



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

LIFE
style

THE BCB ELECTION

Pointless issues are holding the cricket board polls back

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JATILESHWAR IN STAR

The eminent singer will perform at The Daily Star Centre on Sept 20

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Govt denies EC more clout

Polls expenditure to go up, parties to get more donations as cabinet okays changes to RPO

M ABUL KALAM AZAD and SHAKHAWAT LITON

The government yesterday approved a set of proposals for bringing changes in the Representation of the People Order, but ignored a few others that the Election Commission proposed for having more clout to conduct general election.

The approved proposals include increasing the ceiling of candidates' election expenses and their security deposits and donations for political parties, according to a copy of the proposals that the law ministry prepared for yesterday's cabinet meeting.

The cabinet, however, didn't decide on the proposal for lessening the punishment for election offences. The EC made the proposal so that executive magistrates, alongside judicial magistrates, could hold trial for electoral offences.

Some of EC's proposals were not placed before the cabinet, as the law ministry didn't include them in the draft bill for amending the RPO.

Before the preparation of the draft bill, the law minister held meetings with two advisers to the prime minister and some senior Awami League leaders to examine the EC's proposals for electoral reforms ahead of the general election, according to media reports.

The commission's proposal for awarding punishment to individuals for furnishing false information or concealing any information in the nomination paper or in the affidavit was excluded from the draft bill.

The EC had proposed that an individual would be disqualified for contesting the parliamentary polls for such offence.

The proposal for introducing electronic voting machines in the polls also didn't find its place in the draft bill.

The EC also suggested a provision for punishing individuals and government officials for negligence in duties assigned by the commission or for their refusal to assist it. And the offender would be sentenced up to three years' imprisonment or fined Tk 50,000 or both.

But this proposal too was ignored.

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With only a few months in office left, the government top brass are busy attending foundation-laying ceremonies. Workers in front of Baitul Mukarram national mosque give finishing touches to a plaque for a foundation stone laid by the then home minister Shahara Khatun on March 6, 2009. Inset, a plaque inscribed with the name of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

APPEAL AGAINST MOLLAH'S CONVICTION SC verdict today

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Supreme Court is set to deliver today the verdict on appeals in the war crimes case against Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah, whose life sentence triggered widespread protests in February.

The five-member SC bench, headed by Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain, will sit at 9:00am and pronounce the judgment at the beginning of today's court proceedings. This case is at the top of today's cause list of this court.

The four other judges of the SC bench are Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, Justice MA Wahhab Miah, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik.

This is for the first time the Supreme Court is delivering a war crimes verdict.

This case has special significance also for the February 5 rise of an unprecedented mass movement at the Shahbagh intersection demanding capital punishment for war criminals.

On February 5, International War Crimes Tribunal-2 sentenced Quader Mollah merely to life imprisonment, even though it was proved beyond doubt that the Jamaat leader had committed heinous war crimes.

The movement, spearheaded by bloggers and online activists, put the

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Cancel Hall-Mark chair's bail

ACC appeals to HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a petition with the High Court, seeking cancellation of the bail to Hall-Mark Group Chairman Jasmine Islam because she broke her bail condition.

A trial court in Dhaka on August 4 granted bail to Jasmine, wife of the group's Managing Director Tanvir Mahmud, in 11 corruption cases after she pledged to pay back Tk 2,600 crore in monthly instalments of Tk 100 crore.

The ACC submitted the petition yesterday, saying Jasmine had violated the bail condition by not paying the very first instalment of the money that was swindled by the group out of Sonali Bank.

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Act before Oct 25

Khaleda warns govt of dire consequence if caretaker bill not placed

RASHIDUL HASAN and ANWAR ALI from Rajshahi

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said the opposition alliance would wage a "new type of movement" after October 25 if the government did not restore the caretaker government system in the constitution within the time frame.

"Our ongoing movement will continue till October 25 and [in the meantime] Eid-ul-Azha will also be celebrated. But the government will have to face dire consequences if it doesn't accept our demand within this time frame," she told a mammoth rally at



the Rajshahi Madrasa ground.

Khaleda, who is the chief of the 18-party opposition alliance, called upon all political parties outside the alliance to constitute a united platform and wage a movement to topple the incum-

bent government.

"It's not the time to stay away. Let us all sit together, don't think who is superior or inferior, who is to the right or left. It's not the time to think about who had been a big leader in the past. Our only aim is to remove the Awami League government from power and save the country," she said.

Although the BNP chief at a rally in Rangpur on Sunday declared that she had come there not to seek votes, but to drum up public support to foil the government's bid to hold a unilateral election, many BNP lawmaker

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RAMPAL POWER PROJECT

Plant to use saline water

Green campaigners still concerned

SHARIER KHAN

Taking into account concerns of environmentalists, the proposed massive 1320 megawatt coal power plant in Rampal close to the Sundarbans will use surface water from the Passur river so that the project does not affect underground water table.

The water after use will be recycled through a closed cycle cooling system to avoid any harm to the ecology.

Excessive use of groundwater at the

Barapukuria power plant in north Bengal has caused underground water tables to dry up, wrecking havoc on people of adjacent villages.

Besides, environmentalists like Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association and Bangladesh Poribesh Bachao Andolon have also expressed concern over the use of underground water at the Rampal power project.

The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Indo-Bangla joint venture power plant recom-

mends installing a central effluent treatment plant at the project site to treat the saline water of the Passur river before use and then recycle it through the cooling system.

Abdul Matin, secretary general of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said the EIA report had been prepared incorporating false information.

"Initially, they said they would use groundwater at the plant. But later they cancelled the idea due to criticism by

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Modified brinjal found okay

REAZ AHMAD

An expert committee has termed sound all scientific findings concerning the country's first genetically modified (GM) crop -- Bt Brinjal -- and is now preparing its review report on those for forwarding it to the agriculture ministry, officials said yesterday.

On receipt of the experts' report, the National Technical Committee for Crop Biotechnology (NTCCB), headed by the agriculture secretary, would look into the report and then send it to the National Committee on Biosafety (NCB) for final approval.

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FILE PHOTO

No right to vote or run in polls

Govt acts on RPO, electoral law about war crimes convicts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday approved a proposed amendment to the RPO to bar war criminals, convicted under the International Crimes Tribunal Act, from contesting the parliamentary polls.

It also placed a bill in parliament on the same day seeking to change the electoral roll law to bar convicted war criminals from being registered as voters.

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EC soft on 'sheaf of wheat' party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Commissioner Shah Nawaz yesterday said they, for the second time, have given the Bangladesh Nationalist Front (BNF) additional time to meet registration requirements to ensure justice and transparency.

"We have taken the decision about two-three days ago. The party will be

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Towhidul Islam lies in hospital bed with grievous injuries he suffered as a bomb that he innocently picked up went off yesterday. The seven-year-old had found the bomb, wrapped in scotch tape, in a residential area near police lines in Feni.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH



Mother could not take it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nothing beats a mother's love for her child, and that's why the higher the stake the harder the emotional drive gets.

The situation came tragically true for Nazneen Akhter, 35, a senior reporter of The Daily Janakantha.

Yesterday, failing to bear the shock of her daughter's demise, she jumped off the balcony of their fourth-

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