

Khaleda, sons apply for case withdrawal

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and SHAKHAWAT LITON

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her family members yesterday appealed to the government for withdrawal of 20 cases filed against them during the last caretaker government.

Their petitions come close on the heels of those filed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Of the cases against Zia family, Khaleda stands accused in four on graft charges, her elder son Tarique Rahman in 11--seven on extortion, three on graft and one on tax evasion charge--her younger son Arafat Rahman Koko in five--three on corruption, one on moneylaundering and one on extortion charge.

Khaleda's counsel Mahbub Uddin Khokon and some pro-BNP lawyers filed the petitions with the Dhaka district magistrate.

They also filed petitions for dismissal of cases against the former prime minister's younger brother Shamim Iskander, his wife Kaniz Fatema, his two brothers-in-law Mustakim Reza and Mustakin Reza and BNP lawmaker Moudud Ahmed.

Since the government's move to review 'politically-motivated' cases, as many as 11,00 applications have been filed with District Magistrate Zillar Rahman, who is also deputy commissioner.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Home Minister Sahara Khatun, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, AL presidium members Abdur

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A preteen somersaults into Kadda river, upstream of the Turag, under Kadda Bridge in Kallakoir of Gazipur yesterday, unaware of the state of the river water, which lost its colour as waste of nearby industries contaminates the water only a few metres away.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Govt plans to clip spending

- No recruitment to 10pc vacant posts
- Luxury car use to stop
- Outsourcing of low-level jobs mullied

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is planning to outsource class IV employees under revenue budget in posts that fall vacant because of retirement or other reasons.

It is also planning not to appoint for the time being any manpower to 10 percent vacant posts at all levels as an austerity measure to offset the impact of the global economic recession.

Economists have welcomed the plans but said it has to be ensured that the existing manpower works properly.

The Finance Division is going to advise every government division, office, directorate and firm to freeze 10 percent posts temporarily as an austerity measure, finance ministry sources said.

A circular in this regard has been prepared and it will be circulated from the Cabinet Division down to the upazila level next week, ministry officials said.

Replying to journalists yesterday at a hotel, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said, "There will be no retrenchment of government staff. Many posts are vacant. No fresh recruitment will be made against 10 percent of these vacant posts."

Muhith said action would be taken against government staff that do not work but draw salary.

Zaid Bakht, research director of Bangladesh Institute of SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Ghulam Rahman new ACC chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government appointed Ghulam Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) chief yesterday, twenty-eight days after Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury stepped down from the post.

The government also downgraded the status of the ACC chairman to a Supreme Court judge from the status of a minister given during the tenure of the last caretaker government.

In a gazette notification, the government appointed Rahman as commissioner of the commission under section 6 (1) and its chairman under section 5 (1) of the ACC act, 2007 with effect from May 2, 2009.

Meanwhile, acting ACC chairman M Habibur Rahman in the afternoon confirmed that they received a copy of the gazette notification on the appointment.

"The anti-corruption commission's approach to advance with its activities now depends on the new chairman. We hope for the best," said Habibur Rahman in a reaction to the appointment.

"It's a matter of relief for me that the huge task of anti-corruption drives will no longer be on my shoulder," he added.

Former bureaucrat Ghulam Rahman, who retired as shipping and ministry secretary in 2004, was appointed as chairman of the

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Govt opens maiden power plant bids

Eight firms vie for 300MW station

SHARIER KHAN

Eight power companies yesterday submitted their financial and technical bids to install a 300 megawatt power plant in Siddhirganj under the World Bank financing, the first power bid opened under the new Awami League government.

Sources say four Chinese companies, an Indian and an Indo-German joint venture, a Korean and a Spanish company submitted their offers which the officials found quite "attractive".

Of these, an influential ruling party leader having strong Chinese connection is allegedly representing all Chinese bidders.

Sources say he has taken over the "representation business" from a pro-BNP businessman as the AL came to power.

Though the price offers of the eight companies were available yesterday, the sources say that doesn't necessarily reflect who was the actual lowest bidder due to a host of technical and financial issues that need to be evaluated properly.

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The Electricity Generation Company of Bangladesh (EGCB) that floated the tender will take around two months to evaluate the bids with the help of Canadian consultation company SMC Lavalin.

After the EGCB signs a contract with the lowest responsive bidder, it will take another 24 months to complete the power project.

The sources revealed the read-out price offers submitted by the bidders yesterday. The bidders gave out their prices in Bangladeshi taka, euro, dollar and even in Chinese currency.

"The lowest price spelled out here may not be eventually the lowest one. That would be decided by the tender evaluation committee of the EGCB," comments an official.

The tender rule insists that each bidder submit, along with power plant construction cost, a Long Term Service Agreement (LTSA) contract cost. While it is not so commonly used in this country, the LTSA is a system under which the contractor carries out maintenance and service for the plant.

POLL EXPENDITURE BNP reports in detail at last

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP, Jatiya Party and some other parties submitted their election expenditure reports to the Election Commission (EC) on the last day yesterday bringing to an end mandatory submission of those by all the 38 parties which contested the December 29 parliamentary polls last year.

