

## Graft cases against Falu, Hashem stayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed for six months the proceedings of two separate corruption cases against former BNP lawmakers Masaddak Ali Falu and MA Hashem.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the cases in 2007 against Falu and Hashem on charges of amassing wealth illegally and concealing information about the wealth.

Upon two separate quashment petitions filed by the BNP leaders, the HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Rais Uddin also issued separate rules upon the ACC and government to explain within four weeks why the cases should not be quashed.

Both the former lawmakers are now free on bail in the cases.

Advocate Ahsanul Karim appeared for the petitioners.

## Investigate CG's unconstitutional acts

### Pro-BNP lawyers demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pro-BNP lawyers yesterday demanded formation of an investigation committee led by a senior judge of the Supreme Court (SC) to probe into "unconstitutional acts" of the immediate-past military-backed caretaker government (CG).

The demand was made by Barrister Mahbubuddin Khokon, also a BNP lawmaker, at a press briefing at the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) building in the city.

The BNP demand came three days after a remark by just-elevated SC judge Surendra Kumar Sinha saying that an attempt was made to remove him illegally from the High Court during the rule of the caretaker government.

Barrister Khokon also alleged that the law ministry had provided "untrue" information to the chief justice

about the number of pending cases of the appellate division before the recent appointment of four new judges to this court.

He said the ministry in a letter on June 29 said there were 1,20,095 cases pending with the appellate division till December 31, 2008.

But in a reply to the law minister on June 30, the chief justice said the number of pending cases in the court was 6,247 till that date, he added.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed has turned down the allegation, saying that an assistant registrar of the SC had officially provided him with the number of cases of the apex court for placing at parliament during a question-answer session.

He, however, said his ministry will examine if there is any confusion about the number of pending cases at the apex court.

## Sahara returns home today

UNB, Dhaka

Home Minister Sahara Khatun, who suffered waist injuries and underwent operation at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore, will return home today.

She will arrive by a flight of Singapore Airlines at 11:40pm after about 20 days of treatment, said a Home Ministry release yesterday, the day newspapers carried reports that the absentee state minister for home affairs, Sohel Taj, now in the USA, tendered his resignation at the end of May.

Sahara suffered waist injuries as she fell in the washroom of her official residence on June 29.

She was first given treatment at the Trauma Centre at Shyamoli in Dhaka under the supervision of Health Minister Dr AFM Ruhul Haq. As per Prime Minister's direction, she was later sent to Singapore for better treatment.

She left for Singapore on July 1 and got admitted to the Mount Elizabeth Hospital. A 12-member surgery team, led by Dr Toh Chow Lai, carried out the operation on her waist at the hospital on July 2.

"The home minister expressed gratitude to the prime minister for cooperation in her treatment. She thanked the health minister for his overall supervision in her treatment," said the ministry release.

She also thanked the countrymen as they prayed for her recovery.

## Police find no allegations against three ICS workers

Lawyer tells HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A lawyer for three detained members of Islamic Chhatri Sangstha (ICS) yesterday told the High Court that the police did not find any allegations against them.

The police arrested the three members -- Tania Akhtar, Syeda Fauja Akhtar, and Jasmine Nahar -- from a madrasa in Pirojpur on July 3, suspecting them to be involved in criminal activities. ICS is a female student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami.

Three separate writ petitions challenging their arrest were filed with HC on Sunday.

During the hearing of the petitions yesterday, their lawyer Barrister Abdur Razzaq said that the police submitted a report to the chief judicial magistrate's court in Pirojpur yesterday (Monday) where they stated that there was no allegation against the three members and they should be exonerated.

Barrister Belayet Hossain, another lawyer for the petitioners, yesterday told The Daily Star that the copy of the police report was submitted to HC for its consideration.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui fixed today for issuing orders on the petitions, he said.

## Obituary

METRO DESK

Nusrat Islam (Neha), a student of KG I of Maple Leaf International School, passed away on Saturday, says a press release.

