

Tarique still waiting for govt nod

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Tarique's leaving the country as he has obtained bail in all cases filed against him. But the government is unwilling to send Tarique away without imposing any restrictions on him whatsoever and that is the main reason behind the delay, the source added.

He said restrictions might be imposed on Tarique under certain provisions of the Emergency Power Rules (EPR).

Hearing the news that Tarique would leave the country, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain went to the BSMU at 7:00pm to bid Tarique farewell.

Earlier, wife of Tarique's maternal uncle Sayeed Iskander and Tarique's physician Dr Idris Ali went to see him.

Coming out of Tarique's cabin, Idris Ali told reporters that the BNP leader would leave the country at night for London via Singapore and get admitted to a London hospital by Friday.

Several thousand supporters also thronged the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital. They brought bouquets to bid their leader farewell and waited in front of the D-block chanting slogans and singing songs.

An ambulance of Naz-e-Noor Hospital was also brought to the entrance of D-block to carry Tarique to Zia International Airport (ZIA).

Additional police were deployed at the BSMMU and ZIA to beef up security.

Speculations over Tarique's leaving for the ZIA arose as his wife Zubaida Rahman went to the hospital at 9:30pm.

Advocate Shimul Biswas told reporters that Tarique could not go

abroad yesterday because of influences from an "unseen" quarter.

Advocate Aazam Khan said, "All preparations were made to send Tarique abroad—a ticket of Singapore Airlines was purchased, the home ministry and the Supreme Court were informed. But Tarique could not leave because of the government's prevention at the last moment."

"Our all-out and peaceful attempts will continue to send Tarique abroad for treatment in the next available flight," Aazam said, adding, "We have booked tickets of the British Airways and the Emirates."

Tarique is a leading accused in corruption cases. He was released on bail on September 3 after 18 months of highly publicised imprisonment on various graft and extortion charges.

Earlier, Tarique obtained a UK visa of five years' validity on September 8 and a German visa yesterday, valid for 90 days, indicating that he may fly to Germany from the UK.

He had applied for the German visa on Tuesday, but because it takes at least a week to issue a Schengen visa to visit Europe, the German Embassy issued him a German national visa under special consideration.

Tarique's wife Zubaida, daughter Zaima Rahman, and Tarique's physician Dr Kazi Mazharul Islam Dolon will be accompanying Tarique. His wife and daughter were also given UK visas for five years while his physician obtained a visa for six months.

Tarique's lawyers met home ministry officials informally on Tuesday to confirm that there is no problem regarding Tarique's leaving the country for treatment. The

home ministry confirmed that there is no bar from the government over the matter.

Sources said Tarique has numerous offers from his loyalists, well-wishers and BNP units from across the world including the UK, Germany and the United States, who have offered to help him with treatment in those countries.

Meanwhile, Syed Nahas Pasha, editor-in-chief of the weekly Janomati and the Curry Life Magazine in London, told the Daily Star last night over telephone that the UK chapter of BNP has made all preparations for Tarique's treatment at any specialised hospital.

Quoting the president of the BNP UK chapter, he said the party leaders there have spoken to several consultants and neurologists in London and Tarique would be admitted to whichever private hospital they suggest.

Startling 82pc

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Madrasa Board this year, 50,882 including 18,146 female students have passed.

The pass rates for male and female students are 83.32 and 80.88 per cent respectively.

The Madrasa Board has been the most successful among the nine education boards in the last three years in terms of pass rate.

Last year, the board secured a 74.31 pass rate while the overall pass rate of nine boards was 65.60 per cent. The board's pass rate was 75.23 against the overall pass rate of 65.65 per cent in 2006.

This year, the Madrasa Board has secured the second position among the nine boards in terms of GPA 5 achievers with 2,886 students -- 2,333 male and 553 female -- having obtained the highest grade.

The number of GPA 5 holders under the board rose three times on the previous year's 930.

A total of 507 madrasas have obtained cent percent pass rate. The number of colleges having cent percent pass rate this year stands at 70.

Last year, the number of madrasas with cent percent pass rate stood at 356. However, all students passed in only 40 colleges under the seven education boards last year.

