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VOL. VI NO. 136 REGD. NO. DA 781 JAISHTHA 24, 1403 BS, DHAKA FRIDAY, JUNE 7 1996 MOHARRAM 19, 1417 HIJRI 12 PAGES REGULAR PLUS MAGAZINE: PRICE TAKA 8.00

Magazine

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DSE price index 886.33 (+0.66%)
Market capital Tk 6018.17 cr
Transactions in volume 163635
Transactions in value Tk 4.12 cr

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NEWS BRIEFS

Court holiday

June 12

Bangladesh Supreme Court and all lower courts and their offices will remain closed on June 12 on the occasion of national election. The Chief Justice yesterday announced the holiday for both the divisions of the Supreme Court, its offices, lower courts and their offices, said an official handout, reports UNB.

Peace procession in city today

Citizens for Democracy, Bangladesh will bring out a peace procession today to create public awareness for maintaining peace on June 12, said a press release yesterday. The procession will start at 9 am from the National Press Club. All citizens have been requested to participate in the procession, reports BSS.

Arms smuggler held in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, June 6: Detectives of Chittagong Metropolitan Police arrested one Mohammad Ilyas, an alleged arms smuggler from a shop at Agrabad here yesterday. According to DB sources today, Mohammad Ilyas was wanted on charges of illegal arms deal in the border areas of the country.

Postal holiday

The post offices throughout the country will remain closed on June 12 on the occasion of the parliamentary election. But the post offices which have GEP/EMS services will remain open to continue the services, said an official handout yesterday.

ADB study reveals

Urban poverty goes up by 14pc in 5 yrs

By R M Titumir

A country-wide sample survey, conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), has revealed an escalation of urban poverty by more than 14 per cent over the last five years.

The final draft of the "Study of Urban Poverty in Bangladesh" showed that 61.30 per cent of the urban population were below the 'absolute' poverty line while 40.20 per cent fell below the 'hardcore' poverty line. The corresponding figures for 1991 were 46.70 and 26.2 respectively.

The study measured poverty line, based on income/

expenditure related to daily normative calorie intake plus 25 per cent adjustment for non-food items. The absolute poverty line was determined at Taka 3,500 per household per month with Taka 2,500 as the poverty line for the hardcore poor.

The questionnaire was administered to a 'nationally representative' sample of 3,000 households from Dhaka, three other metropolitan cities (Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi), four secondary towns (Barisal, Sylhet, Dinajpur and Tangail) and two towns (Habiganj and Panchgaj).

During the last five years, only 26 per cent of the households perceived their economic condition to have improved, for another 26 per cent situation had remained the same while for 47 per cent the status had worsened, the other one per cent was uncertain about any change.

Nearly 21 per cent of the households believed that their economic condition had improved over that of their parents, but 56 per cent said it had worsened, for the rest it either had remained the same or uncertain.

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Party leaders say they would respect polls results: Shafie

By M Anwarul Haq



Shafie making a point during the interview yesterday

The leader of the 12-member Commonwealth election observers team has expressed the hope that all parties contesting the coming parliamentary polls would abide by the election code of conduct and respect the verdict of the people given through the ballot.

In an interview with The Daily Star yesterday at the Sheraton office of the Commonwealth team, Dr. Tan Sri Md Ghazali Shafie stressed the need for peaceful holding of the polls and fairness of the electoral process.

Dr. Ghazali Shafie, who is a former foreign minister of Malaysia, said that all members of the Commonwealth team were already familiarising themselves with the election laws of Bangladesh and the code of conduct.

"Every country has its own

election laws and so do you. And one of the primary concern is to see that the election code is being strictly adhered to by the political parties and the Election Commission," he said.

Dr. Shafie said leaders of some political parties including Awami League, BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and the Communist Party had already met him yesterday and he was open about exchanging views with leaders of all other parties also.

He noted that having talked with the leaders of political parties he felt they had some misgivings, but he did not elaborate. But he hastened to add, "That is not our concern. Moreover, all the leaders who had met me had given the assurance that they would respect

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Goods train derails in Sylhet, rail link snapped

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, June 6: The train communication of Sylhet with Dhaka and Chittagong has been suspended after the derailment of 15 bogies of a goods train at Ponaichak near Shibbari, about 400 yards from the Sylhet railway station this afternoon.

