

EXTORTION CASE AGAINST HASINA

Writ petition challenging proceedings withdrawn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The writ petition challenging the proceedings of Tk 3 crore extortion case filed against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by businessman Azam J Chowdhury was withdrawn from the High Court (HC) yesterday since the case was earlier withdrawn from the trial court.

The writ petition filed by Hasina had been pending with the HC bench comprising Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui.

Hasina's counsel Barrister Sheikh Fazle Nur Taposh told the HC bench that they would not proceed with the writ petition since the case has become ineffective following the trial court order.

The trial court earlier allowed the government to withdraw the case, which was filed on political motive against Hasina during the regime of the past military-backed caretaker government, he said.

Taposh prayed to the HC bench not to proceed with the writ petition and the court granted his prayer.

Deputy Attorney General Razik-Al Jalil told The Daily Star that he did not oppose the prayer of Taposh since the government had earlier withdrawn the extortion case against Hasina from the trial court.

On May 12 this year, the HC vacated its earlier order staying the proceedings of the case so that the government could pray to the trial court to with-

draw the case.

On September 16 of last year, the HC stayed proceedings of the case and granted bail to Hasina following a petition filed by her.

In January this year, the government decided to withdraw the extortion case against Hasina following Azam's application to home ministry for dropping charges against her.

Azam, managing director of Eastcoast Trading Pvt Ltd, had filed the case against Hasina and her cousin Sheikh Selim with Gulshan Police Station on June 13, 2007 on charge of extorting Tk 2.99 crore from him in exchange for awarding a contract to set up a power plant at Siddhirganj.

2 GRAFT CASES
SC upholds
HC bail to
Babar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday upheld two High Court (HC) orders granting bail to former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar in two corruption cases filed by the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC).

The cases -- one for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information to the commission, and another for bribery of Tk 21 crore involving the murder of Bashundhara Group Director Humayun Kabir Sabbir -- were filed against Babar during the emergency period.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Justice MA Matin passed the orders, dismissing the leave-to-appeal petitions filed by the ACC against the HC orders.

Babar's counsel Advocate Ahsanul Karim told The Daily Star that his client could not be released from jail following yesterday's orders as earlier, he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in an arms case.

The HC in August last year granted bail to Babar and stayed the proceedings of the corruption cases. The ACC then filed two leave-to-appeal petitions with the SC against the HC orders.

The SC dismissed the petitions and upheld the HC orders when those came up on the cause list of the Appellate Division for hearing yesterday.

Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan appeared for the ACC.

Autorickshaw
drivers enforce
strike today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Autorickshaw drivers called a daylong strike in the city for today to protest harassment by vehicle owners and press for their 11-point demand.

Dhaka Autorickshaw Sramik Union and Dhaka Zila Autorickshaw Sramik Union yesterday called the strike separately.

General Secretary of Dhaka Mahanagar CNG Autorickshaw and Mishuk Sramik Union Shakhawat Hossain Dulal said his union and the Jatiyatabadi Autorickshaw Sramik Union have supported the strike.

Many cooperative societies of drivers also supported the strike, he added.

The drivers alleged that the owners take about Tk 700 to 800 as daily deposit instead of the government-fixed Tk 450.

The hired goons of the owners also attacked a peaceful demonstration organised by Mir Hazaribagh Autorickshaw drivers, injuring some 18 drivers, recently they said.

The Dhaka Mahanagar CNG Autorickshaw and Mishuk Sramik Union also called a meeting at Muktangan at 12:00 noon today.

Jokes contest
soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Unmad, the country's only satire cartoon magazine, and Autoline Multimedia will jointly organise a nationwide jokes contest shortly.

Organisers of the contest said this at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) in the city.

Renowned cartoonist Ahsan Habib, who is also the editor of the Unmad, said people aged from 7 to 70 would be able to participate in the competition.

To this end, they will publish advertisements in the print media within a few days.

Interested people can log on to www.autoline.com.bd for registration. They can also dial 06662610758 or 01198018645 or send sms to 01198013048, he added.

Termining jokes a miniature literature, the Unmad editor said such events will give people a breather in the monotonous life.

One of the main objectives of the programme is to make satire a standard form of literature, a practice that is well known abroad, Masud Kamal, associate editor of the Autoline, an automobile magazine, said.

A jury panel of 12 members will select the primary contestants while three of them will be the judges in the final round.

The winner of the contest will bag Tk 1 lakh while the first and second runner-up will receive Tk 50,000 and Tk 25,000 respectively.

The entire programme would be recorded and later telecast on TV.

