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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**EC directives**  
 The Election Commission (EC) has asked the electoral enquiry committees to monitor today's polls and inform the Commission immediately if there are any irregularities. In a circular yesterday, the Election Commission gave the directives to the enquiry committees of 64 districts. The committees have been asked to fax to the EC reports of any incident of ballot stuffing, fake voting or illegal influence in voting process, reports UNB.

**Bombs hurled at DU VC's residence**  
 By DU Correspondent  
 Unidentified persons exploded at least 13 bombs in front of the official residence of Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University Prof Ema-juddin Ahmed yesterday evening. Three bombs were exploded at around 7:15 pm while 10 bombs about half an hour later. The VC, however, could not be contacted.

**City AL public meet tomorrow**  
 The Dhaka City unit of the Awami League will hold a public meeting in front of the Jatiya Press Club at 2:30 pm tomorrow. City unit president Mohammad Hanif and General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya yesterday requested the party leaders, workers and the people to attend the meeting, reports UNB.

**Four arms seized**  
 The law enforcing agencies yesterday, the 55th day of country-wide illegal arms recovery drive, recovered four fire arms, 35 bullets and 34 explosives from different parts of the country.

**Sehri, Iftar timings**

Ram	Feb	Sehri	Iftar
25	15	—	5:57
26	16	5:11	5:58
27	17	5:19	6:58

## Polls today amid Opposition boycott



Army personnel with machine guns were deployed at important points in the city yesterday on the eve of the elections. — Star photo

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 The country goes to polls today to elect its Sixth Jatiya Sangsad amid tight security and boycott by major opposition parties.  
 The polling begins at 8 am and will continue till 4 pm without any break.  
 The polls will be held in 250 of the 300 constituencies of the 330-member parliament. Thirty seats reserved for women will be filled up by the majority party after the polls.  
 In 60 constituencies, 48 candidates, including Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and some ministers, have been elected unopposed. Election to one seat has been cancelled and to another postponed.  
 In the 250 constituencies, 1,450 candidates are contesting. Of them, 993 are nominees of 41 political parties, including 300 of the ruling BNP. The remaining 457 are independent candidates.  
 The Election Commission (EC) has set up 21,106 polling stations and some 98,710 booths. Nearly 45 million voters out of a total of about 56.16 million are in the 250 constituencies.  
 The EC had earlier appointed 66 returning officers in 64 districts, 506 assistant returning officers and 3,17,236 polling officers to conduct the polls.  
 Administrative cadre officials and employees and teachers of schools and colleges have, however, threatened to abstain from performing their election duties. They cited insecurity because of the oppositions call for boycotting the polls.  
 The opposition parties boycotting the elections, especially Awami League, have called for a 'people's curfew' on the election day today and urged people to stay indoors.  
 Some 20 people, including four policemen, were killed in pre-polls violence across the country.  
 Meanwhile, the EC has deployed army, BDR and huge contingents of police and ansar forces to maintain law and order during voting.  
 Today is a public holiday.  
 In an address to the nation over radio and television yesterday evening, Chief Election Commissioner Justice AKM Sadeque said that all preparations were taken to ensure smooth voting at 21,106 polling stations across the country.  
 See Page 12 col 8

**Many polling centres yet to receive ballot boxes, papers**  
**By Staff Correspondent**  
 A number of polling centres in the country did not receive any ballot boxes and papers due to resistance from opposition workers yesterday while in many areas, polling officials declined to perform their duties, reports received from our correspondents said.  
 In Sherpur, five TNO offices failed to despatch ballot boxes and papers to the polling centres under the thanas concerned as the Opposition workers kept the offices gheraoed since yesterday evening. The gherao continued till the filing of this report at midnight, reports our correspondent.  
 DC of Brahmanbaria Golam Kibria, talking to The Daily Star, said that ballot papers could not be sent to polling centres in Brahmanbaria, Cosha and Bancharampur thanas due to Opposition's resistance.  
 In Meherpur, 45 presiding officers have urged the authorities to withdraw them from election duty after some of their colleagues were kidnapped in Sadar and Gangni thanas yesterday.  
 In Kurigram, election officials were seen yesterday.  
 See Page 12 col 7