According to railway officials, two oil tankers were badly damaged as a result of which a huge quantity of kerosene oil leaked out. Railway track along more than 500 yards has also been damaged badly.

Official sources said, the goods train 'SS-1' was on its way to Sylhet from Akhaura. Fifteen bogies including two oil tankers out of the total 37 bogies were derailed.

The cause of the accident could not be ascertained immediately.

The Divisional Traffic Officer and the Divisional Manager from Dhaka visited the spot tonight. Movement of all trains on the Dhaka-Sylhet and Sylhet-Chittagong sections has been suspended. A relief train from Kulaura junction reached the spot and started repair of rail tracks.

Polls monitors from SAARC countries start arriving

By Staff Correspondent

Some of the 40-member South Asian non-government team of observers have already arrived in the city to monitor the June 12 parliamentary elections, says a press release of the Non-Government Election Observers from SAARC based at Dhaka Sheraton.

The mission is coordinated by the International Center for Ethnic Studies (ICES) and the delegates include eminent judges, parliamentarians, journalists, diplomats, civil servants, academics and constitutional lawyers. The mission coordinator from Sri Lanka and eight of the delegates from Pakistan have arrived, the release confirmed.

Historic June 7 today

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League and its front organisations will observe the 'Historic 7th June' today to pay rich tributes to those who had sacrificed their lives for the realisation of six-point demand and release of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1966.

On this day in 1966, a number of political activists were killed by the then Pakistani government of Ayub Khan as Bengalees gave a call for a general strike and tried to organize a rally demanding realization of the six-point demand and release of its architect, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

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One more accused in Shahabuddin killing arrested

Star Report

Shihazul Huq alias Zulu, 28, on other man accused in the killing of city Awami League leader and ward commissioner ASM Shahabuddin, was arrested from Agargaon area in the city last night.

Zulu was hit in his head during an exchange of fire between his gang and detective police near the Planning Commission Office at around 9 pm, said a senior police official.

He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Under the custody of Detective Branch (DB). No major operation would be needed for the injury, police and DMCH sources said late last night.

Zulu was named as number three among the 10 accused in the FIR filed with Mohanmadpur police in connection

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Prisoners released

Star Report

A number of prisoners have already been released from different jails in the country under the government decision on remission of sentences.

The government had earlier announced remission of prison terms for certain categories of prisoners.

A few thousand prisoners in different jails would now walk to freedom, some officials pointed out.

"A section of the prisoners enlisted to be given benefit of the announcement has already been released and the others in the list would be freed within a couple of days," said

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Commentary

ISPR's lessons on logic and patriotism

By Mahfuz Anam

According to the Inter Service Public Relation (ISPR) press release of 5 June most of what has been published in the newspapers concerning the events of 18-20 May — reports, write-ups, editorials and comments — are all illogical, ill-informed and misleading. According to ISPR, these writings might create "misunderstanding in the public mind" and so it "urges all patriotic citizens to desist from creating unnecessary debates and making illogical comments." What is more, the press handout is full of innuendos that those who have written on this subject are unpatriotic, indirectly hinting that our sovereignty and independence are being compromised because of them. The press release says, "It is regrettable but true that various questions are being raised by some people without knowing fully the rules and regulations of the army and despite the fact that a detailed explanation had been given on the matter earlier." The ISPR adds that "Such things are not desirable from patriotic citizens."

We object to both the text and the tone of the ISPR. First, about not knowing army rules and regulations. How can we know? Are we ever told anything about our army, except when things go wrong or when they decide to take power?

We are never given any information except of very ceremonial nature. As taxpayers and upkeepers of our army we are never told how our money is being spent. Even in our

parliament we never had any fruitful discussion about our armed forces. When we express legitimate concern about a certain action — like making the public the Court of Enquiry's report — and its possible impact on the elections, then our patriotism is indirectly questioned. If we, as citizens of a democratic country, do not know enough about army rules and regulations it is because of bodies like ISPR which never tells us anything. And once it does, it expects us to swallow everything like school kids, and then we are threatened with all sorts of consequences if we express any further curiosity.

