

Tarique's release

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for treatment after getting bail from the HC, he said.

"This is nothing but to keep Khaleda Zia under pressure," Anwar told The Daily Star, hoping that the Supreme Court (SC) would judge the matter impartially.

Meanwhile, a section of government policymakers said they believe that releasing Khaleda and Tarique on bail might have an adverse impact on politicians and people since Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina was released on an executive order.

"Release of a highly corrupt detainee like Tarique may establish him as a clean person," said a source in the government, adding that even a new case would be filed against Tarique if the SC judgment goes in his favour.

Several advisers to the caretaker government have been saying Khaleda would be released the same way followed for Hasina.

THE APPEALS

The attorney general's office filed the petitions on behalf of the government and the ACC for filing regular leaves to appeal with the apex court against the HC bail orders.

The attorney general's office has also informed the jail authorities about filing of the appeals so that they do not release Tarique, sources said.

The vacation bench of chamber judge of the Appellate Division is likely to hear the petitions today.

Tarique's counsel barrister Mahbubuddin Khokon yesterday told The Daily Star that he heard about the petitions but his advocate-on-record did not receive any copy of them.

The hearing of the stay petitions will be held at the court of the chamber judge of the Appellate Division this morning, he said.

"If the Appellate Division stays the High Court bail orders, Tarique cannot get released from jail. If the chamber judge does not stay the orders, there will not be any legal bar to his getting released," barrister Khokon said.

A full bench of the Appellate Division earlier granted bail to Tarique after examining his medical report prepared by a medical board, so the chamber judge should not stay the HC bail orders, he added.

He said Tarique has secured bail in all the 13 cases filed against him and the HC also stayed proceedings against him in all these cases.

Responding to separate bail prayers, the HC last week granted an interim bail to Tarique in 12 cases and the ACC, the government and individual persons. Even the SC granted Tarique bail on August 28 in a bribery case paving the way for his release.

Of the total 13 cases filed against Tarique, eight are for extortion and

the rest for corruption, tax evasion and bribery.

CASE AGAINST MOUDUD

Moudud was sued for evading Tk 4.12 crore in income tax while Pintu and his wife Nasima Akhter Kalpana were charged with dodging Tk 11.22 crore and Tk 98.26 lakh in income tax respectively.

NBR deputy tax commissioners Hafiz Al Asad and Ayesha Siddiqui Shelly filed the cases with the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court against them.

After the hearing, Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque recorded statements of the complainants and took the charges into cognisance against the three under the provisions of Income Tax Ordinance 1984.

The court also issued arrest warrant against Kalpana and directed the jail authorities to produce Moudud and Pintu before the court on September 3 for next hearing in the cases.

In his complaint, Asad mentioned that Moudud evaded Tk 41,232,654 in income tax from 1997 to 2006.

Moudud concealed information about his wealth worth Tk 164,930,631 from the NBR department and gave false information to the income tax department about his real income and expenditure, Asad added.

Police filed a case against Moudud on August 27 on charges of stashing away Tk 2.2 crore in a bank through forged documents. He was shown arrested in the case the same day.

The HC earlier granted bails to Moudud in three cases filed against him on different charges.

Moudud was arrested at his Gulshan residence on April 13 last year with 16 bottles of foreign liquor, 32 cans of beer and 220 pieces of sari belonging to the government relief fund.

CASE AGAINST PINTU

NBR Deputy Tax Commissioner Ayesha in her complaint said Pintu evaded Tk 112,231,777 in income tax from 2001 to 2007.

He also concealed information about his wealth worth Tk 448,927,110 from the NBR department and gave false information about his real income and expenditure, the complainant added.

Pintu, an accused in a number of cases, was sent to jail on February 12 last year after he surrendered to a Dhaka court seeking bail in two criminal cases.

CASE AGAINST KALPANA

The same complainant said Kalpana evaded Tk 9,826,314 in income tax from 2001 to 2007 and concealed information about her wealth worth Tk 23,305,265 from the NBR, the complainant added.

Dhaka, Delhi

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expeditiously," says the joint state-

It says verification process of released prisoners of one country held in the prisons of other should be expedited and modalities in this regard will be worked out.

The Indian side led by its Home Secretary Madhukar Gupta offered Bangladesh to hand over their convicted prisoners, but Dhaka agreed on to extradite those who finished their terms.

