



Bashundhara Group chief, family charged with amassing Tk 107cr

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday pressed charges against Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan (Shah Alam), his wife, and their four sons in a case filed for amassing wealth worth about Tk 107 crore beyond their known sources of income.

They were also charged with concealing information regarding wealth worth about Tk 14.17 crore.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Upazila polls may become political

EC plans to scrap its plan for non-partisan election

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Political parties will be able to contest in the upcoming upazila elections after all, as the Election Commission (EC) finally decided in principle to scrap its earlier plan of rendering the long over due polls non-partisan, sources in the commission said.

The EC's new strategy for holding the upazila polls without rubbing political parties the wrong way, came after consulting legal experts, the sources added.

If the EC's changed position remains unchanged, it will not file any appeal against the July 31 High Court (HC) ruling that scrapped the commission imposed restrictions on political parties barring them from contesting in the city corporation and municipality polls held on August 4.

The commission will also refrain from asking the government to amend the Upazila Parishad Ordinance 2008, which it earlier intended to do for making the upazila polls non-partisan.

And it will not keep in the final draft of the electoral code of conduct for upazila polls, the bar on political parties it had in the earlier draft, the sources said.

The EC's earlier bid to keep political parties at bay during the August 4 polls to four city corporations and nine municipalities failed after the July 31 HC ruling.

The EC yesterday at a meeting that finalised the draft election rules for the upazila polls, also discussed the much debated issue of holding the polls in October, ahead of the parliamentary poll tentatively scheduled for the year end.

Referring to legal experts' opinions Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda at the meeting said if the commission sends proposals to the government for amending the Upazila Parishad Ordinance for making the polls non-partisan, the move might go against the HC verdict, and incur the wrath of political parties as well, according to the sources.

The legal experts told the EC that it will be difficult to defend the amendment since the move will contradict provisions in the constitution.

"So, the election commission is in favour of not sending the proposal for amending Upazila Parishad Ordinance to the caretaker government," an EC official attending the meeting said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Govt reinstates Aug 15 as Nat'l Mourning Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

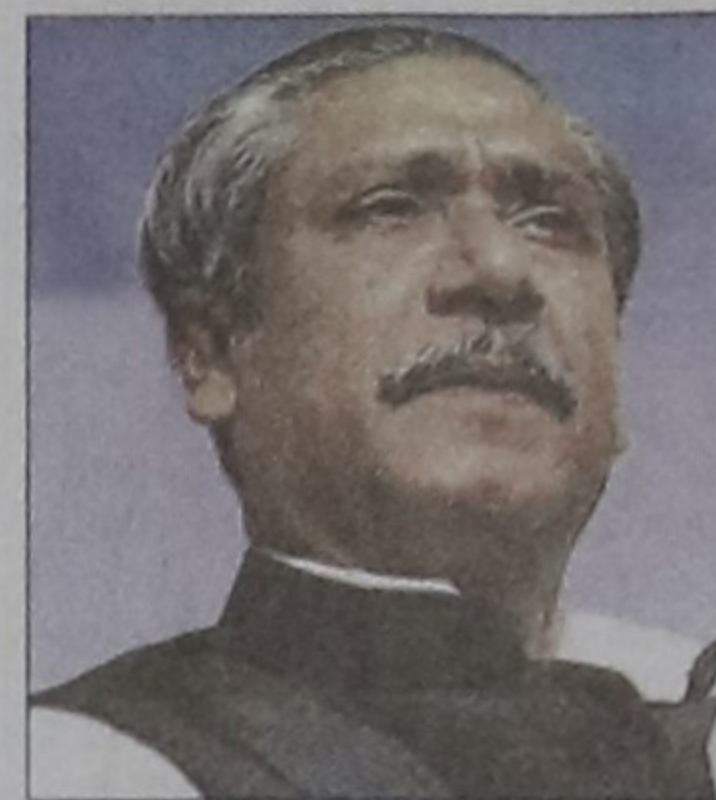
In compliance with a recent High Court (HC) ruling, the government yesterday reinstated August 15 as National Mourning Day and a public holiday to commemorate the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The decision came at a weekly meeting of the council of advisers, said Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim.

