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National HR Commission launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday set up the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) which would investigate human rights violations and advise the government on the enforcement of international human rights covenants.

The law ministry yesterday issued a gazette notification bringing the NHRC into effect. The NHRC will have a chairman and two members. One of the three will be a serving or retired Supreme Court judge.

The President, based on recommendations by a six-member selection committee, would choose the members and the chairman who has to be between 50 and 72 years old. They will serve three-year terms with a maximum of two terms.

The President will also choose a
SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

BNP to contest poll if Khaleda, Tarique freed

Observes 30th founding anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP-led four party alliance leaders yesterday said they will take part in the national elections if it is held in a free and impartial manner and if BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman are released.

The alliance leaders warned the
SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Khaleda's release process in final stage

Says Hossain Zillur

UNB, Dhaka

Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said the process of former prime minister Khaleda Zia's release is now in the concluding stage.

He made the remark at a press briefing at the commerce ministry when asked how much more time it would take to get Khaleda released.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Tarique's bail stands

SC asks govt, ACC to file regular appeal after vacation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday declined to stay the High Court (HC) orders granting bail to former prime minister Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman in six cases.

Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Md Joynul Abedin however asked the government and Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to file regular appeals against the bail orders after the apex court returns from 42-day annual vacation on October 12.

Defence counsels said the judge's decision means the HC orders allowing Tarique bail on health grounds stand, and there remains no legal bar to his release.

Tarique, detained at the prison cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital, has lately been granted bail by the HC

in 12 cases and the SC in one.

Attorney General Salauddin Ahmed expressed disappointment at the court's refusal.

Earlier on Sunday, the government and the anti-graft body filed petitions with the SC for stay on bail orders in six cases.

Of the cases, two were lodged by the ACC on charges of amassing wealth through illegal means and keeping back assets information, and embezzling funds meant for Zia Orphanage Trust.

The other ones were filed by businessmen Amin Ahmed Bhuiyan, Harun Ferdousi, Khan Mohammad Aftabuddin and Abdul Monem on charges of extortion.

Tarique's lawyers Rafiqul Islam Mia and Mahbubuddin Khokon said the chamber judge has refused to grant the pleas for stay in light of the guidelines issued recently by

the full-bench of Appellate Division on bail prayers.

According to the guidelines, the courts can order bail for an accused on health and humanitarian grounds.

Talking to reporters, Mia said in a civilised country there should not be politicking over a "seriously ill person" getting bail for treatment.

He urged all to show respect to the court orders.

The attorney general said the government is providing best possible treatment for Tarique at a hospital of his choice. Medical boards can recommend sending him abroad for treatment, and accordingly the government can make arrangements. Bail was not essential for that purpose.

He however observed that the chamber judge has followed
SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Citizens' charter vital for both private, public sectors: Zillur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education and Commerce Adviser Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said a citizens' charter is imperative for both private and public sectors, for improving the overall quality of services to the people.

Almost all ministries, a number of government departments, and deputy commissioners' offices already prepared charters of their services last year.

Echoing Zillur, former adviser to the caretaker government Advocate Sultana Kamal said people sometimes become captive to service providers in both public and private sectors.

The remarks came from a seminar on: What is citizens' charter -- why and how, jointly organised by

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

REGISTRATION WITH EC

No response yet from big parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 30 political parties, most of which only exist in names and have very little activities, collected application forms for registration with the Election Commission (EC) as of yesterday. The major political parties, with the exception of Jatiya Party, are yet to respond in this regard.

Only four out of the 16 political parties invited to political party registration talks with the EC, which begins on Saturday, have collected registration forms, according to a list prepared by the EC Secretariat.

The EC started the distribution of forms Thursday.
HM Ershad-led Jatiya Party (JP),
SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Rab) and Sammayabadi Dal are the four parties in the process of registering with the EC.

The registration was made mandatory for contesting the parliamentary polls.

Awami League (AL), BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh are still vehemently opposing political party registration before the parliamentary polls citing constraint of time to meet the conditions for registration.

The 16 political parties invited to the talks with the EC are in a better of positions to get registered since they only have to amend their party constitutions and fulfil a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

AL demands JS election in November

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League yesterday demanded that the government hold the parliamentary polls in November.

The party also demanded immediate and unconditional release of Sheikh Hasina, saying that it would not participate in the stalled national election without her.

"The long-awaited parliamentary polls must be arranged in November, as the Election Commission's preparation is going to be completed by this time. Awami League Working Committee (ALWC) has taken a decision that the party will take part in the parliamentary polls only under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina," AL acting General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam told reporters at the party's Dhanmondi office after two days' meeting of the ALWC.
SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Ramadan begins with fresh spike in essentials prices

WASIM BIN HABIB and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Prices of vegetables, fruits, meats and other essentials used for preparing iftar items shot up further in kitchen markets of the capital yesterday on the eve of Ramadan.

Taking the opportunity of weak market monitoring, traders in kitchen markets are charging high prices at will, alleged many shoppers.

The state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) is going to sell some essential commodities for fair prices during the month of Ramadan that starts today.

