

Govt given Sept 18

FROM PAGE 20 Hasina, also said the AL chief called the meeting to discuss possible steps to compel the government to go for electoral reforms.

At the Muktagong rally, the opposition leaders said the one-point agitation would be their final anti-government agitation to force it to meet the demand for reforms in caretaker government and Election Commission. They also warned the law enforcers of retaliation if they torture opposition leaders and workers during the countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on Sunday.

"We will go for one-point agitation to topple the alliance government if it does not accept electoral reform proposals by September 18 (the date of the combine's grand rally in the capital)," AL President Member Amir Hossain Amu said.

Tofail Ahmed alleged that as part of a government conspiracy, police attempted to kill AL Organising Secretary Sabir Hossain and former lawmaker Haji Mohammad Selim during the Wednesday's siege programme. He feared a situation of confrontation if the government hands over power to a caretaker government without implementing electoral reforms.

Rashed Khan Menon, president of Workers' Party, said the government would be forced to hold dialogue and reconstitute the EC.

ISD leader Hasanul Haque Inu said those torturing opposition leaders and workers would be blacklisted and brought to book after dislodging this government.

AL acting General Secretary

Polls to be held

FROM PAGE 20 mislead the people, sensing no chances of winning the next elections.

"But the people are united in favour of politics of democracy, peace and development, and they will foil all conspiracies against the country's democracy," she told her audience.

The prime minister noted that the BNP has introduced multi-party democracy and restored people's democratic rights. This democratic process will continue in the future, she asserted.

Khaleda hoped that people would again vote for the BNP-led alliance in the next general elections to keep up the politics of democracy, peace and development as well as carry forward the roadmap of development initiated by her government.

Listing the development works carried out by her government, she said the present government has carried out massive development and public-welfare activities in all sectors across the country.

She said the opposition wants to reintroduce one-party 'Bakal' system they had once introduced banning all political parties. They are proceeding in that direction.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, State Minister for Labor and Employment and local MP Amanullah Aman and Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, among others, addressed the meeting.

Earlier, the prime minister inaugurated eight new development projects in Keraniganj.

Updated list drafts

FROM PAGE 1 CEC MA Aziz claimed on Monday that the EC has done its "best" in updating the voter list.

Sarkar, however, said yesterday, "It is my honest confession—the task for updating the voter list was not done the way it should have been. I have doubts over the process of deleting names from the existing voter list."

The documents disclosed by the EC Secretariat shows that 21,63,408 persons have registered their names as voters during updating while the EC officials across the country deleted only 45,08,680 names from the list.

The EC started updating the existing voter list from July 21 without any procedure to examine the authenticity of the applications received by its field officials during door-to-door visits.

The field level task for updating the voter list was completed on September 10 allegedly keeping many eligible people across the country out of the list. Allegations were also raised for registering under-age people and fohingya refugees.

86 colleges

FROM PAGE 1 colleges and madrasas with zero success rate reduced significantly against 131 of the last year.

Sixteen technical colleges, 22 colleges under Rajshahi board, eight under Jessore board, five under Chittagong board, three under Barisal board and one under Dhaka board are also on the list of no-success institutions.

On the other hand, 388 colleges and madrasas across the country achieved brilliant result with 100 per cent pass while the number was 214 last year.

Of the 388 all-success institutions, 314 are madrasas.

Besides, 25 all-pass institutions are under the technical education board, 22 under Dhaka board, 11 under Rajshahi board, five under Sylhet board, four under Comilla board, three each under Chittagong and Barisal boards, and one under Jessore board.

The pass percentage was below 10 per cent in 19 educational institutions, below 20 per cent in 110 institutions and below 50 per cent in 1,480 institutions.

The number of institutions without any success is decreasing every year, Education Minister M Osman Faruk said, adding that stern action will be taken against the institutions where no examinee passed.

Tax on 3 items

FROM PAGE 1 Garlic has been selling at Tk 70 per kg this week while it was just Tk 40 last week. Dried chili sold at Tk 125 yesterday while last week the price was not more than Tk 85.