Even in the press release under discussion, in which the ISPR castigates all newspapers of being ignorant about army rules and regulations it does not bother to tell us anything new, or answer any of the questions we have raised, for example under what army rules the former CAS and other high ranking officers are being held, what is it that they are charged with, under what rules the Court of Enquiry is working and what is its terms of reference.

Public speculation only takes place in the absence of proper and full information. It also takes place in the absence of proper briefing by appropriate bodies. For example in-

stead of reprimanding us, the press release could have tried to answer some of the questions we had raised. Concretely why is the ISPR silent on when the Enquiry Court's report is due, where it will be submitted and what possible actions can follow. Is the ISPR not aware that there are lots of questions in the public mind which it is its duty and obligation to answer.

The press write-ups have been termed 'illogical' and yet no example have been given as to where and how these writings have violated the norms of logic, about which ISPR seems to claim a monopoly.

What we find so insidious and utterly unacceptable is that just because some people have written about these events their patriotism should be questioned. It is the usual tactics of military governments to claim monopoly of patriotism for themselves and accuse anybody who thinks differently of being 'disloyal' and worse 'unpatriotic'. We have lived under that tyranny both under Pakistan military dictators and their Bangladeshi versions. It appears that ISPR has not awakened to the fact that democracy has been restored in this country in '91, and that now people expect far more transparency and openness from every institution in the

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'BNP lacked strength to pass caretaker bill in 5th JS'

BOGRA, June 6: BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia charged some parties with boycotting the fifth parliament on illogical and unjustified grounds, reports UNB.

She was addressing a huge public meeting at Altafunessa play ground this evening.

The former Prime Minister pleaded her party's inability to bring in a legislation to amend the Constitution providing for election under a caretaker government in fifth parliament due to the fact that her party had not the requisite two-third majority.

Despite her repeated entreaties to the then Opposition in fifth parliament to return to the House to help her pass the necessary legislation, they refused to extend to her their cooperation.

Speaking in justification of February 15 polls the former Prime Minister said it would not have been possible to maintain the continuity of

constitutional process required for ushering in a caretaker government to hold election.

She said her party had not transgressed the limit imposed by the Constitution. Whatever we have done, we have done by staying within the bounds of the Constitution, Begum Zia added.

She noted with satisfaction that nobody could throw her party out of power. "We have transferred power within the framework of the Constitution which is an example without a parallel in the history of Bangladesh," she said.

Begum Zia claimed that the BNP had safeguarded democracy and the Constitution from the onslaught of undemocratic forces. "Now it is time for you to take correct decision and cast your votes accordingly in the next election."

No party has done for Bogra what the BNP has done, she claimed. Various parties have

talked variously about bridges over the Jamuna, but we have started the bridge and completed 40 per cent of the project within our tenure of office. If we returned to power, we shall complete rest of the work she assured.

She said Bogra was the birth place of late President Ziaur Rahman and hoped people would vote for sheer of paddy so that BNP candidates returned to parliament from all seven seats in the district.

Begum Zia today also addressed wayside meetings at Sariakandi, Sherpur, Shibganj, Nandigram and Gabtoli and introduced her party candidates at these meetings.

Addressing an election rally at Sirajganj midnight Wednesday the BNP Chairperson said the BNP by no means sought votes to merely perpetuate its rule, but to free the country from shackles of foreign domination.

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AL promises 'non-communal political system' in country

CHALNA BAZAR (Khulna), June 6: Awami League President Sheikh Hasina today declared that if voted to power in the June 12 elections, her party would build up a 'non-communal political system' and introduce pension scheme for elderly farmers, reports UNB.

"We want to establish a non-communal political system under which all citizens irrespective of caste and creed will be treated equally," she told a big public meeting in this remotest area of Khulna district.

Hasina had a 2-hour journey on bumpy roads and crossed two rivers to reach this tiny rural market place, near the Sundarbans, in Dakope thana.

Dakope and Batiaghata thanas comprise the Khulna-1 constituency from where she is contesting the election, besides two other constituencies. In the final leg of her 3-day

election trip to the southern parts of Bangladesh, the Awami League Chief extensively toured the three constituencies — Khulna-1, Bagerhat-1 and Gopalganj-3 — from where she is contesting. She also travelled to some other constituencies in the area campaigning for the party candidates.