Neha, her father and cousin died in a road accident on their way to Dhaka from Comilla.

Principal, teachers, students and staffs of Maple Leaf International School expressed shock at her death.

## Abul Hasnat freed on bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) leader and former chief whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah was freed on bail yesterday.

Caretaker of Dhaka Central Jail Touhid Islam said the AL leader was freed in the afternoon from the city's Labaid Hospital where he was receiving treatment.

The High Court (HC) on July 8 granted bail to Hasnat in four cases filed against him on different charges.

The AL leader was earlier sentenced to total 34 years in jail in the four cases.

Upon four appeals filed by Hasnat against his convictions, the HC bench of Justice MA Wahhab Miah and Justice Abdur Razzaq passed the bail orders.

The bail to Hasnat will remain valid until disposal of the appeals.

## Salman hits out at Star, Alo

FROM PAGE 1

"The malicious propaganda has been going on for many years now, which we kept ignoring, and we are now compelled to bring the issue before the court of public," he said.

"For the past few years, we have seen efforts -- very conscious and often beyond anyone's comprehension -- from these two newspapers to stifle our attempts to grow, create more jobs, and expand our exports," he said.

"It is true we have gone through ups and downs as our country has in all these decades. Nevertheless, we have tried to protect the interests of our workforce as well as our shareholders," he said adding that their efforts have not always been successful for various reasons, often factors beyond business contributing to the lack of success.

He said both newspapers on July 10 this year reported 'incorrectly' that Bextex, a subsidiary of Beximco Group, had declared dividend out of revaluated reserves pursuant to revaluation of its lands, buildings, and other assets.

And worst of all, the two newspapers referred to Bextex shares as 'junk shares', he added saying, "It is well known to all that Bextex has world class manufacturing facilities, blue chip customer base, it is an established brand both in the domestic and international markets."

"We leave it to you to judge whether Bextex shares can be called junk shares, and the journalistic standards applied by these two newspapers," he said.

He also said the two newspapers brought allegations of insider trading against him. "This is a serious allegation, probably the worst allegation one can come up with in this context."

Referring to a deal struck between Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd and an American investment firm, he said, "The deal drew an unprecedented malicious response from the two newspapers -- Prothom Alo and The Daily Star."

Such a speculative story with serious potential repercussions on the market is unthinkable in any other country in the world," he claimed.

"...The story was ill-motivated and lacked any substance. But common investors do get shaky by such propaganda. This is a gross violation of market regulations as defined in the Securities and Exchange Commission Ordinance," he said.

The Prothom Alo's sister concern, The Daily Star, also published a similar report with similar content, he said.

"The Daily Star story

referred to the ludicrous extent of the price fall -- 0.59 percent -- to claim that investors got shaky over Beximco Pharma's deal with a US firm," he said.

The Daily Star failed to convince any analyst to back up its claim, while the Prothom Alo, misquoted a well-known analyst, Salman claimed.

Salman said the Prothom Alo is owned by Latifur Rahman's Transcom Group, which is also the majority owner of The Daily Star. "We do not intend to conduct a similar propaganda war on Mr Latifur Rahman and his Transcom Group. The world of business, we believe, should pursue interests in a more ethical manner," he said.

"We would also like to refer to another so-called news analysis that so blatantly aimed to personally malign me," he said.

**SALMAN'S RESPONSE TO REPORTER'S QUERIES**

In a question-answer session, a reporter from vernacular daily the Amar Desh asked Salman whether the two newspapers are against the current government, claiming that they were supporters of 1/11.

Salman replied, "These two newspapers were not only supporters of 1/11, rather they were the architects of the minus two theory."

"They ran editorials, news analyses, and front page by line stories in favour of the minus two theory. But after the minus two theory failed, they are now out with minus one theory," he said.

They are now trying to malign the government and make it feel uneasy, he said adding that they are also going against the national interest by carrying out activities detrimental to investment and the capital market.

