

Khaleda, Nizami

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affairs adviser to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, and Giasuddin Al Mamun, friend of Tarique Rahman, in separate criminal cases.

Hearing the petitions, an HC bench comprised of Justice Sharif Uddin Chaklader and Justice Md Emdadul Haque Azad issued separate rules upon the government to explain as to why the petitioners should not be granted regular bail.

CASE AGAINST KHALEDA, TARIQUE
Khaleda and Tarique on August 25 filed separate petitions with the HC for bail in the case.

The HC bench issued the rule upon the government to show cause within six weeks as to why they should not be granted regular bail.

Barrister Mahbubuddin Khokon, a counsel for Tarique Rahman, yesterday told The Daily Star that the HC would hear five bail petitions filed by his client today.

ACC Deputy Assistant Director Harun-ur-Rashid filed the "Zia Orphanage Trust" fund embezzlement case against Khaleda, her son Tarique and five others on July 3 in connection with embezzling over Tk 2.10 crore by forming the fake organisation.

The five other accused are former BNP lawmaker Qazi Saleemul Huq Kamal, Sayeed Ahmed, Gias Uddin Ahmed, Sharfuddin Ahmed and Mominur Rahman, son of Khaleda's sister.

CASE AGAINST NIZAMI
Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami, also former industries minister, obtained anticipatory bail till the trial court concerned accepts the charge sheet of the Barapukuria coalmine corruption case.

Hearing the bail petition, the HC also issued a rule upon the government to explain within two weeks as to why Nizami should not be granted regular bail in this case.

On February 26 this year, the ACC

filed the case against detained BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and 15 others, including 10 former ministers from BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, in connection with corruption in awarding Barapukuria coalmine operation contract to a Chinese company.

CASES AGAINST SQ CHOWDHURY
The HC bench upon three petitions filed by Salauddin Quader Chowdhury granted six months' ad interim bail in two extortion cases and four months' ad interim bail in a cattlelifting case.

The court also stayed for six months the proceedings of the extortion cases and stayed the proceedings of the cattle lifting case for four months.

His lawyer Omar Sadat told The Daily Star that Awami League activists of Rangunia in Chittagong filed the cases with Rangunia Police Station in 2007.

He said in the cattle lifting case SQ Chowdhury is accused of stealing five cows and seven goats from the plaintiff with the help of his followers in 2001.

Sadat said all the "baseless" cases were filed against SQ Chowdhury with the political intention to harass him.

CASES AGAINST MAMUN
The HC granted six months' ad interim bail to Giasuddin Al Mamun in two extortion cases filed with Gulshan Police Station. The court also stayed proceedings of the cases for six months.

His lawyer Fakhrul Islam said his client has obtained bail in 14 criminal cases and in each of two cases he was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.

"Mamun has appealed to the HC for bail in the cases in which he was convicted by special courts. If he is granted bail in these cases, there will be no legal bar to releasing him," he said.

AL talks

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during election.

Meanwhile, key AL leaders yesterday expressed doubt about the government's intention in holding the national election by December, saying the election would not be held in five years if it is not held in December.

They were speaking at a discussion marking Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's 33rd death anniversary organised by pro-AL doctors' body Swadhinata Chikitshak Parishad at the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh.

Addressing the discussion, AL Presidium member Amir Hossain Amu said varying statements made by the government have aroused doubts in people's minds over holding of the parliamentary polls.

Amu demanded announcement of the national poll date by October, saying they would then have no objection to holding of upazila elections.

Presidium member Suranjit Sengupta said the people gave the government mandate to be in power until December after which the government would be "illegal, unconstitutional and undemocratic".

Syed Ashraf said, "If the parliamentary election is not held by December, it will not be held in the next five years." He said it is the duty of the AL to resist any move to delay the poll.

Ashraf said the present caretaker government is committed to people by a "social contract" to hold the national election by December.

Landslides

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Department and the Police department.

Rain-induced mudslides claimed 11 lives on August 18 this year in the Port City and 127 earlier on June 11 last year. Over 70 others were killed in hill and landslides since 1998 including 16 in 1998, 19 in 1999, 16 in 2000 and seven in 2002.

JCD vows

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the arson and their immediate arrest.

They also alleged that Dhaka College students quite often go violent causing losses and other sufferings to the business community adjacent to the campus.