Bangladesh is not considering India's proposal, said senior home ministry officials attending the talks.

Both the sides, however, agreed to build up a mechanism to expedite the process of repatriation of the prisoners who completed their jail terms.

"We can't hand over the convicted persons who have not finished their terms," Bangladesh Home Secretary Abdul Karim told a joint briefing held at the home ministry in the afternoon.

Karim, who led an 18-member delegation at the talks, also confirmed that anti-state activities against any country including friendly neighbour India will not be allowed to take place.

Asked about reported imprisonment of Ulfat leader Anup Chetia in Bangladesh and his extradition, he said, "We're not talking about a single person; rather, the efforts are to deal with all the prisoners."

The Indian home secretary told journalists, "We have assured the Bangladesh government that no political activities will be allowed against any country, including Bangladesh."

Gupta also assured his counterpart of reducing killings on the borders by their Border Security Force (BSF). Abdul Karim also said attention would be made to reduce the number of killings, if not fully stopped.

The meeting did not make any headway on demarcation of 6.5 kilometres of unmarked border and other border-related issues like Tin-Bigha Corridor where Bangladeshis are living in a host-estate-like situation.

The two sides, however, agreed to convene a meeting of the Joint Boundary Working Group at an early date to discuss all outstanding boundary-related issues.

Both the sides expressed sincere desires to further expand and strengthen bilateral cooperation to solve matters related to security and border management.

"Both sides condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reaffirmed commitment not to allow their territory to be used for any activities inimical to each other's interests," reads the joint statement.

Termining smuggling of arms and ammunition, explosives and fake currency notes a serious threat to peace and security, Bangladesh and India have agreed to find out the elements engaged in such illegal activities and bring them to justice.

The neighbours have also agreed on sharing information about trafficking of women and children, fighting illicit drugs smuggling to curb the cross-border menace.

The next home secretary-level talks will be held in New Delhi.

Fire in city

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traffic for over two hours while firefighters were dousing the blaze which had originated from a leak in the CNG line of the minivan which was burnt to ashes.

Witnesses said the fire originated from the minivan which was parked in the underground parking lot of FR Tower (Faruk Rupayan Tower) around 3:45pm, creating dense smoke which rose up to the 18th floor seeping onto them.

According to the witnesses, after the fire broke out about 200 people were able to rush out of the building immediately while several hundred others went to the roof of the building, many of whom leapt off to the adjacent 22-storey Aval Centre.

Meanwhile, at least 30 others jumped off to the rooftop of another adjacent three-storey building. Samsuzzoha, deputy assistant director (DAD) of Fire Service and Civil Defence told The Daily Star, "The CNG line of the minivan was leaking and when the driver tried to start the vehicle, it caught fire creating smoke and panic."

The fire department DAD also said they had to break down glass facades and doors on different floors to let the smoke out.

Fire department sources said at least 10 of their units fought for more than an hour to put the fire out.

Pay Commission

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Habibur Rahman have been appointed full-time members of the pay body.

Vice-chancellors of Agricultural University, Islamic University and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and representatives from Buet, finance ministry and Armed Forces Division will serve as part-time members.

In his June 9 budget speech, Finance Adviser AB Mirza Azizul Islam proposed constitution of a pay commission at the beginning of fiscal year 2008-2009.

The first pay commission was formed in 1972 and followed by four more in 1976, 1984, 1989 and 1996.

Upazila polls

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prior permission of the local police authorities.

"For holding rallies the candidates will have to apply to the police authorities concerned before 24 hours of the meeting schedule specifying the time and venue of the programme," says the draft code of conduct.

The EC has decided not to make the upazila parishad polls non-partisan following the July 31 High Court ruling that scrapped its earlier restriction on campaigns by political parties for candidates they backed in the August 4 city corporation and municipality polls.

Following the ruling the commission's move to keep political parties away from the two local government body polls failed.

The upazila parishad candidates will be allocated electoral symbols specified for the local government body elections and no candidate will be allowed to begin campaign before 21 days of the polling date, EC Secretariat officials said quoting the draft.

The code of conduct also imposes restrictions on using posters and graffiti on walls, vehicles etc.

For violation of any provisions of the code of conduct, an individual will be sentenced to six months' imprisonment or fined Tk 50,000. In case of gross violation of the

rules, the code of conduct empowers the EC to cancel candidatures.

