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Tarique likely to fly to UK Thursday

Wife, daughter still waiting for visa

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, who got UK visa yesterday, is likely to fly to London on Thursday for medical treatment.

"Tarique along with his wife and daughter is ready to fly to London on Thursday," one of Tarique's family members told The Daily Star last night.

"We have booked airline tickets and he along with his family members is set to fly to London on Thursday," Tarique's counsel advocate Ahmed Aazam Khan told The Daily Star.

However, Tarique's wife Zubaida Rahman and daughter Zaima Rahman, who also applied for entry clearance to the British High Commission, are yet to get UK visa.

Tarique, his wife and daughter will submit visa applications to the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Govt mulls ethical society to curb graft

Formulating National Integrity Strategy; PM to lead ADB-financed good governance project

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The government is considering introducing a 'national integrity strategy' (NIS) in a bid to create an ethical society to back up its drives against rampant corruption.

The government aims at achieving the goal through 'rebuilding integrity' in every segment of the society including public, private and political sectors.

Though the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is responsible to prosecute the corrupt, policymakers of the present government believe it's impossible to fight graft only by ACC through prosecution, say sources involved in formulation of NIS.

"So the government has taken initiatives to formulate NIS to combat corruption through moral-based approach to complement the ACC's functions," says a source.

Explaining the perspective of coming up with a new idea, another source argues: "Ineffective formal control and lack of social and citizen-oriented anti-corruption accountability mechanisms have added to what could be termed a crisis of integrity."

"This calls for a longer-term change process with a strong reform regime that would sit at the core of the good governance agenda of the government," the source adds.

"Given the holistic nature of a

national integrity strategy, its full implementation would be long-term -- more like a decade than months," observes Barrister Manzoor Hasan, director of Institute of Governance Studies (IGS), Brac University, who is involved in formulation of NIS draft through consultation with cross-sections of people in the country.

The sources say the government is formulating NIS as part of the four-year project styled "Supporting the Good Governance Program" financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The ADB is providing the government with a loan of \$150 million

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

EXTORTION CASE Hasina's trial deferred again until Sept 23

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday again deferred the trial proceedings in the Tk 2.99 crore extortion case against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former health minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim to September 23.

Judge M Ashraf Hossain of Special Court-5 set the new date for cross-examination of the plaintiff following a time prayer. This is the fourth time the cross-examination of plaintiff Azam J Chowdhury was deferred.

Earlier on August 18, the counsels for Hasina cross-examined the plaintiff.

As the court sat yesterday morning, the prosecution lawyers appealed for two weeks' adjournment of the trial proceedings, saying the plaintiff could not appear in the court due to his illness. They also submitted a medical certificate of Azam J Chowdhury.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

JS polls date likely within a week

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) might announce within a week a specific date for the parliamentary poll, and detailed schedules for upazila parishad and Dhaka City Corporation elections, dispelling doubts about the long overdue national ballot.

If everything goes according to the commission's plan, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda will unveil the final leg of the roadmap for the much awaited ballots with a major breakthrough in the prevailing political stagnation in the country.

At a meeting in the office of the chief adviser (CA) on Sunday, the council of advisers to the caretaker government and the EC finalised the plan in the wake of growing demands of political parties for a specific date for the parliamentary election, sources in the commission said.

The EC asked the government to ensure a congenial atmosphere for electoral preparations by relaxing further the emergency powers rules (EPR), allowing the parties to hold their national councils for meeting the criteria for mandatory registration with the commission, the sources added.

The current relaxed state of EPR declared on May 12 this year only allows countrywide indoor politics on a limited scale, and still bars gathering of over 200 people.

But the parties' national councils will require attendance by thousands of people.

"We will disclose everything after the talks with political parties are over," CEC Huda told waiting journalists yesterday on the EC Secretariat premises, replying to a query about the commission's discussion with the caretaker government.

The talks between the EC and

political parties will be completed today and the commission will review the proposals of the parties for a couple of days.

A highly placed source in the EC said the commission believes, once the specific date for the ninth parliamentary election is announced, it will clear all doubts about the poll, the tentative scheduled for which was set for the third week of December by the CA during his address to the nation on May 12 this year.

