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President, CA to visit Tungipara to pay homage to Bangabandhu

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed will visit Tungipara in Gopalganj on August 15 to pay homage to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the occasion of his 33rd death anniversary.

The head of the state and the head of the government will offer special prayers and place wreaths at the grave of Bangabandhu, officials said.

This year's commemoration of the country's slain independence leader takes place in a changed context of restoration of the August 15 as National Mourning Day by the High Court order and the caretaker government's decision to comply with the order.

Bangabandhu was assassinated on August 15, 1975.

On August 15 last year, President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed also visited Tungipara and paid homage to

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Elected city leaders won't quit party posts

Plan to launch legal battle

SHAKHAWAT LITON and HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The Awami League (AL)-backed mayors- and councillors-elect prepare to pursue a legal challenge against the winners to resign their party positions before taking the oath of office.

The Local Government (City Corporation) Ordinance-2008 and Local Government (Municipality) Ordinance-2008 were promulgated by the army-backed caretaker administration to deal with the formation and functions of the local government bodies.

But those elected in the August 4 polls, mostly belonging to AL, view those as 'unconstitutional' and 'undemocratic'.

The AL policymakers on Sunday directed the mayors-elect to chal-

lenge the laws at courts, said party insiders.

Talukder Abdul Khaleque, the mayor-elect of Khulna City Corporation, said, "Since the High Court ruled that the candidates can use their political identities in the polls and scrapped the curbs in that regard, then why we should have to leave our party posts."

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, he said he is now in Dhaka consulting lawyers to file a writ petition with the High Court soon.

Also chief of Khulna city AL, Khaleque said elected mayors and councillors in Rajshahi and Barisal city corporations will join him in the legal battle against the ordinances.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain yesterday said the candidates seemed to have no problem with

the laws before the polls.

"And they should not change their mind now," he observed, adding that the commission however has nothing to say or do if the government does not want obedience to the provisions.

The EC in its original proposal said one would have to quit party posts to contest the local polls. But the caretaker government changed the proposal into a provision that applies after the election.

While the government and the EC say the restrictions are part of efforts to free the local government institutions from partisan politics, the major political parties dismiss those as an "attempt towards depoliticisation".

If the mayors- and councillors-elect stand down from their party posts, those who will be elected in

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Army to work as strike force in next polls

Election Commissioner Sakhawat says

UNB, Dhaka

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain yesterday said army will work as strike force with the law enforcement agencies during next elections.

"The Election Commission can bestow the magistracy power upon anyone who remains out of the law enforcement agencies," he told reporters while replying to a question at the Election Commission Secretariat.

Sakhawat said magistracy means the "power of instant judgment," which the law enforcement agencies are not empowered to exercise.

He said army remained a part of all big elections in the past and performed as the strike force.

The election commissioner said as the elections to more than 300 upazilas will be held in October, it will not be possible to maintain law

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MONEY WHITENING PROVISION

Shah Alam's Tk 498cr escapes ACC net

Top graft suspects' huge wealth stays safe for legal barriers

EMRAN HOSSAIN

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) could have charged Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam with amassing ill-gotten wealth worth Tk 606 crore had he not whitened Tk 498 crore under the money whitening schemes offered by successive governments.

The anti-graft watchdog on Sunday finally charged him with amassing ill-gotten wealth worth only about Tk 107 crore. Alam whitened the money over the years during the rule of both Awami League and BNP.

Detained businessman

Giasuddin Al Mamun also whitened Tk 30.22 crore taking the same opportunity, while his brother former lawmaker Hafiz Ibrahim and his wife Mafriza Sultana whitened Tk 11 crore under 2005 SRO (Statutory Regulatory Order) on different occasions.

Like Shah Alam, Mamun and Ibrahim, many high-profile graft suspects whitened huge amount of ill-gotten wealth and ACC cannot take action against them due to legal barriers.

The commission, however, has not made an official estimate of the money whitened by the corruption suspects accused in ACC cases.

