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AUG 21 ATTACK
CID allowed to probe role of Khaleda, Nizami
COURT CORRESPONDENT

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday received permission to probe the case filed by a victim against detained former premier Khaleda Zia, her son Tarique Rahman, Jamaat chief Matur Rahman Nizami and 25 others for the grenade attack on an Awami League (AL) rally on August 21, 2004.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate passed the order after Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) of CID Mohammad Fazul Kabir, also the investigation officer (IO) of the original case, submitted a petition to investigate the petition case jointly.

On June 5 last year, diploma engineer Badar Aziz Uddin from Cox's Bazar filed the case with the

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Truth Commission should not spare any 'particular party,' says ACC chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Lt Gen (ret) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury said yesterday the proposed Truth Commission should not have any scope to spare any 'particular party' in its operation, and that must be ensured through law.

The ACC has prepared a draft giving its opinion and suggestions about Truth Commission, he said at a routine press briefing at the ACC headquarters.

The government last month sought the ACC's views on the formation of Truth Commission.

"If the government feels the necessity of forming Truth Commission, then we should not have any disagreement with the government on its decision," said Hasan Mashhud.

The ACC draft contains a recommendation that no particular party should be given any special opportunity through the formation of Truth Commission, he mentioned.

Responding to a question, the ACC chief ruled out any possibility of a row between the two commissions over any single case.

Asked about the ACC bringing out processions during the state of

emergency, he said if the government permits it and thinks it will not cause any harm to the country, then there is nothing wrong with it.

On allegations that ACC actions are motivated, he said, "Our work is the proof (that the allegations are baseless)".

Hasan Mashhud also said the commission has already ordered filing 30 cases based on allegations made by people. It has received 40,000 allegations from them.

He mentioned that the ACC has 60 cases in court now and 41 have been disposed of. It has filed 174 first information reports (FIR) and

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AL, BNP welcome dialogue
UNB, Dhaka

The Awami League and the BNP yesterday welcomed the government-sponsored dialogue to be held this month, which aims at holding the general election in a free, fair and credible manner.

"We welcome the dialogue, we're waiting for it as we first raised the demand for it in order to reach a national consensus," Awami League General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam told UNB.

In reply to a question, he said issues like price hikes, state of emergency, pre-election atmosphere, law and order and reforms of different constitutional bodies will be raised at the dialogue by the

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Only MPs have right to stay in Nam flats
Allottee ex-lawmakers say

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of former Awami League, BNP and Jatiya Party lawmakers yesterday said only the elected legislators have the right to stay in the Nam flats as those are parliament property.

They demanded that the government immediately cancel the allotment of the Nam flats to the government officials.

"We are living here (Nam flats) as per allocation from the Parliament Secretariat and no-one has the right to cancel that allotment," said Shajahan Khan at a press conference at the Nam Flat on Manik Miah Avenue.

Former lawmakers of AL, BNP and JP of the eighth parliament present at the press conference raised their voice in support of the statement.

They said they will vacate the flats if the government guarantees that those won't be allocated to anyone else before the next general elections.

The former lawmakers however said they don't believe the flats would remain vacant as some have already been allotted to the government officials.

On living without rent, they said nowhere in the world lawmakers pay rent, adding, they only pay service charges.

In the written statement, Shajahan Khan said according to a parliament committee meeting, Nam flats on Manik Miah Avenue and Nakhlapara are now parliament members' residence.

"Parliament members' buildings are property of parliament and only elected lawmakers have the right to live there. It's disgraceful and humiliation to let those to others," he said.

"We don't want to go on confrontation with the government," he said, demanding that the government will work in line with the Speaker's application.

He also said only Parliament Secretariat can fix rent for MPs and "we're using Nam flats paying service charges fixed by the parliament secretariat".

Earlier on March 23, a number of former lawmakers of AL, BNP and Jatiya Party vowed to resist the government move to vacate the flats.

On December 4 last year, the ministry of housing and public

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ILL-GOTTEN WEALTH
Atiqullah Khan jailed for 13yrs
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court dealing with corruption cases yesterday sentenced editor of the daily Janakantha Atiqullah Khan Masud to 13 years imprisonment for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information in his wealth statement submitted to the ACC.

