



CORRUPTION CONVICTION

Once bigwigs now face poll exclusion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A good number of former ministers and lawmakers including some bigwigs who have been detained on corruption charges will not be able to contest the next parliamentary election if they fail to free themselves from conviction before the polls.

Detained Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will be disqualified from contesting the polls, if she is punished on charge of corruption under the Emergency Power Ordinance rules. The authorities are also preparing to file corruption cases against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

One will be disqualified from contesting any polls including the parliamentary election if he or she is convicted by the trial court.

Filing appeal against the trial court's verdict will not remove the bar until and unless one is acquitted of the conviction through the

Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

To realise its plan, the government has already formulated stringent rules blocking the ways for the graft suspects to contest the polls and it is determined to complete the trial before the polls, scheduled for December 2008 according to the Election Commission's roadmap.

To deal with the corruption suspects, there are tougher rules under the Emergency Power Ordinance.

The constitution says a person shall not be eligible to stand in any election if he or she is convicted for a criminal offence involving moral turpitude and sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release.

But according to the Emergency Power Ordinance rules, any person convicted for corruption by a trial court will be disqualified from

contesting any election until adjudication of his or her appeal against the verdict and no convicted person shall ever be considered qualified for any post in the government, semi-government organisations, statutory bodies, or in any organisation that has government affiliation.

Communications Adviser MA Matin, who is also the chief of national taskforce on prevention of serious crimes and corruption, said, "We will try not to allow corrupt politicians to contest the elections.... Actions will be taken against all corrupt people irrespective of their political affiliations."

Matin said the anti-graft taskforce had so far investigated 131 corruption charges and investigation into 100 more similar cases will be completed in next three months.

According to the official record of the taskforce, 17 cases are under

Writ petition today against Hasina's arrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawyers for detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina will file writ petition with the High Court today challenging the legality of her arrest and the 'extortion' case filed against her under the emergency powers rules.

AL sources said a team of six senior lawyers led by Barrister Rafique ul Haq will file the writ petition for the former prime minister.

"We will move to the High Court tomorrow (Sunday) challenging the arrest of Sheikh Hasina and the case against her," AL Law Secretary Advocate Sahara Khatun told reporters yesterday after a meeting with acting party President Zillur Rahman at his residence.

Tawfique Newaz, one of the counsels for Hasina who visited her at the special jail yesterday, AL leaders Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser, Shubid Ali Bhuiyan, Dr Dipu Moni and Advocate Rahmat Ali were also present at the meeting.

Sahara Khatun, who is on the legal aid committee for freeing Hasina, said they have enough grounds to challenge the case. They



A housewife at Matuail in the capital washes utensils with stagnant rainwater, mixed with filth and waste, as this part of the city remains waterlogged following torrential rain during the last few days.

CA for more interactions among advisers, secretaries

UNB, Dhaka

Chairman of the Council of Advisers (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday called for formal interaction between the advisers and the secretaries for the better functioning of the administrative machinery.

He gave the call during a regular weekly meeting of the Council of Advisers, where Cabinet Secretary Ali Imam Majumdar presented a report on the progress in implementation of the decisions taken in

3 schoolchildren killed in Ctg road crash

UNB, Ctg

Three students of a primary school were crushed under the wheels of a truck on the Chittagong-Najirhat highway at Charia under Hathazari upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Mahmud, 9, of class four, Aleya, 7, and Saleha, 6, of class two of Charia Government Primary School.

Witnesses said the Najirhat-bound truck from the port city ran

Fire damages 8th floor office at CA Bhaban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire gutted some furniture, documents and office equipment at the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) in CA Bhaban at Karwan Bazar in the capital last night.

Monirul Islam Monir, a security guard of the building, said, "When I reached the building around 9:15pm, as I had night duty there, I saw pedestrians looking upwards at the building and screaming 'fire'."

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CU asstt professor made lecturer for writing student's answer script

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong University (CU) syndicate yesterday downgraded a teacher from assistant professor to lecturer on charge of writing on a female student's answer script.

This is a first instance of its kind since the university's launching in 1966.

The syndicate also terminated Mohammad Nazim Uddin, general secretary of CU Employees' Union, on different charges including bribery, fraudulence and making indecent proposal to a driver's wife.

The syndicate took the decisions in its 442nd meeting held with Vice-Chancellor M Badiul Alam in the chair.

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Essentials prices up amid downpour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of essentials rose further in the capital over the last two weeks, and retailers and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) blamed the hike on low supply due to the recent downpour.

Edible oil, rice, flour, onion, aubergine, green papaya, cucumber, green banana, green and dried chilli, different types of leafy vegetables and spices - all saw a rise in their prices at the kitchen markets as well as the BDR-run shops and markets.

Col Abdul Halim, chief of the BDR Trade and Commerce Monitoring Cell, told The Daily Star, "The vegetable fields in different places across the country have

gone under water due to heavy rain and the supply became limited. So, the prices have gone up for the time being."

The price of soyabean oil has risen to Tk 80 per litre from Tk 76 last week. Retailers at the Karwan Bazar kitchen market said the price may rise further this week.