Masul Alam, chief executive of Autoline Multimedia, Executive Director Salahuddin Mithu, Managing Editor of the Autoline Shahriar Rubel, and the anchor of the contest Wahid Bine Reza Buppy were present on the occasion.



A Jet Airways aircraft veers off the runway at Zia International Airport in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

PHOTO: COURTESY

Less use of air conditioners
can save 500MW power daily

Experts say at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If power consumption by air conditioning system in all institutions and organisations including the office of the prime minister can be reduced, 400 to 500MW power can be added to national grid everyday, said the experts at a roundtable yesterday.

"400 to 500MW power can be saved everyday if power consumption by air conditioning system in all offices and institutions including the office of the prime minister and national parliament can be kept stopped on alternate hours," said Prof Ashrafur

Islam of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

The roundtable titled 'Alternative energy in solving gas and electricity crisis' was organised jointly by Infrastructure Development Company Ltd (IDCL) and Forum Brigade (FB) at the National Press Club in the city.

Ashrafur said the country's five to 10 per cent demand for energy can be met from renewable sources while the country should depend mainly on coal, gas and nuclear energy for the rest.

"Had our government thought about nuclear energy

20 years back the present crisis could have been avoided," he added.

Other speakers stressed the need for formulating a policy to welcome the private sector in power generation to meet the crisis.

Islam Sharif, CEO and executive director of IDCL, presented the keynote paper at the roundtable where Prof Shahnaz Hossain, Prof Hossain Mansur and Prof Ismail Hossain Khan were present.

Prof Saiful Haque of Renewable Energy Research Centre of Dhaka University moderated the programme.

Workshop on
media's role in
addressing
domestic
violence held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation organised a workshop on role of media in addressing domestic violence at LGRD seminar room in the city yesterday.

BNWLA Executive Director Advocate Salma Ali, human rights activist Maleka Begum, Prof Farzana Islam of Jahangirnagar University and Prof Gitara Nasreen of Dhaka University, among others, spoke at the workshop.

Journalists from both the print and the electronic media took part at the programme.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK

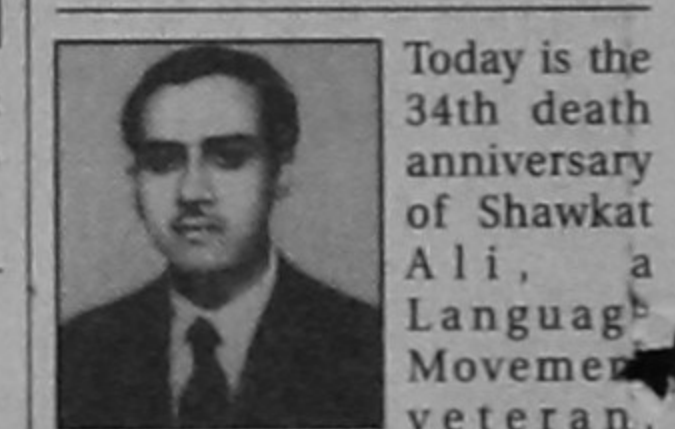
Today is the 41st death anniversary of Moulana Muhammad Akram Khan, pioneer of Bengali Muslim journalism in the subcontinent, says a press release.

On the occasion, Jatiya Sangbadik Sangstha chalked out elaborate programme, including discussion and doa mahfil, at its districts and upazila units.

A seminar will also be held at the central office of Jatiya Sangbadik Sangstha.

Shawkat Ali

DU CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 34th death anniversary of Shawkat Ali, a Language Movement veteran, says a press release.

On the occasion, his family will organise a milad mahfil.

Jaheda Khatun

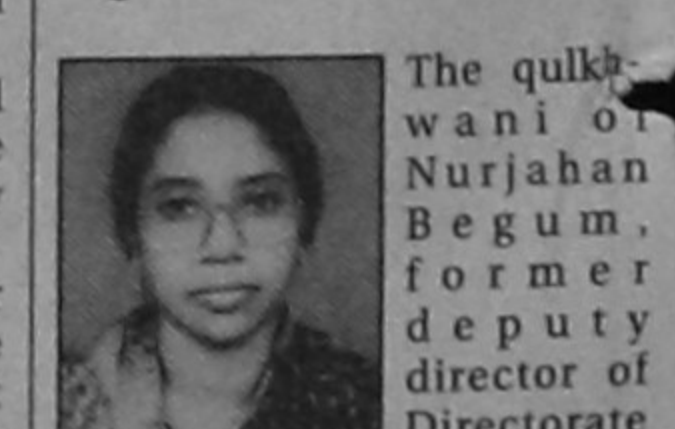
METRO DESK



Today is the 18th death anniversary of Jaheda Khatun, mother of martyred freedom fighters Engr Md Fazul Rahman and Md Rafiqul Islam Baset, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his village home in Narsingdi after Zohr prayers.

