

# Probe into graft cases against Khaleda, Hasina begins

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has begun investigations into the graft cases filed against detained former prime ministers Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina on Sunday.

"There are two months for investigations. The investigating officers (IOs) have been appointed and the investigations have begun," ACC Secretary Mokhles ur Rahman said at its regular briefing yesterday.

On Sunday night, the ACC filed a graft case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, her youngest son Arafat Rahman and 11 others with Tejgaon Police Station. She was arrested yesterday morning following the case.

Earlier in the day, the anti-graft watchdog filed a Tk 3 crore corruption case against the detained AL president. A first information report was filed against her with the same police station.

ACC Deputy Director Jahirul

Huda has been made the IO in the case against Khaleda while the name of the IO of Hasina's case could not be known.

According to sources, although the ACC secretary said the IOs have been appointed for both the cases, the IO in Hasina's case has not been appointed as of 5:20pm yesterday. "The file sent for the Commission's approval is yet to come back," said a source.

In reply to a volley of questions as to when the inquiry into the allegations against both the former PMs began, when the ACC received the inquiry reports and from whom it has received the complaints, the ACC secretary refrained from giving a clear answer.

"Wealth statements have been sought before and the newspapers carried the details. The primary inquiries have been done by the Commission as the complainants are the ACC deputy directors," he said.

Mokhles said the Commission approvals are needed before filing FIRs and submitting charge sheets. "The approvals have been given on behalf of the Commission."

He said if it is found during the investigations that someone is not involved, his/her name would be dropped at the time of submitting the charge sheet. "As the FIRs have been filed by the Commission, the ACC is the complainants," he said.

About the source of information based on which the inquiries against Khaleda and Hasina have been done, he said it might be written or oral or from other organizations.

Mokhles said the Commission yesterday received the wealth statement of Hasina through prison authorities. He said AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil and former BFCI president Abdul Awal Mintoo also submitted their wealth statements on Sunday through the jail authorities.

## US Chapter of BNP protests arrest of Khaleda

The US Chapter of BNP yesterday held protest rally following the arrest of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, says News World from New York.

At the rally at Jackson Heights in New York, the BNP leaders announced to stage demonstrations in front of UN headquarters on Friday protesting the arrest of the former prime minister Khaleda.

Presided over by Abul Hashem Bulbul of Volunteers of Bangladesh, the rally was also addressed by Zillur Rahman Zillu, general secretary of BNP US Chapter.

Meanwhile, BNP supporters have formed International Khaleda Zia Release Council to expedite her release.

Zillur Rahman Zillu, Belal Mahmud, Mohammad Helal Uddin and Mostofa Kamal Pasha Bulbul, US Juba Dal President Zahir H Chowdhury and General Secretary Abu Sayed Ahmed are the coordinators of the council.

## TAX Evasion NBR to sue ex-member of PSC Mahfuz

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) in a board meeting yesterday decided to file a tax evasion case against Mahfuzur Rahman, former Public Service Commission (PSC) member.

NBR sources said after examining the actual income of Mahfuzur Rahman, tax officials primarily found him guilty of concealing income in his income tax return.

Three other businessmen were also found guilty of the same charge and the board decided to file cases against them as well. Names of the three businessmen, however, were not disclosed by the NBR, added the sources.

Mahfuzur Rahman resigned from the PSC after the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) declared him a corruption suspect a few months back.

Sources said as per the decision of the NBR board meeting, cases will be filed against the guilty individuals under Section 163 and 164 of income tax rules.

According to the income tax ordinance, concealing income in the tax return is a punishable offence bearing a maximum penalty of upto five years imprisonment with fines.

## Retrenched jute mill workers threaten hunger strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Retrenched workers of the state-owned Crescent Jute Mills Ltd have threatened to launch indefinite hunger strike from September 16 if their demand regarding full payment of their arrear wages, gratuity and provident fund is not met.

The decision was taken on Sunday at a meeting of the action committee formed by the laid-off workers.

Crescent Jute Mills Workers' Union President Md Siddiqur Rahman said family members of 1,500 laid-off workers are facing various difficulties due to severe financial crisis.

He said they have already appealed to the chief adviser for his interference to address the issue with top priority.

