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## TRUTH COMMISSION Ordinance okayed with a few changes

UNB, Dhaka

The Council of Advisers yesterday approved the Voluntarily Disclosure of Information (Amendment) Ordinance 2008 by bringing a few changes in the provisional law that provides for the formation a Truth and Accountability Commission.

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## Govt to allow limited scale trade union activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to ease the state of emergency on a limited scale to allow the trade unions carry out their activities for holding the overdue elections to the CBA (collective bargaining agents) bodies.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

# 5 lakh depositors swindled by Jamaat's farmer wing

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Bangladesh Chashi Kalyan Samity (BCKS), farmers' wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, but also registered as an NGO, remained the party's financial front through illegal banking in at least 17 districts over a decade, sources say.

Following a changed scenario after 1/11, the NGO has shut down its offices and swindled a huge amount of money collected through deposits, special deposit schemes and investment on loans among members since 1997.

The BCKS business was also unlawfully sold to Jamaat supporters for covertly continuing the financial activities.

Dissident BCKS officials, involved Jamaat leaders and victims say the accurate amount of misappropriation cannot be found out without proper inquiry. But they add the figure would be minimum Tk 100 crore collected from about five lakh people.

The sources say each of seven BCKS branches in Rajshahi earned around Tk 2.5 crore annually and the NGO staffs were engaged in misappropriation from the very beginning.



The signboard of an office of BCKS, farmers' wing of Jamaat, in Puthia, Rajshahi is placed inside its supervisor's office room as the NGO shut down after 1/11.

A large number of officials and employees, who were also members of Jamaat and its front wings, had left both job and party in protest against the cheating. Some dissident employees are now on the run following threats on their lives by Jamaat men.

Rafikul Islam, formerly a member of Islami Chhatra Shibir and

BCKS field worker, on June 16 filed a general diary (GD) with Puthia Police Station. He says in the GD he has been threatened with death for revealing BCKS 'secrets'.

"I couldn't even imagine that Jamaat men were cheating," Nazmul Haque told The Daily Star. He was a Rokon (member) of Jamaat's Bagha unit and BCKS

## SAVINGS SWINDLE

- Political front got NGO registration
- Around 5 lakh depositors swindled
- Tk 100cr reportedly gobbled up
- Offices shut down after 1/11
- NGO 'sold' to Jamaat people

assistant director and resigned from both posts in September 2007.

"Members used to express anxiety over future of their money. I always assured them that Jamaat men cannot cheat. I had such confidence in Jamaat that I promised to return their money were they cheated."

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

# 6 thrown out of mayor race

EC cancels their candidature over defaulted loan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the first day of scrutiny, the Election Commission (EC) yesterday cancelled six nominations for two mayoral posts on different grounds including loan defaulting.

Out of the six, four were in Khulna City Corporation (KCC) and two in Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC). However, none of the mayoral nominations in Sylhet and Barisal city corporations was cancelled.

The scrutiny of nominations submitted for councillor's posts could not be completed and will continue today.

Of six city corporations, four along with nine municipalities are going to polls on August 4.

Our Khulna correspondent reports: City Awami League (AL) General Secretary Mizanur Rahman Mizan, Muslim League leader Sirajul Islam, and independent Qamrul Alam Mintu and SM Hafizur Rahman are the four mayoral aspirants who failed to qualify in the scrutiny.

District election office sources said Mizan, Sirajul and Mintu's

nominations were rejected as they were proved defaulting on Tk 23.78 lakh, Tk 1.66 crore and Tk 1.48 crore in loans taken out from Basic Bank, Bangladesh Shilpa Bank and Janata Bank.

Hafizur's was cancelled as he still holds an office of profit in KCC. Sirajul Islam told The Daily Star that he would file an appeal against the cancellation today.

After yesterday's scrutiny, the number of mayor aspirants stands at 11.

Out of 281 applications for councillorship, so far 92 have been counted and six cancelled. Of 47 nominations for women's reserved seats, only one has been cancelled, sources said.

Bangladesh expatriate in Belgium Golam Rabbani and Siddikur Rahman are the two whose nominations for the post of RCC mayor were cancelled.

Rabbani's was not accepted as he submitted that without signature while Siddikur's suffered a similar fate as he was identified as a loan defaulter by Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank and Janata Bank.

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# Jamaat leader seeks stay on Aug 4 polls schedule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Jamaat-e-Islami leader yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court (HC) seeking a stay on the Election Commission's (EC) August 4 schedule for holding four city corporation and nine municipality polls.

