

## MI-29 CASE Hasina asked to appear in court Aug 20

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and the five other accused in the MiG-29 warplane purchase graft case to appear before it on August 20.

The court rejected petitions for discharging Hasina and the other accused from the case.

Judge Golam Mortuza Majumder of the Special Judge's Court, Dhaka Division, also set August 20 for its decision whether to frame charges in the case.

The court relieved late army chief Gen (ret'd) Mustafizur Rahman, another accused in the case, of all charges. Gen Mustafiz died on August 3.

Hasina, also Awami League president, now abroad for

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## CITY, MUNICIPALITY POLLS Tax, wealth, police records of winners to be checked

SHAKHAWAT LITON

For the first time in the country's history, tax and wealth statements, and police records of people's representatives elected to city corporations and municipalities will be checked by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and the police department.

Informed by different sources that some of the officials-elect either submitted false information or concealed correct information, the Election Commission (EC) at a meeting on Sunday decided to launch the investigation, sources in the commission said.

All sorts of documents submitted during the electoral process by the newly elected local govern-

ment officials will be sent to the NBR and to the office of inspector general of police (IGP) for scrutiny, the sources said.

According to the electoral rules, candidature of an elected representative to city corporations and municipalities might be cancelled if the representative had submitted false information or suppressed any information regarding financial matters.

If the candidature of a mayor or councillor elect is cancelled, his or her election to the post will automatically be cancelled even after taking the oath of office, senior officials in the EC Secretariat said.

The rules also have a provision of filing criminal cases with courts instead, against any elected repre-

sentative, if the person is accused of violating electoral rules.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda already declared that legal actions will be taken against violators of electoral rules, even if they are elected.

Upon directives from the EC, its secretariat yesterday completed all preparations to send relevant documents to the NBR and to the office of IGP today, the sources said.

The EC in its draft letter, to be sent to the NBR and IGP today, sought separate opinions on each of the elected officials, after scrutiny of their records that fall under the jurisdictions of the two government authorities.

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## National flag to be at half-mast on Aug 15

Govt announces

UNB, Dhaka

The government has decided to observe August 15 as National Mourning Day, rescinding a previous notification that had stopped the state commemoration of the death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

An official announcement yesterday said the national flag will be kept at half-mast at all government and non-government buildings and at Bangladesh missions abroad to mark the day.

Bangabandhu was assassinated in a military putsch on August 15, 1975.

"The impugned notification issued by the Cabinet Division on August 3, 2002 has been cancelled," says the announcement.

The caretaker government

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## Only civil servants, their wives approaching Tac

EMRAN HOSSAIN

Only incumbent and former government officials and wives of three of them have so far applied to face the Truth and Accountability Commission (Tac) in the 10 days since its inception for making voluntary disclosure of corruption.

A few businessmen also visited the Tac office while politicians sent lawyers and contacted the commission themselves over phone to learn about the rules and regulations for the procedure and explanation of the Voluntary Disclosure of Information Ordinance 2008, commission sources said.

Two government officials directly applied to the Tac to confess their corruption while eight applied to Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for going to the

Tac that began functioning on August 3.

The ACC held a meeting yesterday afternoon to decide on sending the eight applicants to the Tac to dispose of cases on a regular basis to avoid any backlog. But the meeting could not make any decision on them as their cases need further scrutiny, Tac sources said.

The commission will hold another meeting today to discuss the matter.

Tac officials said they expect that more corruption suspects will start coming up in a couple of days with applications seeking absolution. They expect that the third week of this month will be the peak time for filing such applications before the September 1 deadline.

"We are getting applications mostly from government service-

holders while businessmen and politicians are making phone calls every day to learn about the rules and regulations for facing the commission," Tac Chairman Justice Habibur Rahman Khan told The Daily Star.

"We do not know yet why only government officials have applied to seek absolution. We hope that we would be able to explain the matter in a few days," he said.

"We think corruption suspects will begin filing applications in a couple of days. We have officially received one or two applications for consideration," the Tac chairman said but refused to divulge any further details regarding the applications.

ACC sources, meanwhile, said those who have applied through

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## HC stayed tax evasion case proceedings against Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday stayed for three months the proceedings of a tax evasion case filed by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) against detained BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman.

Responding to a writ petition filed by Tarique, an HC bench comprised of Justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice Md Abu Tariq also issued a rule upon the government to explain within six weeks why the initiation and continuation of this case should not be declared illegal.

Meanwhile, the chamber judge of the Appellate Division Justice MA Matin sent a petition filed by Tarique Rahman -- for staying the proceedings against him in the Tk 21-crore bribery case involving the murder of Bashundhara Group director Humayun Kabir Sabir -- to the regular bench of the Appellate Division for hearing.

