

2 GRAFT CASES SC upholds HC orders staying proceedings against Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday upheld the High Court (HC) orders staying the proceedings against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina in the Niko and barge-mounted power plant cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

A four-member full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin kept stand-over the two provisional leave to appeal filed by the government to stay the HC orders and also asked the government to file regular appeals with the SC against the HC orders.

"The government appealed to the SC for vacating the HC orders. After hearing both sides, the Appellate Division kept stand-over the government petitions, but did not stay the HC orders. So the HC

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14-party picks mayoral candidates for 4 cities

Talukder Khaleque in Khulna, Badsha in Rajshahi, Kamran in Sylhet, Hiron in Barisal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL)-led 14-party combine last night announced the names of its mayoral candidates in the August 4 polls to four city corporations.

The announcement came after two-day long discussions among its leaders.

Held at AL acting President Zillur Rahman's Gulshan residence, the protracted meeting unanimously nominated Talukder Abdul Khaleque for Khulna City Corporation (KCC), Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran for Sylhet City Corporation (SCC), Shawkat Hossain Hiron for Barisal City Corporation (BCC) and Fazle Hossain Badsha for Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC).

Of the four contenders on the combine ticket, three belong to AL and the other to Workers Party.

Khaleque is a member of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC) and the president of Khulna city AL. Kamran is the convenor of Barisal city AL while Badsha is a politburo member of the Workers Party.

Khaleque is on trial accused of misappropriating Tk 1.05 crore of government funds allocated for constructing a college building at Rampal upazila in Bagerhat. The now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption filed the case in 2004.

Kamran, the incumbent SCC mayor, has been detained since May last year on corruption charges while Hiron is among the

graft suspects listed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Earlier in the day, ALCWC, the highest decision-making body of the party, endorsed the nominations with Zillur Rahman in the chair.

However, the names were finalised at the 14-party meeting last night.

Unveiling the list, the AL acting chief urged the coalition rank and file to unite in favour of the candidates. He also called on the party leaders aspiring to mayoral posts to withdraw their nominations to have a single contender and ensure victory.

Zillur said hopefully there would be no problem after the announcement.

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EC to seek action on Rajshahi ADC for passing flawed candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) will ask the establishment ministry to take disciplinary action against additional divisional commissioner (ADC) of Rajshahi for clearing the way for five disqualified candidates to contest the Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) polls.

The EC took the decision following a meeting yesterday, officials said.

The returning officer (RO) had earlier rejected their candidacies for councillorship during scrutiny as they turned out to be loan defaulters and Open Market Sale (OMS) dealers. Electoral laws bar such people from contesting polls.

However, Additional Divisional Commissioner (General) Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman, in his capacity as the election appeal authorities for the August 4 polls, declared their candidatures valid on appeal.

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Final list of redrawn JS seats published

Dhaka dist gets 20; changes in 133 constituencies

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday issued a gazette notification finalising the list of parliamentary seats with district-wise redrawn boundaries, eliminating all doubts raised by political parties about the initiative's success.

Disposing as many as 3,000 appeals filed against the move to redraw the parliamentary constituencies ahead of the stalled national polls, EC yesterday came up with the decisions.

The EC Secretariat last afternoon sent the gazette notification for publication, wrapping up the six-month-long task that began in January according to its electoral roadmap announced on July 15 last year.

The new list sees changes in boundaries of 133 of the 300 con-

stituencies, while the rest remain unchanged. But seats representing 17 districts in parliament have either increased or decreased.

After massive delineation of boundaries, seven new seats have been added to Dhaka district. Metropolitan areas with high population density have won all the seven additions.

The number of constituencies in the capital now stands at 15, up from eight. It means Dhaka metropolis will be represented by 15 lawmakers in the new parliament instead of previous eight.

The EC on April 29 unveiled the draft list of constituencies with boundaries of 133 seats demarcated. The move got severe flak from political parties that feared it would create obstacles to holding the stalled ninth parliamentary polls as per the roadmap.

The major political parties -- Awami League and BNP -- questioned EC's jurisdiction to the do task and demanded cancellation of the gazette that declared the draft.

Grassroots level leaders of different political parties filed over 3,000 appeals against the draft list.

The EC heard the appeals at the EC Secretariat in the capital and in Sylhet, Comilla, Chittagong, Barisal, Khulna and Rajshahi during June 12-30.

"Some changes were made in the proposed boundaries of 80-90 parliamentary constituencies considering people's desire which did not contradict the criteria of delimitation," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain told reporters at his office yesterday. He said the list is now final.

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Khaleda files writ petition challenging Gatco case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained former premier Khaleda Zia yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court (HC) challenging the legality of the Gatco corruption case against her.

The HC bench of Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Mashuque Hossain Ahmed may hear the petition on Sunday.

In the petition, Khaleda said the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) did not maintain the due legal procedure in giving permission to file the case against her.

She prayed to the HC for staying the case proceedings and issuing a rule upon the government and the ACC to show cause as to why the case proceedings should not be quashed.

The commission filed the case against Khaleda and 22 others on charges of corruption in awarding Global

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Tk 21CR BRIBERY CASE Court to decide July 14 about charge-framing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The trial court of Tk 21 crore bribery case against detained BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman and seven other people will pass its judgment on whether to frame charges in the case on July 14.

