

ACC appeals to SC against bail to Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday moved to the Supreme Court seeking stay of bail granted by the High Court to former prime minister Khaleda Zia in GATCO graft case.

The appellate division is likely to take up the petition for hearing today.

The petition also sought to overturn Sunday's High Court order that stayed the proceedings of GATCO graft case.

The case filed by ACC with Tejgaon Police Station on September 2 against Khaleda Zia, her younger son Arafat Rahman Koko and 11 others for involving in the scam, resulting in Tk 1,000 crore loss to the national exchequer.

Khaleda in a writ had challenged invoking the Emergency Powers Rule in the case debaring her seeking bail from the court.

The High Court on Sunday granted bail to Khaleda and also

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Probe into institutional graft from December

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) is likely to file more cases against graft suspects as it has readied 79 more first information reports (FIR) while primary investigations of more than 100 allegations against different corruption suspects are also on.

ACC Chairman Lt Gen (ret'd) Hasan Mashud Chowdhury told journalists yesterday that the commission's activities will assume a new dimension by the end of December this year as it is likely to initiate investigations of institutional corruption.

Meanwhile, four former secretaries yesterday testified before the ACC in connection with a case filed against former premier Khaleda Zia, her younger son Arafat Rahman Koko, and 11 others, for allegedly awarding contracts for container handling in Chittagong

and Dhaka inland container yards to Global Agro Trade (Pvt) Co Ltd (Gatco), despite its lacking in required qualifications.

"A massive work is in the pipeline now as we have prepared 79 FIRs, and charge sheets against seven persons will be submitted soon. Investigations are on in 45 cases while the commission now has 26 cases pending with the court," said the ACC chairman during a routine news briefing in the commission's head office yesterday.

The chairman said primary inquiries of 101 allegations of corruption are also on.

The commission also held a meeting with its lawyers discussing legal aspects of the fresh FIRs readied to be submitted, sources said.

"We will not waste our time pursuing the cases that will not yield any result," the chairman

added.

"I can't guarantee that all the FIRs will turn into charge sheets, but we earnestly want to maintain proper procedures," the chairman said.

"I think the activities of the ACC will assume a new dimension as we are informed of the corruption allegations against different service oriented organisations. Investigations of such organisations will begin by the end of December," Mashud said.

Meanwhile, the summoned secretaries mainly explained to the commission that they carried out their duties according to the decisions made by respective ministries, and as secretaries it was their duty to assist the Cabinet Purchase Committee which awarded the work to Gatco.

The secretaries who appeared before the commission are ATM

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Sohel, Salman sued over Tk 191cr AB Bank loan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday sued Beximco Holdings Ltd Chairman Sohul F Rahman, Vice-Chairman Salman F Rahman and eight others on charges of fraudulently obtaining a bank loan that now stands at Tk 191.39 crore.

Taken out from the Arab Bangladesh Bank Ltd in 1998, the loan had been rescheduled several times before it reached the current figure.

The other accused in the fraud are former managing directors of Arab Bangladesh Bank CM Koyes Sami and Abu Hanif, former officials MA Awal and Tawhidul Islam, Beximco Holdings Ltd Directors Iqbal Ahmed, MA Qasem, Osman Kaiser Chowdhury and ex-official Binoy Krishna Nath.

ACC Assistant Director Mahbulul Alam filed the case with the Motijheel Police Station where

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CEC urges all to help ready voter list for quick polls

STAR REPORT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday urged the people to cooperate with the Election Commission (EC) in preparing the voter list for holding the ninth parliamentary election as soon as possible paving the way for lifting the state of emergency.

"The sooner we will be able to hold the election after having the voter list ready the sooner the state of emergency will be lifted," CEC Huda said at a views exchange meeting in Tangail just ahead of launching the work of preparing the voter list with photographs for Tangail municipality area, reported our local correspondent.

The CEC also warned that the emergency regime will remain in force if the election cannot be held.

"The people will have to cooperate with us in preparing the voter list for holding the election soon if

they want the state of emergency lifted," Huda said.

Referring to the chief adviser's latest remark that an unelected government should not stay in power for long and that the state of emergency should be lifted during the election, the CEC said many quarters already demanded withdrawal of the state of emergency.

"It is not fair to raise the demand only, they will have to help create the environment for meeting the demand too," the CEC quipped.

Explaining the backdrop against which the president was compelled to declare the state of emergency, the CEC said the emergency regime is necessary to keep the law and order situation normal for preparing for the election.

CEC Huda earlier said the state of emergency should be relaxed by the end of December this year in the areas where local government elections will be held from January according to the EC's electoral

roadmap.

In his address, Huda, who had been appointed as the CEC on February 14 after the resignation of his predecessor MA Aziz following the declaration of the state of emergency, explained the current situation also.

He said the ninth parliamentary election was postponed amid a volatile political situation mainly due to a flawed voter list.

"Political parties built a movement against it, during which 30 human lives perished. We want to hold the election with a fair voter list and we also want to stop the culture of vandalism and arson in the polls," the CEC asserted.

"The work of preparing the voter list with photographs will be completed within the timeframe the Election Commission announced earlier," he added.

In its electoral roadmap announced on July 15, the EC said

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Hasina seeks to withdraw Tk 7 lakh for tax payment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Awami League President Sheikh Hasina wrote a letter to the National Board of Revenue (NBR) recently to allow her to draw Tk 7 lakh from her bank account with Sangsad Bhaban branch of Sonali Bank so that she could pay income tax.

