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SC judgment today on Hasina's bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) will deliver today its judgment on the government appeal against Monday's High Court (HC) order granting bail to detained former prime minister Sheikh Hasina in an extortion case, and not to hold trial of the case under the emergency power rules. The full bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin heard arguments by the state counsel and Hasina's lawyers for a couple of hours and fixed today for delivering its verdict. Attorney General Fida M Kamal, counsel for the state, in his submission opposed the HC order. He said the question of explanation of emergency power rules

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Reserved gas blocks to go to foreign companies

Petrobangla pushes Bapex to strike Niko like deal

SHARIER KHAN

The Petrobangla has ordered Bapex to open up its reserved oil and gas areas and two exploration blocks for joint venture agreements with foreign oil companies in the same vein of the controversial Niko deal. Officials and experts view this move taken last week as "suicidal" saying that there is no justification of doing another mistake as in the Niko deal where foreign companies are being given risk-free and near-confirmed gas resources reserved for national exploration company Bapex.

Some of these ring-fenced areas have gas sand structures much bigger than that of Titas gas field (5.12 trillion cubic feet (tcf) proven reserve) which is the country's biggest gas field till date. For instance, while the Titas field gas structure is 20 km by 17 km in size, the reserved Sitakunda gas structure is 70 km by 10 km and the reserved Patia structure is 40 km by 15 km. In its July 25 letter, Petrobangla Director Maj Md Moktadir Ali informed Bapex of an earlier proposal sent to the energy ministry and directed it to take steps to open up the ring-fenced areas and

blocks 8 and 11, reserved for Bapex, for joint venture agreements with foreign oil companies. The letter asked Bapex to "protect" national interest and ensure "transparency" in this bid. The reserved or ring-fenced areas include Kapatia, North Bhairab, Hazipur, Kamta, Sitakunda, Patia and Jaldi. These areas were ring-fenced in the nineties when various exploration blocks were opened to foreign oil companies with the vision that Bangladeshi company Bapex would one day tap them. The joint venture agreement

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Tariqul, wife, son sued for land grab, extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Former BNP minister Tariqul Islam along with 29 others including his wife Nargis Begum and son Aninda Islam Amit were sued yesterday for extortion and grabbing land. Lutfur Rahman Babu, general secretary of Arabpur union unit of Awami League (AL), filed the case with the court of a first class magistrate. The plaintiff alleged that former environment and forest minister Tariqul, his wife, son and other accused grabbed his house and land in Jessore and forced him to pay Tk 10 lakh as toll in 2003. The court directed Jessore Kotwali Thana OC MA Matin to probe the allegations and take necessary steps in this regard.

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NBR yet to legalise undisclosed money of Khaleda, Saifur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has not yet accepted the Tk 33 lakh tax paid by BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday for legalising her undisclosed money under the ongoing amnesty, saying that it was not paid lawfully. The NBR is also checking the ways BNP leader and former finance minister Saifur Rahman paid 61 lakh in taxes yesterday to legalise over Tk 1 crore, to decide whether his tax submission will be accepted or not, sources said. Khaleda paid the tax through her counsels to legalise Tk 1.30

crore. Saifur also paid the tax under the scheme through his representatives. "As per the rule, the return should be submitted in the NBR authorised forms along with legal documents," NBR Chairman Badiur Rahman told the journalists at his office yesterday about Khaleda's submission. "But she (Khaleda) did not submit the returns maintaining the rules, which means such a submission has no legality till now," the NBR chief added. About Saifur's submission, a high official of the NBR said that they did not receive the papers yet.

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Hasina serves legal notice on ACC

Challenges validity of its notice

BSS, Dhaka

Former prime minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday sent a legal notice to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) challenging the notice of the commission served upon her to submit wealth statement. Barrister Fazle Nur Tapas, legal counselor of Hasina, sent the notice to the ACC chairman, challenging the validity of the issuance of the notice by a deputy director-level officer of the ACC to a former prime minister ordering her to submit wealth statement. ACC Secretary Mokhees-ur Rahman told reporters that the

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EC wants new law for voter listing

Requests for repeal of existing ordinance

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) has asked the government to repeal the existing Electoral Rolls Ordinance to dispel fears of legal controversy over the voter listing and proposed for making a new law to prepare a fresh voter list with photographs. In a sudden move, the EC sent a draft to the government on Tuesday for enacting a new law, retreating from its earlier stance on amending the Electoral Rolls

Ordinance 1982, sources said. In the draft law, the EC also proposed introduction of a tough provision for punishment against creating any obstacle to the preparation of the voter roll, which will officially kick off in Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) area on August 5, and in other areas in phases. "If anyone creates any obstacle to preparing the voter list, he or she will be punished with highest six months imprisonment with a fine

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Business leaders critical of IMF's diktat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Business leaders have criticised the interference of the international agencies, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and their bid to influence economic management of the country. Top leaders of business and financial sectors yesterday in a joint statement alleged that the agencies were trying to impose conditions and dictate terms in every trifling detail of economic

management of a sovereign country. They expressed their grave concern over the IMF's direction to increase energy prices. They said the IMF directed the government to make adjustments in domestic prices of natural gas, which, in their opinion, will be the suicidal decision for the economy. It is known that an increase in gas price automatically leads to the increase of production costs as well as an increase in fertiliser price,

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China renews support for tri-nation road link

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi yesterday reiterated Beijing's support for Dhaka's proposal for a tri-lateral road-link project connecting Bangladesh, Myanmar and China, when he met Bangladesh Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Chowdhury in Manila in Philippines. During the meeting held on the sidelines of the ARF (Asian Regional Forum) meet, Iftekhar also told the Chinese foreign minister that Dhaka is willing to welcome large Chinese investments and up

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Floods cause huge damage to crops, infrastructure

Bridge collapse in Tangail kills 3

STAR REPORT

More areas of the central part of the country, including the eastern side of the capital, are going under floodwater, as the Jamuna, Padma, Meghna and small rivers around Dhaka continue to swell at most points. Three people died and 10 others went missing when a bridge collapsed in Tangail while three others including an official of Bangladesh Rural Development Board

Mohammad Shahidul, drowned in Sirajganj yesterday. The flood situation in Sirajganj and the north-eastern districts of Netrakona, Sunamganj and Sylhet deteriorated slightly. Three people, including a child, died and 10 others went missing when a 60-foot section of the 200-foot Baruria Bridge on the Elengani in Tangail was washed away Tuesday night, our Tangail correspondent reports.

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CA says govt ready to tackle flood fallouts

UNB, Ullap, Kurigram

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said the government has adequate preparations to deal with the exigencies caused by the raging floods across the country. "There is adequate food in government stock to tackle the emergency situation and the government has also taken steps for immediate import of more food...tender would be floated in this regard in a week," he told reporters. Fakhruddin made the remarks after distributing relief materials, including rice, fungi and sari, among the flood-affected people at

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MTB announces launching of

VISA Electron Debit Card



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