

UPDATING VOTER LIST IN NILPHAMARI

Striking teachers refuse to do the job till demands met

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Updating the voter list in Nilphamari district may be hindered as election officials are yet to appoint 'assisting officers' for enumeration while only three days are left to complete their lists.

The lists can not be prepared as school teachers, who did the voter enumeration earlier, refuse to do the job this time.

Data collectors and supervisors who prepare of the earlier voter list have been named 'assisting officers', election officials said.

Most of the data collectors and enumerators were teachers of government and non-government primary schools.

Assistant Registration Officer (ARO) and the Upazila Election Officer are supposed to appoint the 'assisting officers'.

Talking to this correspondent, many AROs said schoolteachers refused to work as enumerators to update the voter list.

Domar Upazila Election Officer Mahe Alam said he requested many school teaches but all of them refused. Some of them told him that there was an unwritten instruction to striking teachers not to do the job till the government accepts their demands, he said.

Nilphamari district general secretary of non-government teachers association Mozhar Hossain, when asked, cited a statement of Selim Bhuiya, chief co-ordinator of the School Teachers-Employees Council, in which he said striking teachers would not participate in the voter enrolment process unless their demands are not met.

Non-payment of their remuneration in full for preparation of the previous voter list by the Election Commission (EC) is another cause for their reluctance, he said.

Many teaches alleged that money was deducted from the 'poor' remuneration promised by the government.

Mahe Alam said, the EC has

given directive to appoint voter enumerators from among staff of government, semi-government or autonomous bodies if teachers refuse to do the job.

Even officials and employees of Krishi Bank and Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank can be engaged in the work, he said.

The list of 'assistant officers' must be completed by July 20. Updating the voter list will start on July 21 and will be completed by August 10, as per the EC directive, he said.

An 'assistant officer' would be appointed for every 600 people. In preparation of the last voter list (now rejected), a data collector was appointed for every 400 people.

This correspondent tried to contact district election officer Faridur Rahman. He was not available as he went to Dhaka to attend a meeting at the Election Commission, sources at his office said.

Feasting on forests, govt lands

12,000 out of 27,293 acres 'grabbed' in Cox's Bazar for shrimp cultivation: List of 'grabbers' submitted to DC for help to recover lands



STAR FILE PHOTO

A 'grabbed' forest (left) is being cleared of tees in Chwarandwip in Chokoria and an enclosure created in Mokeshkhali for shrimp cultivation.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The Chittagong Coastal Forest Department yesterday submitted a list of 15 'land grabbers' to Cox's Bazar Deputy Commissioner, seeking administration's help to recover government lands and forests including the Paraban (a man made forest in offshore Sonadia and Ghatibhanga islands).

The alleged land grabbers include some influential leaders of a ruling party and Union Parishads, official sources said.

Despite filing of cases by the forest department, land grabbing is going on in the tourist district, mainly to create enclosures for shrimp cultivation.

Cox's Bazar Awami League Secretary Shalauddin Ahmed CIP at a press conference yesterday also alleged that a local ruling party leader alone created 211 enclosures on grabbed lands.

The almost free-style land grabbing and destruction of forests also evoked protests by local environmentalists, journalists, lawyers and citizens' groups, who staged demonstrations and submitted memorandums to the government earlier to save the Paraban and declare it an exclusive tourist area.

Lands and stretches of forests close to the coast are being grabbed one after another in the five upazilas of the district. Court orders for recovery of the lands can not be enforced as the encroachers are influential ruling party leaders, sources claimed.

Forest department officials said land grabbing increased in the last four years while they virtually played the role of an onlooker.

They said about 12,000 out of 27,293 acres of forestland in the district have fallen in the hands of land grabbers during the period.

Rally in Rangpur for pipeline gas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Several hundred people held a rally here yesterday to press six-point demand for development of the northern districts including Rangpur.

The rally under the banner of Rangpur Nagorik Committee was held at the court square yesterday morning.

Speakers at the rally called for a unity to press their six-point demand that includes establishment of education board in Rangpur, formation of division comprising eight northern districts and gas supply through pipeline.

With Mohammed Afzal in the chair, the rally was addressed by, among others, Abdul Quddus, Anwar Hossen Bablu, Advocate Abdul Kashem, Monsur Ahmed and Anwar Hossen.

Husband kills wife, takes life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An expatriate husband committed suicide after strangling his wife at Bamangari village at Mirpur upazila in the district yesterday.

