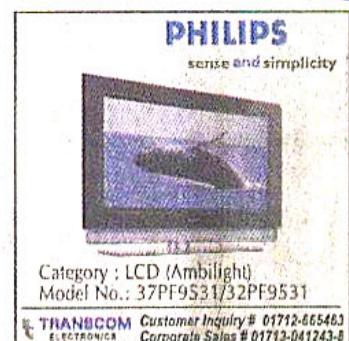
VOL. XVII NO. 102

DHAKA SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2007

BAISHAKHI 15, 1414 BS

RABIAS SANI 10, 1428 HJRI

24 PAGES PLUS STAR INSIGHT PRICE: Tk 10.00



EC taking steps
to free its sectt
from PMO
Says Sakhawat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has taken initiatives to separate its secretariat from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), now the office of the chief adviser.

"The Election Commission will soon send a proposal in this regard to the caretaker government," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain yesterday told the BBC Bangla Service.

He disclosed the EC initiative a day after civil society leaders and other professionals stressed the need for separating the EC Secretariat from the PMO in a dialogue on draft proposals for electoral reforms.

The EC is considering execution of the EC Secretariat's separation

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Tk 270cr laundered money recovered

7 businessmen involved in the illegal transfer;
govt hopes to retrieve Tk 3,000cr more

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

has collected money recovered after being pilfered from the public coffers. The central bank will consider the recovered money as "non-tax revenue".

Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday informed the finance ministry that the money has been deposited in the government account.

Meanwhile, the recovered money directly contributed to the improvement of the government's borrowing status, bringing it down to Tk 4,300 crore on Monday from Tk 4,700 crore in the first week of this month, according to BB

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

sources.

Of the seven businessmen who deposited the amount through pay-orders, the names of three could be learnt. They are Anis Ahmed Gorki of MGH Group, business partner of former prime minister Khaleda Zia's son and BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, Nader Khan whose identity details were not available, and Salman Ispahani of the Ispahani Group. But, talking to The Daily Star, Salman Ispahani

refuted the BB report, claiming that the money has been deposited in the government account.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

AL men divided over reform issues

HASAN JAHID TUSHAR

reforms issue as some stress that the top leadership should be changed immediately to have the party back on track while others say that ensuring a democratic system within the party should take precedence over the leadership issue. Besides, the damage control should also kick in.

Khaleda Zia, who is likely to visit Saudi Arabia next week to perform Umrah, will take decision regarding the reforms through discussion once the ban on indoor politics is lifted, said a party insider.

BNP Secretary General Abdul

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

A faction of senior leaders want the task to begin immediately after lifting of the ban. Whether the party chief is present or not does not matter as it is only about doing the job, they argue.

In recent times, political leaders, members of the civil society, Election Commission (EC) and some advisers to the interim government have stressed the need for reforming the political parties so that intra-party democracy and transparency are ensured.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of AL leaders said members' adherence to the party constitution, and holding of councils in time are the key areas that

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

that intra-party democracy and transparency are ensured.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

No BNP reforms in Khaleda's absence Party leaders, workers say

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The BNP will not initiate any reforms in the party as long as its Chairperson Khaleda Zia is kept isolated from the leaders and workers.

The leaders and workers alike think that implementation of reforms is simply not possible in absence of the former premier. They said without her the party should not think of joining the dialogue on electoral reforms as well, said party insiders.

However, other sources say senior leaders are divided over the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

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