

## Tarique granted HC bail

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to explain why detention order against him should not be declared illegal.

A Dhaka court, meantime, set December 6 to pass judgment on a seven-day remand prayer for Tarique in another case.

### TARIQUE'S BAIL

The division bench of Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury granted the ad interim bail to Tarique, reports UNB.

The court also issued a ruling upon the government to explain in a week why placing the two extortion cases under the Emergency Power Rules should not be declared illegal.

Despite the bail, Tarique is unlikely to walk out of prison as he is accused in a string of other corruption cases along with the detention order, said Mahbubuddin Khokon, a counsel for Tarique.

The two cases were filed with Shahbagh and Dhanmondi police stations in April.

### TARIQUE-HANNAN SHAH

Another division bench of Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana and Justice M Abu Tariq yesterday ruled on the government to explain why detention order against Tarique and Brig Gen (ret'd) ASM Hannan Shah, adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia, should not be declared illegal, reports UNB.

The court orders followed separate petitions by Tarique and Hannan challenging the validity of detentions against them under the Special Powers Act.

The government put Tarique in detention under Special Powers Act following his arrest on March 7. Hannan Shah was served with a 30-day detention order on November 25 after his arrest.

Earlier on November 22, Hannan secured ad interim bail from the High Court. He is accused of violating the Emergency Power Rules and assaulting a top party dissident, Lt Gen (Ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman, on November 7.

### TARIQUE'S REMAND

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Rabbani fixed December 6 to give decision on remand prayer for Tarique in connection with concealing information in his health statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission, reports our court correspondent.

The investigation officer in his

forwarding report explained to the court why Tarique should be remanded after the BNP leader was turned in before the court under tight security at 11.05am.

The IO wrote that Tarique needs to be questioned to discover the sources of his Tk 55 lakh bank deposits with Banani branches of Prime Bank and Dhaka Bank, plots at Basundhara and in Gazipur and other relevant matters.

Defence lawyers, on the other hand, submitted a petition for cancellation of the remand prayer arguing that their client was implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy to harass him. They said the reason for the remand prayer was baseless.

The court then asked the defence lawyers, after long hearing on the issue, to submit an affidavit stating that the charges brought against their client are false, fabricated and concocted, which the defence followed.

At one stage, the court told Tarique's lawyers that the investigation officer should be given the opportunity to probe the matter independently this time as the past government had made the Anti-Corruption Commission a dysfunctional entity which is why no probe reports were submitted for years.

Two other accused in this case are Tarique's wife Dr Zubaida Rahman and mother-in-law Iqbalma Banu.

ACC Deputy Director Zahurul Huda filed the case with Kairul Police Station on September 26, accusing Tarique of concealing information on assets worth over Tk 4.23 crore in his June 10 wealth statement to the anti-corruption watchdog and amassing an estimated Tk 4.82 crore wealth illegally.

The BNP leader handed in his statement through the jail authorities, showing that he, his wife and daughter own Tk 1.37 crore in assets.

He was earlier remanded for 10 days in four extortion cases -- he is accused in seven such cases -- filed with Shahbagh, Gulshan and Kairul police stations on different dates.

The joint forces arrested him on March 7 at his mother's cantonment residence and he has since been detained in Dhaka Central Jail.

## Ballot box

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Party of Bangladesh, and Workers Party demanded introduction of transparent ballot boxes. And, BDB also suggested the same during its talk with the commission yesterday.

About polling agents, the CEC said the commission will study carefully how to change the existing culture of having a large number of polling agents in polling stations, in a bid to curb poll expenditure.

"We have to think of it deeply, how to keep the polling booths uncluttered and how to avoid the presence of a huge number of polling agents there. The polling agents work to check the authenticity of a voter. But this time the voter list will have photographs of voters, reducing considerably the possibility of fake votes being cast," the CEC argued.

The BDB delegation led by its Secretary General Maj (ret'd) Abdul Mannan argued for reducing the number of polling agents for curbing poll expenditure. BDB leaders also said a large amount of money is spent only for hiring the polling agents.

The CEC lauded the BDB proposal and assured them of necessary steps addressing the issue.

The existing electoral laws say a contesting candidate or his/her election agent, may, before the commencement of the poll, appoint for each polling station not more than two polling agents if there is only one booth, and not more than five polling agents if there are more than one booths, and the contestant shall give notice thereof in writing to the presiding officer in advance.