In exercising the authority given by the upazila parishad ordinance, the EC will promulgate the code of conduct by next week, if possible, after the law ministry sends it back, EC sources said.

The EC has decided in principle to begin holding the upazila parishad elections from October 23. Polls to 200-250 of 482 upazilas will be held in the first phase.

Major political parties including the Awami League and the BNP have been vehemently opposing the government and EC plan for holding upazila polls before the stalled ninth parliamentary elections scheduled for the third week of December.

Senior leaders of the parties also announced to resist the upazila election, fearing it will create obstacle to holding of the parliamentary polls.

Meanwhile, the EC is going to open talks with political parties on September 6 where the issue of upazila elections is likely to be discussed.

The EC has planned to formally talk about the timeframe for holding the upazila polls after the dialogue, sources said, adding that the EC Secretariat is, however, making preparations for holding the upazila elections in October.

Politicians welcome

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"Political parties seem more focused on representing the voices and interests of the leadership, members, and the patrons... while ownership of the parties is no more with the people," he said, stressing the need for collective decision making process.

Once the RTI law is enacted, the people will have access to information on political parties' decisions, balance sheets, committees, etc.

"To force parties to disclose information, they will have to be brought under the purview of the law. If it cannot be done right at the moment, it can be done later through an amendment," he added.

Asked for their commitment to put RTI in their election manifestos, Liberal Democratic Party President Oli Ahmed said they have already done it.

Workers' Party President Rafiq Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal's Shirin Akhter, and Bangladesh Kalyan Party's Mohammad Ali also said they will include it.

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh Secretary General Abdul Mannan said he will try to include a commitment to the law in their election manifesto while Jatiya Party's GM Quader said, "I think it will be in Jatiya Party's election manifesto."

Flood feared

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Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh in India.

They reminded people that everything depended on the developments of the next 48 hours. The situation will start to improve after three days if the monsoon becomes weak upstream.

The press conference was held at the conference room of WDB where additional director generals Abul Kalam Md Azad, Liakat Al Faruque, Muhammad Shuaib, Mainuddin Khan, Habibur Rahman Zinnah were present.

Most of the rivers including the Jamuna, the Brahmaputra, the Arial Khan, the Ghagot and the Padma are following above their danger levels and are devouring homesteads, roads and croplands. The flood situation in Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Bogra, Sirajganj, Faridpur and Madaripur has worsened further, our correspondents report.

An elderly woman drowned in floodwater in Gaibandha when she was walking a submerged road at Kerkirhat yesterday.

Around 30 metres of flood embankment of the Brahmaputra eroded and marooned around 20,000 people. There is a crisis of food and drinking water at the shelters where flood-affected people have taken refuge.

Nearly 70,000 people have been marooned in Gaibandha Sadar, Sunderganj, Fulchhari and Shaghatapuzilas.

Many moved to flood shelters set up by local NGOs. Gana Unnayan Kendra and Samaj Kalyan Sangstha made arrangements for boats to rescue marooned people in remote char areas.

Hundreds of people in Hasilkandi, Gobindi, Chalkpara, Kumarpada, Nakier Char, Munshirhat, Chinir potol, Haldia, Bera, Nalsia, Uttar Ulla are being moved to safer places as the mighty Jamuna is swelling and devouring land.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reports: The flood situation in different low-lying areas and chars of seven upazilas in Sirajganj worsened rendering over 6,000 people homeless.

The water levels of the Jamuna

Zardari

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after becoming the PPP presidential candidate.

He said if all state institutions work within their specified domain, there is no need for a contestant to consult the 'establishment' on becoming or not becoming a candidate in the presidential race.

The PPP presidential nominee said he always tremendously felt 'under pressure' when Musharraf, who resigned on August 18, was occupying presidency. "Now, I am relieved and feel no pressure," he was quoted as saying.

Turning to another topic, the PPP chief said a section of media was "very vicious against me", apparently referring to reports in western newspapers about his mental health.

"The baseless propaganda was unleashed because some people don't want to see the PPP strong and strengthened, having its own President," he said, adding "they might have their own fears."

Meanwhile, Pakistan's ruling PPP's Presidential candidate Asif Ali Zardari, who inherited the party's leadership after the assassination of his wife Benazir Bhutto, has purged it of the former premier's close confidants, a media report has said. Party stalwarts, whom Benazir had relied upon as angry at the way her closest aides have been humiliated and alarmed that her political legacy is being betrayed, The Sunday Times said in a report.