Jahangir's body was sent to his village home Laxmipur for burial yesterday afternoon.

After yesterday's JCD rally its central committee's Senior Vice-president Sultan Salauddin Tuku told reporters that they will launch a countryside movement to oust the government if Tarique is not sent abroad immediately.

"We demand that the government sends Tarique Rahman abroad within a day or two considering his serious illness," Tuku said adding that the JCD central committee will meet soon to launch a countryside movement for ousting the government if their demands are not met.

"Despite the High Court's recommendation and repeated demands of Tarique's doctors, the government has yet to take any effective step for sending him abroad," Tuku added.

He alleged that a conspiracy is on to create a vacuum in BNP's leadership by 'killing its future leader Tarique', and that is why he is not being sent abroad.

From the rally, JCD leaders also demanded lifting of the state of emergency.

Manju

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of income and three years' RI for hiding information about his wealth. The jail terms will run consecutively, the court said in its judgement.

Since he is absconding, the jail sentences will come into effect the day he surrenders or is arrested.

Earlier on June 10 this year, Manju was sentenced to seven years' RI in a bribery case.

On May 18, he was given a seven-year jail term in another bribery case.

And on June 26 last year, he was sentenced to five years in jail for possessing 21 bottles of alcohol at his Dhamondi house in the capital.

Manju's wife Tasmima Hossain was also accused in the case concerning accumulation of wealth illegally for aiding and abetting him in doing this. But the High Court on June 6 this year quashed proceedings against her following a writ petition.

ACC Assistant Director Sheikh Faizay Alam filed the case with Dhamondi Police Station on October 7 last year.

According to the charge sheet, Manju accumulated Tk 1.72 crore wealth and held back information about property worth Tk 2.10 crore, which were disproportionate to his known sources of income.

The ACC served a notice on him on May 29 last year asking him to submit wealth statement to it, and he did so on June 17 this year.

Advocate Harunur Rashid was the prosecution counsel in the case.

300 cars requisitioned

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of the black laws and also one of the bad jobs of the police department," the IGP said. "The police had to do it for the greater interests of the country despite sufferings of the citizens."

In reply to a question, the police boss said, "There is no alternative to it, as the government has neither sufficient vehicles nor enough fund to purchase more to meet the requirement."

The DMP commissioner said they are reviewing the existing requisition policy to stop harassment of the vehicle owners and misuse of the law as well as inappropriate usage of requisitioned vehicles.

"Earlier, we couldn't compensate the owners and provide meal allowances to the drivers and helpers for lack of fund. We've submitted a proposal to the government seeking allocation of Tk 5.25 crore annually in this regard," he said.

He added according to the proposed policy, vehicle owners would be provided with compensation if any of their vehicles gets damaged during the requisition period.

Sources say the law enforcement and other government agencies manage vehicles through requisitioning by the transport department of the DMP as they have shortage of transport.

Assistant Commissioner of the Motor Transport (AC-MT) Department Sudip Kumer Chakraborti told The Daily Star around 200 vehicles are requisitioned by the DMP every day. The number is often increased due to political situations and the government's special activities, he added.

He said the DMP requisitions every day over 80 buses, around 75 pickup-vans, 40 microbuses, five trucks and around 10 taxicabs.

He went on to say the DMP requisitioned highest 825 vehicles a day during the last days of the BNP rule.

DMP sources say they meet their own demands through requisitioned vehicles and also supply those to the joint forces, Rapid Action Battalion, prosecution department, Dhaka Deputy Commissioner's Office for conducting mobile court drives, and several other government agencies for various purposes.

But insiders say the traffic officials often harass the vehicle owners and also collect bribe from them threatening them with requisition.

Besides, there are allegations that a number of government high officials use the requisitioned vehicles for their personal use.

Khandaker Rafiqul Hossain Kazol, president of Association of Bus Companies (ABC), termed requisitioning a "corrupt" system.

"The bus transport sector is severely being hampered due to requisition system as at least 80 buses of the Companies always remain requisitioned. But we never get the compensation and the meal allowances."

"To avoid harassment, we always provide around 80 buses to the DMP. The government itself should arrange the necessary transport to its agencies."

Bangladesh Truck Owners Association general secretary Rustum Ali said, "In the name of requisition, the police officials often harass us."

