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Opposition parties hail Nagorik Committee recommendations
Saifur criticises civil society move
RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The main opposition political parties yesterday welcomed the Nagorik Committee's recommendations on electoral and political reforms and said they reflect the people's views and aspirations. They also said the recommendations made by the Nagorik Committee, a platform of civil society members, prove that the opposition's proposals for electoral reforms are quite logical. The ruling alliance leaders, on the other hand, seemed divided on the committee's recommendations placed at a press conference on July 17. Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, the senior most leader of the ruling BNP, came down heavily on the civil society body yesterday while BNP Standing Committee

PROFIT REPATRIATION IN 5 YEARS More taken out than pumped in thru' FDI

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Foreign investors have taken out more money than they have pumped into Bangladesh in the last five years mainly through profit repatriation and repayment of loans with foreign banks. Bangladesh Bank sources said out of several hundred foreign investors in the country, a few mobile phone companies dominate this outflow of money, followed by oil and gas companies and foreign banks. Between 2001 and 2005, foreign investors repatriated \$2,744 million while the foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow was \$2,185 million. FDI records for 1996 to 2005 show the investors remitted \$3,626 million or 81 per cent of their

investment of \$4,457 million. The data shows that between 1996 and 2000, the country enjoyed a higher rate of FDI inflow with a lower outflow of profit and loan repayment. According to Board of Investment (BOI) data, investors in telecommunications sector claim 36 per cent of the total FDI, textiles 18 per cent and chemical industries 7 per cent, oil companies 18 per cent, banks 10 per cent and power companies 2 per cent. Investments in telecom, energy and financial institutions have been categorised as service sector investments and the rest as manufacturing sector investments. The main outflow of money is taking place in the service sector that does not export any commodity or

employ larger manpower. The data shows that in 2001, the FDI was \$355 million while the investors repatriated \$175m in profit and \$188m in loan repayment. In 2002, the FDI was \$328m while investors repatriated \$195m in profit and \$243m in loan repayment. In 2003, the FDI was \$350m, profit repatriated \$355m and loan repayment \$229m. In 2004, the FDI was \$460 m, profit repatriated \$338m and loan repayment \$372m. In 2005, the FDI was \$692m while investors repatriated \$418m in profit and \$208m in loan repayment. Bangladesh Bank information shows that between January and May this year, investors repatriated \$180 million in profit.

19 injured as Shibir attacks BCL rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) yesterday attacked a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) protest rally at Govt BL University College in Khulna that left 19 students injured. The clash erupted around 11:30am when Shibir activists attacked BCL and Chhatra Union activists when they were holding a rally on campus protesting against the incident at Jagannath University on Monday. Locals said a large number of non-student Shibir cadres led by ICS BL University College unit President Mian Mujahidul Islam attacked the BCL protest rally without any provocation. They clubbed BCL and Chhatra Union activists with iron rods and pelted bricks. Three critically injured were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital. The clash, around 12:45pm, spread into all the dormitories of the institution and on the busy

VOTER LIST UPDATING Counting from desk continues too to justify expenditure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Along with its latest decision to update the voter list by visiting door to door, the Election Commission (EC) is also determined to continue the ongoing procedure for the same task sitting at offices to justify the expenditure for its controversial move. The procedure that began on July 1 amid lukewarm response from people and triggered enormous controversy has virtually remained stalled after the EC's July 7 decision for visiting door to door to update the voter list. Secretary to the EC Secretariat Abdur Rashid Sarkar told reporters on Monday that the EC has no plan to stop the ongoing procedure. Sources said the EC Secretariat

has already spent over Tk 1 crore for the task to update the voter list from offices of different local government bodies and public organisations but failed to get people's response. Preparation of the draft of a fresh voter list declared illegal by the Supreme Court already incurred a loss of about Tk 43 crore. The EC later initiated a move to justify this expenditure through using the draft's information for updating the existing voter list. It, however, cancelled the decision in the face of severe criticism. The EC Secretariat at the end of June allocated Tk 74.36 lakh against district and upazila election officers for transportation and Tk 19.51 lakh against 6,273 assistant

Saifur says no to EC plea for fund

UNB, Dhaka

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman refused to allocate fresh fund for the Election Commission (EC) to update the voter list when the EC officials met him yesterday and sought the new fund. Saifur inquired the EC officials about the Tk 64 crore fund allocated earlier for the task. The EC had spent the money for preparing its controversial fresh voter list, ignoring a High Court verdict. "I think the High Court's order was correct," Saifur told reporters. "They [EC officials] came to me... seeking fresh fund, but I asked them what they have done with the money given earlier," he said. The finance minister told the EC officials to go to the Prime Minister's Office to complain, if they have any, but he will not sanction any new fund.

