

## AL seeks int'l support

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AL held meetings with the European Parliament members, USA, UK, Canadian and Chinese diplomats, International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI) during the last few days to ask them to put pressure on the government.

Talking to The Daily Star a senior AL leader said even though a number of diplomats said that the national elections would not be free and fair under the emergency, they are still confused. "We will continue to talk to them in this regard and talk to the United Nations and the Commonwealth parliament members," he said.

A few AL leaders also told The Daily Star that if the government did not have any motive centring the national polls, they would have had no objection to national polls under emergency. Since the government has repeatedly asked voters to vote for a certain kind of candidates in the name of "honest and competent candidates", it clearly indicates that the government has an intention with the polls, a senior AL leader said asking not to be named.

By holding a free and fair city corporation poll, the government has gained the international community's confidence that it is possible to hold national polls with the emergency enforced, the leader said, adding, "We are not falling for that."

AL acting General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam said, "We have taken part in the city corporation elections with the emergency enforced, but we will not do the same in the parliamentary elections."

"If the emergency is not with-

drawn, the fear factor will remain and the national election will not be free and fair," said AL Presidium Member Suranjit Sengupta adding that political rights cannot be restored keeping the fundamental rights suspended.

Talking to The Daily Star he said, "We will hold the final round of discussion with the government very soon to make our position clear."

"We will continue to be proactive in our engagement with the caretaker government and we hope they will be constructive in their approach and create an environment that leads to the election and lifting the emergency well before the announcement of the election schedule," AL Organising Secretary Sabir Hossain Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

Saber, also political secretary to party President Sheikh Hasina, said there is a political process leading to election day and the environment in which the political process goes on is as important as freedom with which voters cast their votes on the election day. "And the election is not a technical event confined to the day of polls," he added.

However, Jatiya Party (JP), a component in the AL-led grand electoral alliance, is planning to get all political parties to have one common stance over the state of emergency.

"We and all political parties want to reach a consensus through discussion on the issue of emergency and then decide on taking part in the polls with or without the emergency enforced," JP acting Chairman Anisul Islam Mahmud told The Daily Star.

## Crime investigation

**FROM PAGE 16**  
marks, gunshot residues, arson accelerant, paint, glass, etc, they said.

Upon the modernisation of the forensic lab in Dhaka and installing of the new forensic lab in Chittagong and the computer lab at CID headquarters, the CID will have the capacity to track down offenders by examining the evidence and samples collected from a crime scene.

"Although it's like finding a needle in a haystack, the search for such crucial evidence is a routine procedure in modern crime scene investigation. Once the evidence is gathered, it is analysed by forensic experts and put through DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) tests that can provide precise evidence against criminals," said a top CID official.

However, "it's crucial that the first officer reaching the crime scene properly protect the area to restrict access and prevent contamination of evidence. The entire investigation hinges on that first person being able to properly identify, isolate and secure the scene by establishing a restricted perimeter, mainly with a rope, tape or barriers."

"But most of our police personnel do not even know how to secure a scene to prevent evidence from being tampered with or destroyed inadvertently," said another official.

Hubert Staberhofer, Programme Manager of Police Reform Programme (PRP) of the government, said under the PRP case investigators will receive training so that they can properly identify, isolate and secure the scene.

Prosecutors with the help of biometric and other evidences analysed at the modern forensic labs will be able to put together airtight cases against rapists, murderers and arsonists, said the CID officials adding that many of these criminals are repeat offenders and sometimes walk away without being convicted as the law enforcers presently lack modern tools and facilities to tie them to the crimes they had committed.

The CID officials also said criminals almost always leave a trail of their handwork and evidence on the crime scene -- blood, semen, hair, skin, nail scrapings, fingerprints, footprints, bite marks on the victims' body, etc.

Other forms of evidence left on the crime scene may include tool marks, fabric impressions, tyre marks, etc.

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## Oil palm

**FROM PAGE 16**  
on aquatic life, as it requires a lot of insecticide and other chemical spraying for good production, experts say.