The price of cummin seeds rose by Tk 50 a kg, pushing it to Tk 210 in a week. Cardamom seeds now sell at Tk 570, upped by Tk 50 per kg.

The price of potato has risen by Tk 2. Onion that sold at Tk 22 a kg last week was selling at Tk 26 yesterday.

Different kinds of lentils were selling at prices upped by Tk 4 from the last week's.

An average 200-gram tea pack now sells at Tk 38 with a raise by Tk 4 while prices of liquid milk packs have risen by Tk 2 per litre.

Isabgul bhushi was selling at Tk 600 per kg yesterday, marking a rise of Tk 100 per kg. A 2-kg pack wheat sells at Tk 60 while it was Tk 54 last week and flour at Tk 44 from Tk 42.

Puffed rice and parched rice sell at Tk 28 per kg against last week's Tk 26. One kg poultry chicken meat currently cost Tk 90 while it would take Tk 85 last week.

Vermicelli too has risen in price by Tk 3 per kg while 900-gm packs of ghee were selling at a price increased by Tk 50.

However, the EC has no plan to examine the unusual rise in the number of voters in the updated voter list, sources at the EC Secretariat said.

THE BBS REPORT The BBS report shows the number of people aged 18 years and above—the age for a person to be eligible for voting—should be maximum 8.02 crore if no deaths occur during the last five years and every eligible person is listed.

The calculation is based on the 2001 BBS census report completed soon after the previous voter list was prepared ahead of the last parliamentary elections.

The report showed the number of people in the age bracket of 13 years and above at 8.02 crore. Those who were 13 years in 2001 have reached the voting age in 2006, five years down the line.

So, there is no way that the number of voters in 2006 could go above this figure. In fact, it should be less than 8.02 crore as at least 10 lakh people in the age group died in the last five years.

Moreover, if the standard calculation—that at least 5 per cent voters do not get listed for various reasons—is factored in, then another 40 lakh would be reduced, meaning, the actual number of voters should be around 7.5 crore.

The voter list prepared in 2000 also triggered controversy over the number of voters. The European Union (EU) in a letter to the then CEC MA Syed noted that the voter list included a staggering 1.3 crore 'ghost' voters.

In September 2003, the EC said the number of 47.48 crore voters is too high in a population of 13 crore. It argued that 55 per cent of Bangladeshis are aged over 15 years. So, even if the eligibility age is reduced to 15 years, the maximum number of voters cannot be more than 7.15 crore.

8 injured in BCL-Shibir clash at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

Some eight Dhaka University (DU) students were injured in a clash between Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Islami Chhatra Shibir at Sergeant Zohurul Haq Hall on Wednesday night.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) also beat up Shibir men and forced both BCL and Shibir men out of the dormitory following the fight.

Of the eight injured, six were Shibir men while two were BCL activists. The injured Shibir men are Abdul Kuddus, Shibir hall unit president, Shimul, Abu Taiyeb, Nazrul Islam, Shaiful Islam and Mobarak Hossain. The two injured BCL men are Shariful Islam and Bakul.

Sources said five of the injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Sources said the clash erupted in room-3008 of the dormitory's extension building around 10:45pm when a BCL activist told his Shibir roommate not to subscribe to a pro-Jamaat newspaper to the room.

They were involved in a scuffle that ignited chases and counter chases between their organisations' activists in the dormitory. The BCL men beat up dormitory unit Shibir President Abdul Kuddus and another Shibir activist and vandalised 10 rooms where Shibir men stayed in.

The Shibir men beat up Shariful and Bakul and vandalised a number of rooms.

Injured Saber

FROM PAGE 20 On Wednesday, the police kicked the veteran AL leader on the belly and charged batons on his lower abdomen, witnesses said.

Meanwhile, Sajid Wajed Joy, son of AL President Sheikh Hasina, visited the Apollo Hospital to see Saber Chowdhury yesterday.

