

150 BNP men allowed to visit Zia's grave

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government finally decided to allow a maximum of 150 leaders and activists of BNP to accompany party Chairperson Khaleda Zia during her visit to the grave of late president Ziaur Rahman to offer Fateha on his death anniversary tomorrow.

The authorities concerned also gave BNP permission to hold milad mahfil at the graveyard as well as in the districts across the country.

The party, however, will not be

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President to visit graves of Zia, Mujib

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed will visit the grave of president Ziaur Rahman on his 26th death anniversary tomorrow.

He will place wreath and offer special prayer at the grave at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the morning, a Bangabhaban press release said yesterday.

The president will also visit Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's grave at Tungipara in Gopalganj district at a convenient time, the press release added.

MEGHNAGHAT-2 PROJECT

Obaidul's firm misses another deadline

Cites political instability as reason

SHARIER KHAN

Scamster Obaidul Karim's shell company BON Consortium yesterday missed the deadline for financial closure for the 450-megawatt Meghnaghat-2 power project.

The BON, however, attributes its failure to 'political instability' and Sunday requested the government to allow it an additional seven and a half months time for financial closure by amending the project's Implementation Agreement (IA).

The government is yet to take a decision on the matter.

Earlier the same company missed a deadline to pay up land rental and other fees on January 21 and faced a notice of 'Project Company Event of Default' to pay up Tk 6.22 crore by February 22 or face cancellation of the contract.

That cancellation was saved by Middle Eastern Belhasa group, which is a member of the Consortium, through submission of that money at the last minute. The PDB that gave the BON Consortium 20 acres of land for this project had

remained in limbo with it.

With the consortium's lead bidder Steag (Germany) and Obaidul Karim missing from the scene, the PDB could feel that the BON would not be able to carry out the project and it was a waste of precious time not to cancel the project. "But PDB has to give the consortium some legitimate time to reach a final decision," notes a PDB official.

Now while the PDB is prepared for scrapping the deal, the BON is asking the government to keep it hanging further.

In a letter Sunday addressed to President Prof Iajuddin Ahmed, the BON Consortium asked the government to change the project's Implementation Agreement (IA) that was signed between the power ministry and the BON Consortium on March 19 to allow it more time for financial closure. The letter was signed by Director of Operations, BON Engr Noor Uddin.

This letter was supported by another one from Capital Management House (CMH) of the Kingdom of Bahrain. This letter

issued on May 22, addressed to the power secretary, says that the BON requests for an amendment to the IA related to the proposed financial closing date.

It adds, "The CMH along with its group of investors is committed to contribute majority of the equity and debt financing for the project worth USD 355 million."

Referring to a last week's discussion with the ministry, the BON letter says, "Due to various factors identified by us and CMH as affecting... the Meghnaghat Phase-II power project in recent months, including... political instability following the change of Government and the public awareness of the internal investigations being conducted by the Government in relation to the project, it has not been possible to procure a suitable EPC (engineer-procure-construct) contractor or to obtain commitments from commercial financiers and/ or equity participants to the Project."

The letter noted that last week the ministry verbally confirmed

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21 GRAFT SUSPECTS

ACC does not serve notices due to bureaucratic complexities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) could not serve notices yesterday on 21 top corruption suspects, including former prime minister Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman, due to some bureaucratic complexities.

The ACC in its meeting on Sunday decided to issue the notices and officials told the press

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Charges pressed against Moudud for possessing liquor, beer

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday pressed charges against former law minister Moudud Ahmed for possessing 32 cans of beer and 16 bottles of other alcoholic beverages from his Gulshan residence.

Officer-in-Charge of Gulshan Police Station Mohamamd Obaidul Haque, who is the investigation officer (IO), submitted the

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PHOTO: PID

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed meets President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Army chief meets president

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed made a courtesy call on President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Iajuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban yesterday.

General Moeen apprised the president of various issues relating to Bangladesh Army, said a

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CHT PEACE ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION

Body to sit first time in 7 years for review

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rangamati

The advisory committee on the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord is going to hold its first meeting on Thursday to review the implementation process of the peace accord.

The meeting will be held at the CHT affairs ministry with its adviser Iftekhhar Ahmed Chowdhury in chair, seven years after the committee was formed.

The committee will also discuss other issues related to the peace accord signed in 1997 and bringing changes in local authorities, sources said.

The caretaker government (CG) took the initiative to hold the first meeting of the committee, which was formed during the Awami League (AL) rule, but never got the chance to have a formal meeting.

The meeting will discuss bringing dynamism in different development projects undertaken by the government in CHT, future working plans of the advisory committee and others related issues.

Some important decisions including handing over of the

charges of the present chairmen and members of three district councils to the new interim committee are likely to be taken at the meeting. Current chairmen might also be removed.