"The commission will first announce only the specific date for the parliamentary poll, a detailed schedule for it will be announced later," one of the EC sources said adding that the announcement might come by the end of this week or early next week.

The source also said during EC's meeting with the council of advisers, Dec 18 came into the discussion

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

4 city mayors take oath today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly elected mayors of four city corporations will take oath today.

The chief adviser to the caretaker government will administer the oath of the four mayors at a ceremony organised by Local Government Division at the LGED auditorium at 11:00am in the capital.

The division has already sent letters to the four mayors -- Talukder Abdul Khaleque of Khulna, Badaruddin Ahmed Kamran of Sylhet, AHM Khairuzzaman Liton of Rajshahi and Shawkat Hossain Hiron of Barisal -- inviting them to attend the oath-taking ceremony.

Local Government Division Secretary Sheikh Khurshid Alam will moderate the ceremony.

The LGRD adviser, members of the advisory council, secretaries, representatives of diplomatic missions and local donor agencies, and civil society members will be present there.

Elections to four city corporations and nine municipalities were

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



A man tries to cross the embankment that gave in to the surging water of the Padma at Srinagar in Munshiganj yesterday inundating several villages. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

AL talks with EC today

BNP sits on re-invitation, allies boycott dialogues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) is scheduled to sit for a talk with the Election Commission (EC) today, hard on the heels of a boycott by BNP and its four-party alliance partners Jamaat and Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ).

Jamaat and IOJ boycotted their scheduled electoral dialogues with the EC yesterday saying the talks will not yield any positive result as the 'previous ones also failed'.

BNP declined to sit with the commission the day before saying it did not want to have a dialogue with the EC with 'unconstitutional' rules still remaining in the new electoral law.

The EC meanwhile re-invited BNP to the talks that began on Saturday in a bid to reach a consensus on mandatory registration of political parties with the commission.

But it might not re-invite the allies of BNP, sources said.

Jatiya Party (Manju) and Liberal Democratic Party however sat with the EC for their scheduled talks yesterday.

In a pre-dialogue warning to the EC, AL Acting General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam yesterday said they will not accept any unilateral decision taken by either the commission or the military backed caretaker government regarding electoral reforms and holding of local government elections.

"We are not bound to accept any of their unilateral decisions regarding holding of upazila polls before the parliamentary election. Decisions have to be taken on the basis of a national consensus," he told reporters in AL Acting President Zillur Rahman's Gulshan residence in the capital.

He also said holding of the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

FLOODS ICDDR,B sees sharp rise in diarrhoea cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh ICDDR,B is experiencing an unusual rise in the number of diarrhoea patients due to the worsening flood situation in the low-lying areas in the eastern part of Dhaka.

The patient inflow at the hospital increased to more than 600 yesterday, which normally remains at 200-250, an ICDDR,B press release said.

"Typically we see a large increase in the number of patients twice a year -- once in pre-monsoon and then in post-monsoon period, which is closer to the end of September due to flood situation," said Henry Richards, manager, communications unit of ICDDR,B.

Tents have been erected in the parking space of ICDDR,B with the capacity of up to 750 patients. More doctors, nurses, health workers and attendants have been added to the regular staff.

The ICDDR,B's Dhaka hospital treats primarily children under the age of five but a huge number of adult patients are arriving in severe states of dehydration this time, the release said.

AUG 21 ATTACK CASE Charge hearing deferred until September 11

UNB, Dhaka

The charge hearing in the case of killings in the August 21, 2004 grenade attack on an Awami League rally was again deferred to September 11 due to procedural flaws.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal (STT)-1, after examining the case documents, re-fixed the date for the hearing.

Earlier, the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court had transferred the case to the STT following a notification of the home ministry.

Another charge hearing on the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Disease, poor relief work follow flooding

STAR CORRESPONDENT

Waterborne diseases and poor relief efforts coupled with lack of jobs and price hike of essentials are putting the lives of poor flood-hit people in misery.

The flood situation is worsening in the central parts but the situation is improving in the northern districts, reports received from different areas stated.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre stated, the situation in the south central districts would start improving in a day or two. Water levels of all large rivers

are going down, it added.

