

## Khaleda won't be sent back to jail before polls

### Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is a convict and sentenced to imprisonments in two corruption cases, she will not return to jail before the next parliamentary election, said Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday.

"The government has released her on two conditions as per section 401 (I) of the Criminal Code of Procedure. It has no plan to change this decision before the next election."

He made the comments while talking to journalists after inaugurating a two-day training programme for the sub-registrars at the Judicial Administration Training Institute in Dhaka.

The government on September 19 extended the suspension of Khaleda's jail sentence for six more months.

She was freed from jail on March 25, 2020, after the government suspended her jail sentence for six months. She walked out of jail during coronavirus pandemic.

Khaleda landed in jail on February 8, 2017, after being sentenced to five years' imprisonment by a special court in Dhaka in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

On October 30, 2018, the High Court enhanced her punishment to 10 years.

The former prime minister was convicted by another special court in Dhaka in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case on October 29, 2018. She was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment by the court.

Meanwhile, Anisul Huq also told reporters that a bill on the amendment of law for holding trial of Jamaat-e-Islami as a war criminal organisation will be placed before the Jatiya Sangsad soon.

Responding to another question, he said the government was waiting for the Election Commission's decision about the reported application of Jamaat-e-Islami in the name of a new political party for registration.

He also said that sub-registrars must provide the best service to the people without any harassment and to prevent fraudulence in the land registrations.

Inspector General of Registration Shahidul Islam Jhinuk presided over the meeting where Law Secretary Golam Sarwar also spoke.



Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal holds a rally in front of the BNP's Nayapaltan headquarters in the capital yesterday. The meeting was organised to mark the 44th founding anniversary of Jubo Dal, the BNP's youth front.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## West playing dangerous geopolitical game

### Says Putin; Russia strikes infrastructure across Ukraine

AGENCIES

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday scolded the West for playing what he cast as a "dangerous, bloody and dirty" geopolitical game, but said the United States and its allies would ultimately have to talk to Russia.

"Power over the world is what the so-called West has put on the line in its game - but the game is dangerous, bloody and I would say dirty," Putin told the Valdai Discussion Club. "The sower of the wind, as they say, will reap the storm."

"I have always believed and believe in common sense so I am convinced that sooner or later the new centres of the

multipolar world order and the West will have to start an equal conversation about the future we share - and the earlier the better," Putin said.

He also said the West, blinded by colonialism, had helped incite the conflict in Ukraine and was seeking to stoke a crisis over Taiwan in an attempt to enforce global dominance.

Quoting a 1978 Harvard lecture by Russian dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Putin said the West was openly racist and looked down on other peoples of the world. He said coming decade will be the "most dangerous" since the end of World War II.

Putin's comments came after a

Russian government official raised the possibility that Moscow could shoot down commercial Western satellites being used to help Ukraine's war effort, as Russia pressed ahead with its bombing campaign against Ukrainian infrastructure.

Konstantin Vorontsov, a senior Russian foreign ministry official, said the use of Western satellites to aid the Ukrainian war effort was "an extremely dangerous trend".

"Quasi-civilian infrastructure may be a legitimate target for a retaliatory strike," he told the United Nations First Committee, adding that the West's use of such satellites to support Ukraine was "provocative".

## Carry out reforms

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The BB officials then said they would publish both the gross and net reserves in the future.

The IMF team also opposed to different exchange rates for export, import and remittance.

In response, the BB officials said they might consider a single rate in the future.

The team then sought updates on BB's pilot programme to reduce the non-performing loans at 10 commercial banks.

The BB informed the team that the programme had already started.

Besides, the BB informed the IMF that it had decided to amend five laws to crack down on the willful defaulters.

The visiting IMF team, led by its Mission Chief to Bangladesh Rahul Anand, will hold more meetings with the BB before the wrap-up meeting with BB Governor Abdur Rouf Talukder on November 8, said the official.

The discussion started on Wednesday.