"Despite knowing his identity, the police attacked him in a planned way to kill him," Joy told reporters during the visit.

Saber said, "The police became aggressive when I told them my identity."

Joy also visited Bangladesh Medical College and Hospital to see city AL Organising Secretary Haji Mohammad Selim and the Trauma Centre to see Chhatra League and Juba League leaders, who were also injured during the opposition programme.

Family members of Haji Selim are now trying to send him to Bangkok, Delhi for better treatment.

Swechchhasebak

FROM PAGE 20 ple some 20 yards off his sister's house at Post Office Goli at around 10:20am.

"Buller-hit, Yusuf ran to our sister's house where he collapsed," said the victim's elder brother MA Gani. Relatives and locals rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) immediately, but he died on the way, he added.

Badda Swechchhasebak League president Shafiq Mollah alleged that BNP and its front organisations' leaders planned and killed Yusuf as part of their conspiracy to diminish their (Swechchhasebak League) organisational power in the area.

He said Yusuf was organising activists in the locality ahead of a demonstration yesterday afternoon at Muktagong.

Swechchhasebak League General Secretary Pankaj Debnath alleged that BNP men in Badda area have been threatening him since August 15 and the killing is a sequel to that. Yusuf played an important role during Wednesday's election commission siege programme, he added.

Leaders and activists of Swechchhasebak League brought out a procession in the city's Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday afternoon demanding arrest and punishment of the killers.

GPA-5 getters

FROM PAGE 1 ranked second with 2,035 and Chittagong grabbed the third position with 1,006. Of the achievers other boards, there are 732 students in Jessore Board, 447 in Comilla, 239 in Barisal and 158 in Sylhet.

Besides, 412 madrasa students under Madrasa Education Board secured GPA-5, while the number was only 23 last year and two students from Bangladesh Technical Education Board achieved the grade, like the previous year.

GPA-5 indicates marks ranging between 80 and 100, the highest grade in the new system introduced in 2003.

More cheers in HSC results

FROM PAGE 1 37.05 in 2000. Last year too saw a leap in the pass rate as it shot up to 59.16 from 47.74 in 2004.

As many as 4,12,024 students—2, 31,055 boys and 1,80,969 girls—sat this year's exams and 2,63,358 of them—1, 48,409 boys and 1,14,949 girls—passed.

Some 9,450 examinees have secured the highest Grade Point Average (GPA)-5 while the number was 5,509 last year and 3,036 in 2004. Of them, 4,837 are from Dhaka Board, 1,006 from Chittagong Board, 2,035 from Rajshahi Board, 732 from Jessore Board, 447 from Comilla Board, 154 from Sylhet Board and 239 from Barisal Board.

Pass percentages for boys and girls are 64.23 and 63.52 against 60.13 and 57.84 of last year. The HSC results of the seven boards were published yesterday under the grading system introduced in 2003.

Results of the Alim examinations under Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board and HSC (vocational), business management, and diploma-in-commerce examinations under Bangladesh Technical Education Board were also published yesterday—all under the grading system.

The number of Alim examinees getting GPA-5 this year is 412 while only two from technical board have secured GPA-5.

Students from business studies and commerce have marked a significant progress as 1,884 secured GPA-5 against 684 of last year. From humanities, 619 students have secured GPA-5 this year against 297 last year.

Education Minister Osman Faruk handed over the result sheets to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office. State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Fuq Milon, Education Secretary M Momtajul Islam and the heads of the education boards were present.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction over results this year compared to past few years, increase in the number of students getting GPA-5, falling number of expulsions for adopting unfair means, and also over considerable decrease in the incidents of cheating in the public examinations.

Dhaka Board this year fetched the highest pass percentage of 74.76 and Jessore Board the lowest of 54.40. Rajshahi Board last year obtained the highest pass percentage of 65.93 and Sylhet Board the lowest 44.40.