A total of 146 students under the Madrasa Board were expelled under the board while 203 students under the Technical Education Board were expelled this year.

Meanwhile, the Technical Education Board has witnessed a sharp increase in pass percentage, which stood at 81.27 earning it the third position among the nine boards. Last year, the board secured pass percentage of 68.13.

Out of 54,518 examinees under the board, 44,306 including 27,974 male and 16,332 female have passed.

This year 51 students -- 29 female and 22 male -- have achieved GPA 5 while only five students obtained the highest grade point under the board last year.

Khaleda set to be freed

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her tomorrow as early as possible," Siddique added.

Leaders of BNP and its allies were busy through the day yesterday planning a grand reception for Khaleda who will be walking out of jail a year and eight days into her arrest from her Dhaka Cantonment house on graft charges.

Although the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC), which filed the four graft cases against Khaleda, also filed separate petitions seeking stay of the bail orders, those will not be an impediment to her release as hearings of the petitions will not be held before September 15, according to Khaleda's lawyers.

The ACC yesterday filed two separate petitions with the Supreme Court (SC) seeking stay of the High Court (HC) orders granting Khaleda bail in Gato and Niko cases, a day after filing separate similar petitions seeking stay of the HC orders granting her bail in Zia Orphanage Trust and Barapukuria coalmine cases.

"The HC bail orders will remain valid until adjudication of the ACC petitions in the Appellate Division," Khaleda's counsel Barrister Rafiqueul Haq told the Daily Star.

The joint forces arrested Khaleda and her son Arafat Rahman Koko in the morning of September 3 from their Shaheed Moulouf Road residence in Dhaka Cantonment on graft charges, and a Dhaka court sent her to a sub-jail a couple of hours later.

All legal impediments to Khaleda's release were removed with the HC granting her three months' ad-interim bail in Gato and Niko graft cases on Tuesday.

On August 26, the HC granted four months' ad-interim bail to Khaleda and her elder son Tarique Rahman in Zia Orphanage Trust fund embezzlement case responding to their separate bail petitions moved on the previous day.

Two days before that, an HC bench granted Khaleda a four-month ad-interim bail in Barapukuria coalmine graft case.

Khaleda's counsels yesterday submitted her bail bonds in the four cases to four separate courts.

"The courts dealing with Niko and Gato cases accepted the Tk 1 lakh bail bond from Sanaullah Mia as the advocate guarantor and me as the local guarantor," Masud Ahmed Talukder, one of Khaleda's counsels told the Daily Star.

Earlier in the day, they submitted bail bonds in Zia Orphanage Trust and Barapukuria coalmine cases to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of Dhaka, which the court accepted.

On receiving the bonds, the courts sent Khaleda's release orders to the prison authorities.

Sources said the government has taken all preparations for Khaleda's release today.

TODAY'S PROGRAMME
After her release, Khaleda Zia is likely to visit at Zia Uddin the grave of her late husband Ziaur Rahman, who was also a president of the country and the founder of BNP.

Party sources said she may later go to the BNP office at Naya Paltan before going to her cantonment home.

Her elder son Tarique Rahman is expected to leave the country any time soon for treatment abroad as he was also released on bail in all 13 cases filed against him on charges of corruption.

Her younger son, Koko, who had been released on July 17 through a government executive order, left for Singapore on July 19 for treatment.

Khaleda earlier put Tarique's release as a condition for her own release from jail.

Bomb hoax

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NFR Uddin of Bijoy Nagar, a passenger of the Air Arabia flight, was detained for interrogation, said ASP Sheikh Shariful Islam of Rab.

The bomb hoax created panic among passengers at the airport and delayed the scheduled flight of the Air Arabia aircraft by two hours.

The plane left for Sharjah at 4:45pm, sources added.

Cox's Bazar

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vote manipulation.

The organiser, New7Wonders Foundation, had charged on September 3 that some websites were arranging multiple votes for the two tourist favourites using single email addresses.

The Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) called for legal actions against the zealots involved in tweaking the rules.