Replying to another question on why he is not taking legal actions against the two newspapers, Salman said he is in a process of suing them. "Our lawyers are studying the issue. We will not file cases just to show off. We will fight the case vigorously and to win," he added.

When asked, how many times his companies' loans were rescheduled since their establishment, and what were the sizes of down payments for rescheduling, if there was any, Salman replied there are Bangladesh Bank specified down payment rates for rescheduling. "Whatever we did was in line with the Bangladesh Bank regulations and with its approval."

Replying to another query about why Salman disputes The Daily Star's claim that Bextex shares were 'junk shares', although it was a Z category share before its graduation to A category on

June 24 this year, and since Z category shares are generally referred to as 'junk shares' -- he said, "I don't agree with you that you always term Z category shares as junk shares."

"Lafarge is in the Z category, but is it a junk share?" he came back with a question of himself, terming the cement manufacturer as one of the best companies of the country.

"You have the right to create new definitions as the pen is in your hand, but if you ask anyone of the capital market, he will say that Z category shares are not always junk shares," he said.

He said junk shares are shares of those companies, which are in the Z category on the capital market despite having no existence at all.

Asked why he should not be termed as a loan defaulter, as according to his own statement, the loan rescheduling procedures for two of the Beximco Group companies have not been completed yet, and as those two companies are among the top 10 loan defaulting companies listed by the central bank -- Salman claimed that the two companies are not among the top 10 defaulters.

Claiming that he is not a loan defaulter, Salman said any running company may become a loan defaulter temporarily due to various reasons.

But it is a serious offence if one defaults on a loan wilfully, maintain no contact with the bank, and refuse to pay back, he said.

"But we have never done so. Whenever we became a defaulter, we negotiated, and were well in touch with the banks to overcome our problems," he claimed.

"Now it's up to you whether you will label me as a loan defaulter or not, and I have no comment on that. What I want to say is that my conscience is very clear, I am not a loan defaulter," he said.

"I have done everything required to stay out of the list of loan defaulters," he claimed.

Asked whether he thinks Beximco Group companies' share prices are overvalued given that the PE ratio of Beximco Ltd is 248.40, Bextex's is infinity, Beximco Pharma's is 49, Beximco Synthetic's is 132.48, BD Online's is 78.47, and Shineeupur's is 40.14, while the banking sectors PE ratio is 10, and the market's average PE ratio is 17 -- Salman said Beximco Ltd's PE ratio is not correct, and about the other companies of the group he said, "I don't recall at the moment."

He said the market will determine whether Beximco Group companies' shares are

overvalued or not.

When asked how he is hoping to turn his loss incurring companies into well performing ones, he replied, "In our annual general meetings we announced the details about turning the companies into well performing ones."

He said his group faced problems including 'credit line supply' during the tenure of the last BNP-led government as well as during the immediate past caretaker regime.

"But now the group is doing better, and the performance will improve more in the future," he said.

When a reporter asked Salman about the list of loan defaulters released by the finance minister, he stopped the reporter in mid-sentence and said, "Following the release of the list, the finance minister announced that I am no longer a loan defaulter, don't you know that?"

"I know many things about the owner of the newspaper that you represent. But I don't want to make those public," he tersely added.

## Hena Das

FROM PAGE 16

yesterday morning at the age of 85.

She had been suffering from old age complications and breathed her last at 11:30am.

Her body is kept at the BSMMU mortuary. The funeral may take place on Thursday after the arrival of her younger daughter from Germany on Wednesday.

She will be taken to the offices of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and Teachers Association on Thursday. Then, she will be taken to the Central Shaheed Minar premises at 12 o'clock where people will get the opportunity to pay their last tribute to the selfless leader.

She will be cremated in Narayanganj, said CPB leaders.

Hena Das was admitted to the city's Labaid Hospital Friday morning soon after she had lost consciousness at her residence inside the Buet quarters. She was shifted to BSMMU Sunday afternoon.

Leaders and activists of CPB and different rights organisations thronged the BSMMU at the news of her death.

