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Victim sues Khaleda for Aug 21 grenade attacks

Tarique, Nizami, 25 others also named in the case; court asks for probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former premier Khaleda Zia, her son Tarique Rahman, Jamaat chief Matir Rahman Nizami and 25 others were charged with murder yesterday in the August 21 grenade attacks on an Awami League (AL) rally about three years ago.

Badar Aziz Uddin of Cox's Bazar filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka. He too was injured in the blasts that left 23 killed and scores wounded on the city's Bangabandhu Avenue in 2004.

The other accused include Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babur, former BNP lawmakers

Amanullah Aman, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, Mirza Abbas, Mosaddek Ali Falu, Barkat Ullah Bulu, Salahuddin Ahmed,

Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu, Managing Director Nurul Islam, Helaluzzaman Talukder Lalu, and businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Cooked up story

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigators of the August 21 grenade attack now say the four-party government had cooked up the story that the blasts were carried out by a criminal gang, as 'confessed' by a petty criminal Joj Miah, who was also a creation of the police.

They are now following on a new clue that a group of Afghan war veterans might be involved in the carnage.

However, almost three years down the line, the crime still remains unresolved, thanks to directions coming from former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babur who acted as a conduit for carrying out instructions of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Tarique knew Khaleda would be sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman yesterday told his lawyers that he thinks cases may be filed against his mother, former prime minister Khaleda Zia.

Tarique made the comment when a team of lawyers visited him yesterday at Dhaka Central Jail for the first time since his arrest.

"I guess cases might be filed against my mother... she can be implicated in more cases in the coming days," Nasiruddin Ashim, a barrister of Tarique's legal defence team, told The Daily Star quoting him.

Tarique enquired about his family members during the lawyers' visit, sources said.

Tarique's lawyer yesterday filed a petition with the High Court for providing division to Tarique in jail.

After getting permission from a court, four lawyers talked to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

EC PLAN FOR ELECTION

New candidates won't need to wait for 3yrs

Re-polling in case of at least 50pc 'no vote'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed condition that a candidate will require at least three years of affiliation with a registered party to contest parliamentary polls will not be applicable for the next general elections only so as to enable newly formed parties to participate.

Election Commission (EC) is also planning a provision that re-elections will be held in polling centres where 50 percent or more "no vote" are cast.

"The condition that a candidate has to have three years attachment with a recognised political party would not be effective for the coming election," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd)

Sakhawat Hossain told newsmen yesterday.

He said they changed their plan to encourage honest and competent people to participate in the elections.

However, retired government and non-government organisation (NGO) officials will not be able to take advantage of the flexible rule.

"A political party has to meet the criteria set by the commission for its registration, a must for getting the EC's permission to participate in the elections," he said.

Earlier, the EC during a meeting with journalists said candidates would require at least three years of political involvement with a registered party to contest the polls.

Regarding "no vote", Sakhawat

said the voter's right to tender a "no vote" will be ensured through the ballot paper.

About the EC Secretariat's separation from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), he said he hopes the EC Secretariat would be separated from the PMO.

"We will send a draft to the chief adviser this week. However, we do not want an amendment to the constitution. The secretariat will be brought under the commission through an ordinance," he said.

Sakhawat said a tender might be floated on Friday as the tender proposal for acquiring equipments and supplies for voter enrolment activities is ready.

About the voter list pilot project

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

EU Troika due today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A European Union (EU) Troika delegation arrives here today on a four-day visit to evaluate the current political situation, state of human rights, political reforms and progress in the preparations towards holding the next parliamentary elections.

The team will be led by Andreas Michaelis, director general for Asian and Pacific Affairs of the German Foreign Office.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Tk 17CR TAX DODGING Special court frames charges against Lobi

UNB, Dhaka

The special anti-graft court yesterday framed charges against BNP lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi for dodging tax worth over Tk 17 crore.

The trial of the case, filed by the National Board of Revenue (NBR), will begin tomorrow with deposition by prosecution witnesses.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Houses up for grabs

The story of how BNP leaders including Tarique pocketed pricey lands and houses at throwaway rates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Just like Harris Chowdhury, a convicted fugitive and political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, some other influential leaders of the immediate past ruling four-party alliance also bought government houses for giveaway prices under other peoples' names from Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk), using political and administrative clout.