Qulkhwani



The qukhwani of Nurjahan Begum, former deputy director of Directorate of Education and wife of Lt Col (ret'd) Mosharraf Hossain, will be held at Mohakhali DOHS Mosque after Asr prayers today.

Nurjahan, who passed away on Sunday, was buried at Banani Army Graveyard in the city.

She also served National Curriculum of Textbook Board and different government colleges.

She left behind her husband, two daughters, one son-in-law and numerous students to mourn her death.

Her friends, relatives and admirers are requested to attend the qukhwani and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

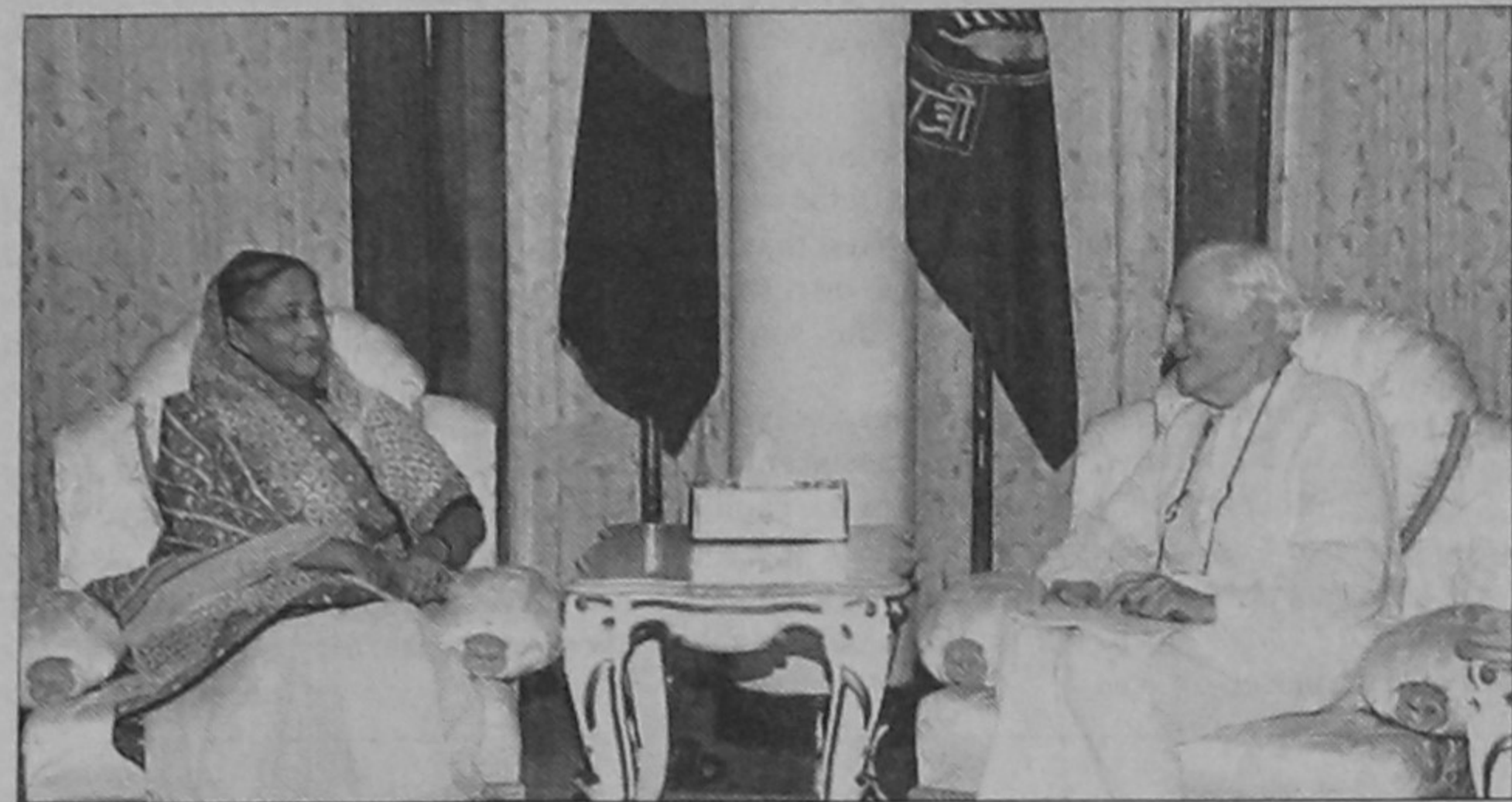


PHOTO: PID

International Commission on Chittagong Hill Tracts Co-chair Lord Eric Avebury calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Jamuna in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

TUBERCULOSIS TEST
UK High
Commission
clarifies visa
process

METRO DESK

The British High Commission in a press release yesterday said it is aware that some agents are providing misleading advice on tuberculosis (TB) tests.