"They do whatever they want and also often collect money from us," he alleged.

According to existing laws, a vehicle can be requisitioned for highest seven days against everyday payment of Tk 500 to its owner

and Tk 50 each to its driver and helper as meal allowance.

But this is not in practice since independence.

Moreover, over 500 requisitioned vehicles were burned to ashes or damaged severely on different occasions, but the owners did not get a single penny from DMP.

Earlier on February 12 in 2005, the HC stayed the DMP functioning on requisition of private cars plying in the city after a writ was filed by Kafil Uddin, a leader of Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners Association.

But The Supreme Court (SC) on March 5, 2005, stayed the HC decision until March 31 the same year.

The HC also ordered the DMP not to requisition any vehicles for six months as SC lawyer Tobarak Hossain filed another writ in August 2004 challenging the requisition laws. But the SC also stayed that HC order.

SC lawyer Tobarak Hossain said, "The case remains pending for years. But I am carrying out the procedures."

Talking to The Daily Star, AC-MT Sudip Kumer said over 15 writs were filed in different times regarding requisition.

The DMP commissioner said following the writs, the DMP formed a six-member committee to compensate the vehicle owners and allocate meal allowances.

AKM Hafiz Akhter, (DC-Transport) said, "Though there were laws for providing compensation, there was no regular allocation. The government on different occasions paid some amount which was not sufficient."

Asked, the DC-Transport said, "The owners often do not come to receive their compensation considering it as harassment since they have to wait for months."

He said according to the new proposal, the DMP sought Tk 4.5 crore yearly for compensation and Tk 75 lakh for the meal allowances.

According to the new proposal, a large-sized bus would get compensation of Tk 1,000, minibus Tk 700, microbus and truck Tk 600 and car and taxicab Tk 400 per day.

CEC

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He told journalists that two political parties have registered with the EC already.

Replying to a question, he said the upazila elections would be held on October 23 but how many upazilas the election would be held in is yet to be decided.

Earlier, CEC Huda inaugurated the debate competition. Speaking as the chief guest of the inaugural function, the CEC recalled his childhood days in the school between 1950 and 1952.

He said, "We, the generation of the independence, have failures in many areas. We could not be successful in everything. It is my desire that the present generation overcomes our failures and prospers."

The CEC thanked the school authorities for inviting him as a former student.

Brother Robi Purification, headmaster of the school, presided over the function where Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, executive editor of Bangla daily The Sangbad, was present as special guest.

Assistant Headmaster Brother Chandan D Gomes and Debate for Democracy Chairman Hassan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron also spoke at the function.

The debate is jointly organised by St Gregory's High School and Debate for Democracy. More than 30 schools of the city are taking part in the three-day competition.

Cops asked

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men) were supposed to stay within the campus.

"We did not allow them to come out of the campus for agitation. But since they did it, cases have been filed to deal with it," he said.

He said the police did not go in action thinking that it might spread the violence across the country. **TARIQUE OUT OF DANGER**
The BSMMU authorities yesterday said Tarique was out of danger.

They said he was still under 48-hour observation.

Tarique refused to have CT scan at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. However, jail authorities said he may have the CT scan today.

"Tarique has temperature and the right side of his head has swollen," Dr Kazi Mazharul Islam Dolon, who sits on a medical board earlier formed for Tarique, told reporters after visiting the BNP leader.

"But nothing can be said for sure before 48 hours," he said.

Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddique said Tarique was doing fine. "I have talked to him. He did not complain of any problem," he said.

Inspector General (Prisons) Zakir Hassan said the prison authorities have nothing to do with Tarique as he was under the supervision of the BSMMU authorities.

"He's not in the prison cell of the hospital now. He's staying in a cabin," he said emerging from the home ministry meeting.

He said the doctors informed the home affairs adviser that Tarique was out of danger.

Six areas

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be affected as a result of climate change. Global warming caused by the developed countries is also going to leave an impact on the lives of thousands of people and their livelihoods.

Bangladesh is taking preparations to build capacity for climate resilient development. He also stressed the importance of adaptation planning and adequate financing for in the coming decades.

The presentation also said how the government responded to the greenhouse gas reduction through facilitating clean development mechanism (CDM) projects and opportunities for finance and investment in mitigation efforts as well.