During the electoral reform talk in the EC Secretariat's conference room, BDB placed a set of proposals including one for allocating election symbols for individual candidates, cancelling the existing system of allocating one symbol for all nominated candidates of a political party. It also proposed allocation of Tk 5 per voter as election expenditure, and barring anti-liberation political parties and similar religious obscurantist forces from getting registration from the EC.

During the talk with BDB, the two other election commissioners, Muhammed Sohul Hussain and Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakawat Hussain, explained various electoral reform proposals drafted by the EC.

## Trial of Hasina

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The investigation officer (IO) of the case later included Sheikh Rehana's name in the charge sheet after an investigation.

On November 11, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court summoned Rehana, who resides in the UK, to turn herself in by November 18 and directed the authorities concerned to publish the summons in two Bangla national dailies.

Rehana, however, did not comply with the court order.

The IO submitted the charge sheet before the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on July 24, with 24 people as prosecution witnesses. The court accepted the charge sheet and issued a warrant for Rehana's arrest and ordered attachment of her properties.

Law enforcement agencies arrested Hasina on July 16 and produced her before a magistrate court, which sent her to jail.

Two more extortion cases and a graft case were filed against the former prime minister with Tejjagon Police Station on April 9, June 13 and September 2.

Advocate ABM Sharifuddin Khan Mukul has been appointed the chief public prosecutor (PP) while Borhan Uddin, Golam Kibria, Syed Ahsan Habib and Shahidul Islam Sardar are to assist Mukul during the trial.

**ZILLUR TO DEFEND HASINA**  
Awami League (AL) acting President Zillur Rahman after a 35-year break of legal practice appears before the court to defend the party chief Sheikh Hasina who is in detention on extortion charges, reports UNB.

"After a break of long 35 years of legal practice, I am going to appear before the court for my leader," said the elderly politician.

Briefing reporters at his Gulshan residence Zillur Rahman demanded that the accused be prosecuted under the existing laws. Otherwise, the court will come under question home and abroad, he said.

He observed that the extortion case against the daughters of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the arrest of Hasina "are a design to harass them."

Zillur asserted that Hasina was never involved in corruption. "If there is transparency in the trial she will come out free."

The Awami League leader said they would always support the government if its purpose is to establish rule of law in the country.

## Regulatory

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handed over a cheque for \$10,000 for the relief of the cyclone-hit people.

Dr Akbar said they would soon submit another recommendation to simplify the regulatory complexities for the foreign investors.

He added that the recommendation would be relating to simplifying regulations on exports, imports and foreign investment.

## VGF did not reach

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to this situation. "We have a long month ahead but we do not know what will happen if the administration takes so long to collect rice," said Ahmed Khan of Aulapur village in sadar upazila.

## Mine character

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Bangladesh will need 450 million tonnes of coal.

The draft says that the country's existing four discovered coalfields of Barapukuria, Phulbari, Khalashpur and Dighipara can meet this need until 2030 or thereabout.

The country's lone coalmine is the Barapukuria underground mine, which is now producing around half a million tonnes of coal a year. The troubled mine may be able to produce up to one million tonnes a year in a best-case scenario.

The committee was formed in June as the sixth draft version of a national coal policy drew a lot of criticism for being anti-investment and self-contradictory. It held its first meeting one month after its formation.

The 10-member committee held dialogues with various stakeholders and opinion leaders stressed the need to have a national coal body like "Coal Bangla" that would lead coal ventures in the country.

Last week the committee had long discussions on the royalty issue. The present legal framework demands six percent royalty on coal production from an open-pit mine, and five percent from an underground mine. It was long felt that this rate, fixed decades ago, has become irrelevant, as the global energy prices are at an all-time high.

The draft policy sought to increase this rate under a certain formula that can push the royalty beyond 20 percent in the present global coal market context. Potential investors and the Asia Energy have been opposing the idea saying that such royalty rates, added with corporate tax, will turn any coal venture into a failed effort.

In this regard, the committee assigned one of its members to gather data on global royalty rate trend. The data tabled last week showed that worldwide seven percent is the highest royalty rate. Any rate beyond that can make the coal production price too costly.

The committee also argued that increasing the royalty would be also applicable for the government-owned Barapukuria coalmine, which is unable to properly pay its five percent royalty. Earlier, the committee made a visit to that coalmine.

The committee last week also

## Making EC

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approved the Livestock and Fish Feed Ordinance-2007 in principle, but sent it back to the ministry for further vetting.

