

Khaleda, Hasina get back SSF security after poll schedule announced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to provide former premiers Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina with special security for three months from the next day after announcement of national election schedule.

According to the decision, both the leaders will be treated as very important person (VIP) and provided with Special Security Force (SSF) to ensure their top-level security during the three months.

The decision came at a meeting of the council of advisers held at the Chief Adviser's Office yesterday with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in the chair.

Earlier, the Awami League (AL) formally asked the government to ensure top-level security for party chief Hasina, who is now under

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Cyclone Reshmi looms large

Depression-turned-storm now moves towards Khulna-Barisal coast; city life crippled by gales, rains

STAR REPORT

The deep depression over the Bay of Bengal grew into Cyclone Reshmi yesterday, and was approaching the country's south-western coast with the possibility of making landfall by noon today.

According to the Met office, the storm has lost much of its strength for expansion. As of last evening, it was spinning over a radius of 250 kilometres. The wind speed at the core was ranging between 60 and 80 kms an hour.

A special warning issued by the Met office said the cyclone was about 460 kms west-southwest off

Chittagong port, 435 kms west-southwest off Cox's Bazar and 280 kms southwest off Mongla port.

Moving north-northwesterly at up to 10 kms an hour, it might cross Khulna-Barisal coast in between morning and noon.

Talking to The Daily Star around midnight, weather officials said the chance of the storm gaining strength was little as it was already pretty close to the land.

They said hopefully there would be fewer casualties and minor damage as the Sundarbans might prove a bulwark too strong for Reshmi to wreak havoc.

As per the last release, the cau-

tionary signal for maritime ports was raised to four from three at daytime. The river port authorities were asked to hoist signal number two.

It also said the storm may cause sea surges at least four feet higher than normal astronomical tides.

Besides, heavy rains were forecast to lash the country over the 24 hours that began at 5:00pm yesterday.

Many low-lying areas in Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Noakhali, Laxmipur, Feni, Chandpur, Barguna, Patuakhali, Barisal, Bhola, Pirojpur, Jhalakathi,

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Toxic Milk Powder Govt moves to enforce HC ban order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken steps to enforce the High Court (HC) order on stopping sale and display of all the eight brands of powdered milk "contaminated with melamine".

Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) will issue a public notice in this regard for the police and the departments concerned to implement the order, while committees will be formed at district levels to monitor the markets.

A high-level meeting on melamine in milk held at the secretariat with Health and Food Adviser AMM Shawkat Ali in the chair took the decision yesterday.

The government took the decision prior to receiving the certified copy of the HC order.

Meanwhile the results of the eight brands of powdered milk sent

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Fuel prices slashed by 10-13pc

Diesel-run transport fares also go down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has slashed petroleum prices by 10 to 13 percent following the recent drastic price fall in the global market.

In an announcement yesterday, chief adviser's special assistant for energy M Tamim said prices of per litre diesel and kerosene will come down to Tk 48 from Tk 55, petrol to Tk 78 from Tk 87 and octane to Tk 80 from Tk 90.

The new fuel prices effective from Sunday midnight will also reduce diesel-run transport fares by Tk 0.05 to Tk 0.07 per kilometre, he added.

"The petroleum prices have been reduced following fall of prices in the global market; it will be readjusted in the same way in

PRICES (Per litre)	
Diesel	Tk 48
Petrol	Tk 78
Octane	Tk 80
Kerosene	Tk 48

future," said Dr M Tamim at a press conference after announcing the new petroleum prices.

The government increased petroleum prices by 35 percent on average in July this year as the fuel price in the global market hit record high \$179 per barrel. But from September, the international petroleum prices began to go down and reached \$61 as of yesterday.

Examining the global market

trend, the government decided to readjust the fuel prices.

According to the new announcement, diesel and kerosene prices have been cut by 12.73 percent, petrol by 10.34 percent, and octane price slashed by 11.11 percent per litre.

Dr Tamim said the government has decided to review petroleum prices every three months and will provide subsidy for diesel and kerosene as usual.

The prices of octane and petrol will be adjusted based on imported price of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), he added.

