

Voter list revision

FROM PAGE 1
The voter list of 2000 contained 6.4 million ghost voters. Another 97 million voters have died since then, he reckoned.

He quoted a European Union (EU) letter addressed to previous CEC MA Syed to have pointed out the existence of as many as 13 million ghost voters, while a US State Department report this year saw 8 per cent fake voters on the 2000 voter list.

If the NDI survey and the EU allegation are correct, then names of over one crore fake voters will have to be deleted from the existing list.

The task for preparing the voter list would not have been so difficult had the EC followed the proper procedure for revising the existing voter list in accordance with the Supreme Court verdict, electoral experts observed.

For revising the voter list, enumerators would visit door to door and list eligible voters and delete the names of those who have died.

But the EC in its decision on June 14 asked people to apply for being included in the list and deleting names from it. Electoral law experts termed the procedure illegal.

Sticking to its guns, the EC has repeatedly declined to meet the demands raised by the ruling BNP, main opposition Awami League and other political parties and electoral experts for visiting door to door.

It, however, decided last week to send officials to village union parishes and wards in city corporations and municipalities for distributing voters' registration forms to ensure that eligible people get listed.

LACK OF PREPARATION
District election officers recruited as registration officers for the voter-listing job could not make adequate preparation for the task starting tomorrow as the EC Secretariat did not pass its directives on time.

A number of district election officers said they are yet to hold any meeting with the assistant registration officers to chalk out a plan for the task.

The Election Commission took the decision on June 14, but I have received the EC Secretariat circular on June 27, "a district election officer said, adding that there is not sufficient time now for holding any

2 officials

FROM PAGE 20
Quoting witnesses, Paltan police said the accident occurred around 1:10am when the five-member Rab team was returning to their base at Dhaipur after completing a classified operation.

When their vehicle reached Rajarbagh Police Lines, the truck, while taking a turn, slammed into the side of the vehicle.

ASP Mahub and Lieutenant Sarwar died on the spot and when they were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), on-duty doctors confirmed their death.

Badly injured Flight Lt Mujahid and the two Rab sources were also rushed to DMCH. Mujahid was later admitted to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka.

Meanwhile, the driver and helper of the truck managed to flee the scene after the accident. Police seized both the vehicles. Paltan police said they are trying to find the owner, driver and the helper of the truck.

Son of Shamsher Ali, Shahed Sarwar, who is a member of Bangladesh Navy, hailed from Barokhada in Kushtia while Mahub Pradhan, son of Abdus Sattar Mia, hailed from Munshiganj.

On completion of their autopsy, their namaz-e-janaza was held at Rab-10 office.

Mahub was buried later at Azampur Graveyard while Rab men took the body of Shahed Sarwar to Kushtia for burial at their family graveyard.

Ministers in JS

FROM PAGE 1
reasonable level. Except for two items, they are now lower than [those in] the Indian market," Commerce Minister M Hafiz Uddin Ahmed claimed.

He said the price of sugar has come down from Tk 55 to Tk 43 a kilogram.

Against an opposition statement that the commerce minister was chased by people at a kitchen market recently, Hafiz said the media reports were imaginary.

State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar said, "The law and order has improved."

Denying allegations of the state patronising the criminals, he said, "We don't have any bahini (groups) like Hazari Bahini or Golondaz Bahini."

About the opposition's allegation that the government is reluctant to investigate the August 21 grenade attacks properly, Babar said, "Everyone will know in detail about the incident very soon. The charge sheet is now at the final stage."

Earlier, AL lawmaker Mohammad Nasim asked the state minister for home to inform the House who were involved in the August 21 attack as during his recent US trip Babar said that the real culprits have been identified.

Referring to the Udichi blast verdict, Jatiya Party lawmaker GM

meeting with the assistant registration officers.

The EC Secretariat meantime issued an order cancelling the weekly holidays of the divisional, district and upazila election officers on Friday and Saturday. It, however, spared the assistant registration officers who are government employees.

The EC Secretariat has not even allocated money for the remuneration of the officials, nor did it specify whether they will be provided with the remuneration. The publicity urging people for getting listed is also very poor, sources said.

CEC Aziz and the secretary of EC Secretariat yesterday declined to talk to the media about the latest situation over the preparation of the voter-listing task.

Bar Council

FROM PAGE 1
with the president to know his health condition, as confusion is rife over his present status.