Before students can apply for a UK visa of longer than 6 months, they need to undergo a TB test and obtain a medical clearance certificate from a health centre operated by the Organisation for International Migration (IOM).

It is not possible to get an appointment by visiting the IOM centre, nor can the UK's Visa Services accept a TB certificate from another source. Applicants must make an appointment with the IOM by phoning their call centre, read the release served to offer some important clarification on the TB and visa application process, to ensure that student applicants are correctly informed and not left disappointed.

The summer months are always a very busy time for student visa applications and this year it is even busier than the last.

Unfortunately, the unprecedented demand has led to longer delays in getting an appointment.

IOM and UK's Visa Services are looking at ways to offer additional appointments but the current delays are being made worse by applicants not attending the appointments that they have booked.

The High Commission is also aware of some agents suggesting that there is a cut off date for student applications. This is not the case. Once an applicant has his TB certificate and assembled all his papers, he can apply for a student visa by visiting one of the visa application centres in Bangladesh -- Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. Students need to prepare their visa applications thoroughly. They do not need an agent to submit the application and if they feel they need additional advice, they should choose their agent carefully.

The student visa application form (called VAF 9) is available free of charge at www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/vafs and Tier 4 student visa guidance is available at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk

Applicants must not submit false information or forged documents with their visa applications. This will result in the visa application being refused and a ban of up to 10 years on travelling to the UK. The UK's Visa Services are processing applications as quickly as they can, in usually just over two weeks. If any applicants think they might miss the start dates of their courses, they should contact their sponsoring institution to request a later start date, added the release.

CHT PEACE ACCORD

Section 9 contradicts
constitution: CECOUR CORRESPONDENT,
Khagrachhari

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said Section 9 of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord, which directs for enrolment of only 'permanent residents' of the hills in the voter list to hold election to three hill district councils and regional council is a contradictory to the constitution.

"So the contradictory section of CHT Peace Accord should be amended first and then if the government wants the Election Commission (EC) will hold election to three hill district councils and regional council," he said.

At a press briefing at Khagrachhari Circuit House, the CEC said the constitution is the supreme law and every section, clause or article, which is contradictory to the constitution should be amended.

He said the EC prepared the last voter list according to article 121 of the constitution which says, "There shall be one electoral roll for each constituency for the purposes of elections to parliament, and no special electoral roll shall be prepared so as to classify electors according to religion, race, cast or sex."

Replying to a question, the CEC said election to Dhaka City Corporation will be held by next January.

"Then we will make plan for holding election of about 4500 union parishads and

about 375 municipalities. And then if the government wants we will go for holding election to three hill district councils and regional council," he added.

National Project Director Moazzem Hossain and Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Abdullah were present on the occasion.

7 robbers
arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested seven members of a gang of robbers from in and around the city in separate drives in last two days.

Demra police made the arrest following a series of robberies at four flats at Konapara from where they looted gold ornaments and other valuables worth around Tk 2.50 lakh on August 3.

The arrestees are Md Fazal, 34, Rezaul Hawlader, 32, Kabir Hossain, Md Rafiq alias Tuna Miah, 55, Mohammad Harun, 37, Babul Miah, 35, and Bashir alias Galkata Bashir, 35.

Police said they arrested Fazal, Rezaul and Kabir on Sunday night from different parts in the city and as per their confessions we arrested others from Narayanganj and Gazipur.

Apart from robberies at Demra, they confessed their involvement with other robberies in the city, including at Jatrabari and Shanti Nagar, police said.



Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at many places over all the six divisions with moderately heavy falls in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:29pm today and rises at 6:35am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Khulna and lowest 24.0 degrees Celsius at Sayerdupur.

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	33.3	26.8	81	85
Chittagong	32.0	26.7	88	81
Rajshahi	31.8	26.6	88	90
Khulna	34.5	27.2	82	87
Burisal	33.5	25.0	82	96
Sylhet	30.8	26.0	92	96
Cox's Bazar	32.8	25.5	79	95