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Bullets hit Hasina's Mercedes on Aug 21

Experts find

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Ballistic experts found that three bullets hit the windows of the armoured Mercedes in which Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina was escaping the scene following the grenade attacks on the AL rally on August 21, 2004.

A three-member team, comprising members from the Special Branch of Police (SB) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID), already prepared a report in which it mentioned that 10 marks were found on five windows of the Mercedes G-class sports utility.

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CA seeks \$1b from donors for long-term disaster plan

ASHFAQ WARES KHAN

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday asked donors to pump in an estimated \$1 billion to assist a massive long-term plan to protect coastal areas from natural disasters and climate change otherwise Bangladesh's development will be hampered.

Endorsing the chief adviser's proposals, donors pledged their commitment to the project but asked the government to ensure

the framework for the massive logistical and coordination challenges in pursuing the long-term plans.

In a meeting with bilateral and multilateral donors at his office, the chief adviser said the country could no longer afford to count on relief and rehabilitation and wait for the next natural disaster. He said, "After two consecutive floods during the monsoon and cyclone Sitr, we need a reawakening and new resolve to shape our destiny."

"We believe that the time has come for us to take a long-term view of Bangladesh's frequent trysts with nature's whims," Fakhruddin said, adding, "We must be ambitious in our approach and firm in our resolve in thinking of a large-scale, long-term solution to contain the fury of mother-nature on a sustainable basis."

Citing years of development gains lost to natural disasters like Sitr, Fakhruddin feared the Millennium

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No scope for Rohingyas to become voters

Says CEC

UNB, Bandarban

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda has said there is no scope for inclusion of Rohingyas in the voter list.

"Only the country's real citizens who live in particular addresses will be made voters and provided with voter ID cards," the CEC told a view-exchange meeting here yesterday.

The circle chief of the area, government officials, public representatives, the district election officer, enumerators, supervisors and local elite attended the meeting at Bandarban Tribal Cultural Institution.

Election Commissioner Brig

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

BB predicts inflation rise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The central bank has projected that inflation rate will rise by 1.3 percentage point in the current fiscal year compared to that of last year due to the rise in prices of food and non-food items in the global market.

However, the central bank predicts that the GDP growth rate will stay over 6.0 percent, though many quarters have anticipated it would be lower than that.

The Bangladesh Bank makes these views in its Monetary Policy Review released yesterday.

In the review it says, "The projections of food and non-food inflation lead to a prediction of 12-month average general CPI inflation in FY 08 in the range of 8.10 percent and 8.50 percent vis-à-vis the end FY07 CPI inflation rate of 7.20 percent."

The central bank also says the current projection indicates that international prices of most of the commodities, especially those of rice, wheat, edible oil, and other essential commodities that Bangladesh imports, are not likely to come down in 2007-08.

It further says Bangladesh has a high food weight in total consumers price index (CPI), which makes domestic inflation highly susceptible to food price changes in the international commodity market.

The review adds: "With rationalisation of the enforcement regime and other measures taken by the government to increase production and supply of essential commodities after the temporary disruption in the supply chain in FY 07, it is more likely that the supply situation would return to normalcy early in FY08."

The 12-month average food

inflation is likely to lie in the range of 9.30 percent and 9.70 percent and 9.75 percent to 10.15 percent respectively in rural and urban areas, the review adds.

The projections suggest that the national 12-month average food inflation in 2007-08 fiscal year would settle in the range of 9.75 percent and 9.85 percent.

The review also predicts that the 12-month average non-food inflation is likely to be in the range of 6.35 percent to 6.75 percent and 5.50 percent to 5.90 percent respectively in the rural and urban areas.

The projections also imply that the national 12-month average non-food inflation in 2007-08 fiscal year would settle in the range of 6.10 percent to 6.50 percent.

The GDP growth rate for the current fiscal year would be in the range of 6.2 percent to 6.5 percent.

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Investors clash with cops as stocks dip

SARWAR A CHOWDHURY

Hundreds of investors took to the street in front of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) building clashing with police yesterday after the key index had lost 83 points on the Dhaka bourse around noon.

The melee prompted the market regulator to allow resumption of brokerage lending to investors for purchasing shares.

At least five people were injured during the half an hour clash.

On November 19, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) imposed a ban on lending to investors by both brokerage houses and merchant banks for purposes of investing in stocks.

Trading on the premier bourse started with a steep fall yesterday

with almost all the share prices dropping significantly. Finally, the DSE General Index fell by 5.44 points, or 0.18 percent, ending the day at 2,873.29 points.

Following the plunge agitated investors came out of the trading houses and started demonstrating around 11:00am.

The news that trading had come to a halt at 11:20am due to a technical glitch in the bourse's server computer added fuel to the demonstration.

Members of law enforcing agencies, including police and the detective branch, rushed to the spot and resorted to baton charges on the protestors, who in turn

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SEC COMES UNDER FIRE, STAR BUSINESS



PHOTO: STAR

General investors stage a demonstration in front of Dhaka Stock Exchange following a sudden slump of stock prices yesterday. At least five people were injured during clashes between investors and police that followed.