"She was a valiant lady and took part in different movements including the language movement and liberation war," said CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, adding that she also contributed a lot in teachers' movement and women rights movement.

She also played a significant role in cultural movement and her dedication and activities will remain a source of inspiration for all, he added.

Hena Das fought for building a humanitarian society throughout her life and also worked hard for the cause of women's rights, said Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam. She was the vice president of the first committee of Mahila Parishad and served as its president for long eight years after the demise of Begum Sufia Kamal.

"Hena Das is one of the persons whose sacrifice, devotion and activities inspired me in politics," said Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury while visiting the leader at BSMMU. She never compromised with her ideology and she was a rare person, Matia added.

Hena Das was born in Sylhet on February 12, 1924. The anti-British movement influenced her while she was a class-VII student. In 1938, she joined progressive students' organisation, Students' Federation.

She earned membership of Communist Party in 1942 and married Communist leader Rohinee Das in 1948.

She organised women during the Nankar Movement in 1948-49 and later organised female tea garden workers for trade union to realise their rights.

She came to Dhaka and took up teaching in 1958. She served as headmaster of a non-government school in Narayanganj. She joined the Liberation War in 1971 and distributed relief among the refugees who took shelter in India.

She got involved with the Teachers' Association in 1978 and was the elected general secretary and vice president for long 14 years. She was one of the members of the first education commission headed by Dr Quadrat-e-Khuda.

She got many awards. In 2001, she received the national award -- Begum Rokaya Padak.

She authored a number of books that include Amar Shikha O Shikha, O Bibon, Srimoyi Dinguo, Srimoyi Ekattor, Pancham Purnash and Char Purush Kahini.

## JMB PATRON CASE

## Aminul denied bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi court yesterday rejected bail prayer of former BNP minister Aminul Haque in connection with a case for abetting and patronising outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

Mohsin Ali, father of JMB atrocity victim Monwar Hossain Babu of Chalk Sarkutia, filed the case after his son was killed during the operation by JMB's executed leader Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai in Bagmarain 2004.

Judge ABM Mahmudul Haque of the Court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Rajshahi, however, granted Aminul bail in the case for misappropriation of corrugated iron sheets from the government relief funds.

Aminul, a key patron of Islamist militant outfit JMB in Rajshahi region in 2004-2005,

was hauled before the court during hearing of his bail prayers.

He surrendered on July 7 after staying two and a half years as a fugitive abroad and applying to the government for withdrawing all the 13 cases against him.

In the case filed by Mohsin, some 58 people were accused, but later eight including BNP Organising Secretary Mizanur Rahman Minu were dropped from the charges.

With the killing of Babu on April 1, 2004, Bangla Bhai along with his gangs began their so-called state-sponsored vigilante operations.

Aminul purposely patronised JMB militants abusing the police and administration during the BNP-Jamaat-led alliance rule. He was eventually handed down 31 years and six months of imprisonment in Rajshahi in 2007 in this regard.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 2 injured in blast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two youths were injured in a home-made bomb explosion in Sayedabad area in the city yesterday afternoon.

Locals said the incident occurred when the victims -- Md Nadim, 18, and Jumnon Ali, 20, -- were preparing the bombs on the 3rd floor of an under-construction building at Swamibagh around 5:30pm.

The victims were rushed to a local hospital immediately and brought to Jattrabari Police Station later, sources said.

### Free medical service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pancare Hospital authorities yesterday provided free medical services for around 300 underprivileged patients at Rayerbazar in the city, says a press release.

With a view to creating health awareness among the destitute, the hospital organised the programme in the area.

Patients got opportunity of having free blood test, prescription and drugs.

Under the leadership of Maj (ret'd) Dr Abdul Matin, chairman of the hospital, Dr Mehedi Hasan, Dr Pili Mamtaz and Dr Gulshan Ara rendered conducted the programme.



PHOTO: NESTLÉ BANGLADESH LTD

Nestlé Bangladesh Limited donated 12 computers for 12 schools in Gazipur district on Sunday. Jatinder Middah, manufacturing director of the company, and other high officials handed over the computers to the headmasters of the schools. Mirza Golam Hossain, senior manager, Corporate Affairs and Communication, spoke on the occasion.