BD FOODS' HEROIN SMUGGLING Investigators trace Hundi operation

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Investigators probing heroin smuggling to the UK has found that BD Foods Ltd had brought Tk 80-90 lakh since 1995 up to March 2005 into the country from various foreign countries including the UK through hundi. Sources said while checking banking information of 12 business houses, including BD Foods Ltd and its nine sister concerns, the investigators unearthed the transaction of the huge amount of illegal money. Detained BD Foods Chairman Badruddoza Chowdhury Momen also admitted to bringing the money through hundi when investigators asked him during remand about the inconsistencies between his earnings and capital. Mainuddin, manager of BD Foods Ltd and a close relative of Badruddoza, used to handle the hundi business. "The investigators will soon

start checking minutely the banking information of the 12 companies to find out if any other shoddy transaction was made by the business houses," a source said. Apart from smuggling heroin, the BD Foods used to ship dried fish and beef—hiding them in the consignments of legitimate items like vegetables and frozen fish—to different foreign countries although it had no official permission for such exports. Badruddoza would sell the exportable items at unusually lesser prices as he earned a huge amount of money from smuggling heroin and selling items for which he had no export permission. Kazi Zafar Reza, proprietor of Rainbow Enterprise, already confessed to a magistrate that he started smuggling heroin in vegetable consignments after incurring a "huge loss" in his legitimate vegetable export business. Zafar, who confessed to

CONFIRMATION OF HC JUDGES SC Bar mulls going to president, CJ to raise its objection

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) is contemplating taking up with the president and the chief justice its opposition to confirmation of some of the 19 additional judges of the High Court appointed in August 2004 amid controversy. Leaders of the SCBA also plan to move the High Court against the law ministry's inaction regarding the controversy over academic certificate and age of Justice Faisal Mahmud Faizee despite a directive from the president's office. "We would urge the chief justice to have extensive consultations with the senior judges and advocates, and prepare an evaluation sheet about these judges (19 additional judges) most of whom have been appointed on the basis of party allegiance only," SCBA

President Barrister Amir-Ul-Islam told The Daily Star last night. The president confirms appointment of judges of the SC and the HC on the recommendation of the chief justice. As the two-year term of the 19 judges expires on August 22, the SCBA has planned to move with the issue. Most of them did not fulfil the criteria for becoming a judge, a senior lawyer said. Another lawyer said, "We have observed their performances in the last two years and found many of them incompetent." On Monday, senior lawyers of the Supreme Court (SC) discussed the issue of confirmation of the additional judges. When contacted, one of them said they want to meet the president and the chief justice to urge

Search on for tsunami survivors Death toll crosses 340 across Indonesian coast

AFP, Pangandaran

Rescuers yesterday desperately sifted through wreckage for survivors of a tsunami that killed more than 340 people and left scores missing when it slammed into Indonesia's Java coast. In a harrowing reminder of the 2004 disaster that left 220,000 dead across Asia, walls of water up to three metres (10 feet) high smashed ashore Monday, toppling buildings and sending thousands of terrified residents fleeing. The tsunami was triggered by a 7.7-magnitude undersea earthquake off the south coast of Java island, where no early warning system had yet been put in place and many residents had no inkling of the tragedy to come. Heff Martin, a 26-year-old Swiss office worker, said he and his fiancée had only moments to "think with clear heads and use common sense" to save their lives. "There were people screaming outside the hotel, so one of the hotel staff went outside to see what



Survivors of the tsunami that struck Indonesia on Monday try to salvage whatever they can from their destroyed houses along Parangtritis Bantul beach yesterday.



Trash piling up on the Buriganga near Aganagar in Keraniganj on the outskirts of the capital as dumping of waste into the city's lifeline continues.

Filth fills up Buriganga banks Encroachers' new way to grab the dying river

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Encroachers are adopting a new technique to slowly fill up the Buriganga banks with household and industrial rubbish on the pretext that they have no alternative as the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) garbage pickups never collect their rubbish from the area. This time the encroachers are violating the concrete embankment along the river, which the experts had constructed to demarcate the river and protect it from encroachment. Besides, the government's plan to protect the Buriganga Second

Channel along Kamrangirchar is also being marred as a section of local people, who are producing 'official' documents of ownership, are systematically filling up the channel. In densely populated areas of Kamrangirchar, Imanganj, Swarighat, Babubazar, Shyambazar, Postogola and Zinzira along the river, about a hundred sites have been created on both the banks to dump rubbish. Several places of the embankment earmarked for the riverbank have been covered with rubbish. At some places the encroachers have planted trees on the huge piles of

rubbish that have filled up parts of the river. The most prominent dumping sites along the river are at Zinzira, where huge garment wastes along with household rubbish are dumped into the river. Finding a local trader dumping rubbish on the slope of the embankment from a rickshaw van yesterday morning, this correspondent asked why he was filling up the river. "The Dhaka City Corporation has no arrangement for collecting rubbish in the area and we have no other alternative," was the reply of the callous trader. With this fresh onslaught on the

Buriganga, the government's task force to protect the river comes under renewed challenge. Activities of the task force, however, had already come to a standstill following the death of shipping minister Col (ret) Akbar Hossain. The last meeting of the task force was held on April 25, 2006. State Minister for Shipping Major (ret) Quamrul Islam, now in charge of the shipping ministry, told The Daily Star that he would look into the matter immediately. "I am soon going to visit the spots and take necessary steps to protect the river," Quamrul Islam

4 kids hurt in explosion at videogames shop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four children were injured in an explosion in a videogames store on Walter Road at Sutrapur in the capital yesterday morning. The children -- Mithu, 12, Sumon, 9, Ronny, 10 and Israfil -- were admitted to Mitford Hospital and released after treatment. Police said the injured are street urchins and they live around the neighbourhood. Witnesses said the bomb exploded at around 10:30am with a loud bang while the children were busy playing video games in the games store. Jhantu, the owner of the store, said the bomb was inside a plastic bag left in the store by one of his regular young gamers only a few minutes before the explosion. Investigating Officer Sub Inspector Aiyub at Sutrapur Police Station said the bomb was a low-capacity 'cracker'. Lashkar-e-Qahar warns of more blasts in Delhi, Mumbai

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