"No visitor is allowed to see the ailing president on advice of the medical board," the Bar Council vice-president told the UNB quoting a Bangabhaban telephonic message assaying in reply to his petition.

In reply to the Bangabhaban phone call, Rokan said he has asked for a written letter of regret in this regard.

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday submitted an application seeking an appointment with the president.

"We have told the SC Bar that nobody will now be allowed to see the president as he is in complete rest as advised by the doctors," Press Secretary to the President Mokhlesur Rahman Chowdhury said.

He said the same policy is being followed for everybody. "Even the acting president and the ministers are also not meeting the president."

The SC Bar in an emergency meeting on Wednesday decided to meet the president to what they said know his physical condition and "take legal steps to protect the constitutional dignity and rights of the president."

BSF abducts

FROM PAGE 20
took away three women --Malina, wife of Morshed Ali, Halejan, wife of Omar Ali, and Habia of Pragpur Union--when they were going to neighbouring Chilmari Union.

Meanwhile, BDR sent letter to its Indian counterpart demanding return of the seven Bangladeshi women.

The Indian border guards had kidnapped seven other Bangladeshis from the same frontier last week and returned them to BDR later.

Agrani Bank

FROM PAGE 20
said that unidentified criminals entered the bank breaking the main gate and broke open the vault to loot the cash. The looted single barrel 12-bore gun and bullets were for use by the daytime security personnel of the bank. The looters also ransacked some furniture and the manager's room.

A bank official informed that the bank did not employ any night guard for the branch.

Woman

FROM PAGE 20
arguments and the court recorded statement of 12 prosecution witnesses.

According to the prosecution, the customs officials at the Zia International Airport arrested Rabeya with a bag of 4kg heroin when she landed at about 8:30pm on June 3, last year. She was handed over to Airport police the same day.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Shahidul Islam Sardar appeared for the state while Advocate Ali Akbar defended the accused.

Quader said all the accused were acquitted thanks to lack of proper investigation.

He said as per the government statistics at least 16,540 people have been killed during the present rule. Referring to the 'mass arrest' of common people to thwart the opposition programme, he said the incidents have exposed the anti-people character of the police.

On irregularities in primary education, he said, "The government has accommodated illiterate BNP leaders in the committees formed to oversee the recruitment of primary school teachers."

AL lawmaker Faruk Khan alleged that syndicates of pro-government businessmen have been controlling the prices of essentials through hoarding.

"The alliance government has destroyed the judiciary through politicisation. It has appointed dishonest persons as judges as all of them belong to the ruling parties," AL lawmaker Rahamat Ali alleged.

Independent lawmaker MM Shahin urged the government to increase the monthly allowance for community teachers from Tk 750 to Tk2,000.

Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Abdus Shabid, Panchanan Bishwas, Shahjahan Khan, KM Jahangir and Rahamat Ali took part in the discussion.

AL MP

FROM PAGE 1
Karim, AC Abul Khair, AC (Tejgaon) Ghaus Uddin Rimon, AC (Petrol) Ali Ahmed Khan.

Officers-in-charge (OC) of Dhamondi and Mohammadpur Police Stations Mahub Hossain and Zahurul and eight other police officials.

Sohel Taj along with a huge number of party leaders and workers appeared before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka and filed the case.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Syed Mujibul Haq recorded statement of the lawmaker, took the complaint into cognisance and ordered a judicial enquiry into the matter.

In his complaint, Sohel Taj mentioned that he along with his party activists brought out a procession at the road 27 in the city's Mirpur Crossing at about 12:30pm, on June 20.

The on-duty policemen attacked him and other demonstrators from the back and threw teargas shells near Xenial Chinese Restaurant without any provocation, even after Sohel Taj identified himself as a lawmaker. The attack left him and several others seriously wounded, the complainant added.

Besides, he came to know that on June 19, DC Kohinoor Miah held a meeting with his high police officials to take necessary steps for tackling the situation and kill Sohel Taj as soon as he was sighted during the programme, the complainant added.

The lawmaker also showed his wounds to the magistrate while giving the statement.

Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud and advocates Abdul Matin Khasru, Syed Rezaur Rahman and Sahara Khatun stood for the complainant.

Big boys

FROM PAGE 1
on penalties.

Portugal are coached by Luiz Felipe Scolari, who also ended England's hopes at the quarterfinal stage of the last World Cup when he was in charge of Brazil.