The BDR-run shops were selling soyabean oil at Tk 78 per litre; two weeks back they sold it at Tk 72.

Rahman, a retailer at Hatirpul kitchen market, said oil companies took demand notes from the retailers several times last week but the supplies have yet to arrive. "Meanwhile, our stock is running low," he said.

A dealer of Teer soyabean oil said, "I placed order to the com-

pany several times, but no supply yet."

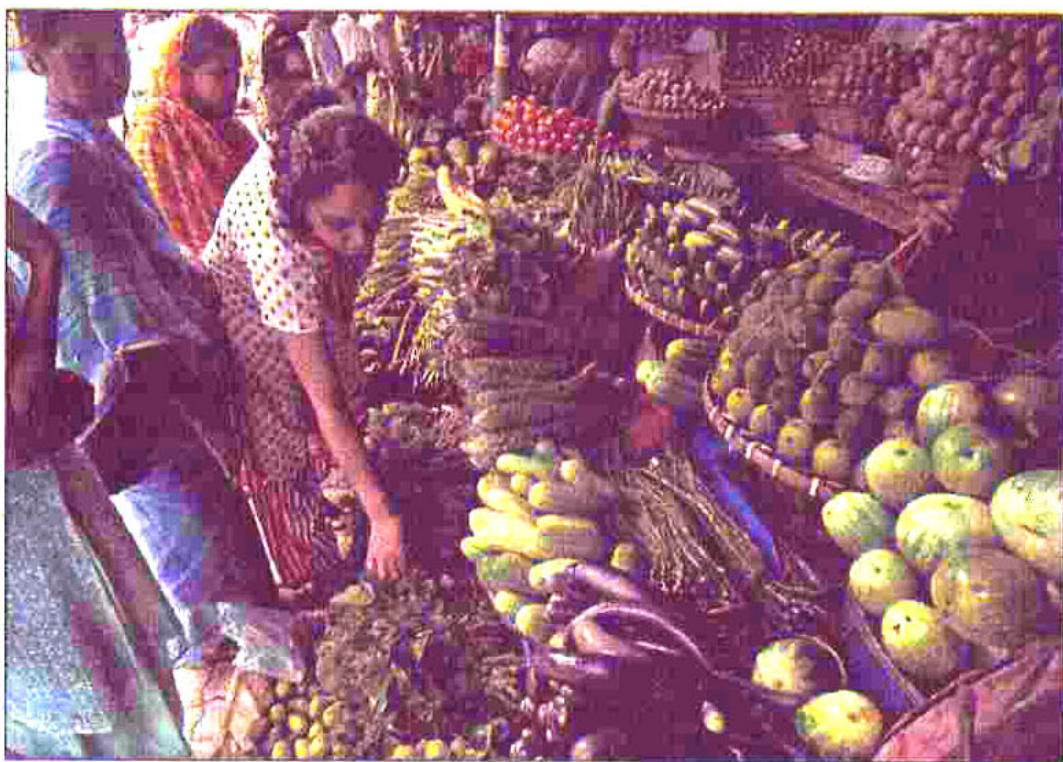
The price of flour rose sharply during the last two weeks. The price of 1kg pack, which was Tk 25 last week, has leapt to Tk 30.

Onion was sold at Tk 22 per kilogram last week and is now being sold at Tk 28.

Only the price of potato has remained stable, said the retailers of Karwan Bazar and Hatirpul kitchen markets.

The price of green chilli has doubled during the last two weeks, reaching Tk 80 per kilogram at different retail markets. The BDR-run shops were selling green chilli at Tk 75 although they sold it at Tk 30 two weeks back.

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Vegetable prices mark further rise at kitchen markets of the capital following the downpour across the country during the last few days. The photo was taken from Hatirpul kitchen market yesterday.

Credit growth dips in banks

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

Growth of credit flow in the banking sector has decreased significantly in the first five months of this year despite no contraction measures taken by the central bank.

Bangladesh Bank (BB) data shows credit flow increased by only one percent during January to May, while the increase was 9 percent in January-June last year.

"We're witnessing a declining growth of credit flow from the banking sector that means we may not have to impose any specific measures to check the flow," said a central bank official.

Explaining the unusual decline, officials of different commercial banks said entrepreneurs are in apprehension about investment as the country is going through a state of emergency.

"People did not take loans from banks during the first few months after the present government came to office. They were in fear. The situation has improved slightly only in recent days," said an official of a nationalised commercial bank (NCB).

He said the NCBs have been witnessing negative growth of credit flow since January.

The branch manager of a pri-

vate commercial bank cited an example of three aspiring clients and said, "They had applied for loans, but are now taking time and may be observing the overall political situation." He said the investors do not want to take any risk.

The BB released six-month monetary policy early this month that had hinted to increase the rate of SLR (statutory liquidity requirement) and CRR (cash reserve ratio) in an apparent bid to reduce private sector credit flow.

The BB has set a target to keep growth rate of domestic credit

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Hasina sees her arrest as part of larger conspiracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina is scared for her life and said yesterday her arrest is part of a larger conspiracy to eliminate Bangabandhu's family.