The last BNP-led alliance government had cancelled the state observance of August 15 in 2002. The HC on July 27 declared the decision illegal. It also cancelled the order that had prohibited flying of the national flag at half-mast on the day.

August 15 was first declared National Mourning Day by the then Awami League (AL) government in 1996.

On this day in 1975, the nation saw the architect of its independence Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman killed along with most of his family by a group of army officers.



The HC in its July 27 ruling noted that the grounds the alliance government cited for cancelling observance of the day at state level were not factually correct.

In scrapping the status of August 15 as National Mourning Day and public holiday, the BNP-Jamaat government argued that previously the day had neither been fixed nor been observed as such.

On the day, national flags will be at half-mast all over the country.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

'Unconditional' release for Khaleda very soon

All procedures finalised, says adviser Quader; JCD men vandalise cars for her freedom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will be released "unconditionally" very soon as the caretaker government has finalised all procedures in this regard. She is expected to be freed under an executive order.

"Khaleda Zia will be released without any condition... The process for her release has reached the final stage," Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader said while responding to reporters' queries at the Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday.

The adviser, however, could not say when the BNP chief would be released. "It is difficult for me to answer," he said.

Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman also said the government was fully aware of its responsibilities regarding her release. "We are determined... but we do not want to talk about any date."

Nirjaton Protirodh Chhatra Andolan (student movement to

resist repression) a platform backed by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) staged demonstrations on Dhaka University campus last night demanding immediate release of Khaleda Zia.

Sources said the students vandalised around seven vehicles and set a few tyres on fire on the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) intersection around 8:15pm.

Army-led joint forces arrested former prime minister Khaleda at her cantonment home on September 3 last year in connection with the Gato corruption case. She is now held at a makeshift special prison set up on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan premises. Khaleda is facing four corruption cases now.

The army-backed government detained Khaleda and former premier Sheikh Hasina and dozens of high-profile politicians and businessmen as part its country-wide crackdown on corruption.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Engr Mosharraf, Ilias Ali granted HC bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted bail to former Awami League (AL) minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain in a case filed for breaking the emergency power rules and ex-BNP lawmaker Ilias Ali in an extortion case.

Meantime, the Appellate Division refused to accept the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) leave to appeal petition against an HC order that had granted anticipatory bail to Dr Taslima Zaman Ahmed, daughter of AL leader Tofail Ahmed, in a corruption case.

Granting Engr Mosharraf interim bail, the HC bench of justices Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Mashuque Hossain Ahmed also directed the authorities not to arrest or harass him and issued a rule on the government to explain in two weeks as to why bringing the charges against him should not be declared illegal.

Earlier on July 28, the HC had granted Mosharraf two months' bail in two other cases, following which he was released from Kashimpur Jail on August 1, only to be rearrested at the jail gate on charges of breaking the emergency power rules.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



The footbridge at Farmgate is crammed with people during rush hour yesterday as traffic police prevent city dwellers from jaywalking on the busy city intersection.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

AL to complete district bodies for JS polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) has decided to shore up its grassroots base by completing district committees as part of preparations for the parliamentary election and, if necessary, movement.

The decision came at a meeting of AL presidium members, joint general secretaries and organising secretaries.

Held at party chief Sheikh Hasina's political office in Dhanmondi, the meeting also decided to write to the caretaker government and the Election Commission (EC), seeking dates for the second-round talks.

AL acting general secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam briefed reporters about the meeting presided over by presidium member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury.

He said AL wants the government not to take any decisions unilaterally. Decisions taken without consulting the political parties would not help the efforts to restore democracy, he added.