Md Asaduzzaman, project director of the jute mills, said the government did not allocate any fund to pay the arrears.

Meanwhile, retrenched workers of the closed Peoples Jute Mills yesterday refused to receive partial payment of gratuity and provident fund terming the process deceptive and unjust.

Habibur Rahman, project director of the jute mill, could not be contacted despite several attempts.

PHOTO: STAR

Prof Muzaffar Ahmad speaks at the National Electoral Olympiad at the Diploma Engineers' Institution auditorium in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are ASM Shahjahan and Imtiaz Hasib.

## NATIONAL ELECTORAL OLYMPIAD 2007 HELD Decision on NSC should be finalised after nat'l election

Says Prof Muzaffar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shujan President Prof Muzaffar Ahmad yesterday said any decision regarding the formation of National Security Council (NSC) should be finalised after the national election and a thorough discussion in parliament.

"The nature of such a security council should also be specified," he said during a question-answer session of National Electoral Olympiad 2007 organised by Shushashonar Janney Nagorik (Shujan) at the Diploma Engineers' Institution auditorium in the city.

A total of 120 college and university students from 30 districts took part in the National Olympiad. They were selected through district level Olympiad that began in July last year with a view to raising awareness about true democratic practices.

The issue of security council may be viewed from the perspective of external security or from the perspective of various issues such as food, energy and water, Prof Muzaffar said, adding: "We, therefore, should first decide what sort of security we want."

There is nothing wrong with the idea of having a security cell, but its formation should follow open and thorough discussion in the national parliament, he noted.

Presiding over the session, Prof Muzaffar also hoped that the knowledge the students across the country have acquired through the Olympiad would be applied to the next local government and national elections.

Other speakers stressed the need to step up the national campaign to prevent the use of black money in the elections and rid the politics of corrupt people.

Shujan's electoral Olympiad is part of its campaign to make the people of all strata, especially the future generation, aware of democratic practices, they said.

"People of all sections of society and professions, especially those in power, must be honest and competent to build a true democratic nation," said journalist Syed Abul Maksud.

Shujan Secretary Badul Alam Majeed called on all to come forward to raise awareness about the next election so that all eligible citi-

zens become voters and elect the honest and competent members of parliament.

"Thus we will make a 'Sonar Bangladesh' (golden Bangladesh)," he said.

Minhazul Islam of Premier University College, Chittagong, and Gazi Bulbul Hasan of Nawapara Model College, Jessor, became champion and runner-up respectively at the college level, while Abu Taher of Chittagong University and Mominur Rahman Monir of Chuadanga Government College became champion and runner-up at the university level of the National Olympiad.

Advisers to the former caretaker government ASM Shahjahan and M Haizuddin Khan, Awami League leader Abdul Mal Abdul Muhi, DemocracyWatch Executive Director Taleyeh Rehman, South East Bank Ltd Deputy Managing Director Imtiaz Hasib, Shujan Treasurer Badre Alam Khan and assistant secretary Zahir Hossain also spoke at the programme.

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## Lawyers demand release of Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

A group of 51 lawyers of the Supreme Court came sharp with their demand for immediate release of BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia through "legal process".

In a statement, they said Khaleda, immediate past prime minister, was arrested yesterday without any specific allegation due to protracted propaganda orchestrated by a vested quarter, which is only a manifestation of "conspiracy".

"The arrest of Khaleda by the joint forces is very unfortunate," the lawyers said.

The signatories to the statement include AM Mahabubuddin Khokon, M Shamsul Alam, AK Mujibur Rahman, Golam Mohammad Chowdhury Kamal, Md Jainul Akhter Elahi, Md Helal Uddin Mollah, Md Abul Kalam Azad, Md Rabu Karim and M Karim Khan.



President of South Asian People's Union Against Fundamentalism and Communalism Prof Kabir Chowdhury speaks at a press conference at his residence in the city yesterday. On his left is Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir and on his right are Justice KM Sobhan, Justice Ghulam Rabbani and writer Shahriar Kabir. (Story on Page 2)

## After Khaleda's arrest



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PHOTO: STAR

1. Police form a cordon as BNP Chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia being taken to sub-jail from the CMM's court in the city yesterday. 2. A convoy carrying Khaleda Zia crosses Surjol area in the old part of the city on the way to sub-jail. 3. Two photojournalists fell while scrambling to take photographs of Khaleda Zia on the CMM's court premises. 4. An army vehicle patrols the areas near the CMM court.