The petition also challenged the legality of two ordinances promulgated by the government for holding local government elections.

The petitioner prayed to the HC to issue a rule upon the government and EC to explain why the ordinances should not be declared unconstitutional.

An HC bench comprised of Justice Md Imman Ali and Justice Md Emdadul Huq is likely to hear the petition today.

Justice Md Imman Ali and Justice Md Emdadul Huq is likely to hear the petition today. Jasim Uddin Sarker, a leader of Dhaka city unit Jamaat-e-Islami also a Supreme Court (SC) lawyer, filed the writ petition as a public interest litigation (PIL), stating if local government elections are held before the stalled parliamentary poll, holding of the latter might be jeopardised.

"The caretaker government has taken a risk by announcing the schedule for local government elections. It also issued two

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



A local of Kutiaghata in Khulna drags a dead monitor lizard yesterday after killing it for "devouring" much of their poultry recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# EC finds itself on a sticky wicket

Struggles to deal with convicted polls contestants for conflicting laws

SHAKHAWAT LITON

While scrutinising applications for candidacies in the August 4 polls to four city corporations and nine municipalities, the Election Commission (EC) is simultaneously following the 'traditional custom' and the stringent Emergency Power Rules (EPR).

The 'custom' has been to allow individuals convicted in criminal cases to contest in polls while their convictions are at the appellate stage, while EPR strictly bars convicted individuals from contesting in polls even if the convictions are being appealed.

In defence of its rather peculiar position on the matter, the EC claimed that it is 'just following the laws'.

But eminent jurists said there is no specific law that allows individuals convicted in criminal cases to contest in polls while the convictions are being appealed, but allowing such persons to contest in polls 'has become a custom'.

They said the EC is not following the constitution that bars convicted individuals from contesting in polls.

Meanwhile, the EC yesterday at a meeting discussed the legal dilemma faced by returning officers (RO) in scrutinising the applications, and instructed them to follow both the 'custom' and EPR, sources in the commission said.

By that instruction, the commission in effect ordered its ROs to allow individuals convicted under regular penal code to contest in elections if their convictions are at the appellate stage, but to disqualify individuals convicted under EPR even if the convictions are being appealed.

Emerging from the meeting yesterday, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakawat Hussain said if a person is convicted of corruption by a trial court under EPR, he or she will be disqualified from contesting in the polls.

According to EPR, if a convicted person files an appeal against the conviction, he or she will still remain disqualified from contesting in polls until adjudication of his or her appeal against the verdict.

"But if an individual is convicted of corruption under the regular

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# Essential prices go up further

Traders points at rain, fuel price

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of daily essentials including rice, lentils and edible oil shot up further in the capital in the last two days.

However, prices of broiler chicken came down by Tk 10-20 per kg.

Traders claim the price hike of fuel along with incessant rain was behind the price hike of daily commodities. A section of traders are also taking the opportunity of poor monitoring by the government, they allege.

Prices of brand soya bean oil rose by Tk 9-10 per litre as the oil companies re-fixed the prices of different quantities yesterday. A five-litre can of Rupchanda was fixed at Tk 606.5 and five-litre Teer at Tk 594.

However, each five-litre can of different brands was sold at Tk 605 to Tk 615 in retail market yesterday. The price was between Tk 560 and Tk 565 two days ago.

The prices of all varieties of rice have increased by Tk 1 per kg at retail markets.

Coarse rice was selling between Tk 34 and Tk 36 per kg yesterday which was Tk 33-35 two days back.

Miniket (fine rice) was sold at Tk 42-43 a kg yesterday, while it was Tk 41-42 two days earlier.

Parija (medium variety) was sold at Tk 37-38 per kg yesterday. It was sold at Tk 36-37 two days ago.

The wholesale prices of all varieties of rice have also increased by Tk 10-20 per maund (37.32 kg) in the city market.

Prices of all varieties of lentils have gone up by Tk 2-5 per kg in the city kitchen markets.

In retail markets, Kangaroo lentils (good quality imported lentils) were sold at Tk 110-115 per kg yesterday. The price was Tk 110 two days ago.

Local lentils were selling at Tk 100-110 per kg yesterday and the price was between Tk 100-105 two days ago.

One kg of lentil imported from Turkey was sold at Tk 92-95; it was between Tk 90-95 two days back, market sources said.