Fahim Munaim said according to the proposed ordinance none will be allowed to market livestock and fish feed without approval from the testing authorities concerned of the government, and there must be manufacturing and expiry dates on the packets.

The ordinance also bans adding chemicals to the feed.

The council also approved the Money Loan Court (Amendment) Ordinance yesterday.

Replying to a question Fahim said distribution of vulnerable group feeding (VGF) cards began in Barguna, Pirojpur, Bhola, Jhalakathi, Shariatpur, Khulna and in Madaripur on Saturday.

Today the cards will be distributed in Bagerhat and Gopalganj where those will be distributed in Shatkhira and Patuakhali from tomorrow, he said adding that 10 to 12 lakh metric tons of rice have already been imported to meet the shortage of 19 lakh metric tons.

In reply to another question, Fahim said the government had talked to non-government organizations (NGOs) so that they postpone collecting loan repayment instalments in Sidr battered areas, prompting some of them to postpone it already.

"The government will talk to the NGOs again regarding the matter and follow up on the matter," he said.

He also said the government will sit with international donors today and discuss the matter of long-term infrastructure rehabilitation in the cyclone battered areas.

## Matin

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Matin told a meeting of cross section of people at Barisal Circuit House.

Matin, also coordinator of relief and rehabilitation, was critical of certain NGOs including the one that reportedly took away CI sheets from the roof of a woman borrower's house in the cyclone-affected area for failing to repay loan.

"Such inhuman activity would not be tolerated," said the adviser. Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Salahuddin Ahmed and Brig Gen Rashiduzzaman also spoke at the meeting.

Salahuddin informed the meeting that all commercial banks have been instructed to soften the hard rules of realising loans from the borrowers in cyclone-affected areas. Defaulting loans should be rescheduled without asking for repayment.

He advised the NGOs to go slow in recovery of credits.

Brig Rashiduzzaman gave an account of relief and rehabilitation activities.

His latest estimate put the death toll in cyclone Sidr at 3,300 with 863 people still missing. Besides, 563,000 houses and crops on 11 lakh hectares of land were damaged by the cyclone.

Some 265,000 bundles of CI sheets would be required for reconstruction and repair of houses. But only 13,000 bundles have been procured so far from home and abroad.

invited Asia Energy chief Gary Lye to hear his opinions on several issues, including exports, which is one of the main focuses of Asia Energy's Phulbari coalmine development scheme. The controversial company proposed to produce 15 million tonnes of coal a year from an open-pit mine in Phulbari that has 572 million tonnes of coal.

Lye told the committee that the company was interested in a market that would secure the return of its investment. Asia Energy would not be interested to export, if the local market can absorb the production.

According to Lye's written statement, Asia Energy says that it already sees a market of 12 million tonnes of coal a year. The Asia Energy had proposed to set up a 1,000MW power plant, which would demand three million tonnes of coal a year. Plus, the country's brick kilns demand around three million tonnes. Brickette (packed coal used for cooking and domestic use) industry can cater for household demands of another three million tonnes. And if the government okays an Asian Development Bank (ADB) proposal to set up another power plant, then another three million tonnes of coal can be sold.

Apart from this 12-million-tonne market, an investor friendly environment would encourage more power plants, which can consume the remaining coal of Phulbari's production, Lye said.

He, however, added that about 25 percent of the coal of Phulbari was high quality coking coal, which is used in steel industry and has very high price in the international market. Until Bangladesh has its steel industry, this coal should be exported instead of using it in brick kiln, he said.

## Muggers shoot

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Police and eyewitnesses said when fabric trader Saiful Islam was returning home around 7:00pm from Narsingdi, the gang on a CNG-run auto-rickshaw stopped him at Baroani. As he cried for help, locals came forward and started chasing the miscreants.

Being chased, the gang fired shots at the pursuing mob killing Matin on the spot.

When the muggers reached Malipara, locals again started chasing them. The gang opened firing again and Arman was wounded. He died after he was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Locals, however, managed to capture two of the criminals. They handed them over to Sonargaon Police Station after beating them up.

## UN commends

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Iftekhar Chowdhury assured her that such support would continue. "Bangladeshi authorities look forward to work very closely with the new department," he said.

He also urged that there should be appropriate representation of Bangladeshi officials both at the Headquarters and field of the UN in line with its contribution of peacekeepers.

They discussed possibilities of deployment in newer operations.

## CA pledges

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continuing its efforts to explore more international market for Bangladeshi products. If Saffa is fully implemented, there is possibility of manifold increase of inter-trade between the South Asian countries.