The chamber judge also fixed August 17 for the hearing at the apex court.

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Tailbacks on Tongi Diversion Road at Moghbazar caused sufferings to city dwellers yesterday. The chief adviser recently asked authorities concerned to tackle the traffic congestion issue of Dhaka.

## Draft coal policy for Mine Bangla

Proposal goes to cabinet today

SHARIER KHAN

The eighth draft coal policy that emphasises immediate government-led action in coal sector to meet the country's surging energy demand is likely to be placed before the caretaker government's cabinet today.

The draft proposes to set up a "mine Bangla" in line with Petrobangla by 2010 to spearhead different mining schemes. This government body will take strategic partners from private sector through open tenders for quick development of the schemes.

Other proposals include compulsory release of 20 percent shares of a mining venture to the local market as per the laws of the Securities Exchange Commission. When selling back, shareowners will be only able to sell those to the government at market price.

"Because of excessive revisions and inputs from a wide number of people, the draft policy now sounds more like a law than a policy," says a source. "And this was exactly the observation of the law

ministry about the policy when the energy ministry sent the draft to the law ministry a few months back."

The draft policy tries to touch almost all aspects of coal development. "That is why the law ministry observed that instead of such a policy, the government should work on several laws instead of just one," the source adds.

The coal policy was first drafted in December 2005. The seventh draft was prepared by a committee to review the draft policy. Headed by former VC of Buet Prof Abdul Matin Patwari, the 10-member committee submitted its report to the energy ministry in December last year.

The ministry itself has also modified some of the contents. Only recently, the ministry has forwarded the draft to the Cabinet Division for approval by the cabinet.

Under this policy, private companies will not have sole ownership over any coal mining deal and must come as partners with a national coalmining company.

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## Khaleda won't apply for release

UNB, Dhaka

Detained former prime minister Khaleda Zia has taken a firm stand that she will neither apply to the caretaker government seeking release nor accept parole.

"The government has arrested me and it is the government's duty to free me. Cases against me are all politically motivated. I will not apply for release. I want to be freed with honour," she was quoted by her lawyers as saying.

Khaleda's lawyers Ahmed Azam Khan and Shimul Biswas met her at the makeshift jail in the parliament complex yesterday and had nearly a 45-minute conversation with her.

Emerging from the meeting, Advocate Azam Khan told the news agency that Khaleda Zia expressed concern over delay in sending her son Tarique Rahman abroad for treatment.

About her registration as voter, Khaleda said she will be voter as a free citizen from her house at Shaheed Mainul Road in Dhaka Cantonment, not from jail.

The lawyers said the BNP chairperson believes that country's independence, sovereignty, democracy and public property are

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## GRAFT, EXTORTION CASES Kh Mosharraf, Kamal Majumder, Pintu get bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted ad interim bail to seven people including former health minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and former lawmakers Kamal Ahmed Majumder and Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu.

Of the seven, BNP leaders Khandaker Mosharraf, Pintu, ex-BRTC chairman Taimur Alam Khandaker, Awami League (AL) leaders Kamal Majumder and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, and former prime minister Khaleda Zia's brother Shamim Iskander are detained in graft and extortion cases while former assistant secretary RAM Obaidul Mukhtar Chowdhury on charges of violating the emergency power rules.

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## MONEY LAUNDERING Scamster Obaidul Karim gets 5 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court sentenced Orion Group Chairman Obaidul Karim to five years' rigorous imprisonment in a Tk 2 crore money-laundering case yesterday.

This is the third sentence against the Orion chief in eight months. He was condemned to life in an embezzlement case in December 2007 while in last June he got 13 years for accumulating illegal wealth and hiding information from the Anti-Corruption Commission.

The court, however, acquitted former Awami League (AL) law-



Obaidul Karim

maker AHM Mostafa Kamal alias Lotus Kamal and his business group's general manager ABM Selim on the laundering charges.

Judge M Ashraf Hossain of Special Court 5, set up at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex, fined Obaidul Tk 2 crore, defaulting on which will earn him one year more behind bars.

The court also ordered for confiscation of Tk 2 crore from the Orion chairman. The sentence will be effective from the date of his arrest or surrender.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case against

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## 'UNLAWFUL' KILLINGS HR body asks govts not to provide any support to Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US-based human rights watchdog Human Rights Watch yesterday urged governments not to work with or provide any support to Bangladesh's elite crime-fighting force Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) until it ends its "wave of unlawful killings" and holds responsible officials accountable.

"For a foreign government to provide assistance to the Rab at this point in time would be to condone the Rab's record of human rights abuses and would raise serious questions about the donor's

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## Ex-DIG's claimed 7 kids are not siblings

Reveal DNA test results submitted to HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former deputy inspector general (DIG) of police Anisur Rahman and his wife are not the biological parents of the "septuplets" rescued from their house and the children are not siblings either, revealed DNA test results.