Most of the experts opposed the move and suggested that the country should rather go for other oil seed varieties including mustered, groundnut, sunflower and soybean, as these are suitable for local soil and weather.

"The standard of oil from these seeds is far better than palm oil," said Dr Reza Khan.

Oil palm cultivation started in Bangladesh in 1979 through import of seedlings from Nigeria and Malaysia. The first batch of oil palm seeds was brought from Malaysia in 1978 and the seedlings were raised in polybags at the Botanical Garden, Dhaka.

Six-month-old seedlings were supplied to Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Sylhet Forest Divisions for planting in 1979.

By 1981 about 784 acres of land, including 279 acres in Chittagong, 325 acres in Cox's Bazar, and 180 acres in Sylhet, were brought under oil palm plantations. Later the total plantation area rose to over one thousand acres.

With a goal to produce palm oil commercially, motivated by the success of Malaysia and Indonesia, the department of forest conducted a clear felling of natural forest.

"But soon those trees disappeared," said Dr Reza Khan, a member of World Commission for Protected Areas.

The forest department had pinned the blame on wild elephants, porcupines, rats and wild boar for disappearance of the trees.

Insects, wild animals, and some diseases affect the growth and cultivation of oil palm in Bangladesh, forest officials say.

"Considerable damage of plantations of Cox's Bazar Division by elephants, porcupines and other animals was reported frequently in plantation areas," said a forest official.

The plantations of Sylhet forest areas, especially in Satchhari, were rather successful but the department could not extract palm fruits for commercial production because of poor quality.

"Still you'll find palm trees in Satchhari forest area," said the official.

"May be saplings of those palm trees have become suitable for Bangladesh weather now," he added.

The sources say the proposal of the 'green circle' project is now at the external relation department.

The project will be implemented in Bogra, Thakurgaon and Joypurhat districts initially. He is very keen to see oil palm trees as he learned recently oil palm trees can meet up scarcity of edible oil. But please don't quote me," said the high official.

## Tac sets Sept 1

**FROM PAGE 1**  
for the same period. They are Asif Ali, a former comptroller and auditor general, and Major Gen (ret) Manzur Rashid Khan.

Under the provisions of the Tac, the corrupt people will be allowed to appeal for mercy after voluntarily admitting their past corruption and depositing their ill-gotten wealth to the state exchequer.

## Rajshahi mayor

**FROM PAGE 16**  
see me acting promptly," he said.

Replying to questions on corruption in RCC, Liton said, "I will investigate previous anomalies and take tough actions if any corruption is found."

A huge number of staff in RCC were employed "quite unnecessarily and just on political consideration or in exchange of bribes in the last 17 years."

"The excess RCC staffs have never been of any use apart from making political processions and meetings a success. I will prepare a list of such staffs and decide on actions against them. I do not mean to seize someone's source of daily bread but I have no right to carry an unnecessary load that cost people money."

"After taking oath, I will be the mayor of all citizens. Every citizen will have the right to speak to me directly. I will fix two days in a week to talk to the people with my prime emphasis on development," he said.

Briefing newsmen about his development plan, Liton said, he would ensure people's participation in development works for transparency and he would identify development schemes to be taken up by talking with the people and involving them in their implementation.

Liton said he had already identified about 12 wards out of the 30 in RCC as least developed wards.

Liton reiterated his pledge to create more employment scope. "I will look for local resources first and then persuade investors to set up industries in Rajshahi."

"Primarily, I will set up an industrial zone on around 200 bighas of land belonging to the RCC and distribute those on lease to interested industrialists with the condition of employing locals," he said.

## Upazila polls

**FROM PAGE 1**  
political parties from the upazila polls even by amending the upazila parishad ordinance as that would again contradict the constitution that acknowledges functions and activities of the political parties.

The HC in its ruling on August 4 polls too upheld the constitutional provisions. It observed that since the rights of the political parties are enshrined in the constitution, the rules restricting the use of political affiliation in the city corporation and municipality polls are illegal.

