

**UK to continue cooperation**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UK will continue to give assistance to Bangladesh and work closely with the government despite having questions about the January 5 parliamentary elections, visiting British minister Alan Duncan said yesterday.

"The UK will remain the largest bilateral donor for Bangladesh, and we look forward to working very closely with the government to make sure that we can help the country's poorest people lift themselves out of poverty," he told reporters after meeting Finance Minister AMA Muhith at the secretariat.

When journalists asked whether there was any change regarding the UK-Bangladesh cooperation in the post-election period, Duncan said his government mostly worked with NGOs, but if Dhaka did things they liked, they would work more closely with the government.

The UK minister of state for international development, who arrived Monday

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**Another case filed against Hall-Mark group**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Sonali Bank yesterday filed another case against Hall-Mark group for taking more than Tk 30.40 crore in loan using fake documents.

Abdus Salam, executive officer of the state-run bank's Ruposhi Bangla branch, filed the case with the Artho Rin Adalat-1 (Money Loan Court) in Dhaka against Hall-Mark Chairperson Jasmine Islam, Managing Director Tanvir Mahmud and one concern of the group, Bobby Fashions Ltd.

After hearing, Judge Md Robiuzzaman directed the defendants to explain by April 16 why steps would not be taken against them.

Earlier on March 25, 27 and 30, the bank filed 10 cases against Jasmine and Tanvir and nine of their companies with the same court for taking Tk 71 crore in loan against false documents.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed 11 cases

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Women with their ailing children flock to the emergency department of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) in the capital yesterday, which registered a rise in patients' inflow beginning on Thursday due to a recent increase in temperature. Authorities said they received more child patients yesterday compared to that of the last couple of days.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

**BANGLADESH'S FIRST PRESIDENT Tarique's claim astonishes Alan Duncan**

Says Shahriar Alam

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam yesterday said visiting UK minister Alan Duncan had expressed astonishment over BNP senior vice chairman Tarique Rahman's claim that his father Ziaur Rahman was the first president of Bangladesh.

"They (British) are surprised...they are also not getting any explanation why a political party suddenly comes up with a distorted version of history. They expressed their surprise," he told reporters quoting Duncan as saying yesterday.

After a meeting with Duncan, the British minister of state for international development, at his office, Shahriar said the issue came up when he referred to Tarique's recent statement in London and asked for the British government's views.

About bringing back Tarique from the UK, Shahriar claimed that there was no warrant against him right now. "There're certain procedures. Once a warrant is issued, only then we can act." The home ministry will look into the matter, he added.

In response to a query, the state minister said Duncan did not raise any question on the acceptability of the January 5 elections. "They're going to meet Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Raushan Ershad," he said, adding that it made clear their position.

He also said the British minister expressed satisfaction as the "country is back to business", and Bangladeshis got back

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**Upazila polls rigging deserves place in Guinness records**

Senior BNP leaders tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Senior BNP leaders yesterday said the massive rigging in the just concluded upazila elections and the "mockery" of the January 5 national polls would get place in the Guinness World Records.

They also said top BNP leaders, party chief Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman had become victims of state-sponsored violence, as law enforcement agencies were filing cases in a planned way against BNP leaders on "baseless" charges.

"The upazila elections have clearly portrayed the government's naked aggression. It was unnecessary for the government to be naked again after the January 5 farcical election because no other party was affected by such elections except the Awami League," BNP standing committee member Goyeshwar Chandra Roy told a discussion at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

Criticising the Sheikh Hasina government, he said the Awami League did not believe that the people were the source of all power. "They consider India as the source of their power. According to the Hasina government, democracy means 'of India, for India, by India'."

He said the government was controlling the entire judiciary system, and turned the whole country into a prison. "And Sheikh Hasina is playing the jail super."

In another discussion at the same venue, BNP standing committee member Rafiqul Islam Mia said the upazila election rigging proved that democracy was not safe at the hands of the Hasina administration.

"So, we will have to wage a tougher anti-government

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**Arrest war crimes suspect Syed Hasan**

Prosecution urges International Crimes Tribunal-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday sought an arrest warrant for war crimes suspect Syed Mohammad Hasan, while an investigation is going on over his alleged involvement in several war-time crimes committed in Tarail upazila of Kishoreganj in 1971.

Prosecutor Abul Kalam submitted a petition to International Crimes Tribunal-1 through its Registrar Office seeking the arrest of Hasan, the alleged commander of Tarail Razakar Bahini, an auxiliary force of the Pakistani army.

The prosecutor told The Daily Star that

the investigation against Hasan started on June 6, 2013, and the investigator had already found evidence about his "involvement" in murders, mass murders, torture, and several other crimes.

Through his men, Hasan is trying to influence the inquiry, alleged Kalam. "So, we prayed for his arrest for a proper investigation."

Hari Debnath, the investigation officer, said Hasan was originally from Machihata village (Pir Bari) in Brahmanbaria sadar upazila but he along with his family had been living in Tarail for many years before

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**Political nonchalance blamed for corruption**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Corruption has been rampant in every sphere of society, thanks to political nonchalance and a lack of transparency, speakers said at a seminar yesterday.

The speakers made the comments at the seminar on "Political unity and accountable administration for the prevention and elimination of corruption" organised by Anti-Corruption Commission at its headquarters in the capital.

Only strong public opinion can create pressure on political leaders to prevent corruption, said former chief election commissioner Abu Hena, who attended the programme as chief guest.

It is democracy when the government cares for its citizens, but when people are afraid of the government, it paves the way for corruption, he said.

The ACC should work with more courage and professionalism to create confidence among common people, the speakers observed.

ACC Chairman Mohammad Badiuzzaman chaired the programme. ACC Commissioners Mohammad Shahabuddin and Nasiruddin Ahmed, and former education minister Osman Faruque, among others, took part in the seminar.



**Obituary**

CITY DESK

Syed Iqbal Ali, son of late Syed Mustafa Ali and brother of founder editor of The Daily Star late SM Ali, passed away yesterday. He was 65.

He will be buried at Banani graveyard in the capital today following his namaz-e-janaza at Azad Masjid in Gulshan after Asr prayers. His qulhwani will be held at Gulshan Bhola Jame Masjid (opposite Shooting Club) on Saturday after Asr prayers. For further details one can call 01819260599.

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