The ruling Awami League, BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and 26 other parties had earlier submitted such reports by the previously fixed deadline-- March 31.

But the EC refused to accept the reports of BNP and a number of other parties as those lacked details of their polls expenditures.

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The headline of our yesterday's story "BNP fails to submit papers within time" was misleading since the EC-extended deadline for submitting details of the party's election expenditure ended yesterday. We regret the mistake.

May Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Labour Day, known as May Day, will be observed today in the country as elsewhere in the world with a vow to institutionalise the socio-economic rights of the workers.

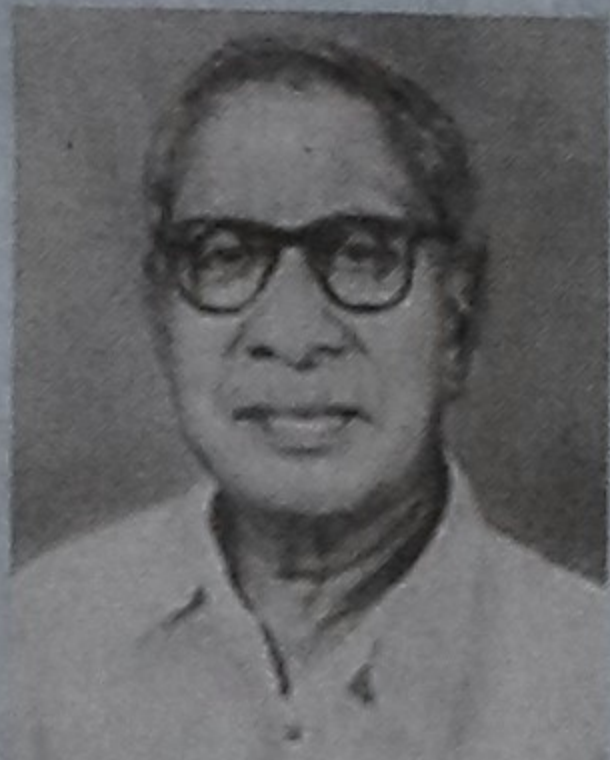
May Day commemorates the killing by police on May 1, 1886 of several demonstrating

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Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on the occasion of May Day. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow.

In quest of history and heritage on the 38th Abduction Day of the great philanthropist Ranada Prasad Shaha



The great philanthropist Ranada Prasad Shaha, an illustrious son of the soil, along with his son Bhabani Prasad Shaha was kidnapped on the fateful night of 7th May 1971 by the ruthless Pakistani Army and their collaborators from his residence in Narayanjanj. Since then their whereabouts could not be traced. R.P. Shaha dedicated his entire wealth and property to the cause of the ailing and the poor in the Health and Education sector and established Kumudini Welfare Trust in the first half of the last century. His laudable contributions to the cause of humanity, for the common masses, mainly in the field of health, education, self-help, employment of women in his homeland at Mirzapur, Tangail are highly acclaimed at home and abroad.

The Kumudini Hospital, Bharateswari Homes at Mirzapur, Kumudini Women's Degree College (first Women's Degree College in the then East Pakistan) Tangail, Devendra College in Manikganj, the first Maternity Wing in the Dhaka Combined Military Hospital are some of the examples of the remarkable humanitarian establishments of R.P. Shaha.

After the abduction of R.P. Shaha and his son the Trust, guided and inspired by his principles and ideologies established Kumudini Hospital School of Nursing, Kumudini Women's Medical College, Kumudini Nursing College (Degree level), Kumudini Trade Training School, Kumudini Handicrafts etc.

In the extensive philanthropic ventures new dimensions are added to the work of rehabilitation and empowerment in various fields. The process of development and undertakings is noteworthy.

Like other great sons of the country who sacrificed their lives on the altar of freedom of our motherland, R.P. Shaha's life and glorious achievements are now a history, our proud heritage. A precise information centre is necessary to preserve this rich momentum.

Anyone with any information about this great personality, his reminiscences, any memorable occasions of his company, pictures, facts, documents may kindly inform and send to our Information Centre or contact us. In this regard your kind cooperation is solicited.

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10pc cut in revised ADP

NEC okays Tk 23,000cr outlay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Economic Council (NEC) has approved the revised annual development programme (ADP) of Tk 23,000 crore for this fiscal year, chopping 10 percent off the actual ADP.

The original ADP was Tk 25,600 crore.

A meeting of the National Economic Council (NEC) with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair made the approval yesterday.

In the revised ADP, the allocation from local resources was reduced by Tk 1,000 crore, a nine percent cut, to make it Tk 10,010 crore. Allocation from foreign resources was cut by 11 percent, Tk 1,600 crore, to make it Tk 12,990 crore.

Rural development and rural organisations will get 16 percent or Tk 3,583 crore of the ADP, education and religion 14 percent or Tk 3,212 crore, power sector 12 percent or Tk 2,812 crore, health, nutrition, population and family welfare 11 percent or Tk 2,642 crore and transport sector 11 percent or Tk 2,578 crore.

The planning ministry presented a report on the progress of ADP implementation at the NEC meeting. It said in July-March of the current fiscal year, the total ADP spending was Tk 10,532 crore, 41 percent of the original allocation.

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