The court also said the EC has no jurisdiction to make policy decisions like determining political characteristics of the elections.

Legal experts said the HC ruling on the August 4 polls will be applicable also to other local government elections.

They said if the government amends the upazila parishad ordinance to enforce restrictions on the political parties it might undermine the constitutional right to association.

**POLLS PREPARATIONS**  
Despite the uncertainty over what would be the nature of upazila polls,

## Tuhin

**FROM PAGE 16**  
the Sangsad Bhaban premises for its quick disposal.

**TUHN CASE**  
After getting police report on arrest warrant against Tuhin, Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order asking the accused to appear before the court on the scheduled date.

On August 4, the same court issued arrest warrant against the former BNP lawmaker from Nilphamari-1 Tuhin following a plea submitted by the investigation officer (IO) of the case.

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the against Tuhin for amassing wealth worth Tk 65 lakh illegally and giving false wealth information to the commission. He has been accused of accumulating Tk 2.9 crore illegally and concealing information about his wealth worth Tk 1.43 crore.

He said he had appealed for a three-week hiatus in charge-framing hearing because of advocate Sanaullah's illness.

Prosecution lawyer Mosharraf Hossain Kajol read out the allegations against Koko.

ACC Deputy director Abu Sayeed filed the case with Ramna Police Station on April 23 this year, accusing that Koko made a fortune of Tk 2.23 crore through illegal means and concealed information on around Tk 11.20 lakh of his assets in his statement to the anti-corruption watchdog.

According to the case, Koko claimed that he, his wife and two daughters own Tk 8.08 crore in movable and immovable property, but investigations revealed their wealth to be more than had been declared.

The ACC enquiry also found that he covered up information about an apartment at Banani, bank loans, 500 shares (Tk 100 each), two savings certificates (Tk 1 lakh each) in his wife's name and benefits he might have received from different businesses, it added.

His wife's Tk 1.50 crore investment in a business and the expenses of his 84 overseas trips between September 2003 and December 2006 do not correspond to the couple's stated sources of income.

When asked to comment on the matter, the adviser said, "Since discussions between the EU and the Election Commission (EC) are going on, there won't be any problem," he told reporters.

The adviser said everyone in the country and abroad welcomed holding of the local government polls under emergency.

He said the government was willing to hold the elections under emergency from the beginning.

"It's not a big matter who is saying what about this," he said adding that none of the candidates in the just concluded local body polls complained about holding elections under the emergency.

"We also told the political parties during dialogue to come up with suggestions on further relaxation of emergency," the adviser said.

But major political parties, including AL and BNP have been pressing for complete withdrawal of emergency before parliamentary elections scheduled to be held in the third week of December.

After Monday's local body polls, the chief election commissioner and the advisers to the caretaker government has been hinting about holding the national elections under emergency.

**Ex-MP Mohiuddin**

**FROM PAGE 16**  
which he will have to spend a year and a half more in prison.

He was handed down three years' imprisonment for giving false information to the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and another five years for concealing information in his tax returns.

Since Mohiuddin is on the run, the sentences will be effective from the day of his surrender or arrest.

NBR Deputy Tax Commissioner Mohammad Wahidullah Khan filed the case against him on June 11 for evading Tk 60.73 lakh in taxes over his income of Tk 2.44 crore in the fiscal year 2003-2004.

On July 10, Mohiuddin was sentenced to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment and one year's simple imprisonment for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information in his wealth statement submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission.

the EC is gearing up to hold the long due polls to over 300 out of 482 upazilas in October.

It is working to announce the election schedule next month, sources in the EC said.

On its instructions, the field level election offices in around 50 districts have already gathered necessary information on polling stations in the upazilas that might go to polls in October.

The political parties including Awami League (AL) and BNP have been opposed to the idea of holding upazila polls before the parliamentary election planned to be held in the third week of December.

The EC Secretariat will soon ask the finance ministry to disburse funds for upazila elections. Around Tk 200 crore was allocated for polls in the current fiscal year, added the EC sources.