In Dhaka Board, 98,691 of the 1,32,091 examinees passed the exams with the pass percentage of 74.76. As many as 65,511 students took the exams under Chittagong Board and 35,636 among them

passed making for a percentage of 54.40.

Among the 96,288 candidates under Rajshahi Board, 54,657 came out successful with a pass percentage of 56.76 against 65.93 of last year. Under Jessore Board, 65,511 students appeared in the exams and 35,636 passed. The pass percentage is 54.40 against last year's 63.70.

Under Comilla Board, 27,268 examinees out of 42,785 passed with a success rate of 63.73 per cent against 60.06 last year. Barisal Board had 25,319 candidates and 15,572 of them passed. The pass percentage is 61.50 against 62.48 last year.

Under Sylhet Board, 18,667 students sat the examinations and 12,218 came out successful with the pass percentage of 65.45 against last year's 44.40.

The pass percentage for Alim examinees is 75.23 against 64.74 last year and for HSC (Vocational) examinees, it is 69.74 against 30.98 last year.

Notre Dame, VN

FROM PAGE 1 Considering the ratio of GPA-5 achievers and total examinees, Vigarunissa Noon College stood first with 45.41 per cent followed by Notre Dame College, with 40.11 per cent and Holy Cross College with 37.23 per cent.

Birshrestha Noor Mohammad Rifles Public School & College, Dhaka College, Dhaka Commerce College, Motijheel Ideal School and College, Holy Cross College, Rajuk Uttara Model School and College, and Residential Model College are also in the top-10 list of high GPA-5 (Grade Point Average) scorers in respective positions.

A total of 2,181 students appeared for the HSC exams in Notre Dame College and 875 examinees achieved GPA-5. Vigarunissa Noon College had 1,143 examinees and 519 obtained GPA-5.

In Dhaka City College, 1,712 candidates took the exams and 290 of them secured GPA-5. Birshrestha Noor Mohammad Rifles Public School & College has 279 GPA-5 students while 955 had taken the exams.

In Chittagong Board, Chittagong College has 299 GPA-5 scorers, Chittagong Government Haji Muhammad Mohsin College has 158 GPA-5 scorers and Chittagong Ishpani Public School & College has 136 GPA-5 achievers.

In Barisal Board, Barisal Amrital Dey College has 72 GPA-5 achievers, Barisal Government Girls' College has 31 GPA-5 scorers and Barisal Cadet College has 31 GPA-5 achievers.

In Sylhet Board, Sylhet MC College with 39 GPA-5 achievers stood first. Sylhet Cadet College with 36 GPA-5 achievers stood second and Sylhet Government Women's College with 28 GPA-5 achievers stood third.

BSF guns down 2 in Thakurgaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down two Bangladeshi farmers at Mandumala of Baliadangi upazila in Thakurgaon yesterday morning and dragged their bodies into Indian territory.

The victims were identified as Md Mujibur Rahman, 45, of Bazbari and Shaheb Ali, 30, of Zagharh of Baliadangi upazila.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources quoting Mandumala locals said BSF sprayed bullets on the victims around 5:30am when they were irrigating their farmland. They said the BSF fired at least 25 bullets on them.

BDR sources said the panic stricken locals fled the village fearing skirmishes between the BDR and BSF.

Confirming the incident, Lt Col Rafique of 20 BDR Battalion said they sent a protest letter to the BSF demanding the bodies' return.

At least 10 people have been killed during the last 30 days in BSF firing.

34 Bangladeshi Shab-e-Barat

FROM PAGE 20 Sha, was being towed by a tugboat when it sank in rough weather off the coast of Koggaia, said an official at the Colombo Radio rescue coordinating centres said.

A navy spokesman said the vessel ran into difficulty and was being towed to the port of Galle, 112 kilometres (72 miles) south of here, when its hull broke.

"We have taken on board 34 Bangladeshi nationals, including two children and two women," the navy spokesman said. "They are being taken to Galle port."

No other details were immediately available.