The court also sentenced Masud's wife Shamima A Khan to three years imprisonment for abetting her husband and keeping the ill-gotten wealth in her possession.

She was also fined Tk 1 lakh, in default of which she has to suffer six months more in jail.

Judge Sirajul Islam of Special Judge's Court-7, set up on the Jatiya Sangsad premises, also fined Masud Tk 10 lakh, in default of which he has to suffer another year in jail.

Earlier, Masud had been sentenced to 21 years imprisonment, seven years in each of the three cases filed against him for getting a building design approved by the Rajdhani Unnayan Katrapakkha

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Prayer Timing

April 4		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-40	5-15
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-21	6-24
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

AUSTERITY
250 industries asked to cut gas usage
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited has requested around 250 industries to cut gas usage from 6:00pm to 11:00pm.

"We've handed in letters to the industries under our area coverage. Ten surveillance units will monitor from next working day [Sunday] which industries are following our requests," M Abdullah, managing director of Titas, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The supply and pressure of gas, however, will remain normal during the five-hour period, he said.

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PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka Wasa workers dig the road in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital to install sewerage lines yesterday, creating traffic congestion at the busy hospital gate.

Delhi signs transport deal with Yangon
OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India and Myanmar Wednesday signed an agreement for India's investment of \$130 million to develop a multi-modal transport project in western Myanmar enhancing connectivity between the two countries.

The project includes a waterway, building roads and developing the Sittwe Port on the edge of the Bay of Bengal linking Myanmar to Mizoram through the Kaladan river bypassing Bangladesh, Indian External Affairs Ministry officials said.

It also includes a protocol on facilitation of transit transport that will give India's landlocked

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Deal on Dhaka-Kolkata rail service by Apr 14
Bangladesh, India finalise details

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and India yesterday finalised all technical issues including schedules and fare for the Dhaka-Kolkata passenger train service ahead of its scheduled launching on April 14.

"The formal agreement in this regard will be signed anytime before Pahela Baishakh," ATKM Ismail,

additional secretary of the communications ministry, told newsmen.

Ismail led the six-member Bangladesh delegation to the two-day long inter-governmental meeting between the rail officials of the two countries that concluded at the Rail Bhavan in the city yesterday.

"We've tied up all loose ends, and are now completely ready for the start of the train service," said

RN Varma, additional member (traffic) of the Indian Railway Board, who led the seven-member Indian delegation.

The Moitree (friendship) Express will operate weekly between the Cantonment Railway Station in Dhaka and Chitpur station in Kolkata through the Darshanaborder.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

N Korea cuts contacts with South amid rising tensions
AFP, Seoul

North Korea announced yesterday it was suspending all dialogue with South Korea and closing the border to Seoul officials, its toughest action in a week of growing cross-border tensions.

The North said it went ahead with its threatened retaliatory action after Seoul refused to apologise for recent remarks by its military chief.

"Our military does not engage in empty talk," the Korean Central News Agency said, disregarding an appeal from South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak for

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WB for global fight against hunger
Rice output to rise this year: FAO

STAR REPORT

The World Bank yesterday called on the international community to mount a wide-ranging fight against hunger as skyrocketing food prices critically threaten the world's poor.

"We need a New Deal for Global Food Policy," World Bank president Robert Zoellick said in a speech to a Washington think tank ahead of next week's spring meetings of the World Bank and the International

Monetary Fund (IMF), reports AFP. Meanwhile, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has predicted that the global rice production will increase by 12 million tonnes or 1.8 percent in 2008.

Referring to a 1930s US government initiative to tackle the problems of the Great Depression, Zoellick said that the new New Deal for Global Food Policy should start by helping those who are most

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Govt to take \$217.7m from IMF to offset pressure on BoP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is taking a \$217.7 million loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to stave off pressure on its balance of payments (BoP) from high import prices.

The IMF executive board approved the loan yesterday saying it would seek to support "Bangladesh's international reserve position that has been put under pres-

sure in the face of sharp rise in disaster-related imports, including large volumes of food," according to an IMF press release.

"The government has indicated its intention to maintain macro-economic stability and pursue important reforms in the areas of revenue administration and policy, expenditure management, energy pricing, and state-bank reform," said IMF executive board's acting

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