They are also outraged that some of Zardari's aides have blamed Benazir Bhutto's most trusted advisers for her death, accusing them of failing to protect her from the assassins who killed her in a sniper and suicide bomb attack.

Naheed Khan, Benazir Bhutto's devoted political secretary and inseparable friend for more than 20 years has been the target of such accusations, they said.

Khan, who has been sidelined since the assassination, was sitting next to Benazir Bhutto in a bullet proof Land Cruiser when the leader was shot while waiting to supporters through the sun-roof. Khan cradled Benazir Bhutto's head on her lap before realising she was dead.

Only four or five members of Benazir Bhutto's team have made the transition to Zardari's camp, said former agriculture minister and Benazir adviser Nawab Yusuf Talpur.

"Most of the people trusted by Bibi are not trusted by him. Benazir had a vision and the capacity to hold this party together... Her legacy is not being handed in the way we expected," Talpur said.

Ex-ambassador

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report (FIR) with Shahbagh Police Station against the immediate-past ambassador to UAE.

In the FIR, it was mentioned that Nazim Ullah was supposed to retire on February 9, 2003. But he remained in service for two more years till February 2005, giving false information and making changes to his SSC certificate.

The former envoy has also been accused of cheating and abusing power.

This is the second ACC case against Nazim Ullah. The commission filed a case against him on May 14 this year on charges of causing a loss of Tk 21 lakh to the state exchequer when he held office as the ambassador to UAE.

The charge sheet in the first case has already been submitted.

HR situation

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countries of the UN every four years to be submitted to the UN.

The HRF in its summary report said several past governments failed to put a stop to the culture of unaccountability.

The forum pointed out a number of concerns that are causing hindrance to the improvement of human rights in Bangladesh. A few of the key areas of concern are citizens' rights, political rights, minority rights, economic and social rights, women's rights, workers' rights, rights of the disabled, institutional protection of human rights and the progress in implementation of international human rights accords.

Mass arrest drives, mass filing of cases against thousands and the prolongation of the state of emergency were also mentioned as areas of concern.

Advocate Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain o Shalish Kendra, presided over the session.

Human rights situation in the country is not satisfactory, she said adding that in Bangladesh "human rights violations take place in the form of extra-judicial killings, torture of the minority and indigenous people, repression on women at homes and workplaces."

Ayesha Khanam, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said the country witnessed improvements in some areas, but that did not help improve the human rights situation in the country significantly.

Sayed Ahmed, coordinator of the forum, presented the summary report. Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kori, Mohammad Mojibur Rahman of BILS, Zakir Hossain of Nagorik Udyog and Mesbah Kamal of RDC also spoke on the occasion.

45-day amnesty

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Kuwait is home to around 2.5 lakh Bangladeshi workers. Several thousand are believed to be illegal.

Irregular expatriates who choose to leave Kuwait during this period will not have to pay fines, said a decree issued by the Gulf's Interior Minister Sheikh Jaber Khaled Al-Sabah.

Those who decide to stay should pay fines to regularise their status. Kuwait fines illegal aliens two-dinar (\$7.5) per day. Those caught after the grace period expires will be deported and barred from re-entering the country, said a statement.

"This gesture by His Highness the Amir has been made in affirmation of the noble humanitarian values, adopted by the state toward this segment of the residents of the country," said the interior minister.

Sheikh Jaber Khaled, in the ministerial statement, said the grace period was given to some of these offenders to have a chance to leave the country without being penalised for evading the authorities on fears of penalty which they may be unable to pay.

"Those who wish to stay in the country can do that on condition they pay the fines and the authorities will grant them the residency regardless of their nationality," the minister clarified.

Residents who had come to the country on a visit visa but did not have a residency permit can report to any border exit and leave the country and the ones who have lost their passports and got new ones can report to the immigration authorities with two photos to process their departure.

Foreigners with a travel ban, as a result of absence from work, are also allowed to leave the country through any exit but those with court records must report to the prosecution to settle their cases.

Foreigners with a travel ban, imposed by the investigation authorities for unsettled felony cases or offences, should meet the required terms and apply for residency during the set period or face deportation.

Three secys

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Zafarullah Khan, secretary of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, was transferred as member of the Planning Commission.