The accused, including former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar, are indicted for trying to cover up the grisly murder of Bashundhara Group Director Humayun Kabir Sabbir in exchange for bribery.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of Special Court-3 at Jatiya Sangsad

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INDO-BANGLA FS-LEVEL MEET Water, transit to figure in talks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India will seek transit facility and greater cooperation in bilateral security from Bangladesh at the foreign secretary level bilateral talks to be held in New Delhi on July 17.

Bangladesh on the other hand will raise unresolved bilateral issues such as demarcation and sharing of water of common rivers and demarcation of maritime borders between the two countries.

"We have discussed transit in different forums. We are interested in transit and will remain inter-

ested," said Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty following his meeting with Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury at his office yesterday.

Criticising the politicisation of the transit issue, the Indian envoy told journalists, "It's an economic issue, not political at all. Look at the rest of the world. I don't understand why this is being made a political issue in Bangladesh."

Asked whether his country has set a timeline for resolving the transit issue, he said New Delhi did

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CA calls for austerity in power, energy use

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday appealed for austerity in electricity and energy consumption by using energy-saving light bulbs and applying newer technologies for an optimum utilisation of the nation's scarce natural resources.

He called for avoiding misuse of gas, electricity and water, applying energy-saving technologies in industries and utilising renewable energy resources like solar and wind power.

The head of the caretaker government made the call while inaugurating a two-day national workshop and exhibition on "Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Programmes" organised by the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

He said the Power Division is preparing a draft Energy Conservation Act, which will require inclusion of necessary provisions in the building code for ensuring efficient use and conservation of energy in building complexes.

The CA further said the government is now considering adoption of a comprehensive renewable energy policy. He expressed his optimism that this would pave the way for removal of barriers to

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Land grabbers fill up a part of the Turag, narrowing the river, at Kamarpara of Tongi to set up a filling station there.

Losing Turag to grabbers

PINAKI ROY

A long stretch of the Turag River circling the capital is being encroached upon and filled up again rendering a large section of the city clearly susceptible to major flooding.

No government agency has yet made any move to stop this pernicious practice.

Private CNG filling stations, private universities, and houses are being built on the lands that were developed on the encroached upon sections of the river, while some of the lands are also being sold.

Local residents said most of the encroachers are influential people having clout over the civil administration, which they alleged sometime help the encroachers to fill up the river.

Due to the wholesale encroachment, the Turag has now turned into a veritable narrow canal, at some places which is filled at both banks leaving only 20 feet to 30 feet of flow with just a minimum navigability for a sand carrying tug boat.

While visiting the river, this correspondent saw long stretches of it by Tongi-Ashulia Road already filled at five points, by influential people for setting up CNG filling stations.

Local residents said the encroachers first stake out their

boundaries on the slopes of the banks with bamboo or wooden sticks and claim ownerships of those sections by putting up signs that read 'private property'.

Later they dump sand into the marked areas and develop lands on the encroached upon sections of the river up to the height of the adjacent highway to build establishments there, the residents added.

For years the encroachers have been carrying out the practice without any intervention from any government agency.

During the visit this correspondent also saw the river was being dredged with dredging machines which had been brought in by the encroachers to pump out sand from the river bed so they might use those to fill up 'their section' of the river.

Interestingly, the 'owners' of all the 'freshly developed lands' sport signs that read 'government approved'.

In Dhaur area, adjacent to Ashulia-Tongi Road, a long stretch of the river bank and its slope is already filled up and developed by the owner of Zahan Group. On a corrugated tin fence that separates the land from the road the following is written: 'No Trespassing -- Zahan CNG Station'. It also sports a license number '101-2-(Chha) 8698. No less than 20 workers were

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Licences of 1,969 rice mills cancelled

Non-cooperation with
food procurement drive

UNB, Dhaka

The government has cancelled the licences of 1,969 rice mills across the country, mostly those who did not cooperate in the government's food procurement drive.

According to an official announcement yesterday, the owners of those mills had either kept their mills closed or rented out to others, violating the rules.

The action was taken against the 1,969 rice mills among a total of

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EU MPs urge govt to lift emergency

UNB, Dhaka

European Parliament members urged the Bangladesh government to lift the state of emergency as the most important step required to prepare for holding the country's next parliamentary elections.

The call was made in a joint motion for resolution on the situation in Bangladesh in the EU parliament in Brussels on July 9.

The motion was moved by Pasqualina Napolitano, Robert Evans, Charles Tannock, Th. Mann,

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ILL-GOTTEN WEALTH ACC sues Sajeda Chy, AKM Jahangir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed cases against former Awami League (AL) ministers Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and AKM Jahangir in connection with amassing wealth illegally and concealing wealth information to the commission.

ACC Assistant Director Mozahar Ali Sarder filed the case against AL presidium member and former environment and forest minister Sajeda Chowdhury in connection with concealing wealth worth Tk 13.84 lakh to the ACC and amassing the said wealth illegally.

The complainant said investigation revealed that Sajeda spent Tk 12.1 lakh to build a house at her village home in Nagarkanda of

Fridpur but she in her wealth statement filed with the ACC claimed she had spent Tk 3 lakh. She concealed Tk 9.1 lakh, he added.

He also said Sajeda spent Tk 47.20 lakh for a plot of Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) land at Banani in the capital but she in the wealth statement said that she had spent Tk 42.46 lakh, concealing information about Tk 4.74 lakh.

ACC Deputy Director SM Mofidul Islam filed the case against former state minister for textile Jahangir in connection with amassing wealth worth around Tk 1.41 crore illegally and concealing information about wealth worth around Tk 76.46 lakh to the ACC.

The complainant said an investigation revealed that Jahangir, his

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