Currently, the EC is drafting rules for the upazila polls. The election rules are expected to be finalised in a week.

Senior officials in the EC Secretariat said they have already drafted an electoral code of conduct imposing restrictions on political parties. But the EC has yet to examine those.

They said the commission would finalise the electoral code once the rules are settled.

Meantime, the EC has drafted proposals outlining ceilings on election expenditures for the contestants.

According to the proposals, persons vying to be upazila chairmen and vice-chairmen would be allowed to spend up to a maximum of Tk 10 lakh if the number of voters in their upazilas is two lakh and above.

For candidates in upazilas with the number of constituents ranging between one lakh and two lakh, Tk 7 lakh would be the upper limit for spending.

In upazilas having less than one lakh voters, Tk 5 lakh would be the most to be allowed as a candidate's election expenses.

## Koko

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**219 Bangladeshi**

**FROM PAGE 16**  
MONUC's Eastern Division General Faruk Bashir, Director of MONUC's Regional Office in Ituri Madam Olamide Adejide, and local Congolese authorities attended the colourful ceremony.

Group Captain Mohammad Harunur Rashid, commander of the Bangladesh Aviation Unit (BANAIR-5) based in Bunia, thanked the MONUC force commander, military and civilian guests from the United Nations as well as the Congolese authorities for their presence at the ceremony.

Rashid said despite many challenges facing the peacekeepers, the 'Blue Helmets' from Bangladesh Air Force have never hesitated to perform their duties.

General Gaye appreciated the professionalism and dedication of Bangladesh Air Force, which has rendered services in various UN peacekeeping missions.

He said MONUC's aviation unit--from Bangladesh and other countries--have carried out 1,500 flight hours without any major accident. Besides, BANAIR-5 carried out rapid repair of three seriously damaged helicopters.

General Gaye said all components of Bangladesh Air Force have worked very well in their respective fields. "It is their professional integrity, their dedication, their care and commitment for which they deserve the cheers and the recognition of MONUC and the Congolese authorities."

## 2 gunned down in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people were gunned down and another was injured in two separate incidents in Dhaka yesterday.

The deceased are Asaduzzaman Rajib, 28, and an unidentified person aged around 22. The injured was identified as Tajuddin, 32, a timber trader.

Family members of Rajib told newsmen that Rajib was going to Bagicha from his home on Rajony Chowdhury Lane at Gandaria when three to four men ambushed him on Akhoy Das Lane in Sutrapur. They shot him and fled the scene firing bullets indiscriminately when Tajuddin got shot in his left hand.

Locals rushed Rajib to Dhaka Medical College Hospital but doctors on duty there declared him dead.

Early yesterday unidentified assailants shot a young man at Badda killing him on the spot. Locals said they found the body after hearing a gunshot.

## One conjoined

**FROM PAGE 1**  
kept in the neo-natal Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the hospital and is not out of danger, the doctors said, adding that they are closely monitoring her condition round the clock.

"She has some temperature and pain because of the long operation," BSMMU's Paediatric Surgery Department Chairman Dr Shaiful Haque told The Daily Star.

Shahnaz Begum, the twins' mother, lost consciousness several times following her daughter's death.

"You know how hard we have tried to save our children. We were aware of the risks of the surgery, yet it is very difficult to accept a daughter's death," the girls' father Golam Kibria, a schoolteacher of Dumurgachha Primary School in Gaibandha, told The Daily Star.

"We would do everything to save the other child," he said.

Six teams of 68 members including over 40 doctors took part in the surgery to separate the twins aged four months and 12 days. The twins were conjoined at their livers, intestines and gallbladders, chest bones and abdomen.

The babies regained consciousness soon after the surgery and were kept at the ICU. Barsha had to be given ventilation support for breathing problem.

Barsha's blood pressure started going down at 10:00pm. The girl died at 11:20pm, Dr Shaiful said.

Receiving Barsha's dead body in the morning, the family buried her at their family graveyard in Rampura village of Gobindaganj upazila in Gaibandha after the Asr prayers yesterday.