In accordance with sections 19 (a), 19 (aa), 19 (aaa), 19 (b), 19 (bb),

and 19 (bbb) of the Income Tax Ordinance, 1984 and four SROs passed since 1998, no government

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Arrest warrant against Shah Alam, family

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued arrest warrants against Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan Shah Alam, his wife and four sons in a case filed for amassing wealth worth Tk 107.81

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Thaksin flees to UK amid graft case

AP, Bangkok

Deposed Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his family have fled to the United Kingdom, the former leader said yesterday after he and his wife skipped a hearing on corruption charges in a Thai court.

A handwritten statement from Thaksin issued Monday said he fled because he could not expect justice in Thai courts. It came amid newspaper reports that he would seek asylum in Britain.



"My wife and I have travelled to reside in England," Thaksin said in the statement. "If I still have luck, I would come back and die on Thai soil like every other Thai person."

Thaksin's statement, which did not mention asking for asylum, was read Monday afternoon on state-run television.

Thaksin, who was deposed in a 2006 military coup, faces a slew of court cases as well as investigations probing alleged corruption and abuse of power during his five years in office. In his statement, he again said he was innocent of all accusations against him.

"What happened to my family and me is like fruit from a poisonous tree. The fruit will also be poisoned," the statement said. "There is a continuation of dictatorship in managing Thai politics... which is followed by interference in the justice system." Thaksin and his wife Pojman failed to appear Monday morning before the Supreme Court's Criminal Division for holders of Political Positions in a case involving an allegedly

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Prices of essentials drop significantly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of essential commodities including edible oil, pulses, rice and flour have dropped significantly at kitchen markets in the city over the last three days.

Traders said usually prices tend to shoot up ahead of Ramadan, but this year they have marked a considerable drop.

The price of non-brand edible oil has decreased by Tk 7-12 in the last two weeks while that of brand soya bean oil too came down yesterday.

Five-litre jerry cans of brand soya bean oil were selling at Tk 570 yesterday in wholesale. The price was Tk 590 just a day before.

Distributors of edible oil told The Daily Star yesterday that almost all soya bean oil companies have dropped hints about bringing down the price and some of them have already started distribution at lower prices.

Though the jerry cans still carry the Tk 596 (MRP) price tag,

their wholesale price have come down, said one of the distributors.

The prices of pulses have marked a fall of Tk 2-6 per kg in wholesale market. A wholesaler of the city's Moulvibazar said prices of quality pulses have decreased by Tk 5 a kg in last week.

In wholesale, local varieties of pulses were selling between Tk 86 and Tk 92 a kg yesterday while the price was between Tk 92 and Tk 98 last week. The price of imported bolder pulses ranged between Tk 82 and Tk 84 a kg yesterday in wholesale markets. Last week they cost Tk 87 and Tk 88 a kg.

It would take time for the price drop to have full impact on the retail markets, retailers said, adding that they have already started selling at lower prices.

In wholesale, prices of rice have gone down almost every day in the last week. It has dropped by Tk 70-100 per mound. In retail,

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Counterfoil of ballot papers found on Khulna road

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

A counterfoil of ballot papers used for August 4 Khulna City Corporation (KCC) mayoral polls was found lying in front of Udayan Club in Khulna city on Sunday night.

The ballot papers with serial numbers 0013603 and 0013605 to 0013681 bear thumb impressions of voters.

Besides, a separate ballot paper with serial number 0013691, which also bears the thumb impression of a voter, was found at the same place at about 11:00pm on Sunday.

It could not be known who left those there.

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Lezak keeps Phelps' dream alive

AP, Beijing

With history about to slip away and Michael Phelps cheering him on, Jason Lezak pulled up next to the lane rope and set out after hunking Alain Bernard, like a NASCAR driver drafting down the backstretch at Daytona.

Only 25 metres to go, half the length of the pool. Every stroke brought Lezak a little closer, a little closer, a little closer, his body seemingly carried along by the Frenchman's massive wake. The two lunged for the wall together. When the result flashed on the board, Phelps was still on course for his record eight gold medals.

By a fingertip. Lezak, the oldest man on the US swimming team, pulled off one of the great comebacks in Olympic history Monday morning, hitting the wall just ahead of Bernard in the 400 freestyle relay, a race so fast it actually erased two world records.