The government allocated Tk 4,000 crore in the budget 2008-09

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RELATED STORY IN STAR BUSINESS



A homeless mother and her child sleep in a makeshift tent on a pavement in Dhaka University area yesterday as the depression in Bay brings in damp and chilly weather to the capital.

PHOTO: STAR

HC issues injunction on dismantling of toxic ship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The High Court yesterday issued injunction on dismantling of toxic ship MT Enterprise in response to a writ petition filed by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) challenging the breaking of the ship.

A division bench comprising Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui passed the order after hearing on the petition.

Defying an earlier court order and ignoring protests from environmentalists, Siko Steel Ship-breaking Yard owned by Madina Enterprise had been dismantling

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BNP rights RPO wrongs in its constitution

EC may miss October deadline for registration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The problem of wording BNP had in its provisional amended constitution regarding severing its ties with 'associated' organisations of students and professionals was corrected yesterday, removing all barriers to its registration with the Election Commission (EC).

BNP Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan went to the EC Secretariat yesterday and made the correction making it clear that the

party will not have any front or associated organisation.

"Now we have no problem in getting registered with the commission," he said on his way out of the secretariat.

Meanwhile, the EC is likely to miss its own October 30 deadline for completing registration of political parties as it is still going through the applications of a large number of parties that mainly exist only on papers.

Although primary scrutiny

found that more than a half of the 107 parties that applied for registration failed to meet the basic requirements, the commission nonetheless is thoroughly scrutinising the applications to avoid complaints.

Earlier, the EC said it will complete registering parties before declaring the detailed poll schedule early next month. But now commission officials are saying the registration process might go on even after the announcement of

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ABDUCTION OF BRAC STAFF Govt seeks Afghan help for release

All Brac staff to be withdrawn in 5 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday appealed to the Afghan authorities to secure the release of two Brac officials who were abducted from Ghazni province Thursday afternoon.

Three days after they were kidnapped the whereabouts of the two are yet to be known.

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury also made an appeal to the abductors to release the two innocent Bangladeshis who were engaged in development work for the benefit of Afghan people.

Meanwhile, Brac said it would



Shahjahan Ali and Akhter Ali gradually withdraw its 160 Bangladeshi workforce in Afghanistan in the next five years. Four gunmen abducted Mohammad Shahjahan Ali and Akhter Ali, Brac area managers posted in Ghazni, when they went

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CANDIDATE SELECTION AL okays system for grassroots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) yesterday finalised its draft policy to seek names of the possible candidates for the next national election from its grassroots level committees.

The local AL bodies will now finalise a five-member panel of candidates for each constituency through holding an open ballot. The party has recently put this provision in its constitution to get registered with the Election Commission.

The AL presidium, the highest policymaking body, last night finalised the draft, which will be approved by the AL Central

Working Committee (ALWC) within a week.

"In our draft ward, union, municipality, thana, upazila and district committee members will be involved in selecting party candidates in each constituency through holding their extended meetings," AL acting general secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam told reporters after the meeting held at AL acting president Zillur Rahman's Gulshan residence.

Issues including AL chief Sheikh Hasina's election participation, upazila polls, re-demarcation of electoral constituencies, among others, were on the meeting agenda.

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Huda files writ petition to remove polls bar on EPR convicts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition was filed yesterday with the High Court (HC) challenging the legality of the provision of the Emergency Power Rules (EPR) 2007 barring people convicted in the cases under the EPR from contesting polls.

Detained former BNP communications minister Nazmul Huda, who was convicted in two criminal cases under the EPR, filed the writ petition.

A lawyer concerned yesterday told The Daily Star that the hearing of the petition might be held today.