The members of the advisory committee include CHT Regional Council Chairman Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, widely known as Santu Larma, Chakma Circle Chief Barrister Debashish Roy, Bomang Circle Chief Aunsuipruf Chowdhury and Mong Circle Chief Pailahpruf Chowdhury and chairmen of three hill district councils Dr Manik Lal Dewan in Rangamati, Mayma Ching in Bandarban, Monindra Lal Tripura in Khagrachhari and three Bangalee members Maulana Mohammed Shahjahan from Rangamati, Nurunnabi Chowdhury from Bandarban and Azizur Rahman from Khagrachhari.

The sitting chairmen of the three hill districts were appointed by the past four-party alliance government mainly on political consideration. While many politically appointed people at different

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An inside view of an apartment building, left, of Amin Mohammad Foundation that developed cracks forcing its residents to evacuate. The outer view, right, of the building at Dhanmondi in the capital.



PHOTO: STAR

Cracks in Dhanmondi condo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The families living in the 15 flats of the faulty Green Jasmine, an apartment building of Amin Mohammad Foundation in Dhanmondi, evacuated while nearby South Breeze English medium school moved its junior section fearing the building might collapse on the school.

Even though Amin Mohammad Foundation officials claimed that the flaws were minor and a "silly issue" had been prioritised, experts said the design of the building was terribly flawed.

As the developers of the building started rectifying the flaws of the building, the guardians of the school children panicked and urged the school authorities to move the section.

Amin Mohammad Foundation

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Mosharraf sued again, Faruk on remand

UNB, Comilla

Another case was yesterday filed against former health minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and 26 others for foiling an Awami League meeting in June, 2006.

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Prayer Timing		
May 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-43	6-47
Esha	8-05	8-35
Source: Islamic Foundation		

US presses Iran to stop supporting Iraqi militias

Truck bombing kills 20 at Baghdad shrine

AFP, Baghdad

The United States told Iran yesterday to stop supporting violent militias in war-ravaged Iraq, during the highest-level direct official talks between the arch-foes in 27 years while a truck bomb killed 20 people at Baghdad's most revered shrines.

US ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker said he met Iranian ambassador Hassan Kazemi for four hours in Baghdad in the first such high-level encounter since the countries severed diplomatic relations in 1980.

Crocker said he had insisted that Iran must back up its claimed

support for Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's beleaguered government by cutting off support for armed factions fighting in Iraq.

"The purpose of our efforts in this meeting was not to build a legal case - presumably the Iranians know what they were doing -- our point was simply to say we know as well, this is dangerous for Iraq," he said.

"What we underscored to the Iranians was that beyond principle there is practice," he said. "The Iranian actions on the ground have to come into harmony with their principles."

He said the Iranians proposed the creation of a trilateral security

commission involving Iraqis and US representatives -- a suggestion Crocker dismissed.

"What we are doing today effectively was a security committee because on the level of policy there isn't a great deal to argue about."

Crocker said the Iranians did not address US complaints and had only complained in general terms about the occupation of Iraq by US troops and said there had not been enough US effort to train up Iraqi security forces.

There had been little expectation that the envoys would see eye-to-eye over the Iraq crisis, with

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Dhaka asks G-8 nations for duty-free entry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh sent separate letters to the G-8 countries yesterday asking the world's most powerful group of nations to give duty-free access to exports from least-developed countries (LDCs).

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BRIBERY

Inqilab Khulna bureau chief jailed for 4 yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna Speedy Trial Tribunal yesterday sentenced Khulna bureau chief of Dainik Inqilab and former president of Khulna Press Club ATM Rafique to four years' rigorous imprisonment and fined him Tk 10,000 in connection with receiving bribe.

He is to stay in prison three more months if he failed to pay up the fine.

He was found guilty of receiving bribe of Tk 20,000 from two officials of the Sundarbans Forest Division's (SFD) westwing.

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DELAY IN PASSPORT ISSUANCE

Passport office for end to police verification

MAMUN AL MOSTOFA

The Directorate of Passport and Immigration (DPI) has recommended that the home ministry should abolish police verification system in issuing passports as it says unusual delay in getting the police report causes lot of hassles in the process.

In a proposal sent to the ministry recently to ease issuance of passports, the DPI said it would rather ask people seeking passports to submit photocopies of birth certificate, character certificate and nationality certificate from local government bodies

attested by first class government officers or principals of colleges or headmasters of local schools.

The DPI would then check the names of applicants for passports with government-prepared 'black list' and 'suspect list' and send the names of applicants on such lists for police clearance, DPI sources said.

Citing statistics of delay in passport issuance, they said that in March this year, they examined 9,350 passport applications in very urgent category and issued 1,437 passports within three days, 2,109 within seven days, 2,822 within one

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