The High Court (HC) bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Farid Ahmed yesterday read out the DNA test reports before the lawyers of Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers Association (BNWLA) and Bangladesh Society for Establishment of Human Rights (BSEHR).

In 2006, BNWLA and BSEHR filed a writ petition seeking legal custody of the children -- four boys

and three girls -- rescued from the former DIG's residence.

The HC bench fixed today (Wednesday) for the delivery of its verdict on the matter.

The reports of the DNA tests, conducted at the DNA laboratory at Dhaka Medical College, were presented yesterday before the court through the Supreme Court (SC) authorities as per a previous order of the HC.

The children have been identified as Marium, Aimon Rahman Anis, Alas Rahman Akand, Nafis Rahman Nais, Dian Rahman, Jannatul Nafiza Rahman and Jannatul Anisa Rahman.

The children's 'mother' Anwara Rahman, accused in an extortion

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## Engr Mosharraf, two others freed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Awami League (AL) minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain was released from Kashimpur jail in Gazipur last night on bail from the High Court (HC).

Earlier in the evening, former secretary to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Khandaker Shahidul Islam and ex-president of Dhaka Club Selim Bhuiyan were freed from the Dhaka Central Jail. The two are co-accused of detained former prime minister Khaleda Zia in Niko graft case.

Kashimpur jail sources said Mosharraf came out of the prison at around 10:00pm.

He was arrested on February 25 last year while in the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) headquarters to submit wealth statement.

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## KHALEDA'S RELEASE ISSUE Hossain Zillur blames media for 'smokescreen'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday blamed the media for "putting up smokescreen" over the release of detained BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Meantime, the former prime minister's lawyers said she will not petition the government for her release.

"There's no smokescreen. It's you who've created it," Zillur told reporters after a meeting with Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader at the secretariat.

He said two things, political discussion and administrative order, are needed to set the BNP chief free.

"The process of her release is at

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## Phelps joins select band

AFP, Beijing



US swimmer Michael Phelps joined an elite list of Olympic greats Tuesday by becoming only the fifth competitor in history to win nine gold medals.

Phelps added his name to the prestigious group of Paavo Nurmi, Carl Lewis, Mark Spitz and Larisa Latynina when he won the men's 200 metres freestyle with a world record swim for his third gold medal in Beijing.

He appears destined to become the greatest Olympian as he continues his quest for an unequalled eight gold medals in one Games here and said the toughest three races were behind him.

Phelps won six gold medals in Athens four years ago and has

already won gold in the 400m individual medley and 4x100m freestyle relay, both in world record time, at Beijing's futuristic Water Cube pool.

Ahead lie the 200m individual medley, 200m butterfly, 100m butterfly, 4x200m free relay and 4x100m medley relay.

"That's great," said Phelps as he emerged from the water after leading all the way in the 200m freestyle final to post a new world record of one minute 42.96 seconds.

"I just wanted to be out on my own which I had done by the 100 metres mark, that was my goal."

Phelps's freestyle victory

Overall Medal				
	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
CHN	13	3	4	20
USA	7	6	8	21
KOR	5	6	1	12
ITA	3	4	2	9

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launched a dominant morning for the United States in the pool.

Aaron Peirsol lowered his own world record in winning the men's 100m backstroke, setting a new mark of 52.54 secs, and Natalie Coughlin defended her women's 100m backstroke crown.

Australian Leisel Jones broke the US stranglehold when she won the women's 100m breaststroke title.

China lead the medals table with 13 gold, ahead of the United States on seven and South Korea with five.

In Beijing, security was stepped up around Olympic sites Tuesday after recent violent incidents, including the fatal stabbing of a US Olympic coach's relative, and there were reports of further trouble in the north-west region of Xinjiang.

Three security staff were stabbed to death in the third deadly assault there in just over a week, state media said.

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PHOTO: AFP

THREE DOWN, FIVE MORE TO GO: US swimming icon Michael Phelps powers his way to win the 200m freestyle gold, his third in a row, at the National Aquatics Centre in Beijing yesterday.

## Obaidul Quader taken to court on stretcher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The trial of a bribery case against detained Awami League leader Obaidul Quader continued at the Special Court-10 yesterday with the ailing leader lying down on the stretcher he was brought in, throughout the proceedings.

After examining Obaidul Quader's medical reports, and recording of one witness' deposition, the judge adjourned the hearing till August 27 and ordered the jail authorities to ensure proper treatment of the defendant.

Another case ongoing in Special Court-7 was also adjourned till Aug 28.

Quader appeared gravely ill and vomited during the proceedings at Special Court-10. At one stage, judge AKM Arifur Rahman questioned why the jail authorities had

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