Tax holiday

FROM PAGE 20 delegation at his office yesterday. IMF Advisor for Asia Pacific Department Thomas Rumbaugh led the delegation.

The NBR chairman said tax exemptions and tax holiday are offered for the national interest and welfare of the local industries.

He indicated that the government would withdraw tax exemptions and tax holiday gradually when "we will find a particular sector has become self-reliant."

In this connection, he informed that the government withdrew tax exemption facilities from 11 sectors in 2004, from seven sectors in 2005 and from five sectors in 2006.

According to official data, exemptions in VAT and customs duty, income tax and VAT cost the national exchequer around Tk 10,000 crore per annum—Tk 1700 crore in income tax, Tk 5890 crore in VAT and the remainder in import duties.

At present, the tax-GDP ratio in the country is 10.5 per cent—the lowest in the world. The IMF has been pressing to increase the ratio to 12 per cent by 2008, but urging Bangladesh to withdraw all exemptions and tax holiday.

About the meeting, the NBR chairman said they had discussion on revenue collection, reforms of the NBR and other related issues.

Replying to a question after the meeting, IMF advisor Thomas Rumbaugh said: "Too many people evade tax in Bangladesh and NBR should continue its drives against such tax evasion."

The NBR chairman countered the remark, saying that there is tax evasion in every country of the world. "We also have this and our laws are very much capable of preventing tax evasion."

The IMF advisor also expressed his dissatisfaction over the failure to achieve the target of tax collection. But this is not the end, there are scopes to improve," he said.

In August this year, NBR collected Tk 2561 crore as revenue as against Tk 2391 crore in the same month last year. "The amount is 10 per cent higher this year," the NBR chairman said.

The revenue collection in July and August this year was Tk 5007.5 crore, which is Tk 447.70 crore more than the same period last year.

Israel starts to lift

FROM PAGE 20 of 1500 GMT at the country's only international airport in Beirut.

"Lebanon opens up to the world once again," trumpeted the front-page headline on the French-language L'Orient Le Jour.

The move marked a victory for UN chief Kofi Annan who piled the pressure on Israel during a tour of the region, and was welcomed by Lebanese politicians and business leaders who said it would help breathe life into an economy shattered by the 34-day war.

As part of the UN-brokered ceasefire deal that took effect on August 14, expanded UN peacekeeping forces are being deployed in south Lebanon and will also be stationed off the coast and at Beirut international airport to prevent weapons smuggling to Hezbollah.

"It's extremely important for the government and the people of Lebanon," Annan said in Spain on the latest leg of his tour. "Now the government... and the Lebanese people can dedicate themselves again to reconstruction."

After talks in Beirut and Damascus, and ahead of a visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said it was time to work on a global solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"It is clear that only a comprehensive settlement involving all aspects of the situation will bring a lasting peace to the region," he said.

Israel slapped the blockade and bombed Beirut's airport runways on July 13—isolating Lebanon from the world -- a day after launching a massive offensive against Hezbollah following its capture of two soldiers in a deadly border raid.

"I kept up the restrictions despite the ceasefire and widespread international protests, saying it would only remove the blockade once it was sure Beirut was enforcing an arms embargo against Hezbollah."

On Wednesday it announced that US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Annan had informed Prime Minister Fuad Olmert that "international forces are ready to take up control positions over Lebanon's seaports and airports."

Lebanese officials had blasted the continuing blockade as a violation of UN Resolution 1701 that brought an end to the conflict in which more than 1,200 Lebanese, mostly civilians, and 160 Israelis, mostly soldiers, were killed.

The restrictions also had a devastating effect on the Lebanese economy.

Boy killed

FROM PAGE 20 die drug undercover and used Yasin for carrying drugs, said police.

The poor boy once sensed that his employers have been using him, in an unethical business. On Tuesday he refused to carry drugs anymore.

Nurul and Hossain then beat him up mercilessly and broke his hands and legs.

The poor father Amir could not treat his son until yesterday evening when the boy succumbed to his injuries.