"Conspirators want to complete their 1975 plot by eliminating me," Advocate Tawfique Newaz, one of the counsels for Hasina, quoted her as saying.

Talking to newsmen after meeting Hasina at the special jail,

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Hannan Shah says reformists have least support

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brig Gen (ret'd) ASM Hannan Shah, an adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, yesterday said not even five percent of the party councillors will support the so-called 'reformists' led by Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

"There is no alternative to Khaleda Zia for running the party as the leaders and workers are united under her leadership ... They believe any kind of change should be brought with her."

Meanwhile, around 200 educational institutions remain unofficially closed, as they have been

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Jamuna flows 85cm over danger level

Compounds flood situation in Sirajganj

STAR REPORT

The flood situations in Sirajganj, Gaibandha, Rangpur, Netrakona, Tangail and Manikganj further deteriorated yesterday.

Four more upazilas of Sirajganj were flooded yesterday as the water of the Jamuna continues to rise due to torrential rain and onrush of water from upstream, our Sirajganj correspondent reports.

The newly affected upazilas are Ullapara, Kamarkhanda, Raiganj and Tarash.

Two children went missing yesterday when they were fishing in the floodwater. They are Rubel, 8, of Polashpur village in Kazipur and Jafar, 5, of Chowdhailly village.

At least 400 villages in nine upazilas have been inundated and about 2 lakh people have become marooned. Hundreds of flood-affected people have taken shelter on higher lands and embankments. Most of them are passing their days under the open sky.

There is a severe crisis of food and drinking water in those places. Diarrhoea, dysentery and skin diseases have broken out in different areas.

Meanwhile, around 200 educational institutions remain unofficially closed, as they have been

flooded. Around 5,000 weaving factories have also been inundated rendering 5,000 weavers unemployed.

Water Development Board (WDB) officials said the Jamuna was flowing 85cm above danger level at Sirajganj yesterday afternoon. The water level might increase within the next two or three days, they feared.

District Relief and Rehabilitation Department sources said they have distributed 50 tonnes of rice, Tk 1 lakh in cash and 135 cans of biscuits among the flood-affected people.

Flood situation in Gaibandha deteriorated as onrush of water from upstream and intermittent rain since Thursday submerged more areas in four upazilas, our correspondent in Gaibandha reports.

Gaibandha Sadar, Sunderganj, Fulchari and Shaghata have been affected as the Brahmaputra went further 66cm and the Ghagot 25cm above danger levels yesterday.

Over 1 lakh people in different areas were marooned.

Knee-deep water is flowing over a four-kilometre stretch of road between Udakhali and Badiakhali snapping road link between Gaibandha with parts of Fulchari upazila. A bridge at Salua on

Kalibazar-Badiakhali road also collapsed.

Rushing floodwater through a breach in a flood control embankment at Singra in Fulchari upazila flooded 25 villages. Standing crops and vegetables also went under water.

An Army team is rescuing nearly 200 marooned people from different chars in Fulchari upazila on the Brahmaputra basin.

The two flood shelters opened at Udakhali High School and Adarsha Girls School on Friday have gone under water Saturday. People have been moved to nearby Udakhali Health Complex from there.

Fresh cracks have developed along the newly constructed ring-embankment at Baguria due to heavy rainfall. The Gaibandha town protection embankment has also become vulnerable at two points.

According to district Relief and Rehabilitation Department, 130 villages have been affected. The district administration allocated 28 tonnes of rice, Tk 40,000 in cash and house-building materials for distribution.

The flood situation in Netrakona further deteriorated yesterday with 55 unions of nine

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Moral values needed for curbing graft as law alone not sufficient

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin yesterday said society and its components will have to be educated on ethics and moral values as law alone is not sufficient to bring down corruption at a tolerable level.

He made the observation at a seminar titled "Rule of Law to Establish a Corruption Free Society". The monthly Legal Aid organised the discussion at the CIRDP auditorium.

"My view is that along with addressing the corrupt person upon due enforcement of law, let there be social abhorrence and disapproval of corruption, and private as well as community disassociation of the corrupts," said chief of the country's apex court.

Editor of Monthly Legal Aid Khawja Golam Mursheed presided over the inaugural session that was attended among others by Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Masayuki Inoue, Country Director of the Asian Development Bank Hua Du, Chargé d'Affaires of the European Commission delegation Françoise Collet, Resident Legal Adviser of the US Embassy Nancy Langston, and former attorney

general AF Hassan Ariff.

Mentioning some laws including the penal code and the anti-corruption acts, the chief justice said, "There are some other laws also relating to prevention of corruption. But still then corruption has rooted itself firmly in every sphere of society as well as in every stage of life."

"Laws have been enacted providing punishment of corrupt persons but same would not go long way in curbing corruption since application of law is delayed or same is not at all applied or enforced in a manner to screen the desired one who ought to have brought within the net of law."

Justice Amin said, "Soft application of law relating to corruption at different levels by the government and the institutions entrusted with or responsible for administration and enforcement of law to some beneficiaries of corruption on lame excuse is no less responsible for corruption."

This aspect and other problems need immediate remedial measure, he said adding that individuals or institutions entrusted with the task to deal with corruption had been soft at times for no reason and

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