Queried if the mayors- and councillors-elect would be asked to resign party positions in line with the new electoral laws, the AL leader said the winners will challenge the "anti-democratic" and "anti-constitutional" laws at courts.

He said AL will finish forming

committees in at least eight organisational districts--two each in Sylhet, Khulna and Barisal and one each in Rajshahi and Rangpur. It has been quite a long time since the party held councils in these districts but did not complete the committees.

The high command has already directed the organising secretaries in charge of overseeing the organisation at the division level to complete the committees. They have been asked to sit with the incumbent and former presidents and general secretaries to do the job.

Eleven districts did not have any council in last several years. "We couldn't hold council there due to the state of emergency. We call on the government to lift the emergency to allow party councils for the sake of democracy," Ashraf said.

Yesterday's meeting withdrew the suspension orders issued about a month ago against Sunamganj district committee. In protest at the decision, AL presidium member Suranjit Sengupta walked out of the meeting.

Insiders said Sunamganj AL activities were suspended in response to complaints from Suranjit.

The meeting also withdrew the suspension order against Netrakona district president.

Office timing for Ramadan announced

UNB, Dhaka

The Council of Advisers yesterday at a meeting approved the timetable for government offices for the upcoming month of Ramadan.

As per the timings, government offices will run from 9:00am to 3:30pm from Sunday to Thursday with a Johr prayer break from 1:15pm to 1:30pm. Friday and Saturday will remain as government weekly holidays.

The Supreme Court will fix the timetable for all the courts while other sectors their own.

DISPUTE WITH CHEVRON WB arbitration court to hear Petrobangla's arguments in Dec

UNB, Dhaka

The World Bank's international arbitration court in Washington has set December 1-5 for hearing Bangladesh's statement on US energy company Chevron's claim for payment of 4 percent of the gas bills that its buyer Petrobangla deducts as wheeling charge.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

43 more back from Kuwait

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another 43 deported Bangladeshi workers reached Dhaka yesterday from Kuwait, raising the total to 914, said Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET).

The Kuwaiti authorities started to deport Bangladeshi workers following labour strikes and demonstrations staged in late July by thousands of Asian workers, mainly Bangladeshis, over various demands including a pay hike.

Most Bangladeshi deportees told The Daily Star that the authorities had beaten them up before forcefully sending them home even though they did not take part in the strikes or demonstrations.

The workers who returned yesterday told BMET officials at Zia International Airport that "many more" in the Gulf state are still awaiting deportation.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait said the Kuwaiti authorities had arrested around 1,000 workers and freed 300 of them as allegations against them could not be proven. The authorities also assured the embassy officials of no further arrest of Bangladeshi workers.

On August 6, Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, the adviser for foreign affairs, expatriates' welfare and overseas employment, in a letter urged Kuwait Interior Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Khalid Al-Jaber Al-Sabah not to deport any innocent Bangladeshis.

Many are being harshly deported to Bangladesh empty-handed for the fault of a few. When we are strong in principle to abide by the law, it is expected that our peace-loving workers would not suffer," the adviser said in the letter.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

AGITATION FOR ARREARS

Workers vandalise 15 RMG factories; 60 units close

Factory in Gazipur set ablaze; owners blame 'outsiders'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment workers demanding back pay yesterday ransacked at least 15 garment factories and four shopping centres at Jamgorah in Ashulia on the outskirts of the capital.

The violence triggered closing of more than 60 garment factories in the area.

The agitating workers also blockaded the Dhaka-Tangail highway for over two hours and

vandalized three vehicles, causing panic and a severe traffic jam.

At least 20 people were injured as police clubbed the mob of agitators to restore order in the area.

Meanwhile in Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ), two garment factories--Softex Sweater Factory and Feather Light--were shut down for various other reasons.

Softex was closed due to labour unrest while Feather Light for insufficient work order, said

sources.

In a late development, angry workers set fire to a factory of Meem Garments in Gazipur around 8:30pm yesterday damaging a huge quantity of fabrics and yarns.

