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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

LIFE

style

RAJUK'S DEVIATION

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha deviates from Purbachal plans

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THE RESONANCE OF RABI

72 years after his death, those words and tunes still move millions of hearts

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Cheers for 'murderers' EC chooses to lose a few more teeth

Rules flouted to clear 30 murder cases; committee sits Aug 20 to review 'politically-motivated' cases along with 200 more

M RAHMAN with AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

The national committee for reviewing and recommending withdrawal of "politically motivated" lawsuits has taken up 30 murder cases, mostly against Awami League men, for review at its next meeting without following due procedures.

The murder cases, with nearly 170 other lawsuits, have been selected for the committee's consideration, mostly without recommendations from district committees

headed by deputy commissioners, said sources in the inter-ministerial review body.

According to the rules, it is mandatory that district committees first select the "politically motivated" cases and then forward them to the home ministry for placing them before the national committee.

But many of the cases have been selected for the committee's review even without the knowledge of district committees, said district officials.

The national committee headed by State

Minister for Law Quamrul Islam has been reviewing "politically motivated" cases since 2009.

The committee's next meeting, which may also be its last, is scheduled for August 20. At its previous 30 meetings, the committee had recommended withdrawing as many as 7,177 cases against a total of 11,200 cases referred to it.

The recommendations for wholesale withdrawal of the cases evoked strong criticism

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SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) has planned to weaken further its power over political parties by allowing them to have associate bodies again and bypass grassroots recommendations for nominating candidates for parliamentary polls.

In its electoral reform proposals, recently sent to the law ministry, the EC has recommended political parties be allowed to have associate bodies of students, like in universities, and even professionals and employees of state-owned entities, like teachers and doctors.

It has also proposed that political parties would not have to nominate parliamentary polls candidates according to the recommendations of their grassroots units.

This provision was introduced in 2008 to instil democratic practice in the parties and stop nomination trading, as before that people with money and no political background could easily obtain party tickets.

In 2010, the Awami League-led government moved to re-empower the party parliamentary boards to pick any candidate, including those the grassroots' have not chosen.

But if the provision is withdrawn by amending the Representation of the People Order (RPO), money will rule the nomination game. The parliamentary boards of parties will be free to choose.

Now, violation of the above-mentioned rules could result in the cancellation of a party's registration with the EC.

"But after the scrapping of the punitive provi-



sions, the Election Commission will have nothing to do if the political parties did not follow the rule for considering grassroots panels," former chief election commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda told The Daily Star yesterday.

He had led the EC when the sweeping electoral reforms were made in 2008.

Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hussein, who was an election commissioner in the Huda-led EC, said if the provision was made ineffective, the culture of "nomination trading" would "definitely" return.

According to Huda and Sakhawat, the aim of the provision was to ensure democratic practice within political parties by empowering the grassroots levels.

Contacted over the phone, election commissioners Shah Newaz and Abu Hafiz said they could not recall what they had recommended in the proposal sent to the law ministry.

Election Commissioner Abdul Mubarak,

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WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Accused gets rare bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday granted conditional bail to war crimes suspect Syed Mohammad Qaisar, due to his poor health condition.

Bail conditions forbid Qaisar from contacting any political leaders, the media and witnesses of war crimes and he has to surrender his passport, if he has any, to the tribunal's registrar office.

Qaisar, 73, a state

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REGISTRATION CANCELLATION

Jamaat's stay plea rejected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court verdict declaring illegal Jamaat-e-Islami's registration with the Election Commission as a political party will remain in force as the chamber judge of the Supreme Court has turned down Jamaat's petition for stay on the verdict.

Political parties not registered with the EC cannot contest national elections.

The Chamber Judge, Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik, yesterday rejected Jamaat's petition, saying that there is no logical ground in the petition for staying the HC verdict. And even the petitioner's counsel

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90-YEAR JAIL

Ghulam Azam appeals to SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Convicted war criminal and former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer Ghulam Azam yesterday appealed to the Supreme Court seeking an overturn of his conviction and the 90-year jail sentence he received.

Finding him guilty in all charges, the International Crimes Tribunal-1 on July 15 sentenced Ghulam Azam to 90 years' imprisonment for masterminding crimes

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Roads to home still not clogged

Most holidaymakers are to leave city 2 days before Eid

WASIM BIN HABIB and SUBIR DAS

People heading to their homes outside the capital for Eid rather had a comfortable exit yesterday as the exodus ahead of the festival was yet to reach its peak.

However, holidaymakers had to go through a six-kilometre-long traffic jam on the Dhaka-Aricha highway at Savar yesterday, as victim workers and family members of the victims of the Rana Plaza disaster had blocked the road demanding salaries, bonuses and compensation.

A good number of people had left the capital in the last few days to avoid the last minute rush. Many managed to go

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Cards, not talks

Hasina, Khaleda exchange greetings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A majority of voters of the country are youths who have never seen their two top leaders, Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia, talking to each other.

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These photos taken from Shahbagh, top, Moghbazar intersection, Ruposhi Bangla intersection, Manik Mia Avenue, and Mirpur-10 intersection in the capital show large hoardings advertising the "successes" of the Awami League-led government. The ruling party did not bother to rent or buy the billboards.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ, ANISUR RAHMAN

City billboards hijacked by AL

Advertisers at a loss as govt moves to sing its own song

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The real estate firm had a huge billboard at Shahbagh touting its apartments. It would not miss anybody's notice. The day before yesterday, as a company director was passing by, he discovered his advertisement had been replaced by a digital canvass, describing successes of the government in the last four and a half years.

The baffled director called his advertisement agency, a top firm in the capital. The agency was surprised too. It did not know anything about the government's "success" billboard.

Nobody bothered to tell the agency or the realtor that their billboard was going to be replaced.

The ruling Awami League has suddenly gone on an aggressive campaign, flooding the city with such billboards highlighting various achievements of the government.

In the process, it has not cared to take permission of the advertisement agencies or the advertisers. It just grabbed the billboards wherever it chose to. It is an illegal act, but since it is in power, the party did not feel that it was illegal.

The agencies and the advertisers are too intimidated to challenge the AL.

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