## Violence marks first day of hartal 4 die, 200 injured

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 One person was shot dead in Chittagong and at least 200 people were injured in clashes between pro and anti-election activists and other incidents of violence in different places in the country yesterday, the first day of the Opposition-called two-day country-wide hartal.  
 Nuruddin (25), an Awami League activist died on the spot when he was shot by some unidentified persons while he was hurling a bomb at the residence of Sheikh Shahnewaz Montu, a BNP candidate elected unopposed.  
 Three more persons died, one in Chittagong while carrying a bomb and two others in Khulna while making bombs.  
 Pankaj Shil died in Chittagong when the bomb he was carrying in his pocket exploded.  
 In Khulna, Shahidul Islam (19), a Chhatra League activist and Monirul Kabir, a JCD activist died when the bombs they were making exploded in separate incidents in Khalishpur yesterday.  
 In the mounting anti-election violence, Opposition activists torched at least a dozen polling centres, attacked 4 TNO offices, kidnapped 8 polls officials and snatched away ballot boxes in different districts including Chittagong, Narayanganj, Brahmanbaria, Kishoreganj, Lalmonirhat, Pabna and Khulna.  
 UNB news agency reported from Chittagong that eight polling centres were torched there by anti-election activists.  
 See Page 12 Col 3

## US Congressman concerned at Bangladesh situation

**WASHINGTON, Feb 14:** US representative Sherrod Brown, a Democrat from Ohio and a member of the Asia and Pacific Sub-Committee, has expressed his concern that the process of democratic evolution in Bangladesh could be slowed and might be even damaged by intractable attitudes in some political quarters, reports BSS.  
 In a recent statement the US congressman has urged all sides in the political dispute in Bangladesh to support unequivocally the concept of democracy. 'Democracy is never easy and is often painful. We have had to learn that lesson repeatedly in the past', he said.  
 See Page 12 Col 2

## Boycott elections, urges Opposition

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 The Opposition has called for a 'people's curfew' today to protest holding of what it termed 'one-party farcical parliamentary polls'.  
 The main opposition parties — Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-Islami had already called a 48-hour hartal starting from yesterday.  
 The opposition demanding vote under a neutral non-party caretaker government asked the people not to go to the polling centres.  
 'People's curfew will be imposed on all the 68,000 villages of the country. None will go to polling centres, none will come out of doors,' main opposition leader and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina said.  
 Meanwhile, sporadic cocktail blasts were heard in different parts of the city which continued till midnight last night.  
 On the eve of polls Sheikh Hasina urged the countrymen to boycott today's 'farcical election' and the voters not to recognise this vote.  
 'Those who killed the democracy have no right to stage any farce in the name of holding so-called election today', she said.  
 See Page 12 Col 1

## DMP requisitions 250 vehicles

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has requisitioned at least 250 buses and trucks for patrol duty in the city on the election day today, according to sources in the DMP.  
 Today is the last-day of the Opposition-called two-day country-wide hartal to protest holding of the election.  
 A number of minibuses, buses and trucks were seen parked at the ground of Rajbargh police station yesterday.  
 Vehicles have also been requisitioned in other districts across the country, sources said.  
 The bus owners are paid Tk 500 and the driver Tk 50 for each day, the source added.  
 The requisition of trucks has badly affected transportation of goods and essentials across the country. Supply of newspaper from the Khulna Newsprint Mills has also been affected, said its managing director AEM Eshaque.  
 See Page 12 col 7

## Army may be sent back to barracks on Feb 17 CEC fears low turnout of voters

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) yesterday feared that there would be a poor turnout of voters due to the prevailing political situation in the country.  
 The Election Commission (EC) will perform its duty and tell the world exactly how many votes have been cast. Even if the ballot box is empty we will also tell that, the CEC said.  
 There cannot be a normal turnout of voters at the polling centres when people are being resisted on the streets, the CEC said while talking to a group of newsmen at his office.  
 The CEC, Justice AKM Sadeque, termed the existing situation as unfortunate and said when many countries were moving from autocracy to multi-party democracy, 'our country is heading towards autocracy from a multi-party democracy.'  
 The CEC said 'his office has taken every step to ensure a fair election. He also added that he was talking to every Deputy Commissioner in the country and directing them to take every precautionary step against 'stuffing of ballot boxes'.  
 Answering a question, the CEC said that the army may be asked to go back to the barracks two days after the elections.  
 He said he had instructed that the army should act upon advice of the civil officials who would coordinate their activities.  
 The army would have to seek permission from magistrates before taking any action, the CEC said.  
 In response to a question whether actions would be taken against any officials not turning up for election duty, the CEC said that his office would first determine whether the circumstances permitted the official to come to the duty or not.  
 'If the situation did not allow the official to come to duty, in that case I will consider. But if it is found that he had any political bias, he will face action', Justice Sadeque said.  
 When contacted the Election Commissioner, Justice Md A. Jallil told The Daily Star last night that the EC had made arrangements for substitute election officials.  
 When asked how these 'substitutes' could conduct the polls without any prior training, Justice Jallil said that the EC had taken the necessary steps.  
 See Page 12 col 7

