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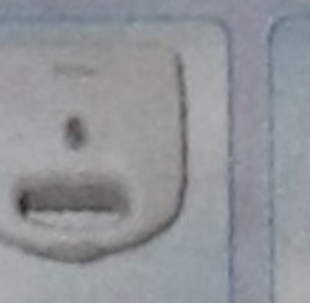
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Govt mulling
policy summit
of politicians

UNB, Dhaka

The caretaker government will organise a policy summit with the top political leaders of the country on three cardinal issues—investment growth, administrative reforms and education.

In the run-up to the December polls, the proposed summit will take place in the later part of November.

Commerce Advisor Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday unveiled the plan of the caretaker government.

Following the 1/11 changeover amid a political crisis over election issues, the present caretaker government has done massive reforms that will need ratification.

He, however, said the government will not provide any guideline on the issues.

Rather, the government will

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Crime dons active
ahead of Eid, pollsSHARIFUL ISLAM and
SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Notorious underworld criminals are coming out of hideouts and reorganising their operatives ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr and upcoming elections, which has resulted in the recent rise in criminal incidents like murder, extortion and mug-

ging. Officials of a number of intelligence agencies said they have reports that at least six top criminals wanted in eight to 10 murder cases visited the country three to four times in the last six months from their hideouts allegedly in India and had meetings with their associates.

Braving the risk of getting

arrested, they are visiting Bangladesh to reorganise their groups that got disorganised after their fleeing the country for fear of "crossfire".

A top official of an intelligence agency said at least three sensational murders and a mugging incident that took place in the last 16 days indicate that top listed criminals are involved in them.

However, investigators are yet to arrest any suspected murderer and mastermind in these sensational cases.

After a special meeting at the home ministry on Monday, Home Adviser Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin told reporters that one reason behind the recent rise in criminal activities might be criminals'

coming out of their hideouts ahead of Eid, Durga Puja and the upcoming elections.

Armed assailants gunned down a leading garment factory owner on Monday. In another incident, criminals snatched Tk 46 lakh after shooting an official of ACI Group on Sunday. On September 3, criminals shot dead a Sheltex executive at Lalmitia while on September 11 an employee of Sohagh Paribahan was killed for refusing to pay tolls at Kalyanpur.

Intelligence sources said top listed criminals Shahadat Hossain, Khorshed Jisan, Mollah Masud, Ashiq and Saidul made several visits to Bangladesh and met their accomplices in the last six months.

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SIDDHIRGANJ PLANT
\$355m power
deal with WB
signed

UNB, Dhaka

The caretaker government yesterday successfully completed its negotiation with the World Bank to have a fund of \$355 million for Siddhirganj 300MW peaking power project and a relevant gas pipeline construction.

The agreement on the financing came after a two-day meeting here between Power Division and a World Bank mission.

As per the negotiation, the

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Upazila polls
before JS to
create chaos
Says Zillur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) Acting President Zillur Rahman yesterday said a chaotic and anarchic situation might be created in the country if the caretaker government tries to hold upazila election before the parliamentary polls.

He also demanded that the government announce specific date for national polls immediately.

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Hasina positive
about meet
with Khaleda
Says barister Rafique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina has shown positive attitude on the much-talked-about proposed meeting with her political rival BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, barrister Rafique-ul-Huq, who defend both the former premiers in the court, said.

He said he is hopeful about the meeting between the two political leaders.

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JU to cut trees
to stop illegal
tree felling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jahangirnagar University (JU) authorities have initiated a move to bring down a few hundred trees on the campus in a bid to, what they said, stop illegal tree felling and remove age-old trees detrimental to health, that sparked protest by the students and environmentalists.

Environmentalists said it would damage ecosystem of the "green campus" which is home to about 150 species of birds and temporary abode to thousands of migratory birds.

The university staffs have primarily marked 480 trees—mostly teak, rain tree, mango and jackfruit to chop down, upsetting students of the university who formed a human chain in front of the vice chancellor's office yesterday demanding a stop to the move.

The university authorities, however, said a total of around 200 trees would be cut down.

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PHOTO: STAR

The authorities are going to fell these trees on Jahangirnagar University campus saying age-old trees are detrimental to health. Students yesterday form a human chain, inset, protesting against the move.

Wasa plans 20pc
hike in water tariff

ERSHAD KAMOL

Dhaka Wasa is planning to increase water tariff by 20 percent, only after a month it slapped a five percent increase in tariff.

Dhaka Wasa Managing Director (MD) engineer M Raihanul Abedin said, "The Board has approved increasing water tariff by 20 percent and the proposal has already been sent to the LGED ministry for final decision."

"The Dhaka Wasa Board has the mandate to increase tariff up to five percent annually. The Board increased tariff by five percent in July after three years. But it is not sufficient to meet the expenditure as the salary of Wasa employees were increased by 20 percent," he said.

He said due to frequent power outage, they have to run pumps

often by generators, which is contributing to a rise in water lifting cost.

However, the decision of increasing tariff without improving the service of Wasa facing systems loss has raised questions.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said, "An organisation needs to tackle systems loss before increasing tariff."

"Wasa should improve its service first," he said, adding that it should conduct a survey before making such decisions.

However, the Dhaka Wasa MD is confident of providing the city residents with better service in the near future.

"We shall install more water treatment plants to increase our production. Water supply in the

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HC stands
in toxic
ship's way

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed beaching of the Green Peace-listed hazardous ship MT Enterprise in the territory of Bangladesh.