Overall Medal			
	6	3	2
CHN	9	3	2
KOR	4	4	0
USA	3	4	5
ITA	3	3	2

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Few sporting events live up to the hype -- this one exceeded it. The 32-year-old Lezak was nearly a body length behind Bernard as they made the final turn, but the American hugged the lane rope and stunningly overtook him on the very last stroke.

Wow! "This has been happening my whole career," Lezak said. "People have gotten on my lane line and sucked off of me, so I figured this is the one opportunity in my whole career to do that."

Watching on deck, Phelps let out a resounding "Yeaaaaaah!" and thrust both arms toward the roof of

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Police towed a number of cars illegally parked in Motijheel yesterday to ease congestion in Dhaka's busiest commercial hub. The photo was taken in front of Krishi Bhavan.

PHOTO: STAR

Ershad, B Chy against freeing graft suspects

UNB, Faridpur

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad and Bikalpadhara President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury have strongly opposed the release of the detained political leaders who are facing corruption charges.

In identical views expressed in separate meetings at Faridpur and Bhola yesterday, the two elderly leaders said the present government came to power 19 months ago with a crusade against the corrupt people. But the spirit has waned.

The people who had welcomed the government are now frustrated seeing the politicians facing a number of corruption cases and investigation into abuse of power are getting freed one after another, they said.

Addressing a roadside meeting

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Khaleda refuses to be voter while in jail

SHAKHAWAT LITON and HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Detained former prime minister Khaleda Zia yesterday again declined to register herself as a voter from behind bars, passing the last chance for it in the capital city area.

Advisers to the military backed caretaker government on Sunday however said Khaleda Zia will be released 'unconditionally very soon' as the government completed all procedures for it.

Khaleda, also the BNP chairperson, will not be eligible to contest in the upcoming parliamentary poll if she is not registered as a voter in any of the constituencies, according to the planned electoral reforms.

The specified 15 days for inclusion of names of left out prospective voters on the voter list for



Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Dhaka cantonment areas ended yesterday, receiving over 7,000 applications for registration.

But, Khaleda stuck to her refusal to become a voter, when the jail authorities went to the sub-jail of the parliament building premises

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Medical Board formed for Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed a five-member medical board for treatment of detained BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, now at a prison cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) hospital.

"The decision of forming the medical board came from the home secretary," Deputy Inspector General of Prisons (DIG-Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddique told The Daily Star last night.

"The home secretary asked the director general (DG) of health directorate to form the medical board through the health ministry," he said.

The DIG (Prisons), however, said they did not get any paper in this regard and the names of the doctors were yet to be known.

Tarique, the eldest son of detained BNP Chairperson and former premier Khaleda Zia, was arrested on March 7 last year. He has been accused in a number of cases on different charges including extortion and bribery.

Kamal Majumder sued for tax dodging

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday filed a case against detained former Awami League (AL) lawmaker Kamal Ahmed Majumder for dodging Tk 2.42 crore in income tax from 1986 to 2006.

Meantime, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) pressed charges against former AL lawmaker AKM Rahamatullah and his wife Hamida Rahamatullah in a case filed for amassing wealth worth Tk 5,17,45,914 through illegal means.

CASE AGAINST KAMAL NBR Deputy Tax Commissioner Kabir Uddin Mollah filed the case with the Senior Special Judge's

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RESTIVE RMG SECTOR Over 3,000 sued for violence in Gazipur, Ashulia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two cases and three general diaries were filed yesterday against over 3,000 workers for torching a garment factory in Gazipur and vandalising several others at Ashulia and the Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) on Sunday night.

Meem Designs Ltd Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury filed a case with Gazipur Police Station in the morning accusing over 1,500 workers of damaging valuables worth Tk 50 crore.

The complainant said unruly workers vandalised and set valuables and properties of the factory ablaze.

Diluna Barua, sub-inspector of Gazipur Police Station, told The Daily Star that none had been arrested.

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PHOTO: AFP

Jason Lezak (L), whose late burst gave the United States the men's 4x100m freestyle relay gold in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, celebrates the spectacular success with teammates Michael Phelps (2nd from L), Cullen Jones (2nd from R) and Garrett Weber-Gale at the National Aquatics Centre in Beijing yesterday.

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