## CA's support for treatment of poor schoolboy

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday allocated a heart valve and an oxygenator from his quota to a poor schoolboy for transplant as his heart valve has been damaged.

The CA made the allocation on an urgent basis in favour of Md Abdul Motaleb, son of a poor farmer of Uttar Gorkata village in Senbagh upazila of Noakhali, as a news item published in various dailies drew his attention.

It was stated in the news that it is not possible for Motaleb's poor family to bear the expenses of expensive treatment of Motaleb who is under treatment at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases and Hospital.

The allocation letter from the CA's office was sent yesterday to the authority concerned, according to an official of the CA Office.

## Call to implement Cedaw

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called on the government to fully implement the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Cedaw) and incorporate it into the country's law.

Though Bangladesh is a signatory to the Cedaw, it is yet to ratify articles 2 and 16-1 (ga) of the convention, hindering its proper implementation, they said.

The reservations to these articles that call for women's equal rights to resources and equal participation in family affairs are also against the spirit of the constitution and human rights, they added.

A committee comprising representatives of 14 rights organisations, including Steps Towards Development, Ain O Shishu Kendra (ASK), Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA), Karmojibi Nari, Oxfam GB and Women for Women, organised the discussion.

It has been said that these articles are not consistent with the Sharia law and family law, but the reality is that 29 Muslim countries have already withdrawn reservations to these articles, she said.

Reservations to even a single article is enough to hold back the

implementation of other articles, she added.

Ferdous Ara Begum, a member of United Nations Cedaw Committee, Ayesha Khanam of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Ranjan Karmakar of Steps Towards Development, Rokeya Rafiq Baby of Karmojibi Nari, Shahnaz Sumi of Nari Pragati Sangha, Kamrun Nahar of ASK and Farhana Hafiz of Oxfam GB also spoke.

## AUG 22 CU INCIDENT 6 people give depositions

CU CORRESPONDENT

Six people gave depositions before the probe committee formed to investigate into the August 22 incident on Chittagong University (CU) campus on the second day of giving deposition yesterday.

However, Arts Faculty Dean Prof Mansur Uddin Ahmed, head of the four-member committee, opted for keeping the names and identities of the witnesses a secret and refused to disclose anything about the findings before the completion of the investigation.

"We have circulated notice to all the departments asking the interested teachers, officers and employees of the university to give witness in the second phase on Thursday and Saturday next," Prof Mansur said.

"We would try to submit the report within a month, but absence of students is hampering our progress," he said.

At least 40 students, teachers and policemen were injured in a clash between the students and police on August 22 on the university campus where some outsiders allegedly took part.

Following the incident, CU authorities formed a four-member committee on that day.

Other members of the committee are Law Faculty Dean Mohammad Zakir Hossain, Prof Mokter Ahmed of Botany department and Assistant Proctor Mohammad Shafiqul Islam.

## Ctg Wasa land worth Tk 50cr recovered

CU CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court yesterday recovered 19.6 acres of occupied Wasa land worth around Tk 50 crore at Middle Halishahar near the bank of the Bay of Bengal.

Sources said the land was acquired by the erstwhile Pakistan Government in 1963 for a sewerage project of Chittagong Wasa.

Later the land was sold and handed over to different persons and business firms with false deeds.

The illegal occupants built a 3500-foot boundary wall in a bid to construct some structures on the land.

The court during its four-hour-

long drive from 9:00am bulldozed 2000 feet of the wall and deployed armed Ansars after setting up Wasa

nameplate over there.

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA)

Magistrate Mohammad Munir Chowdhury led the drive assisted by two platoons of police and a 30-member Wasa team.

On August 8, the same court in a drive demolished 200 illegal structures built on the land and recovered 144 acres of land worth around Tk 450 crore.

A master plan for Chittagong Wasa Sewerage Project is now under preparation.