Hasina appears in court, hearing stalled until Dec 9

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former premier Sheikh Hasina was produced before a Dhaka court on extortion charges yesterday when the detained Awami League (AL) chief had the first opportunity to claim her innocence, four and a half months into the arrest.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, however, adjourned till December 9 the hearing on charge framing against Hasina and two other accused in a Tk 2.99 crore extortion case as the defence counsel prayed for time to

examine necessary case documents.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court (SC) yesterday stayed a High Court (HC) order that had declared illegal the notice issued by Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) to Hasina, asking her to submit her wealth statement.

The defence sought time to examine and check the supplementary charge sheet submitted in connection with the case on Sunday, the copies of which the defence lawyers had not received

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Banks refuse to open account of pro-Khaleda BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State-owned and commercial banks declined to open a bank account for pro-Khaleda Zia faction of BNP that attempted to open the account to collect funds for the cyclone-affected people.

"We contacted almost all the commercial and state-owned banks but they did not agree to open a relief fund (bank account) in the name of BNP," Rizvi Ahmed, acting office secretary of the party, pro-Khaleda faction, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Party leaders said a number of senior leaders of the faction contacted a number of state-owned banks to open a "relief fund" but the bank authorities refused them saying there was "pressure from"

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Bringing back siphoned off money impeded

ACC chief blames it on red tape

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The effort to bring back money that had been smuggled out of the country has hit a snag due to bureaucratic tangles, said Maj Gen (ret'd) Hasan Mashud Chowdhury, chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

At a routine press briefing held

yesterday in the ACC office in the capital, he also said, "There is no competent authority to handle the issue."

Even though the Scotland Yard has been assisting the ACC with some unofficial information on money smuggled abroad, the ACC is unable to take any legal action as Bangladesh lacks official arrange-

ments with the countries concerned in this regard, Mashud said. "We need information from authentic sources to bring the guilty to book."

The ACC chief informed the reporters of launching a mass awareness campaign against corruption on December 9. The ACC,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Army suggests changes in draft electoral rules

SHIAKHAWAT LITON

The army has suggested some amendments to the draft rules on electoral roll, prepared by the Election Commission (EC) and sent to the army authorities seeking their opinion on those.

Reviewing the draft, the army gave suggestions on nine sections and sub-sections of the rules for the EC's consideration, sources at the EC Secretariat said.

Most of the suggestions are technical that specified the procedure to ensure preparing the voter list properly.

The EC is now finalising the draft rules, to be formulated in the next two weeks giving legal coverage to the procedure being followed in preparing the voter list with photographs, and national identity cards.

"We have sought opinion of the army on the draft rules since the disciplined force is helping preparation of voter list," Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain said in reply to a question. The Electoral Roll Ordinance

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Sheikh Selim retracts judicial statement

Alleges torture, death threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Awami League (AL) leader Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim in a retraction petition told a Dhaka court yesterday that intolerable physical and mental torture, and threat to kill him in 'crossfire' forced him to give a judicial statement in connection with the Tk 2.99 crore extortion case.

Selim submitted the petition to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, set up under special arrangements at MP Hostel on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises, when he was taken there along with former prime minister Sheikh

Hasina.

In his petition, the former minister told Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque that the confessional statement was taken following his confinement to an unknown place for a long period, and physical and mental torture in phases.

Defence lawyers said Selim's repeated requests to jail authorities earlier to have the confessional statement withdrawn or to take him to court were ignored.

The AL leader in his petition said the joint forces arrested him on the night of May 21 without any warrant, and took him away after a four-hour search in his residence.

Blindfolded, he was taken to an unknown place, instead of a police station. He was tortured there physically and mentally, and also threatened with death. The joint forces also questioned him over several issues. He was sent to a court on May 30 with a three-day remand prayer, the retraction petition said.

The court granted remand, and Selim was again blindfolded and taken to an unknown place. On June 2, the court ordered his detention for a month.

And on June 17, two persons identifying themselves as men

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Hafiz, Mamun remanded

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed detained businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun on a three-day remand in a cheating case while his brother former BNP lawmaker Hafiz Ibrahim was placed on a two-day remand for misappropriating relief materials.

Meanwhile, Tejgaon police yesterday registered the extortion case against former housing and public works secretary Kamrul Islam Siddiqui and two others as a regular case.

Besides, detained former BNP lawmaker Ali Newaz Mahmud Khaiyam was granted ad interim bail in an extortion case.

MAMUN REMANDED Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Sultan Mahmud passed the order after Gulshan police

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Sacked staffs besiege Sylhet City Corporation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Activities at the Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) office remained suspended yesterday as its 431 staff sacked by a government order on Sunday were barred from performing their duties.

The sacked SCC employees besieged the SCC mayor and other officials for hours demanding punishment of those who arranged jobs for them taking bribe during the rule of BNP-led coalition.

Later, acting mayor Azam Khan held an emergency meeting with SCC officials and ward commissioners.

They formed a three-member committee that will meet the LGRD adviser today. Besides, they decided to run emergency services including supply of water and electricity with the existing staff until regular employees are appointed.

The LGRD ministry cancelled the appointment of 431 SCC staff on the grounds that they were appointed "illegally" following an

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