Following a report published in The Daily Star titled "Toxic ship gets scrap nod" on Tuesday, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) filed a writ challenging the No Objection Certificate (NoC) given by the Department of Shipping regarding entry of the ship.

MT Enterprise is enlisted as one of the 50 dangerous ships in a chart prepared by the Green Peace.

The HC division bench of Justice Mirza Hossain Haider and Justice Mamnoon Rahman has also directed the government agencies to show cause as to why the issuance of NoC would not be declared

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Tac chief missing
corrupt politicians

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicians are not facing the Truth and Accountability Commission (Tac) as it would bar them from contesting polls for the next five years, Tac Chairman Justice Habibur Rahman Khan yesterday.

The Tac chief however said he is not sure whether the graft-accused are disclosing full information about their ill-gotten wealth.

"We did not get expected response from politicians although the commission was primarily planned for them. So, we could not make much progress. Still there is time, and politicians might come to us towards the end of the time limit (September 30)," he said at a press briefing.

"Politicians will become non-entity (in political arena) once they confess to corruption before Tac,

and they will be ineligible to participate in elections for the next five years. They are not coming to us just because of this as preparations for elections are going on," said the Tac chairman.

Replying to a question, he said he did not know if the restriction on corrupt politicians' participation in polls would be lifted or not.

He told another questioner, the deadline for applying to the commission for clemency might be extended if people demand and the press supports it.

Referring to disclosure made so far by those accused of corruption, Justice Habibur said,

"It is not known whether the graft-accused are disclosing full information about their ill-gotten wealth or they are depositing part of that wealth. But it is clear to me

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Thaksin's in-law
Somchai elected
new Thai PM

AP, Bangkok

Thai lawmakers yesterday turned to the brother-in-law of deposed leader Thaksin Shinawatra to be the new prime minister, setting up a showdown with protesters determined to tear down his political legacy.

Somchai Wongsawat appealed

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ILL-GOTTEN WEALTH
Dr Mosharraf
charge-sheeted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday pressed charges against detained former health minister Dr Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain in a case filed against him for amassing wealth worth Tk 9.10

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Sehri, Iftar timings			
Ramadan	Sep	Sehri	Iftar
17	18		6-03
18	19	4-26	6-02
19	20	4-27	6-00

Prayer Timing		
September 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-26	4-32
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-03	6-13
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

US military chief vows
to respect Pakistan's
sovereigntyDefence secretary 'personally'
regrets killing of Afghan civilians

AP, Islamabad, Kabul

The US military chief vowed yesterday to respect Pakistan's sovereignty, the American Embassy said a commitment apparently aimed at easing controversy over a rash of US attacks on militant havens near the border with Afghanistan.

Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, arrived in Pakistan late Tuesday to discuss a range of issues, including ways to improve coordination and cooperation in the wake of Pakistani anger over a Sept. 3 ground attack by US commandos in a border area.

He met separately with army chief Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani for what an embassy statement called "extremely frank, positive and constructive" discussions.

Meanwhile, US Defence Secretary Robert Gates, during a visit to Kabul yesterday, expressed "personal regret" for recent US airstrikes that killed Afghan civilians, and pledged more accurate targeting in future.

After meeting with Afghan President Hamid Karzai and other senior government officials, Gates

said at a news conference, "As I told them, I offer all Afghans my sincere condolences and personal regret for the recent loss of innocent life as a result of coalition airstrikes."

Gates said the US military takes extraordinary precautions to avoid civilian casualties, but added, "It is clear that we have to work even harder." He told Afghan officials that he would be discussing the issue with American commanders and pilots on Wednesday.

Later, Gates flew to Bagram, the main US base in Afghanistan.

Admiral Mike Mullen arrived the same day in Pakistan as its army said its forces have orders to open fire if US troops launch another raid across the Afghan border, raising the stakes in a dispute over how to tackle militant havens in Pakistan's unruly border zone.

"The Pakistani leaders reviewed the progress of Pakistan's efforts to combat militancy, violence and terrorism," the embassy statement said. "Adm Mullen appreciated the positive role that Pakistan is playing in the war on terror and pledged continued US support to Pakistan."

"In this context, Adm Mullen

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PHOTO: STAR

People wishing to spend Eid holidays with their dear ones queue up at this bus counter at Kalyanpur in the capital from 4:00am yesterday to buy tickets in advance. Bus operators, however, said all tickets up to September 30 have been sold.

RUSH FOR HOME

Eid tickets vanish

KAILASH SARKAR and
RASHIDUL HASAN

Most private bus services operating on the routes to county's southern, south-western and northern parts from the capital have already sold out advance tickets for Eid journey from September 28 to 30.

The private bus operators have already hiked ticket fares by Tk 50 to 150 on various routes ahead of the Eid.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Railway (BR), which will operate seven additional trains on different routes, will start selling advance tickets from today.

Hundreds of homebound people yesterday thronged ticket counters at Gabtoli, Shyamoli, and Kalyanpur in the city to buy advance tickets.

Many of them said they had to buy tickets at increased prices despite the government measures to prevent the transport operators from

charging passengers extra fares. About two million homebound people are expected to leave the capital ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) Chairman Sunil Kanti Bose told The Daily Star, "We have taken measures to prevent the transport operators from charging extra fares and stop other irregularities."

"Apart from mobile courts, complaint centres have been set up at all terminals," the BRTA chairman said adding that the measures will remain in force for 10 days after the Eid.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Naim Ahmed said, "Plainclothes policemen and members of intelligence agencies have been deployed at all bus, launch and railway terminals to check irregularities in the sale of ticket as well as maintain law and order."

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