In a statement on October 21, the IMF said the visiting team's objective would be to achieve progress towards a staff-level agreement on a prospective Extended Credit Facility/Extended Fund Facility programme and access under the newly created Resilience and Sustainability Facility in the coming months.

As major reform priorities, the IMF suggested Bangladesh strengthen corporate governance, ensure strict supervision and enforcement of the current framework, and reform the legal system to support a stronger enforcement of creditor rights and debtor incentive for repayment.

Earlier in July, Dhaka sought the loan from the IMF in the form of budgetary support to shore up its depleting foreign currency reserves.

## Tigers seek

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resistance at the back end with the ball meant the Proteas did not manage an even bigger score.

"I played against a lot of the boys and with them. So, I wasn't too unfamiliar with what was to be expected of them [Bangladesh bowlers]. I would say it [playing BPL] definitely helped me in today's match," Rossouw said at the press conference yesterday on using his experience of playing the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) previously.

Taskin's wicket was not followed by more pressure with the ball and, likewise, in chase of 206 when Soumya Sarkar started breezily with two sixes off the first two deliveries he faced against Kagiso Rabada, it did not materialise into something better. Speedster Anrich Nortje dismantled the top-order with career-best figures of four for 10 runs as Bangladesh innings quickly lost momentum and resolve. Shakib said much more was expected after the starts they got.

## AL leaders pulling the strings

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there on November 5.

Rois Ahmed Manna, joint secretary of the association, is the president of Chhatra League Barishal City unit.

The president and general secretary of the association are loyal to Barishal City Corporation Mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah, party insiders said.

Sadiq is the general secretary of Barishal city AL.

Mymensingh District Motor Owners Association enforced its strike a day before the BNP rally there on October 15.

Momtaz Uddin, president of the association, is also the vice president of AL Mymensingh district unit.

Its secretary general Mahbubur Rahman is former vice president of Swechhchasebak League's Mymensingh district unit.

On top of all these, former minister Shajahan Khan, also a presidium member of AL, is the president of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation, the umbrella organisation of transport workers.

"INDEPENDENT BODIES"

When a reporter on October 23 at press conference raised the issue of transport strikes ahead of BNP rallies, Road Transport and Bridges Minister

Obaidul Quader said he has nothing to do if bus operators call strikes and cause public sufferings.

Quader, also general secretary of the AL, asked the reporter to talk to the bus owners instead.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday also said transport owners and workers organisations were "independent", and they have nothing to do in this matter.

"If they [transport owners] think it is not safe, they may not operate their vehicles," Asaduzzaman said.

"Owners and workers have seen how their buses were torched during the movement by BNP-Jamaat in the past ... We are not forcing them [transport leaders]. They are independent. They will decide what they will do. We do not interfere."

The government is not barring the BNP from holding any political rallies anywhere, the home minister added.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said, "As BNP men burnt buses, trucks, and launches in the past, bus owners and workers called a strike in Khulna. If they call a strike in Barishal, it is for the same reason."

Terming the organisations

independent, he said leaders of the BNP, the Awami League, and Jatiya party are involved in these organisations and they together decide on strikes to protect their vehicles.

Yesterday, Ahsan Habib Dulul, organising secretary of the BNP for Rangpur division, said that it was clear that AL would enforce a transport strike in an attempt to foil their rally as the government was panicking after seeing the public support BNP was getting.

He said strikes would not be effective and people would join the rally on foot if they have to.

On September 27, BNP announced division-level rallies to protest the price hike of essentials and fuel, recent killings of five party men in police firings in different districts, and also demanding "release" of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The party so far held three rallies in Chattogram, Mymensingh, and Khulna and its leaders alleged that the government and ruling party men attempted to obstruct their party men from joining the rallies by enforcing transport strikes.

(Our correspondents in Dinajpur, Khulna, Barishal, and Mymensingh contributed to this report.)

## 50 BNP activists hurt

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He also alleged that Manjurul Islam, the upazila Jubo League's organising secretary, led the attack.