Twenty papers were presented yesterday mainly on impacts of climate change on soil and water in South Asia.

The session will be presented at the 'Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRRI) today where the experts are scheduled to focus mainly on food security issues.

President of Iceland Olafur Rangnar Grimsom will attend the symposium on climate change at Hotel Sonargaon on Saturday.

Police scrap

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jobs at the PIO would be posted elsewhere.

On August 12, the DMP launched the intelligence wing to gather information in advance about the activities of different political parties and their front organisations. The PIO was set up under the DMP Rules, 2006.

Two major political parties--the Awami League (AL) and BNP--had said the PIO was set up to harass political party leaders and activists.

DMP Commissioner Naim Ahmed had denied the allegation saying the objective of the PIO was not to harass anyone; it was rather to collect information about any incident quickly so that the police can take preventive measures before it escalated into something bigger, which may become difficult to handle.

Delhi

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newspaper on Monday. Bangladesh handed over an updated list of 1,648 Bangladeshi criminals hiding in India at the director-general level border conference between BDR and BSF held in Dhaka recently. The Indian side gave a list of 464 Indian criminals.

A BDR official said the number of Bangladeshi criminals taking shelter in India is on the rise as the Indian government is not willing to hand them over on the plea of not having an extradition treaty.

According to a BDR intelligence report, some criminal groups are operating against Bangladesh from within India. Lists of such groups and locations of their camps were given to the Indian authorities at the previous home-secretary level talks.

A broad range of issues relating to border disputes is expected to be discussed at the upcoming meeting.

Cross-border terrorism, trafficking of children and women, smuggling of illicit arms and drugs, water sharing and killings on the border will figure high at the talks.

The issues were discussed at length at the BDR-BSF conference. BSF then apologised for the indiscriminate killings of Bangladeshis on the border.

The meeting will also pore over the implementation of the Land Boundary Agreement 1974, demarcation of 6.5 kilometres of borders and exchange of enclaves.

Home Secretary Abdul Karim and Indian Home Secretary Madhukar Gupta will lead their side.

US diplomat escapes gun attack in Pakistan

AP, Peshawar

Gunmen opened fire on the top US diplomat in northwestern Pakistan early yesterday as she left for work in her armoured vehicle, police and embassy officials said. No one was killed in the attack.

Lynne Tracy, principal officer for the consulate in the bustling city of Peshawar, was 100 yards from her house when two men with AK-47s jumped out of their dark blue Land Cruiser and sprayed her car with dozens of rounds of ammunition.

Her driver reversed the vehicle and peeled back to her home, said Arshad Khan, the local police chief and senior investigator in the case.

The brazen attack came hours after the breakup of Pakistan's ruling coalition government, a fracture that could concentrate more power into the hands of a party that says it is committed to supporting the US war on terror.

The government Monday announced a ban on the Pakistani Taliban blamed for a wave of suicide bombings in recent days and hours earlier rejected a cease-fire offer in the Bajur tribal region by the militants.

Khan said Tracy's Land Cruiser was damaged, but only slightly, thanks to its heavy armour.

Though no one was killed by the gunfire, a rickshaw driver was hurt when his three-wheeled taxi was hit by the consulate vehicle, he said. The man was hospitalised, but the extent of his injuries was not immediately known.

Militant activity is rampant in parts of northwest Pakistan, a rumoured hiding place of Osama bin Laden, though mainly in tribal regions where US officials say insurgents have found safe havens in which to plan attacks on American and Nato forces across the border in Afghanistan.

Peshawar, a crowded, dusty city, has not been immune, and concerns about militant activity in and around it prompted the government to stage a paramilitary offensive in neighbouring Khyber tribal region earlier this year.

Talat Masood, a political and military analyst, said American and other diplomats seen as allies in the war on terror, could increasingly be the targets of militant attacks, especially in the next few weeks.

"I think they have to be very careful" he said, noting the army was intensifying its campaign in tribal regions along the Afghan border. "They should take a low profile, their movements should be restricted during this period."

Masood did not think Western allies should scale back their pres-

Zardari

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September 6 presidential polls, ensuring it had enough support to save his victory despite PML-N's decision to pull out of the government and field its own candidate.