The dead were identified as Mirazul Islam, 35, son of Ainnuddin Biswas of Bamangari and Mukta Khatun, 21, daughter of Kesmot Ali of the same village in the upazila.

According to police, Mirazul, a Bangladeshi expatriate in Spain, married Mukta two years ago.

After their marriage, Mirazul sent money to his wife regularly asking her to save.

Back home last month, Mirazul found that his wife made no saving from the money.

He became frustrated. On Saturday night, the couple went to bed.

Next morning, at about 10 am, family members broke the door open and found Mirazul hanging from the ceiling and strangled body of Mukta lying on bed.

Doctors in Kushtia general hospital said Mirazul hung himself after strangulating his wife to death.

Pneumonia kills five

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

At least five children died of pneumonia and several hundreds have been attacked with the disease in the district.

Three of the victims have been identified as Monika, 3, of Khalarmar Chara village of Moheshkhali upazila; Rahima Khatun, 4, of Lamar Chiringya village and Umme Kulsum, 6, of Khodarkum village in Chakariya upazila.

Two of the victims died in the last three days, sources in the Chakariya upazila health complex and district sadar hospital informed yesterday.

Everyday, 45 to 50 pneumonia affected children are being brought to the hospital, they said.

Sources in the Civil Surgeon office said high temperature in the monsoon is the main cause behind outbreak of the disease.

Pirates abduct 3 fishermen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira.

Three fishermen along with a fishing trawler were abducted allegedly by Indian pirates from the Sundarbans in the last two days.

The abducted fishermen were identified as Manik, 25, son of Khoda Baksa of Burigoalini village; Jabar Gazi, 30, son of Solaiman Gazi of Kalinchi village and Ganesh Chandra Bagdi, 38, son of Naran Bagdi of Kalbari village in Shyamnagar upazila.

The pirates kept the fishermen hostages at Arpangashia canal near the Indian border and demanded Tk. 150000 as ransom for their release, said Tamiz Uddin of Kalinchi village in the same upazila.

They set a seven-day deadline for payment of the ransom.

Feud in Kishoreganj BNP intensifies

Former lawmaker terms two-man dist committee 'illegal'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Intra-party feud in Kishoreganj BNP has intensified with former party lawmaker Maj (Retd) Akhter Uzzaman Ranjan terming the two-member district committee "illegal" and threatening to form a new full-fledged committee.

Education Minister Dr. Osman Faruq is president of Kishoreganj district BNP committee and Waliullah Rabbani is its secretary. The committee was formed last year.

The move by Ranjan came after the two-member committee dissolved the BNP committee in

Kotiadi upazila on Sunday. Earlier, the party committee in Hussainpur upazila was also dissolved by the two-member committee.

Ranjan in a press statement issued Sunday night claimed that the Osman-Rabbani committee has no right to dissolve any other committee at any level as it itself is 'illegal'.

According to party constitution, a district committee can not be formed with only two members. There must be 101 members, he said. "The two persons are not forming a full-fledged committee only to exercise their power undemocratically and to continue their illegal activities", the statements said.

Earlier, on November 27 last year, the so-called district committee dissolved Hussainpur upazila BNP committee but its secretary Rafiqul Islam is still holding the post, defying the two persons, Ranjan said in the statement.

While contacted by this correspondent, Rafiq said he is continuing as secretary of the upazila committee as per instruction of Public Works and Housing Minister Mirza Abbas, who is also minister in-charge of Kishoreganj district.

Ranjan said the BNP high command can not approve or form a district committee with only two members.

The BNP is divided into four factions in Kishoreganj and all the factions hold programmes separately. The four factions are led by Dr M Osman Faruq, Mirza Abbas, Maj (Retd) Akhter Uzzaman Ranjan and Awaliullah Robbani.

There is no full-fledged district committee for over 11 years.

On Sunday, leaders of different trade unions aligned with BNP protested formation of a new committee of Kishoreganj Sramik Dal with Nizam Uddin Khan Nayan and Jamal Abu Naser Hilali Minto as president and secretary respectively.

At the press conference, the trade union leaders said the way in which new Sramik Dal committee has been formed is unconstitutional and undemocratic. The committee was formed without holding any council, they said.



PHOTO: STAR

Erosion victims formed a human chain in Manikganj town yesterday demanding government steps for construction of Padma embankment and rehabilitation of the affected people.

7.5x3

12x4