Five units of fire fighters from Tongi and Gazipur rushed to the spot and put out the blaze around 11:00pm.

Both fire service and police

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



JOURNALIST HAMID MIR
From Pakistan

Army officers privately advise President Musharraf to resign

Pervaz Musharraf is very much angry with his friend George W Bush and some of his old friends in uniform. He tried to speak his American friend many times in last few days but the President of USA is not available to President of Pakistan on phone this time.

Why Bush is not responding? He knows that Musharraf doesn't have the good news of arresting Osama bin Laden or Mullah Omer. He only has some bad news about himself.

Musharraf wants to tell Bush that look Al Qaida, Taliban and ruling coalition in Pakistan have united against him and USA must help him in the name of war against terror but he is unable to speak with Bush despite the repeated efforts made by his telephone operator.

On the side, ruling coalition leaders Asif Ali Zardari and Nawaz Sharif are determined to turn the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Musharraf under pressure from allies to resign

AFF, Islamabad

Pakistan's embattled President Pervaz Musharraf was under mounting pressure to quit, with his allies joining ruling coalition calls for him to go before impeachment proceedings begin today.

"Musharraf should step down before the start of the impeachment proceedings, because the country cannot afford confrontation any more," Sardar Bahadur Khan, an MP from Musharraf's main ally, the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) told AFP.

Khan said more than 25 MPs from the PML-Q wanted Musharraf to resign.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Friends here, foes back home

AP, Beijing

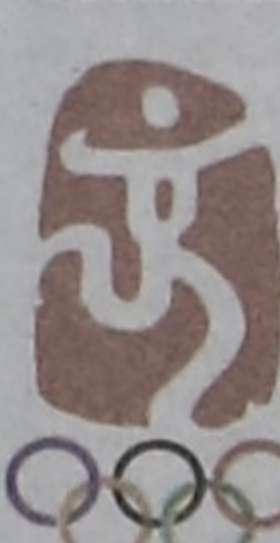
Their countries may be in a conflict, but a Russian and a Georgian shared a podium and an embrace after winning Olympic medals Sunday.

A day after Georgian athletes considered leaving due to violence back home, Nino Salukvadze took the bronze in the women's 10-metre air pistol. Russia's Natalia Paderina won the silver, and after the medal ceremony, Salukvadze put her arm around Paderina and the two posed together for photographs. Paderina than gave Salukvadze a kiss on the cheek.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Gold-gunner Phelps off the mark

AFF, Beijing



Swimming superstar Michael Phelps launched his quest for Olympic Games immortality on Sunday by smashing his own world record in winning the first of a potential eight gold medals.

Phelps sparked an American charge which saw them win five medals in the pool for a Games total of eight including two gold.

But China were steadily building a lead at the head of the medal table winning four further events to have six gold ahead of South Korea's three as the weather broke in Beijing and torrential rain disrupted tennis and archery.

In the women's cycling road race, riders complained that they felt they were "drowning" as they hurtled through the treacherous conditions.

But at the pool, where the first four finals produced two world records, 23-year-old Phelps took centre stage as he opened his bid to break Mark Spitz's 36-year record of seven golds at one Games by

winning the men's 400m individual medley.

With US President George W. Bush applauding in the stands, Phelps carved 1.41 seconds off his world record 4:05.25 set last June, but admitted afterwards he didn't have high expectations before the race.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Overall Medal				
	G	S	B	
CHN	6	2	0	
KOR	3	2	0	
USA	2	2	4	
CZE	2	0	0	



(L) Women's 10-metre air pistol silver medalist Natalia Paderina from Russia (L) holds bronze medalist Nino Salukvadze of Georgia on the podium at the Beijing Shooting Hall while (R) US swimmer Michael Phelps strokes his way to winning the men's 400m individual medley gold with a world record timing at Beijing's National Aquatics Centre in the 2008 Olympic Games on Sunday.



PHOTO: AFP