A correspondent from Faridpur said: Flood situation in Faridpur worsened in the last 24 hours. Around 68,000 people of 18 unions in the Sadar upazila are marooned. More than 10,000 affected people took shelter on the town-protection embankment, highways and schools.

Waterborne diseases like dysentery and diarrhoea have broken out in the areas. The health department and Bangladesh army are engaged in distributing medicine and oral saline. Scarcity of drinking water remains.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Our Sirajganj correspondent reports: Even though water of the Jamuna went down slightly yesterday, the suffering of the affected people in the flood-hit areas did not ease off.

The flood-affected people especially in remote char areas are suffering extremely, as relief efforts are yet to reach them.

About 200 people infected with diseases like diarrhoea, pneumonia and skin infections have been admitted to different health complexes and hospitals, district civil surgeon's office sources said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Clarification

Bangladesh Film Archive (BFA) in a clarification to the series report titled "Archives of Neglect, Historic Loss-I and II", published in The Daily Star on August 22 and 24, mentioned that the sound and print quality of Devdas (1934) as mentioned in the report as not in good condition is true as the film was old and affected when it was collected in the 1980's.

The clarification, moreover, said for better preservation they had prepared a duplicate print of the film. The reporter saw it at the time of cleaning, it added.

The clarification said that the reporter found the vault temperature 26°-30°C as he visited the BFA film vault immediately after a load shedding. During normal condition they maintain 18°C temperature in the vault and humidity in

Moudud, Mirza Abbas, Salim get HC bail

SC stays bail to Khandaker Mosharraf, MK Alamgir, AKM Mosharraf, Paban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted ad interim bail for three months to former law minister Moudud Ahmed, former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas and former BNP lawmaker MAH Salim in separate cases.

Upon petitions of Moudud, Abbas and Salim, two HC vacation benches also stayed the case proceedings against the petitioners for

the same period.

Lawyers concerned said in spite of the HC bail Moudud and Mirza Abbas cannot be released from jail as they are arrested in other cases.

The HC bench comprising Justice Mirza Hussain Haider and Justice Mamnoon Rahman passed the orders in the cases against Moudud and Abbas while the HC bench of Justice Khondker Musa Khaled and Justice Farid Ahmed granted bail to Salim.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court (SC) yesterday stayed for one month the HC orders that granted bail to former minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, former state ministers AKM Mosharraf Hossain and Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, and Khandaker Akter Hamid Paban in separate ACC corruption cases.

Hearing petitions filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Lack of political will in 12yrs paralyses Law Commission

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Law Commission that turns 12 today is being unfairly blamed for failing to modernise the laws and judicial system of the country due to the lack of political will of subsequent governments.

Operating without a chairman and required manpower, the Law Commission has so far drafted as many as 86 recommendations since its establishment on September 9, 1996, for legal amendments. However, except for only three, all of its recommendations were brushed aside as those were not in favour of the governments.

The Law Commission sent its recommendations to the government but never received any response. We do not know why the



The building that houses the Law Commission on the High Court premises in the capital. PHOTO: STAR

governments did not consider the recommendations. We do not even know if anyone has actually gone through them," said an official of the commission.

The position of the commission's chairman has remained vacant since December 5, 2007, when the then chairman Justice Mustafa Kamal's term expired. Another member of the commission retired on February 22 but nobody bothered to fill the position.

The commission's lone remaining member Justice Md Sirajul Islam is currently acting as its chairman.

Apart from the two key positions, 10 of the 13 official positions of the Law Commission, including those of a chief research officer, two

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

Lotus Kamal freed on bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Awami League (AL) lawmaker AHM Mustafa Kamal alias Lotus Kamal was released on bail yesterday.

Lotus Kamal, accused in three cases, was released from Kashimpur jail in Gazipur at around 9:00am as the High Court granted him bail.

Deputy Inspector General (prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddique said they released the former AL lawmaker after they received the necessary papers in this regard.

The joint forces arrested Lotus Kamal, a former MP from Comilla, on February 4 last year.

Sources said the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed a graft case against Kamal on March 22, 2007 for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information of his wealth in the statement submitted to the ACC.

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