Discussions are going on for duty-free access of Bangladeshi products to Russian, Malaysian, Asean and the neighbouring markets, he told the function.

Presently, Bangladeshi products have got duty-free access to the markets of European Union, Canada, Australia and Norway.

Fakhrudin said the government is lobbying for the passage of "New Partnership for Development Act 2007" in the US Congress which will give the country's products duty-free access to the US market. If the bill is approved, readymade garment export there would increase rapidly, he said.

He mentioned some steps of the government designed for accelerating trade and business. These include formation of Bangladesh Better Business Forum and Regulatory Reforms Commission, steps for increasing power supply, improvement of management at Chittagong Seaport and reform in economic sectors. Fakhrudin said the measures are bringing positive results.

The chief adviser said against the backdrop of increasing prices of commodities, it is essential to ensure minimum wages of the workers.

He added that on overall consideration, productivity of export-oriented industries would have to increase and implementation of compliance ensured to sustain the rate of export.

He, however, expressed his satisfaction to learn that most of the BKMEA factories have implemented minimum wage and requested others to follow suit immediately.

Finance and Commerce Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam, Power and Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury and BKMEA President Fazlul Huq also spoke at the function.

Later, the chief adviser formally inaugurated the Knitwear Exposition and went around some stalls.

## Drugs

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heroin around the den. Dealers from across the city also come to the spot to buy the deadly drug.

### SYNDICATE BOSS

The gang's godfather is a couple popularly known as 'drug lady' Rony Begum and her husband Abul Hossain Liton.

According to DNC sources, the couple has been hiding in India for the last six months but their close relatives and aides are looking after the trade.

The sources also say the couple owns several pieces of land and flats in and around the capital. They have a two-and-a-half-high plot in Gazipur and land property in Dakkhinkhan, Khilkhet, Aminbazar, Bardeshi in Savar.

Heroin and phensidyle are mostly smuggled into the country from India, DNC officials say.

Members of the gang often bring consignments of heroin from India and sometimes collect the drug from smugglers in different bordering villages.

Usually, most of the smuggled heroin and phensidyle comes from Benapole in Jessore, the DNC officials add.

Assistant Commissioner (Dhaka zone of the DNC) Fazlur Rahman, however, denied the allegation that DNC officials take bribe from the drug traders.

He said if the allegations against any DNC officials and staff were proved, stern action would be taken against them.

"If a salesman is arrested, within hours the gang finds his replacement. As the salesmen are also addit, it does not take even an hour to appoint a new salesman if anyone is offered Tk 100 to Tk 150 per day," he noted.

Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Naim Ahmed told The Daily Star there is no scope of taking bribe at the institutional level.

He said they will enquire whether anyone takes bribe from the drug peddlers personally.

"If anyone does so, tough action would be taken against them."

## 12 relief seekers

**FROM PAGE 1**  
disaster. Police arrested the 12 after intercepting the procession near Jomaddar Bari while they were on their way to submit a memorandum to the deputy commissioner's office in the district headquarters.

Rest of the protesters later held a sit-in on the road and began an indefinite hunger strike demanding release of the arrestees.

The protesters called off the demonstration after district officials and Navy personnel assured them of release of the arrestees and distributed 10 kg of rice to each of them.

## Ctg Wasa engineers

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Of them, Taher and Faruk are absconding while two others are in jail.

The convicted engineers in collaboration with others paid the contractor in full even though 968 metres of pipeline was not installed in the 3,100 metre pipeline instalment project.

The ACC with the help of Rapid Action Battalion on September 26 this year arrested Shaiful Islam, Mohammad Shafiqul Islam, Muhammad Shafiqul Islam and Abdul Kuddus.

ACC Assistant Director Jahangir Alam, the investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate AKM Shahidur Rahman on September 27 this year. The case was later sent to the Court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge AKM Anwar Hossain.

District and Sessions Judge Majnu Ahsan, who was also the acting judge of the Chittagong Special Judge's Court now renamed Chittagong Divisional Special Judge's Court following the separation of judiciary, framed the charges against the five accused on October 31.

## Govt asked

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HRPB President advocate Manzill Murshid told the news agency that a huge number of justice-seekers have long been deprived of getting shelter of the courts in resolving urgent civil matters during the annual vacation.

"The constitution guarantees that every citizen gets justice at all times. It cannot be curtailed in any way," he added.

## Govt firm

**FROM PAGE 16**  
people living well below the poverty line don't face any scarcity of food and can have a minimum stock of food.