In the petition, it was stated that as per Rule 11(5) of the EPR, 2007, the people convicted by courts in the cases under the EPR will not be eligible for contesting the

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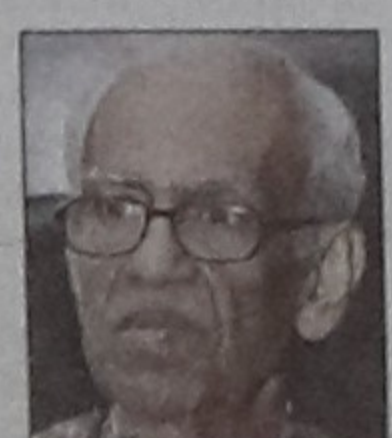
Talking polls and beyond Ombudsman to ensure intra-party democracy

Says barrister Rafique-ul Huq

ASHUTOSH SARKAR and RASHIDUL HASAN

Renowned lawyer barrister Rafique-ul Huq has said big political parties should appoint an ombudsman if they want to clean the party and bring real democracy in it.

The next government may repeal the caretaker government system and the two major political parties might come to a consensus that those who can run the country can also hold an



election and that they would have trust in that election, he said in an interview with The Daily Star.

He appreciated the present caretaker government for its good work like formulating the income tax law amendment ordinance and the Supreme Judicial Commission ordinance, preparation of voter ID cards and separation of the Election Commission Secretariat from the Prime Minister's Office,

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Find details of the interview on page 11

BARAPUKURIA CASE HC bench feels embarrassed to hear 5 petitions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court (HC) bench yesterday felt embarrassed to hear five petitions filed by five former BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami ministers to quash proceedings against them in the Barapukuria Coalmine corruption case.

Jamaat Ameer and former industries minister Motiur Rahman Nizami, former finance minister M Saifur Rahman, Jamaat Secretary General and former social welfare minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, former health minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and former commerce minister air vice-marshal (ret'd) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury had filed the petitions with the HC for quashing proceedings against them in the case.

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News analysis

Trust Bank story twisted

Interbank trading loss labelled as 'money laundering'

INAM AHMED

Interbank foreign exchange trading that caused big losses to at least eight banks about six years back has suddenly been twisted and wrongly labelled as 'money laundering', although the Bangladesh Bank had resolved them as transactional losses.

The false notion arose when an attempt was made on Saturday to file a case against Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) chief Hasan

Mashhud Chowdhury. Efforts were made to implicate that Mashhud had laundered money from Trust Bank, of which he was the ex-officio chairman as the erstwhile army chief. The allegation was based on the fact that the bank had lost about Tk 22.41 crore in inter-bank foreign exchange dealings.

The Daily Star reinvestigated the issue, although it had reported the transactions years ago when a number of both private and

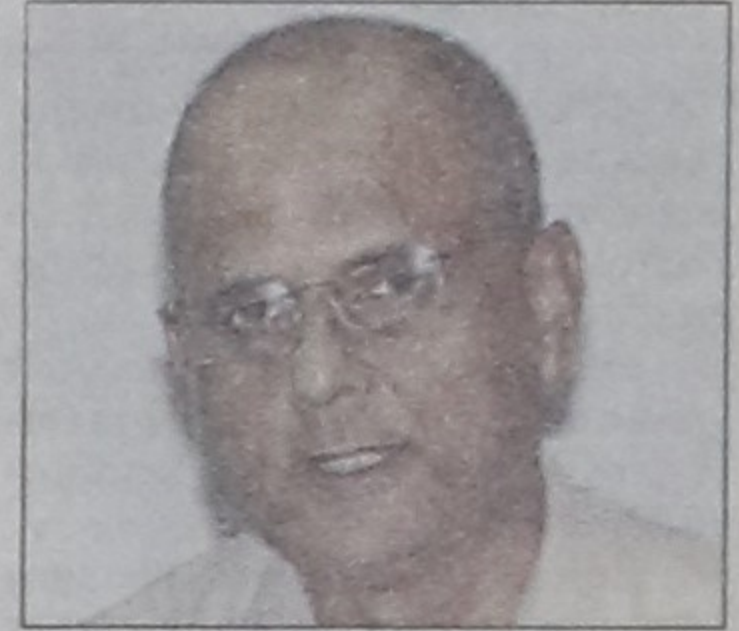
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ACC boss bins graft allegations against him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury yesterday said allegations brought against him by former Board of Investment executive chairman and Amar Desh Publications Ltd Chairman

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