England have played poorly in the group stage, were awful in their 1-0 second round win over Ecuador but have a history of cranking up their game in matches against tougher opposition.

Portugal are still licking their wounds from a bruising, card-littered 1-0 win over Netherlands that has deprived them of suspended midfielder duo Deco and Costinha.

However, the Euro 2004 runners-up have enough talent left at their disposal to trouble England's currently shaky defence.

The quarterfinals are completed by a repeat of the 1998 final as five-times champions Brazil, seeking their fourth successive appearance in the final, take on France.

Zinedine Zidane, scorer of two goals in their Paris triumph eight years ago, is due to retire after the World Cup and will be desperate to ensure he signs off with only happy memories of playing against the South Americans.

Brazil have moved ominously into the last eight without having to show more than glimpses of their best form and remain the book-makers' favourites.

Staff unwilling

FROM PAGE 1
from January to May.

Besides, the AROs expressed fear of insecurity.

"We are helpless.....We have nothing to do but continue the task as we are government employees," a teacher of a government high school said at the meeting with the election officer.

"I spent Tk2,600 for preparation of the fresh voter list, but you have paid only Tk1,000. Who will pay for the rest of the amount that I spent for photocopying and conveyance?" said another schoolteacher who worked for the fresh voter list that the Supreme Court later declared illegal.

In response to the district election officer's request for starting publicity with microphone in their areas, a number of AROs questioned who would pay for it. The election officer assured them of providing the expenditure, but they were not convinced.

Questioning the justification of deleting names from the voter list solely on the basis of one's complaint, an ARO said, "It will be difficult for me to examine complaints about fake voters as well as the applications for inclusion of new names."

"If a few hundred people demand application forms at a time and I can not provide it, they may even attack me. Who will give me security?" a schoolteacher said at the meeting.

Talking to the press after the meeting, several of the AROs, however, declined to tell their names fearing 'consequences'.

Shamsul Alam held three meetings at his office with the AROs under nine thanas in the capital.

Each of the AROs was provided with four kinds of forms for their task -- 1,000 forms for applying for inclusion, 1,000 for inclusion, and 900 for correction and deletion of names on the voter list, sources said.

Opposition to snap

FROM PAGE 1
to besiege the capital and EC Secretariat, demanding reforms in the caretaker government and electoral systems as well as ouster of CEC and two controversially appointed election commissioners.

"We will observe the programme peacefully. If the law enforcers try to obstruct us, we will have no choice but to retaliate," said Bimal Biswas, general secretary of the Bangladesh Workers Party.

He cautioned the government that hartals will follow if it tries to thwart the opposition programme next week.

Bimal said the entire country would turn into a battlefield in case of the police trying to repeat what they did in Kanchpur on Dhaka-Chittagong highway during Dhaka siege on June 11.

A senior police official preferring to be anonymous told The Daily Star that they will be on the alert for acts of vandalism by the opposition activists.

The 14-party combine, meanwhile, has been gearing up for the blockade programme. Senior leaders have already begun touring different parts of the country to mobilise public support in favour of the reforms agenda. They will continue the tours till today.

In last few days, the alliance held a series of meetings with transport leaders and workers where the opposition leaders requested them to keep their vehicles off the streets on July 2. It will also exchange views with different professional bodies.

AL acting general secretary Obaidul Quader told The Daily Star that they will announce even more vigorous programmes to make the

alliance government accept the demands.

Leaders and activists of the opposition parties will gather mainly at four entrances to the capital--Kachpur, Abdullahpur, Savar and Tongi. Besides, they will be present at different strategic points like Gabtoli, Sadarghat, Mohakhali, Kamalapur, and Syadabad.

The 14-party leaders will take position in important streets, river ports and railway stations in the divisional headquarters. The leaders and workers will remain posted at Chittagong, Sylhet, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Khulna, Ishwardi, and Akhaura railway stations so that no train could ply the tracks on July 2.

Upazila units of the opposition parties will cut off communications with the district headquarters while the district units will try to snap links between the capital and the divisional headquarters.

District unit workers of the opposition alliance will mass on the roads and highways near district bus terminals to stop the road communications.

Sources said the district and upazila unit leaders have been directed to muster a large number of people on the roads and terminals.