After Amir filed a case in this connection, Demra police arrested the two employers.

1 killed, 100 hurt

FROM PAGE 20 workers when they attacked the on-duty law enforcers, eyewitnesses said.

Police and APBn members went into action at 11:00am when they came under attack by agitating workers near People's Jute Mills. Assistant Commissioner Zahur Chowdhury of Khulna Metropolitan Police said, adding that workers pelted them with stones and bricks recklessly.

Convener of Patkal Sangram Parishad Sarder Motaharuddin, on the other hand, said workers became furious when law enforcers chased them at the time of laying siege to People's Jute Mills as part of their movement for getting arrears wages and salaries of eight jute mills of Khulna-Jessore industrial belt.

Many shops and vehicles were damaged during the clashes. Unruly workers also damaged Khalishpur Wonderland, a recreation spot for children.

The fierce clashes disturbed normal life at Khalishpur and forced suspension of production at Khulna Hardboard Mill at 11:00am yesterday.

Workers and employees of eight

omy, which imports 85 per cent of its consumer goods.

On top of the destruction of infrastructure, estimated to have cost 3.5 billion dollars, Finance Minister Jihad Azour said the war and blockade had increased Lebanon's public debt to 41 billion dollars, more than twice gross domestic product of 18 billion dollars, he said.

Hasina

FROM PAGE 20 our party enjoys, the prime minister is desperate to hold an election," said Hasina, also president of AL.

She was addressing a view-exchange meeting with presidents and general secretaries of Dhaka metropolitan AL and front organisations. Former lawmakers of different city constituencies too attended the meeting held at the AL chief's Dhammondioffice.

Referring to the election of February 15, 1996, the former prime minister said, they (BNP) held the election without the major political parties but could not manage to cling on to power.

"The prime minister has long been conspiring to rig the upcoming polls as she already knows that her party is bound to lose the election. And having Enshad aboard the coalition won't make a difference at all," she said.

She said despite rigging in the 2001 election, AL won about 41 per cent of the vote. At least 15 per cent votes were stolen at every polling centre at that time, she added.

Hasina alleged that the Election Commission (EC) has again prepared a false voter list, bypassing the High Court directives. The next caretaker government cannot be neutral with justice KM Hasan being at its helm. It would rather be a B team of the ruling alliance, she observed.

On electoral reforms, she said the prime minister will be forced to accept the reform proposals.

The opposition leader directed them to go all out to ensure that tomorrow's hartal, laying siege to Prime Minister's Office on September 12 and the grand rally on September 18 are successful.

AL acting general secretary Obaidul Quader, Tofail Ahmed, Kazi Zafarullah, Abdul Rahman, Abdul Mannan, Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, among others, were present at the meeting.

Shab-e-Barat

FROM PAGE 1 separate messages felicitating the Muslims on the occasion.

Bangladesh Television (BTV), Bangladesh Betar and private television channels will air special programme and newspapers will publish articles highlighting the significance of the Shab-e-Barat, the night of fortune.

Islamic Foundation and other socio-religious organisations have arranged discussions, Qurankhawni, waz mahfil and milad.

On the holy night, the Muslims will distribute food and sweets among the neighbours and the poor.

jute mills have been on indefinite strike since Wednesday demanding arrears wages and salaries.

They have cut off water supply and electricity connection for the families of the mill officials and deprived them of essential services including use of official transport since Wednesday as pressure tactics to realise their demands.

Huge security forces have been deployed at tense Khalishpur industrial belt.

Earlier on Wednesday evening, pitched battles between law enforcers and unruly workers at Khalishpur and Daulatpur left at least 30 people injured.

UNB adds: Around 20,000 workers of seven jute mills in Sitakundi Industrial Area blocked the Dhaka-Chittagong highway for eight hours yesterday, disrupting traffic on the busy route to the seaport.

Sources said the workers put up barricades on the highway at 8:00am demanding payment of all arrears.