TCB will sell sugar, soybean oil, chickpea and onion through its mobile outlets on trucks, and in its retail sales centres everyday through the month except Fridays.

Visiting different city markets, The Daily Star correspondents found different prices of the same commodity in different shops, and an unusual wide gap between wholesale and retail prices.
SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

People were seen thronging city kitchen markets throughout the day yesterday as news confirmed the start of Ramadan today, the month of fasting for the Muslims.

Karwan Bazar, the largest wholesale kitchen market in the capital, along with other kitchen markets was buzzing with shoppers.

Heated exchanges between shoppers and traders, over prices of essentials, were seen in different places.

Supply of different essentials in Karwan Bazar, Hatirpul Bazar, New Market, Mohammadpur Town Hall Market, and Mohammadpur Krishi Market was adequate.

Prices of most vegetables and items used for preparing iftar like green chilli, aubergine, onion, cucumber, lemon, puffed rice, local chickpea, sugar, molasses, and fruits like date, ripe papaya, banana, apple, oranges, grape, mango and watermelon saw a fresh sharp hike in the last two days.

Many consumers, especially of
SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



The underpass is very close and policemen are present on the scene, but it cannot prevent pedestrians from jaywalking at Sonargaon intersection in the city.
PHOTO: STAR

Mobile court seizes seven substandard CNG cylinders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the drive against substandard CNG cylinders and improper conversion kits intensified yesterday, seven inferior cylinders were confiscated from four human hauliers at Gulistan in the city.

A mobile court with the help of Directorate of Explosives and police conducted yesterday's drive.
SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

ACC's image tainted on bail spree

Says Gen Mashhud

UNB, Dhaka

Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman Lt Gen (ret) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury yesterday admitted that the image of toughness of the commission is getting dented due to recent bail binge and stay orders on the cases filed against corruption in high places.
"Yes, it is (being affected). It's a
SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Rivers continue to swell, inundate more areas

Worsening floods drive victims into safer places

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The flood situation is continuing to deteriorate in northern and central parts of the country compelling thousands of people to take refuge in places like educational institutions and high roads.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said low-lying areas in 14 northern and central districts of the country could be inundated further in the next 48-72 hours as water levels of all rivers are increasing.

Of the 73 places where river water level is monitored, 39

marked a rise while 29 marked a fall. The others remained unchanged.

Crops especially vegetables and transplanted Aman have been damaged in many areas due to flooding. Significant damage to Aman seedlings has also been noticed. Fish from hundreds of ponds have been washed away, reports our correspondents. Almost all flood-affected people are facing drinking water and sanitation issues.

Our Kurigram correspondent reports: At least 108 primary schools have been temporarily

closed as flood-affected people took shelter there. About 371 villages and chars in nine upazilas of the district have been inundated. Around 6,500 families have been affected in the last three days alone.

According to sources in the district agriculture department, transplanted Aman and vegetables on around one third of croplands in those areas have been damaged.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent, citing officials concerned, reports: Low-lying areas in Patgram, Hatibandha, Aditmari and Lalmonirhat Sadar upazilas
SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

City bus routes rearranged

Traffic system revved up to tackle gridlock

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities yesterday introduced 40 bus routes in the capital and its outskirts after rearranging previous 138 routes to bring discipline in the traffic system and ease vehicular movement.

The rearrangement does not close any existing routes as there would be 149 sub-routes within the 40 routes -- 20 for buses and minibuses in the city and 20 for the vehicles running between the capital and neighbouring districts.

"Rearranging the routes and fixing specific stoppages for buses of different routes will contribute to a cut in traffic congestion," DMP Commissioner Naim Ahmed, also chairman of Dhaka Metro RTC (regional transport committee), told the inaugural ceremony of the new bus routes.

However, commuters say success in containing traffic jam will depend on how well the traffic police will enforce the new system.

"The same policemen will be on
SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Transfer order of graft court judge leaves many curious

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Transfer order of the judge of a fast-track special graft court has stimulated curiosity among different quarters dealing with trial and investigation.

The special court-4, one of 10 such courts set up at the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar MP Hostel of the National Parliament complex, has so far delivered verdicts in 23 graft cases since its inception in May last year.

Fourteen more cases against high-profile corruption suspects are now pending with the court. But the law ministry has suddenly decided to transfer Judge Shamsunnahar Begum to the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal, Tangail.
SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Karwan Bazar's midnight children

SHAMIM ASHRAF and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Silent tears were rolling down Poppy's cheeks. In the darkness, you could only see the glistening lines. Her 12-year-old elder brother Shakil, tied to a bamboo pole, looked bewildered. Night egged on at Karwan Bazar vegetables depot. No-one even bothers to throw a glance at whatever was going on there.

"He's innocent," the eight-year-old girl protested weakly. "He did not steal vegetables."

In the twilight existence of the Karwan Bazar kids, they were just picking up whatever vegetables were littered
SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



Four street children during early hours try to get on a vegetable-laden truck trundling on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near Karwan Bazar wholesale market in the city.
PHOTO: STAR

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