The opposition line-up held a meeting at the Workers Party office Wednesday with Shamimur Rahman Santa in the chair. The meeting resolved to resist any election under the present CEC and two commissioners. It observed that no fair voter listing is possible under the three and demanded that the government consult the opposition parties and make consensus appointment to the posts of CEC and election commissioners.

JCD man, outlaw killed

FROM PAGE 20
Hospital around 3:30am where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Rab recovered one revolver, two bullets, one pipegun and used cartridges from the spot. Chamak's accomplices however managed to escape.

The body was handed to the family members after an autopsy yesterday afternoon.

A notorious JCD cadre Chamak was wanted in at least 12 criminal cases including double murder cases and assault cases filed with different police stations.

Chamak was sentenced to five years rigorous imprisonment last year following his attack on an army officer on November 7, 2003. He however obtained bail before the verdict of the case and jumped bail.

His father Ohidul Islam Tofa is the former organising secretary of Sylhet city Awami League (AL) and mother Ruby Fatema Islam is the general secretary of Sylhet district Mahila AL.

Meanwhile, an extremist from the outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party ML faction was killed when he was caught in

'crossfire' between the police and his accomplices near Alipur Bridge of Rupsha upazila in Khulna, our Khulna correspondent reports.

Rupsha police arrested Kamrul Islam Dukhu, 32, on Wednesday night at his Anandanagar home in Rupsha upazila.

Following Dukhu's confessional statement a police team along with Dukhu went to Alipur Bridge to recover hidden weapons. Dukhu's men around 4:30am ambushed the team forcing the police to retaliate. Dukhu was caught in the line of fire as he tried to escape custody. He died on the spot.

Dukhu was wanted in three murder cases, one gang-rape case and two cases filed under Arms Act with Rupsha Police Station.

The police fired 20 shots in self-defence after being fired upon. The trade of fire lasted for about 15 minutes, said officer-in-charge (OC) of Rupsha Police Station.

One pipe gun, one revolver, four bullets and four used bullet shells were recovered from spot, the OC added.

160 victims

FROM PAGE 20
study of newspaper reports said yesterday, adding, "These extrajudicial killings have violated human rights in one side and marred the country's image and democratic growth."

Sixty-four journalists fell victim to ruling party-sponsored persecution and attack during this period while 80 others were attacked, tortured, harassed and received life threats by criminals since January this year, said the study based on reports of 12 national dailies.

Two journalists were killed and cases were filed against 43 journalists for publishing reports.

Twenty-five people were killed and 4,030 injured in 210 incidents of political violence.

On an average, 15,203 people were arrested during each incident of political violence, according to the report.

A total of 353 militants were arrested in last six months.

The ASK release said workers' unrest at over 200 garment facto-

ries during the period left two killed and over 400 injured.

The administration imposed section 144 in the country 64 times in the last six months.

Nine prisoners and 19 detainees died in jail custody.

Meantime, the Human Rights and Legal Aid Committee of Bangladesh Bar Council yesterday said that 1,790 people were killed in different rights violation incidents since January 1 this year.

Sixty-six fell victim to gang rape while 39 of them were killed after rape. Total 50 children were raped.

Eighty-eight people were killed and 48 tortured for dowry. Thirty-one women were killed by their husbands, it added.

Seventy-five people were acid-burnt while 28 fell victim to fatwa.

Nine people were killed and 61 injured in bomb blasts while 248 abductions took place.

The report said 60 people were killed by the Indian Border Security Force.

Local firm chosen

FROM PAGE 20
required documents and informed the ministry that MTRC of Hong Kong will work as the constructor, Sena Kalyan Sangstha, Bangladesh as financier and project manager, the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) as the leading consultant.

Hitachi of Japan will supply the equipment and JIBC will provide suppliers credit and syndicated bank loan for the project. The firm also provided authorised letters from the company concerned and some of the officials of those partner organisations met high officials of the communications ministry confirming their involvement.

If his firm finally gets the approval of PICOM the metro line would be established within a period of three years, Masud Reza said, adding that the line would be established through cut and cover method which is much less costly than the tunnel boring method.

He expects to start construction work from this winter after finishing all the formalities.

The company proposed to build six routes with double line beginning from Syedabad to Gabtoli via Mohakhali. The fare in the metro rail will be almost the same as in intra-city bus services in Dhaka.

The company sought 30 years concession time for recovering its investment.