## Illegal aliens: Clinton signs new order

**WASHINGTON, Feb 14:** In a step to curb illegal immigration, President Bill Clinton yesterday signed an order barring US companies that knowingly employ illegal aliens from receiving government contracts, reports AFP.  
 American jobs belong to America's legal workers, Clinton said in a statement. This executive order will make clear that when it comes to enforcing our nation's immigration laws, we mean business, he said.  
 Clinton had announced the measure in his state of the union address on January 23.  
 Campaigning for the November presidential elections has lent additional weight to the already sensitive issue, particularly in California, Florida and Texas, the three states that have the strongest voting power.  
 California and Texas both border Mexico, and Florida has a large number of immigrants from Caribbean and Latin American nations.  
 One of the leading candidates for the Republican vote, ultra-conservative commentator Pat Buchanan, has been campaigning on an anti-immigration America-first platform.  
 Buchanan took second place in Monday's straw polls of Republican voters at their Iowa caucuses, boosted by the  
 See Page 12 col 7

## Repatriation of Chakmas after elections

**AGARTALA, Feb 14:** The third phase of repatriation of Chakma refugees, now sheltered in six evacuee camps in south Tripura district would begin immediately after the election process in Bangladesh is over, official sources said here today, reports PTI.  
 The sources said, the Chakma refugees had expressed their willingness to return to their homeland, the Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT), in neighbouring Bangladesh following an  
 See Page 12 Col 2

## Rain threatens today's tie



**OFF SHE GOES!** Man-of-the-match New Zealand opener Nathan Astle dismisses England paceman Darren Gough (not in the picture) over the long on region for a huge six. New Zealand won by 11 runs. (Details on page 10). — AFP/UNB photo

**MTV promises not to go 'vulgar'**  
 Sports Reporter

**NEW DELHI, Feb 14:** Music television, popularly known as MTV, which launched a 24-hour music V-video entertainment channel last month in the country, today promised that its programmes would not be vulgar and be more India specific, reports PTI.  
 The channel now being beamed by the American satellite Pas-4 would be available through cable network and on the S-band, MTV Asia's vice-president, Ms Chandani Sahgal told a press conference here at the office.  
 See Page 12 col 7

## Schools in Lanka closed fearing LTTE attack

**COLOMBO, Feb 14:** The Sri Lankan cabinet today ordered all schools closed until further notice because of fears of attack by Tamil tiger rebels, a cabinet source said, reports Reuters.  
 The move comes amidst rumours sweeping Colombo that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) might target a Sinhalese school in their campaign for a separate homeland.  
 AFP adds: police and the  
 See Page 12 Col 1

## BCI set to emerge as bank

**Star Report**  
 After a long period of closure and uncertainty, the Bangladesh Commerce and Investment (BCI) bank is set to emerge as a full-fledged commercial bank under the new name — Bangladesh Commerce Bank Ltd.  
 An Ordinance regarding its floating was authorised on January 16 and a new Managing Director has already been appointed and a chairman was designated. However, the government is yet to constitute the board of directors of the bank through gazette notification.  
 The bank will have an authorised capital of Taka 200 crore and a paid up capital of Taka 92 crore.  
 The paid up capital will be distributed between three categories of shareholders, according to official sources.  
 The government has decided to restructure the non-banking financial institution, BCI, after four years when it went bust after severe liquidity crisis and financial mismanagement. The investment company had 24 branches with 600 employees. Following the closure of the BCI, the directors including its chairman, a former Awami League MP, were arrested by the police.  
 In the first category of shareholders, the sponsors will infuse Taka 20 crore.  
 See Page 12 Col 1

**Rajuk Commercial Plot AUCTION NOTICE**  
 Most suitable Commercial-cum-Residential Plot No 16 Road No-2 Sector No-3 having road facilities on three sides measuring more or less 650 Sq metre (9 katha 11 chattak) and Plot No 7, Sector No-6 on Shah Jalal Avenue measuring more or less 948 sqr metre (14 katha 2 chattak) of Uttara Model Town, Dhaka will be allotted for 99 years lease on open auction.  
 Applications on prescribed form with terms and conditions to be obtained from Sonali Bank, Rajuk Bhaban Branch, Dhaka on payment of Tk 500/- (Five hundred) only in cash for each set (non-refundable) and will be received by the Deputy Director (Estates) from the intending bidders up to 2-00 PM on 27-2-96.  
 The auction will be held on 28-2-96 in the Conference room 3rd floor of the Rajuk Bhaban, Dhaka at 10.00 AM.  
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