It has already shut down the four websites accused of cheating, said a press release.

"We worked relentlessly... contacted the organisers and took necessary measures to bring Cox's Bazar and the Sundarbans back in the race again," BPC Chairman Shafigue Alam Mehedi told the Daily Star yesterday.

The Bangladesh Tourism Promotion Association had earlier blamed the indifference and failures on the part of the government, the BPC and Orascom Telecom Bangladesh Ltd (Bangalink), official sponsor for Cox's Bazar, for the disgrace.

The tourism industry expects a boom in foreign tourists if the two places, or either of them, hit the final list of the nature's new seven wonders, to be announced in 2010.

Ctg JMB chief

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serial blasts on August 17 in 2005.

Meanwhile, the Barisal Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal judge Rabiul Hassan acquitted all 14 accused JMB Islamist militants in a case lodged in connection with the serial bomb blasts.

Judge Shaefiqul Karim of the Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal of Chittagong gave the verdict for two bomb blasts that took place on the city's Port Connecting Road and EPZ Intersection on August 17 in 2005 as part of the countrywide serial blast. The other two acquitted JMB members are Abdur Sattar Molla and Arshadul Alam alias Tea Alam.

The case was filed with Bandar Police Station and the charge sheet was submitted on January 14 in 2007 while the charge was framed on June 25 in the same year.

The court pronounced the verdict after taking deposition of 10 witnesses.

The same court here on Tuesday awarded Javed 10 years' imprisonment for bombing at GEC intersection in the port city as part of the serial blast. The court also fined him Tk 5000, in default he has to suffer another year in jail.

Javed Iqbal has so far been awarded 124 years' imprisonment in different terms in nine cases. He is also an accused in seven other cases, which are now under trial at different courts in Chittagong.

Barisal: A total of 12 cases were filed against the JMB militants soon after the serial blasts on August 17, 2005. With yesterday's judgment the trial proceedings of 7 cases have so far been completed.

Out of 14 accused only seven, including four absconders, were sentenced to lifetime imprisonment by the same court on July 30, 2008.

The tribunal judge, Rabiul Hassan, also passed an order to release the accused now in jail if they are not accused in any other cases.

After this judgment, one of the accused Sultan Sharif was released from Barisal central jail on Wednesday evening.

Those who were acquitted of the charge are Sultan Sharif, Golam Morshed Chowdhury Reza, Jalal Arefin, Hafez Saiful Islam, Abu Yusuf Majumdar, Abu Solaiman Sujon, Md Maruf, Jasimuddin, Abdus Sobahan, Giassuddin, Sarwar, Abdur Rahman, Zahid Babu, and Ziaur Rahman Zia.

Miles of tailbacks

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He said five trucks loaded with LP gas cylinders had been waiting at the Paturia ferry ghat for a few days.

Being under the sun for long is also very risky as it could lead to an accident any moment, he added.

Truck driver Amir Ali came to Paturia ghat from Dhaka on September 9 morning with poultry feeds. He said the chicks at different farms in Sathira have already started to die due to the lack of food and the farm owners are repeatedly calling him on mobile phone urging him to bring the feeds as early as possible.

Driver Nurunnabi, who is carrying relief materials of the Ahsania Mission, has also been waiting at the ghat for the last two days.

Liton, helper of a truck, said they arrived at the ghat on September 6 with garment jhut from Dhaka to reach Benapole border but are yet to catch a ferry.

"The truck driver will get Tk 500 and I will get Tk 300 for carrying the goods but we have already spent almost double for our meals," he said. If they fail to reach Benapole by 8:00am on Thursday, they will not get the wages, he added.

Khorsheed Alam, BIWTC assistant manager at Paturia ferry ghat, said, "We hope that one of the four out-of-order ferries will be ready for operating within a day or two."

He said one or two ferries often become unfit for operation and only five cannot bear the huge load of vehicles. The engineering department is responsible for the faulty maintenance, he added.

Tac saved

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But a taskforce investigation into corruption at Titas in past February revealed massive anomalies at the state-owned company.