Hasina trashes PM's assurance over presidency

UNB, Dhaka

Sharply reacting to Wednesday's speech of the prime minister in parliament about the speculations over the presidency, opposition leader Sheikh Hasina has said the prime minister does the opposite of what she speaks.

"In her speech, the prime minister told the nation to wait for another 15 days...we'll wait for 15 days to see what magic she has to show," she said.

Hasina, also the president of the Awami League (AL), was exchanging views with her party's grassroots leaders from Pirojpur, Patuakhali and Barguna districts in Barisal division at AL's Dhamondi office yesterday.

She discussed with them the prevailing political situation in their constituencies, party position, possible party candidates for the forthcoming election and the ongoing anti-government agitation.

Hasina alleged that the prime minister wanted to become president of the country with an evil design to rig the next polls to continue her 'misrule'. She urged people to remain alert about what she said the prime minister's conspiracy.

The AL chief said her party will not allow any 'farical' election of rigging in the country. She urged people to get ready to rush to the capital to resist such 'evil design', if asked.

About Wednesday's verdict in the sensational case for bomb attacks on an Udichi conference in Jessore, the opposition leader deplored that all the accused in the murder case were let off the hook as they belong to the ruling alliance.

To the members of the law enforcement agencies, Hasina said the time has come for them to take the decision whether they will serve the corrupt government in its assuming power further or stand beside the people to establish their basic rights.

Referring to the new national budget passed yesterday, she said the budget has created ample scope for looting public money.

The AL president met the grassroots leaders from 27 organisations of Pirojpur, Patuakhali and Barguna districts.

Charges framed in journo Belal killing case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A Khulna court yesterday framed charges against six accused in the sensational journalist Belal murder case.

They are expelled Jamaat leader Shahabuddin Lashkar alias Dhira, Ekhlash Rahman, Iqbal Hossain Shadhin, Mirajul Islam Miraj, Rafiqul Islam and Yunus Ali alias Goda Yunus.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Md Mashur Rahman passed the order.

Of the accused, the suspected masterminds of the murder Shahabuddin and Ekhlash are now on bail, while the rest are in Khulna Jail.

Ekhlash, Iqbal and Yunus had given confessional statements to the court earlier under Section 164.

Sheikh Belaluddin, Khulna bureau chief of Daikin Sangram, was severely wounded in a bomb attack at the Khulna Press Club compound at about 9:20pm on February 5 last year.

He died on February 11 while undergoing treatment in the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka.

In March the same year, the State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar named the expelled Jamaat leader as the mastermind behind Belal's murder after a meeting of the ministry's monitoring cell.

Over 100 trees

FROM PAGE 20
against the felling of the trees.

DCC Executive Engineer of Zone 9 (Gulshan), Arefur Rahman told The Daily Star he had taken the decision to widen the road to ensure smooth flow of traffic from Baridhara DOHS to Gulshan and Gulshan to Pragati Sarani.

Replying to a question, he said he did not think it necessary to consult the Traffic Engineering Division of the DCC. "Traffic Engineering is a part of civil engineering and therefore being a civil engineer I can take the decision to widen a road," Arefur Rahman added.

A top DCC official source in Nagar Bhaban said the decision to chop down more than a hundred trees in Gulshan area is obscure and one can only assume it was nothing but 'stealing public property'.

"This is a ploy to make huge amount of money through the sales of timber from these priceless trees, which were planted over 30 years ago," the source said. "The minimum price of any timber in the market is sky-high. So, by selling these trees the people involved have made some quick money," he added.

Budget passed

FROM PAGE 1
second highest allocation of Tk 6,125 crore as the ministry has to meet the election-based expenditures.

This budget happens to be the last budget of the BNP-led four-party alliance government before its expiry in October and will be executed by three governments including the present one.

The AL that was absent in last year's budget sessions participated in different budget sessions this year. Main opposition leader and AL President Sheikh Hasina made a concluding speech in the House on Wednesday. Other AL lawmakers also took part in discussions on demands for allocation yesterday morning.

In the afternoon, the AL lawmakers requested the Speaker for extra half an hour to discuss the allocation for the Liberation War ministry. The Speaker first agreed on the proposal but withdrew later as there was a strong objection from the Treasury Bench, especially from BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

As the Speaker refused to provide any extra time, the AL members started walking out of the House around 4:10pm.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan at this time requested the Speaker to provide the opposition lawmakers with the extra time. Upon his request, the Speaker agreed but the AL had already left the House.