The price of potato saw a fresh hike yesterday. A kg of potato was sold between Tk 16-18 per kg, which was between Tk 16-17 per kg two days ago.

Price of local and Indian onions has increased by Tk 2 per kg. Local

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# Angry protests at BSMMU for Tarique's release

10 hurt in cop beating

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred activists of BNP and its front organisations yesterday staged angry protests demanding Tarique Rahman's release at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

Police clubbed the unruly protesters injuring about 10, as their gathering hampered treatment of outdoor patients for over an hour.

Moreover, vehicular movement on one side of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue remained suspended creating severe congestion as the activists of BNP, Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal blockaded the road for over 20 minutes.

Many of the agitators told reporters they gathered at BSMMU to have a view of BNP Senior Secretary General Tarique Rahman but police charged baton without any provocation.

Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Zakir Hassan told The Daily Star, "Tarique Rahman was taken out of the prison cell to produce him before the court at the court order."

He added, "When he was brought out, his party leaders and activists made the chaos."

Witnesses say the activists and leaders started gathering in and around BSMMU since 11:00am to

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# Tk 21CR BRIBERY CASE

## Tarique exempted from court appearance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday exempted detained BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman from appearing in person before the court during the trial proceedings of the Tk 21 crore bribery case.

The court deferred to July 10 the hearing on charge framing against Tarique, former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar and six others in the case involving the murder of Bashundhara Group Director Humayun Kabir Sabbir.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of Special Court-3 also deferred to July 10 the hearing on a petition of detained former home minister Mohammad Nasim for exempting him from appearing before the court during the proceedings of a corruption case.

Tarique, the eldest son of detained former prime minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, submitted the petition to the court through his lawyers under section 540A(1) of the Criminal Procedure Code on June 25, seeking exemption from appearing in person during the trial of the case on health grounds.



The court set June 29 for hearing the petition but following a time prayer filed by Tarique's lawyers the court deferred the hearing until yesterday.

Tarique was brought to the court premises yesterday by an ambulance from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital at 12:25pm but he was not taken out of the ambulance or produced before the court.

As the court went into session at 12:30pm, Tarique's counsel barrister

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# NURSING IN TATTERS

## 10,000 trained nurses remain unemployed

Poor govt watch allows private hospitals to hire unskilled ones

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Even though approximately 10,000 trained nurses are unemployed at the moment, lack of proper government monitoring enables private clinics and hospitals to use unskilled, untrained and non-

registered nurses, deteriorating the service.

A large number of private clinics in the country, especially clinics in the cities, are running with non-registered nurses (nurses without valid diplomas in nursing) violating condition for getting clinic or

hospital licences.

There are 1,005, according to stats of 2005, registered private hospitals in the country which received licences from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) under conditions

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# D8 SUMMIT CA leaves for KL today

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed today leaves for Kuala Lumpur to attend the Sixth D8 Summit in the Malaysian capital tomorrow.

The daylong summit is expected to adopt the D8 Roadmap for Economic Cooperation in the Second Decade of Cooperation (2008-2018).

The D8 grouping, shorthand for Developing 8 Countries, was set

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# Tackle rising fuel, food prices

Malaysia urges D8 group

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

The D8 group of developing nations must tackle the issue of rising fuel and food prices at its summit here this week, Malaysian Foreign Minister Rais Yatim said yesterday.

Iran on Saturday rejected Malaysia's proposal to discuss the spiralling price of crude oil at the

D8 talks, saying it was not the appropriate platform, the state Bernama news agency reported.

Iranian official Suleiman Pour said that, unlike the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, "the D8 is an economic organisation to enhance economic cooperation among member states," Bernama quoted him as saying.

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# WE MOURN



On this day with profound grief we remember Saam Ruslan Anando, the only son of Mr. Md. Fazle Selim and Mrs. Rukhsana Selim (Swarna) and beloved brother of Shahneela Nawshena & Rudmeela Nawshena went into our memories following a tragic car accident near Oregon-Nevada border in USA in the early morning of 7<sup>th</sup> July 2003. He was a student of Grade IX of European Standard School, Dhanmondi, Dhaka. Ruslan was a good singer and earned prominence at his young age participating in various functions. He left behind a lot of friends, members of family and admirers who miss him every moment.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for his departed soul and attend the Milad Mahfil on Monday July 7, 2008 after Magrib Prayers at, House - 1/10 Block-D Lalmatia Dhaka.

Bereaved Parents & Sisters of Saam Ruslan Anando