It found that 135 of its staffers, high officials and minions alike, are millionaire, owning at least Tk 1 crore each. Tac Secretary Khandaker M Asaduzzaman also admitted the gulf between the investigated and self-confessed graft.

The National Coordination Committee (NCC) on corruption and serious crimes referred 107 corrupt Titas staffers to the commission for redemption, without sending along the investigation reports.

The NCC only mentioned the amount of money the staffers confessed to having as ill-gotten wealth.

The NCC list of the Tac includes deputy director general, assistant manager, deputy manager, meter readers, account assistants, supervisors, junior technicians and junior development assistants.

The Tac refused to name the Titas staffers facing the commission. But a newspaper said one former sales assistant, Abdul Kadir Mollah, who drew Tk 4,000 as monthly salary at the time of his voluntary retirement, racked up about Tk 2,100 crore in assets.

He is likely to face the commission.

Commission Secretary Khandaker M Asaduzzaman yesterday told a regular press briefing that they have primarily ordered the 49 people confessing to their corruption to return over Tk 14.97 crore to the state.

He said the Tac has written to the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to unfreeze the accounts of the corrupts so they could return their illegal assets to the state.

"They will not face charges for the illegal assets they disclose to the commission. If they conceal any information, then government agencies may begin investigation at any time," he added.

He also said they have found differences between voluntary disclosures and investigations by the ACC, adding that the commission would take decision based on papers and documents.

In all, 209 people--191 government officials, 13 of their wives and three businessmen--have so far applied to the commission for voluntary disclosures.

Flood still alarming

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victim fell down and died on the spot.

According to Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), flood situation of northern districts continued to improve and has started getting better slowly in central and south central districts and is expected for significant improvement by next 48 hours.

Our Sirajganj correspondent adds: Flood situation has improved in Sirajganj as the floodwater has continued to recede.

Hospital sources said around 300 people of different flood-affected areas have been affected by diarrhoea, pneumonia and dysentery. They were admitted to different hospitals and health centres.

Besides, flood has rendered a number of people workless, causing untold sufferings to them. They are leading their days with great hardship.

Flood victims alleged that the inadequate supply of relief materials has left many people to live in subhuman conditions.

Our Tangail correspondent

reports: Although the overall flood situation has been improving and floodwater retreating in the last two days, a big crack has developed on Pingna-Jokchara flood control embankment at Bhupur upazila.

Water Development Board (WDB) workers are dumping sandbags to save the embankment.

Shajahan Siraj, sub-divisional engineer of Tangail WDB, told the Daily Star that the crack developed on the embankment in Baghbari area at Bhupur upazila three days ago due to the strong current of the Jamuna.

Around 7 lakh of people and vast tracks of farmlands under Bhupur, Kalihati, Ghatil and Basal upazilas in the district may go under water if the embankment collapses, he added.

Our correspondent from Manikganj adds: The overall flood situation in all the seven upazilas in Manikganj has improved.

FFWC office sources said 8cm water of the Jamuna decreased at Aricha point in the last 24 hours and was flowing 12cm above the danger level yesterday.

Achievers thrive on three factors

TOP 20 COLLEGES BASED ON GPA 5			
Ranks	Institutions	Boards	GPA 5
1	Notre Dame College	Dhaka	1,189
2	Dhaka City College	Dhaka	987
3	Viqarunnisa Noon College	Dhaka	663
4	Dhaka Commerce College	Dhaka	518
5	New Government Degree College	Rajshahi	443
6	Motijheel Ideal School and College	Dhaka	420
7	Bir Shreshtha Noor Mohammad Rifles Public School and College	Dhaka	393
8	Holy Cross College	Dhaka	331
9	Rajuk Uttara Model School and College	Dhaka	294
10	Dhaka College	Dhaka	292
11	Bogra Government AH College	Rajshahi	267
12	Chittagong College	Chittagong	261
13	Jessore Cantonment College	Jessore	253
14	Govt Hazi Muhammad Mohsin College	Chittagong	252
15	BAF Shaheen College	Dhaka	250
16	Comilla Victoria Govt College	Comilla	240
17	Rangpur Cantonment Public School and College	Rajshahi	193
18	Chittagong Govt Commerce College	Chittagong	176
19	Rajshahi Govt City College	Rajshahi	153
20	Bogra Cantonment Public School & College	Rajshahi	149

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exams. Besides, colleges now arrange model tests before exams which help students do better in board exams," she said.