## Workshop on agri dev

METRO DESK

Bangladesh Protibandhi Kalyan Samity (BPKS) organised a workshop on 'Agricultural development in persons with disabilities' at AKM Gaias Uddin Milki auditorium at Khamar Bari in the city yesterday, says a press release.

The objective of the workshop was to expedite national development by participation and inclusion of the persons with disabilities in the agriculture, fishery and livestock sectors of the country.

Agriculturist Sowkat Momen Shah Jahan MP, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on agriculture ministry, was the chief guest of the programme.

Agriculturists Dr ANM Waliullah of Department of Agriculture Extension, Dr Md Mehedi Hossain of Department of Livestock, Tofazuddin Ahmed of Department of Fisheries were the resource persons at the workshop.



## Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at most places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

It is also likely to occur at many places over Dhaka, Sylhet and Rajshahi divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places at Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions, Met Office said.

It said day temperature may fall slightly over the country. The sun sets in the capital at 7:47pm today and rises at 6:23am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 36.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 23.3 degrees Celsius at Tangail.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.7	28.2	57	54
Chittagong	33.3	26.2	60	87
Rajshahi	35.2	26.8	81	55
Khulna	32.0	27.6	72	87
Barisal	32.0	27.3	74	92
Sylhet	36.8	27.8	63	50
Cox's Bazar	32.2	26.2	69	97

## DHAKA TODAY

### Workshop

The inaugural ceremony of a regional workshop on computer literacy programme will be held. Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco in cooperation with Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation organises the programme. Venue: BANBEIS Bhaban. Time: 9:30am.

### Discussion

Deshpremik Jonogoner Mancha organises a discussion on constitutional rights on education. Venue: Gono Sangskriti Kendra. Time: 3:00pm.

### Seminar

DEN and PATH jointly organise a knowledge seminar on 'Global warming: A closer look at climatic process and evidences'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

### Workshop

DCCI and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry jointly organise a workshop on clean development mechanism. Venue: DCCI auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

## Stage set in Panchagarh

FROM PAGE 16

help of the Deputy Commissioner's Office, Panchagarh have arranged everything to witness the astronomical spectacle.

The eclipse due to take place between 6:59:46am and 8:55am would partially be visible in other districts including Dinajpur, Rangpur and Thakurgaon.

However, the Met office in its weather forecast predicts hazy visibility with a cloudy morningsky.

The rare eclipse with a magnitude of 1.080 would also be visible from northern India, eastern Nepal, Bhutan, the northern tip of Myanmar, central China and the Pacific Ocean.

People in Panchagarh, Surut, Varanasi, Patna, Thimphu, Chengdu, Chongqing, Wuhan, Hangzhou and Shanghai and the Three Gorges Dam would have the opportunity to view the event.

It is not just a routine celestial configuration occurring in

the space. The "longest duration" eclipse is thought to be a rare occasion by experts since it is the second in a row of triple eclipse happening in 30 days.

Interestingly, the triple eclipse is assumed to be of substantial significance in the history of astrology as well as astronomical studies.

Astrolgers forecast a natural calamity in any part of the globe, but astronomers trash the idea and argue it to be a great opportunity for the sky gazers to witness an event in celestial history.

According to the astrologers, this series of triple eclipse starting from July 7 with a lunar eclipse followed by the solar eclipse tomorrow and another lunar eclipse on August 6 may cause both positive and negative effects.

However, there are scientific cautions from doctors, especially for the schoolchildren, during the eclipse.

Stringent precautions need to be taken on the day since the rays can affect retina in the eyes

and cause macular burn. Those who believe that it can be watched through x-ray sheets should understand that it does not protect the eyes fully.

"Once damage occurs due to the exposure to an eclipse, it's irreversible," cautions Dr Ilias Ali Adin, eye consultant at Dinajpur BNSB Eye