The list of high profile wheeler-dealers

include the two sons and relatives of Khaleda Zia, and a host of ministers and lawmakers of the immediate past ruling alliance.

Former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas, who himself allegedly bought a house, also allegedly arranged the process for his party colleagues and close associates for buying the houses at cheap rates using other peoples' names.

In 2004, the Rajuk authorities took an initiative to sell 18 government houses situated in upscale Gulshan, Dhanmondi, and

Banani areas of the capital. BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's sons and relatives, BNP ministers, and lawmakers and leaders of the four-party alliance bought no less than a dozen of those houses, under other peoples' names to hide their corruption.

Since the present interim government had taken over the power, the original allottee of Harris Chowdhury's house, Fakir Mahbub Anam, applied to the government on May 6 pleading to be allowed to surrender the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Three government houses allegedly bought by BNP leaders. From left, the house on Gulshan Road-89 that Tarique Rahman allegedly bought using the name of a Bashundhara Group director; the house on Gulshan Road-59 that Shahrin Islam Tuhin, nephew of BNP chief Khaleda Zia, bought for only Tk 4 crore; and the house on Gulshan Road-66 that former minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury allegedly bought using the name of Itekkar Uddin Ahmed.

Inflation hits 9-year high

Measures planned to contain it; subsidy on diesel in next budget

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

Inflation rate on point-to-point basis hit a record 8.26 per cent in April of the current fiscal year after 1998 while the rate of inflation increase in rural areas was higher than in urban areas.

Non-food items saw higher inflation than food items, marking a significant change in the trend of inflation as during the earlier months prices of food items rose at much higher rates than non-food items.

Overall inflation rate continues to increase with a 0.85 percentage point increase in April compared to the rate in March. Inflation rate of food and non-food items increased by 0.45 and 1.59 percentage points.

Sources said inflation rate in the recent period increased due to price hike of food items in both domestic and international mar-

kets. Inflation in Bangladesh also surged due to 21 to 33 per cent increase in the prices of petroleum products by the government.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) sources said inflation rate could reach 8 to 9 per cent on point-to-point basis in May-June period and on an average, inflation rate at the end of the current fiscal year may stand at over 7 per cent.

High inflation rate has already been identified as one of the main challenges of the present caretaker government.

Finance ministry sources, however, said the government will take some measures in the upcoming budget to keep inflation rate at a tolerable level so that poor people are not affected.

Following the government move, Tk 2412 crore is going to be allocated in the revenue budget for

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Budget to be announced tomorrow on radio-TV

BSS, Dhaka

The national budget for 2007-08 fiscal year will be announced over all public and private radio and television channels in the country tomorrow at 3:00pm by Dr AB Mirza Azizul Islam, the finance and planning adviser.

The budget speech and summary, books on annual financial statements, grants and allocation demands will be available on the official website of Ministry of Finance the same day, an official handout said yesterday evening.

To make the budget more participatory, all information and important documents on the budget could be viewed and downloaded by any individual or institution at home or abroad from the Finance Division website -- www.mof.gov.bd, the handout said adding that opinions and recommendations on the budget could be sent by filling out a feedback form on the website by 5:00pm, June 14.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

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Participant must send 2 copies of photographs (3R or above) along with participant's name, parents name, date of birth, height, present address, contact phone number & email address. Last date of sending entry is June 18, 2007. Any female above 19 years living in Bangladesh can participate. A participant can register only once. Short-listed participants selected on the basis of the photographs will get confirmation over phone and will be asked to report to Dhaka. Participant has to be a Bangladeshi by nationality. If needed the participant may have to show proof of her age and nationality. The decision of the judges is final at every stage. Any employee of Unilever Bangladesh Limited, Asiatic MCL & Channel i or their close relatives cannot participate in this competition. Wrong information or any kind of persuasion will lead to disqualification of the participant. Authority reserves the right to change or halt the competition at any point of time without prior notice.