Contacted, Manjurul denied the allegations and said the violence might have been a result of Jubo Dal's infighting.

Five of the injured were admitted to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal, hospital sources said.

Morad Hossain, officer-in-charge of Charfesson Police Station, said police rushed to the spot immediately after hearing about the violence and brought the situation under control.

No case or complaint was filed in this regard till the filing of this report around 8:30pm.

Meanwhile in Narayanganj, Jubo Dal leaders and activists alleged that they faced obstructions and attacks by AL men while heading towards Dhaka to join a rally marking the organisation's founding anniversary.

The attack took place in Chonpara Kheyaghat area of Rupganj upazila around 10:00am, they said.

Golam Faruk Khokon, president of Narayanganj Jubo Dal, said at least three of their party men were

wounded in the attack, which was launched by followers of local AL leader Bazlur Rahman.

Bazlur, member of Rupganj upazila unit AL and also a member of Kayetpara Union Parishad, dismissed the allegations and said neither he nor any of his follower was involved in any attack.

Contacted, AFM Sayed, OC of Rupganj Police Station, said he was not informed about any such incident and no one lodged any complaint in this regard.

Meanwhile, the BNP office in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila was attacked by a group of 50-60 people. They vandalised the office around 7:15pm.

Hafizur Rahman, member secretary of Kalapara BNP, claimed that AL men, chanting "Joy Bangla", attacked the office while the Jubo Dal leaders and activists were gathered there ahead of the divisional rally.

Abdul Motaleb Talukder, general secretary of the upazila AL, denied the allegation.

(A correspondent from Narayanganj contributed to the report.)

## US companies

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digital economy, and blue economy, and also collaborate in airport expansion in Dhaka.

There are so many examples of US-Bangladesh partnership in different sectors, said Venkataraman.

Regarding the US investment and business climate, he said the US has been working with the government, International Labour Organisation and European Union to strengthen the labour environment in Bangladesh.

"Opening this brand-new commercial office is a critical reflection of the success of our 50-year relationship with Bangladesh and a testament to this government's success in recent years in growing the Bangladeshi economy and putting it in trajectory to emerge from the least developed country status to a middle-income status," said Venkataraman.

"And more importantly we view the opening of this office as a commitment to Bangladesh's future. We are proud of the 50 years of partnership that we have had and particularly from the US government and from the US business community. And we see this commercial service centre as a

## 2 youths arrested for raping a schoolgirl in Narail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Police arrested two men on charges of raping a schoolgirl in Narail's Lohagara upazila on Wednesday.

Rifat Mollah, 19, and Habibur Rahman, 18, of Baltia village in the upazila's Joypur union, allegedly took the victim to a garden at around 10:00pm and raped her.

When locals approached the scene upon hearing the victim's screams, Rifat managed to flee, while Habibur was caught and handed over to police, said Haran Chandra Pal, inspector (investigation) of Lohagara police, quoting locals.

"Following the incident, we conducted a raid the same night and arrested Rifat," he added.

The victim was sent to a local hospital for treatment, while a case is being processed in this regard.

## EC forms probe body over Rohingya NID scam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Election Commission in Chattogram yesterday formed a three-member committee to investigate the syndicate supplying NID cards to Rohingya people.

The decision comes after police arrested 10 people, including five EC employees, for their alleged involvement in the racket.

They were arrested on Tuesday in the city's Halishahar Housing Estate High School, where voter list updating work was going on.

NID forms and birth certificates were recovered from their possession at the time.

Police said a syndicate of some dishonest EC employees and criminals were supplying national identity cards to Rohingyas.

For each NID card, they took Tk 1.30 lakh.

## Asean ministers 'even more determined' to solve Myanmar crisis

AFP, Jakarta

Southeast Asian foreign ministers said they were "even more determined" to solve the political crisis in Myanmar during talks in Indonesia yesterday ahead of the Asean leaders' summit in November.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military coup in February last year, but despite its expressions of concern, efforts by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) have yet to bear any fruit.