PML-N leaders filed nomination papers for Saeed-uz-Zaman Siddiqui. PML-Q candidate Mushahid Hussain Sayed filed the nomination papers accompanied by his party leaders Senior PPP leaders and federal Ministers Sherry Rehman and Khurshid Shah went to the Election Commission with leaders of the Awami National Party and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, both partners in the ruling coalition, and the opposition Muttahida Qaumi Movement and filed nomination papers for Zardari with Chief Election Commissioner Qazi Muhammad Farooq.

Information Minister Sherry Rehman Sherry said the PPP has a "comfortable number of votes" to ensure Zardari's victory despite the PML-N's decision to leave the coalition.

The PPP had been saddened by the PML-N's move but it would make every effort to take along all political forces to promote the culture of reconciliation, she said.

"We believe that Zardari is the right candidate for this office because he truly represents the unity of the federation," said PPP leader and Law Minister Farooq Naek.

The presidential polls are going to be a three-way contest, with Zardari being pitted against former Supreme Court Chief Justice Saeed-uz-Zaman Siddiqui, who is being backed by the PML-N, and opposition PML-Q secretary general Mushahid Hussain Sayed.

Lankan battles

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Other battles in Mullaitivu and Welioya regions killed four soldiers and one rebel, the statement said.

Army troops captured a part of a reservoir in Welioya on Monday after a clash that killed eight rebels and two soldiers, it said.

Rebel spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthirayakum said not be reached for comment Monday.

Both sides routinely exaggerate enemy casualties and underreport their own. Independent verification of the fighting was not possible because most journalists are barred from the war zone in the north.

Fighting has escalated in recent weeks on the Indian Ocean island. The military claims to have captured several rebel bases and large chunks of territory, while government officials have reiterated their pledge to crush the Tamil Tiger guerrillas by the end of the year.

The rebels have been fighting for an independent state in the north and east since 1983, following decades of marginalisation of ethnic Tamils by governments dominated by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

ence, however, saying that would only embolden the militants and demoralise Pakistanis.

There have been a string of suicide bombings since Pervez Musharraf resigned as president after nearly nine divisive years in power just over a week ago.

The Taliban claimed to be behind a twin suicide bombing at a weapons manufacturing complex near the federal capital, Islamabad, that killed 67 people--one of the largest terrorist attacks ever in the country.

There have been at least three bloody attacks since then. The Taliban spokesman could not immediately be reached to comment on Tuesday's attack.

Pakistan, where anti-American sentiment runs deep, is considered a hardship posting for US diplomats, with many coming for one-year stints without family.

However, while there are occasional attacks on Western targets, ones directly targeting US officials are still relatively unusual. Top diplomats in particular tend to have high security and are often restricted in what places they are allowed to visit.

Along with its embassy, the US has three consulates in Pakistan in Peshawar, the eastern city of Lahore and the southern city of Karachi. In 2006, a suicide attacker blew himself up outside the Karachi consulate, killing a US diplomat.

In 2002, five people, including two Americans, were killed when a militant hurled grenades into a Protestant church in Islamabad attended by members of the diplomatic community.

The US Embassy provided few details about Tuesday's attack, saying only that there was a "security incident" involving three consulate employees. It would not name or describe the employees.

"There were no injuries and minimal damage to the vehicle," spokesman Lou Fintor added. "We are coordinating with Pakistani authorities in investigating the incident."

Meanwhile Tuesday, in Pakistan's southwest Baluchistan province, a bomb rigged to a motorcycle parked near the stage of a political rally in the town of Jafferabad wounded at least 20 people, some critically, police official Nazir Ahmad said.

The attacks come as the country's ruling coalition has crumbled. Just a week before, the two main parties united to drive Musharraf, the stalwart US ally in the war on terror, from the presidency, but their partnership collapsed Monday over disputes about his successor and how to restore judges he had ousted.

Bomb attack

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while three others were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Abdul Quader told The Daily Star that two bombs exploded when he and others were unloading goods from a truck. "I did not see who threw the bombs," he said.

Kotwali police said two hand bombs were exploded near the Medinova Clinic at the Roy Saheb Bazar intersection at about 8:00pm.

Meanwhile, police arrested three alleged muggers on Monday night in connection with a bomb attack on policemen that injured three cops on the Judge's Court premises in the same area on August 21.

The arrestees are Selim, 38, Baltu, 30, and Aynul alias Aminul, 25.