Meanwhile, Samila Rahman, wife of Arafat Rahman Koko, met her mother-in-law BNP chief Khaleda Zia at the sub-jail.

Advocate Khandaker Moniruzzaman, an income-tax lawyer, yesterday met Hasina to discuss ways for her to pay Tk 7 lakh income tax.

Moniruzzaman told reporters near the sub-jail at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises that as all bank accounts of Hasina are frozen, she wrote a letter to the NBR to allow her to draw Tk 7 lakh from her bank account with Sangsad Bhaban branch of Sonali Bank.

During the meeting with the lawyer, Hasina inquired about her husband and other members of her family. She also asked the lawyer to visit her ailing husband and inquire about his health. He said the for

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PHOTO: STAR

THE MAD RUSH: People buy tickets to go to their village home to celebrate Eid. The photo was taken from a private bus counter at Mirpur in the capital yesterday.

Mad rush for tickets

PINAKI ROY AND RASHIDUL HASAN

It was too long a queue. Having had his share, Tuhin Parvez, hailed from Paikgachha in Khulna, rushed to Eagle Paribahan bus counter in Kalabagan only to find he was the 242nd person standing in line for tickets.

After several hours, most in the queue found that tickets for October 9 and onwards until the Eid day were already sold out.

"People up to serial number 87 got tickets. So I came here to try my luck," Tuhin said at the counter of the same private bus near Notre Dame College.

Eagle released advance tickets for October 9 and onwards yesterday.

Almost all the private bus companies and luxurious water vessels that run buses and launches to southern part of the country don't

have a ticket left for October 9-13.

Amid government monitoring, scalpers have still captured tickets of inter-district bus services and are selling them at high rates, passengers in Arambagh allege.

Launch passengers allege they had to pay almost double for a cabin to go to different southern districts including Barisal, Chandpur, Pirojpur, Jhalakathi, Bhola, Khulna, Madaripur and Shariatpur.

This time crisis of bus tickets prevails much higher than early years as old and unfit buses cannot hit the road due to strong monitoring by Bangladesh Road Transport Authorities (BRTA).

Advance launch tickets were released yesterday but in many instances sellers were seen asking for higher rates.

The private bus companies selling advance tickets were found taking the price of last destination

for any tickets.

"We didn't increase ticket fare. We're just charging the fare of the last destination for all," said an official of Sohag bus counter. Magura-bound passengers and Khulna, Satkhira-bound ones are now paying the same fare.

It was seen tickets for Sylhet and Chittagong regions were comparatively available and the fare was also lower than that of southern region.

For Dhaka-Sylhet and Dhaka-Chittagong routes the non-AC bus tickets were selling at Tk 250 and the AC ones at Tk 450 and Tk 350 respectively.

According to the government rules, bus companies can charge Tk 0.80 a kilometre for buses and Tk 0.83 for minibuses.

In Gabtoli, the crowd of home-bound people was much less yesterday. Many people were seen

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Delwar tries to meet Khaleda over more expulsion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of BNP pro-Khaleda faction are going to submit a proposal to Chairperson Khaleda Zia to expel a few more pro-Bhuiyan leaders from the party as soon as possible.

Sources said some central and district level leaders, who are actively working with expelled secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, are also likely to receive show cause notice for violating party disciplines.

According to the sources, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain is trying to meet Khaleda with the suggestions for expelling those senior leaders and issuing notices to some others.

"I have sought permission to meet Khaleda Zia," Delwar told reporters at his NAM apartment house yesterday.

Everyone has to follow the party constitution, he said, adding that according to the constitution only the chairperson can bring any changes to the committee.

The sources further said Delwar will send the proposal to the party chief through her lawyers or relatives if he does not get permission to meet her at sub-jail.

Delwar yesterday met BNP standing committee member RA Goni at his Dhanmondi residence and discussed party-related issues.

A top leader said a few pro-Bhuiyan leaders are regularly delivering aggressive speeches against the chairperson and her family members. As it is absolutely harmful to the party, the pro-Khaleda group thinks it better to expel them from the party, he added.

Earlier, Khaleda expelled Abdul

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TARIQUE, MOUDUD, HUDA, SIGMA Graft cases stayed by HC, explanation sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday stayed proceedings of graft cases against detained BNP leaders Tarique Rahman, Moudud Ahmed, Nazmul Huda and his wife Sigma Huda for amassing wealth beyond their known sources of income.

The bench of Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury Rahman made the ruling in response to three writ petitions filed by former premier Khaleda Zia's elder son Tarique,

former law minister Moudud and former communications minister Huda.

In separate rules, it ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and other authorities concerned to explain within six weeks why the cases pursuant to the notices asking the defendants to turn in wealth statements shall not be declared illegal.

The court also asked the government to explain why bringing the graft charges under the emergency power rules should not be adjudged to have been made with-

out lawful authority.

The petitions filed on Thursday question the legality of filing and continuing of the cases.

Barrister Barique-ul Huq assisted by Barrister Mahub Uddin Khokon moved for the three. Khokon told The Daily Star that the ACC chairman, its officials who are also the complainants in the cases, and chief metropolitan magistrate are respondents to the HC rules.

Tarique, also senior joint secretary general of the BNP, stands

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