During the tour, Hasina told the electorates that the Awami League is committed to end all discriminations, poverty and social injustice, and build a happy, prosperous country.

Hasina said that given the people's mandate in the election, the Awami League would introduce an economic policy which would be conducive to industrialisation and would encourage foreign investments to generate employment for the countrymen.

The basic infrastructural sectors, which have remained so poor for years, will be given

due emphasis. Power facilities will be made available throughout the country within 10 years... country's ports, roads, highways, bridges, culverts, schools and colleges will be developed.

At the same time, she continued, the social sectors would be given highest priority. Healthcare facilities would be provided to all the citizens and the country freed from illiteracy within the shortest possible time, she said.

Hasina, elaborating on the other programmes of the Awami League, said elected representatives would be placed at the union, upazila and thana levels to involve the grassroots people in the development process.

Launching a blistering attack on her main rivals, the Awami League chief said that during its five-year-rule, the ousted BNP government had

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A day-long visit to Dhaka-9 Record number of candidates, hectic polls campaign

By Reaz Ahmad

An election fever has gripped Dhaka-9 constituency in the city (Dhanmondi-Mohammadpur) as the campaigning by some prominent political figures including chiefs of two political parties evoked much enthusiasm.

Other than the four candidates from the four major parties — BNP, Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami — there are at least two prominent candidates in the race in Dhaka-9 seat from where a record number of 24 candidates are contesting, four of them are independents.

Talking to a number of voters from this constituency yesterday, this correspondent got an impression that the recent

killing of a ward commissioner in the area would have some effect on the polls in the seat.

Alleged involvement of the candidate of a major party in the incident may also have some impact on the voting, some local people said.

Despite all these, electioneering by major contenders from this seat reached a new height as a large number of female political workers were seen making hectic door-to-door campaigns in favour of different candidates.

Two candidates also took part in a recent dialogue session organised by a private platform of women in the city. They faced many election-re-

lated queries at the session that was attended by many voters from the constituency.

BNP fielded its city unit president Mir Shawkat Ali in Dhaka-9 constituency. He was elected in the 1991 parliamentary polls from Dhaka-8 seat. Awami League replaced its '91 nominee from Dhaka-9 seat Begum Sajeda Chowdhury by Alhaj Mokbul Hussain to face the challenge in the fray. Kazi Firoz Rashid of Jatiya Party and Md Nazrul Islam of Jamaat are also seen strong candidates from the seat.

Besides, President of Gano Forum Dr Kamal Hossain, who vied on AL ticket from Dhaka-11 constituency in the 1991

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Violence dampens election mood in Chittagong

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, June 6: Sporadic incidents of gunfights, bomb blasts and clashes during the last one week leaving two persons killed and many others injured, according to police and hospital sources.

Hardly any day passes now without a single incident of violence. This has created a panicky situation for both candidates and the voters.

Such incidents of violence had dampened the election mood raising concern among all quarters, observed some candidates.

Expressing his reaction over the recent pre-polls violence in Chittagong, BNP's city convenor and contestant from Ctg-1 (Anwar) constituency Ahsan Rahman Kaiser talking to this correspondent expressed apprehension about holding of election properly here due to the continuation of violence.

Effective measures were not taken by the administration to round up the terrorists and recover illegal arms from their possession, he said.

Police officials here said, terrorists were not yet arrested and illegal arms in their possession are yet to be recovered.

Noman added: "As a result, I am in doubt about holding of peaceful election here if the administration does not take prompt and adequate measure to ensure law and order."

Awami League's central finance secretary and contestant from Ctg-1 (Anwar) constituency Ahsan Rahman Kaiser talking to this correspondent expressed apprehension about holding of election properly here due to the continuation of violence.

special measures were taken to hold peaceful election by maintaining law and order. They claimed that some illegal arms were already recovered and the process was on.

A senior police official opined that recent spate of violence here carried an indication of tough contests among the candidates of major political parties.

In a press briefing recently, SP of Chittagong police Abdul Rauf admitted the availability of huge quantity of illegal arms here.

According to police and other sources, the areas which already witnessed pre-polls violence include Sandwip, Raozan, Rangunia, Patiya, Chandgonj, Kotwali and Doublomongor.

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