BPATC Rector Abu Mohammad Moniruzzaman Khan was made secretary to the land ministry while AMM Nasir Uddin, member of Planning Commission, was made secretary to health and family welfare ministry.

Credible polls

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from Bangladesh. Around 75,000 Bangladeshis are now working in the Gulf state.

Fakhruddin thanked the Qatari government for enacting a new law designed to ensure workers' rights. Bangladeshi workers are now getting due facilities and benefits for this, he noted.

Referring to the visit of Qatar's emir to Bangladesh in 2005, he said high-level visits have taken the relations between two countries to new heights.

AL mulls agitation

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pay heed to our demands," Organising Secretary Abdul Mannan told the meeting.

Party leaders said they will oppose some provisions of the Representation of the People's Order (RPO), 2008 on political party registration at their meetings with the EC.

They said they will ask the commission not to ban front organisations and foreign chapters of political parties as well as not to include "no-vote" option on ballot papers.

The party will not get registered with the EC if the conditions are not addressed, they said.

AL leader Col (retd) Faruk Khan told The Daily Star that they would first try to reach a consensus with the government and the EC through discussions.

"If they do not meet our demands, then we shall have no alternative but to go for movements," he said.

The AL may warn the government that it would stay away from any polls to ensure that the government withdraws all charges against Hasina.

Referring to "conspiracies" to foil timely general elections, Syed Ashrafur Islam said if the parliamentary polls are not held in December, it might not be held even in the next five years.

"A man's death in a gas-cylinder explosion of a mini van, after Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists set fire to it, and unrest in the garment sector are nothing but indications of a bid to foil the national elections."

Termining the two incidents staged plays, Ashrafur said the vested quarters who do not want democracy in the country are doing this.

He criticised the government for allowing BNP-Jamaat alliance leaders to hold a political meeting with Khaleda Zia inside the special jail and said it was part of a conspiracy to foil the general elections.

The interior ministry statement said as to the segment of people who claim that their passports had been seized by their employers, they must get new ones and leave the country within the set period or apply for residency, otherwise they will be forced to leave the country.

Thousands of Bangladeshis went on work strikes at the end of July demanding pay hike and better working conditions.

A US-based labour rights group National Labour Committee in its recent report said hundreds of thousands of foreign workers in Kuwait are paid half their wages. Employers also seize their passports and force them to work 11 hours a day and seven days a week.

Kuwait, where some 2.35 million foreigners live and work alongside a million nationals, has given illegal residents similar grace periods in the past.

Justice Fazlul

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case, will submit the charge sheet with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, sources said.

The anti-corruption watchdog accused the former Appellate Division judge on April 13 this year in connection with amassing wealth worth Tk 1.8 crore beyond his known sources of income and concealing information about his wealth worth Tk 91 lakh.

On Thursday, the ACC approved submitting the charge sheet under sections 26(2) and 27(1) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004 and section 15 of the Emergency Powers Rules, 2007.

The charge sheet will mention 36 people as witnesses and the defendant will be shown absconding. The IO will petition for an arrest warrant.

Justice Fazlul Haque was on the fourth list of corruption suspects the ACC published on October 4, 2007.

On November 18, 2007 the commission asked him to report his wealth. He complied on November 26.

Meanwhile, three people, who were arrested Thursday on charges of taking Tk 24 lakh from Justice Fazlul Haque's family members, promising to get him off the hook, expressed their wish to deposit the money to the state exchequer.

Sub-inspector Amirul Islam of Dhanmondi Police Station, also the IO of the case, told The Daily Star, "The cheats Amalendu Das, dismissed VAT inspector Golam Ambia, and dismissed police constable Mohammad Nuruzzaman alias Iqbal admitted that they took the money. Now they want to deposit the money to the state exchequer."

The arrestees were placed on a three-day remand Saturday.

BNP to contest

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demanded the release of Khaleda's elder son Tarique Rahman as early as possible.

"We are trying to get them [Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman] released through the legal process..."

Rebutting their archival Awami League's criticism that their recent meeting with Khaleda in the sub jail was part of the deal that BNP had struck with the caretaker government through the backdoor, Delwar said since the founding of BNP the party never compromised with any power.

Regarding the 1/11, the BNP secretary general said at the beginning the people were confused about it, but now they have realised that the 1/11 was an international conspiracy against the country, assisted by some local agents.

He accused the caretaker government of destroying the economy and the politics of the country under the pretence of war on corruption.