The programme would also help setting up an institutional base in conducting relief and rehabilitation operations in a well-coordinated manner, he added.

The chief adviser said the government has taken multifarious steps to bring life back to normal in the affected areas. Normalcy is gradually returning in the affected areas following combined efforts of the government, people and various non-government and private organizations.

He, however, said it would take a long time for rehabilitation.

The chief adviser hoped that more individuals and organizations would come forward to help the cyclone victims.

Among the day's donors to the CA's Relief and Welfare Fund, were Theatre President Prof Mamtazuddin Ahmed, Dhaka Commerce College Principal ABM Ashraf Kashem and Chairman of UCBL Board of Directors Yunus Ahmed.

## CHT peace accord

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pro-peace accord forum, organised another discussion on "Ethnic Problems in Bangladesh and CHT Crisis: The Political Way Out" at the VIP Lounge at the press club.

The accord was signed on December 2, 1997, ending two decades of bush war.

**DISCUSSION AGAINST ACCORD**  
Barrister Mainul said the peace agreement can be reviewed, as new distrust, discrimination and conflicts have risen between the Bangladesh and indigenous people in the CHT districts in the last 10 years.

He said the Bangladeshis make complaints of being deprived of equal rights in comparison with the indigenous people.

"As much as I know, no steps were taken yet to remove the discrimination between the Bangladeshis and the hill people that arose following the peace agreement."

Blaming the country's post-liberation governments for long-standing instability in the CHT, he said now the caretaker government has to bear the consequences of political mistakes.

After the country's liberation, indigenous leaders had called on the then head of state to voice their demands for ethnic rights, but they were rather asked to become Bangladeshis, Mainul said.

Being deprived of their rights, indigenous groups initiated violent activities, he added.

The law adviser said it is a demand of justice to remove discrimination, mistrust and conflicts created by the peace accord.

As a political government caused the crisis, it needs to be addressed by a political government as well, he observed.

On ongoing voter listing in CHT districts, he said anyone can be enlisted as voter where they stay. "The Election Commission should clear this rule so that no confusion erupts among the people," he also said.

Chaired by Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, the discussion was addressed, among others, by Khagrachhari Hill District Council Chairman Monindra Lal Tripura, Monthly Madina editor Mohiuddin Khan, member secretary of Samo Odhikar Mostafizur Rahman Millat, and Advocate Tazul Islam.

Journalist Hasan Mahmud Prafulla read out the keynote paper on the issue titled "A Decade of CHT Accord: Expectation and Achievement".

Other speakers also termed the peace agreement unconstitutional as well as against the interests of the Bangladeshi settlers and demanded a review of it.

Prof Emajuddin Ahmed said the accord includes several articles that are anti-constitutional and which don't maintain the interests of the Bangladeshis.

He came up with a suggestion, saying, "The government could form a committee to review it and find out reasons why the settlers are being deprived of their rights."

## Ctg mayor

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Police Station in the evening.

In the new case, the complainant said the couple amassed Tk 1.46 crore beyond their known sources of income and "concealed Tk 2.37 crore" in their wealth statement submitted to the commission.

The mayor was arrested at his Chittagong home on March 7 this year during an anti-corruption crackdown against suspected corrupt politicians and businesspeople.

The ACC sent him a notice to submit his wealth statement on June 25 and Mohiuddin submitted the statement through jail authorities on July 12 saying he has wealth worth Tk 2.23 crore.

"The case was filed after receiving specific allegations against the couple for amassing wealth illegally," said an ACC source.

Earlier in the day, the High Court gave bail to the detained mayor in two corruption cases, one in connection with hill cutting.

A High Court division bench, comprising Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice M Abdul Hye, passed the orders of confirmation of Mohiuddin's bail.

Mohiuddin was, however, not to be freed from jail despite the High Court orders as he is facing more corruption charges coupled with order of detention under the stringent Special Powers Act, his counsel said.

## Benazir

**FROM PAGE 16**  
"They (the government) have a plan to rig the elections. They have created improvised or ghost polling stations and also have a plan to steal thousands of ballot papers a night before election and give them to their candidates," she said.

She accused the government of making "bulk" transfers of key officials ahead of the elections and said mayors from the former government were misusing public funds.

"The government should suspend all mayors and cancel transfers (of officials)," she added.

Benazir said the election commission had not given her the list of voters in her constituency and was demanding 30 million rupees (500,000 dollars) to do so.