Guardians are now more conscious about their children's career. Besides, copy-free exams help good students perform well, Shahana Begum said.

This year, Notre Dame College, Dhaka City College and Viqarunnisa Noon College secured first, second and third positions in terms of GPA-5 achievers in the HSC exams.

Dhaka Commerce College secured the fourth place with 518 GPA-5 achievers while New Government Degree College, Rajshahi became fifth with 443 GPA-5 holders.

This year, Notre Dame College, having 1189 students with GPA-5, secured the first position for the fourth consecutive year.

Last year, Viqarunnisa Noon College and Dhaka City College secured the second and third positions respectively for the third consecutive year. But this year Dhaka City College with 987 GPA-5 achievers beat Viqarunnisa Noon College having 663 students with GPA-5.

100% PASS/FAIL		
Years	100%	0%
2008	674	41
2007	434	60
2006	363	86
2005	272	131
2004	83	278

The number of institutions under Technical Education Board that achieved cent percent pass rate is 97 this year, compared to last year's 38.

In the seven education boards, 70 colleges of those cent percent pass rate. Of those, 40 are under Dhaka, 13 under Rajshahi, four under Comilla, two under Jessore, five under Chittagong, two under Barisal and four under Sylhet education boards.

The number of students expelled during this year's HSC exams is lower than previous year's. A total of 785 examinees were expelled this year, while the number of expelled students was 1,046 in 2007, 1,000 in 2006, 1,729 in 2005, 3,747 in 2004, 7,616 in 2003 and 31,835 in 2002.

Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman at a press briefing at the ministry said the statistics show that the quality of education in the country has improved.

"Monthly Pay Order (MPO) of the institutions which have zero percent pass rate would be cancelled," he said, adding that MPOs of the institutions where less than five students passed would be scrapped for a year and the restrictions would be lifted if the institutions do well in the future.

Under the Madrasa Board, 2,886 students achieved GPA-5 while the number was 930 in the last year. The board saw a rise of 210.32 percent in GPA-5 achievers.

Under the Technical Education Board a total of 51 students obtained GPA 5, which is a 920 percent rise from the previous year.

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Record HSC feat

Board	Appeared	Passed		Growth over Last year %
		Number	%	
Dhaka	1,49,781	1,23,285	82.31	11.54
Rajshahi	1,34,362	96,564	71.87	9.98
Comilla	50,202	38,819	77.33	11.58
Jessore	69,880	50,478	72.24	12.76
Chittagong	40,752	27,696	67.96	6.6
Barisal	31,796	20,758	65.28	9.65
Sylhet	19,366	13,782	71.17	5.19
Madrasa	61,724	50,882	82.43	8.12
Technical Edu.	54,518	44,306	81.27	13.14

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subject, which are one of main reasons for increased pass rate and number of GPA-5 scorers, sources of combined education board computer centre observe.

The same improvement is also seen in the combined average result of seven education boards, Alim examination under Madrasa Education Board and HSC business management examination under Technical Education Board.

The combined pass rate is 76.19 percent against last year's 65.6 percent and 22,045 students secured GPA-5 compared to last year's 11,140. About 6.2 lakh students appeared in the HSC and equivalent examinations and about 4.66 lakh have passed.

Pass percentage for boys and girls is almost same. In Dhaka, Rajshahi and Technical boards, girls have performed well compared to boys.

On the other hand, business studies students have marked a significant progress against science and humanities groups.

Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman officially announced the results at a press conference at the education ministry in the capital.

"The increase in pass rates continues gradually since 2001 which proves that education standard is improving," he said.

The education adviser thanked all officials and employees of nine education boards for publishing the results in 60 days as promised by his ministry. The examinations began on May 29 and ended on July 10.

"Restless efforts by the students and their guardians, college teachers' hard labour, and effective monitoring