

Metropolitan

Bar Council workshop on election monitoring

Dhaka Day by Day

A special Kind of School

by Tanya Mahnaz Huq

Every morning from Saturday to Thursday, between 9:30 and 11:00, a special kind of school sits on the first floor of the TSC building on the DU campus. The class-room is medium-sized with ragged carpets on the floor, no chairs or desks) and the students are the homeless children of the streets namely the 'tokats'. This is an 'Orko' — a school for the underprivileged children, run by a group of enterprising students of the Dhaka University. The school was first started in May '95 by the Chhatria Union with only 4-6 students. A month later Shapon, a master student of the Economics Department took over from them, and he, along with Kanta, Shuman Zahid and Rumana, all of whom are university students, run the school.

The students of the school are basically homeless kids who have arrived in the metropolis from Chandpur and Comilla. Most are without families and earn their living on the streets. These university students, by giving them some sort of education, try to prepare them for the future. Speaking to Shapon, one learns that now there are about 40 students in the school — all aged between 6-13 years old. The school is divided into three

classes, named Ankur (which is the equivalent to play group) Kisholoy (equivalent to kg) and Disha (equivalent to classes 1 to 5).

The books are all given by Shapon and his friends. He proudly claims that the school is run completely by themselves, it is not under an NGO. Even if they take donations sometimes, their condition is only the money; the donors are not allowed to exert any kind of authority over the running of the school. The room has been given by the TSC people, though at the beginning they faced problems from this area too. Food is not given to the students except on special occasions. But, according to Shapon and the others, the main problem is the kids themselves. They just don't give priority to the school; they attend a few classes and then disappear for days. These young people run the school almost entirely out of their own pockets, but in their own words, 'we don't believe that we are doing anything particularly great; instead of spending all our free time gossiping away, we spend a few hours every day teaching these deprived children and this makes us feel as if we are helping society even if it is in a small way.'



Different kind of schooling.

Of colour and language of posters

By Staff Correspondent

Most political parties are by and large abiding by the election code of conduct at least by not printing any multicoloured election posters.

But there are some exceptions.

The BNP recently released some colourful posters with photographs of its founder late President Ziaur Rahman and Begum Zia, the party chief on the occasion of his death anniversary.

Another multi-coloured poster on the city walls with photographs of 1974 famine in the country, attributed to no party, reads, 'Does the Awami League have the ability to govern the country?'

An Awami League candidate put up a multi-coloured poster long before the campaign began. The poster asks for no vote but carries a message, 'we want a terrorism free society'.

Some BNP and Awami League candidates, including BNP's Gen Mir Shakwati and AL's Dr HBM Iqbal have however tried to add colour to their black and white posters by using special device and high-quality printing.

According to some printers, the cost of printing such high quality black and white posters are no less than that of typical multi-coloured poster.

Although more than 25 different political parties and fronts have fielded 111 candidates in the eight constituencies in the city, posters of only four parties virtually occupy the walls. Other than these four parties — BNP, AL, Jatiya Party and Jamaat — posters of Gano Forum candidates Dr Kamal Hossain and Samiruddha Bangladesh Andolan candidate Salman F Rahman are seen on the walls.

Jamaat-e-Islami candidates have refrained from using their photographs in their posters. All Jamaat posters carry messages and the party symbol — the scale.

In Motijheel area Thursday evening, a specially decorated rickshaw driven by a 'rickshawpuller' clad in mijib coat, clean white panjabi and lungi carrying a life-size portrait of AL chief Sheikh Hasina inside it confused the people. They were amazed taking the portrait to be Sheikh Hasina. A closer look into the rickshaw revealed that it was not really Sheikh Hasina but her portrait, set in such a way that showed she was sitting inside.

The rickshaw was decorated with a paper boat atop its hood and some recorded songs were being played for campaign.

Peace rally

A peace rally was brought out in the city yesterday aiming at creating public awareness about maintaining peace and order in the Jatiya Sangsad elections, reports UNB.

Men and women of all walks of life and children of different ages joined the rally, organised by Citizen for Democracy, Bangladesh.

Districtwise list of voters, constituencies

Following is the districtwise list of total constituencies (seats) and voters for June 12 Jatiya Sangsad elections.

District	Seats	Voters	Male	Female
Panchagarh	2	576,920	184,673	190,247
Thakurgaon	3	562,473	277,938	274,535
Nilphamari	6	1,247,362	624,220	623,142
Leopardpur	4	723,085	361,485	361,600
Rangpur	3	1,201,494	608,763	603,131
Kurigram	4	654,198	320,181	334,007
Gazipur	5	1,052,083	516,177	533,906
Bohra	2	444,256	226,956	223,302
C. Noakhali	7	1,904,823	750,800	754,073
Chittagong	3	653,197	321,984	331,213
Naogaon	6	1,184,691	567,964	566,727
Rajshahi	5	1,083,799	587,579	546,219
Natore	4	732,304	363,654	366,650
Sirajganj	7	1,267,015	638,270	629,745
Petna	5	1,043,736	525,178	518,758
Khulna	2	298,023	149,346	148,677
Kushtia	4	840,594	422,934	417,660
Comilla	2	482,694	243,302	239,392
Jhenidah	4	700,177	350,876	355,301
Jessore	6	1,200,461	600,785	599,676
Mogra	2	386,653	192,915	193,738
Bagerhat	2	330,395	162,108	168,287
Kulna	4	706,266	351,950	354,316
Sethia	5	905,529	448,189	457,140
Borgama	3	395,964	193,749	202,212
Patuakhali	4	643,888	317,600	326,284
Biloia	4	668,284	344,817	323,467
Barisal	6	946,183	470,483	475,700
Bhola	2	282,454	138,581	143,873
Pirojpur	3	409,568	204,046	205,510
Inter-dist Pirojpur (Sari-Piroj)	1	166,726	81,552	84,674
Tangail	8	1,621,545	803,899	817,646
Jessipur	5	1,035,834	514,272	516,564
Sherpur	3	610,450	308,957	301,493
Myanmensingh	11	2,048,106	1,049,925	998,181
Inter-dist Myanmensingh (Mym-Netrokona)	1	208,875	104,849	104,026
Netrokona	4	808,445	408,809	399,636
Kishorganj	7	1,222,416	618,870	603,546
Manikganj	4	680,017	318,002	332,015
Naogaon	4	617,810	305,064	312,746
Khulna	13	3,386,359	1,699,675	1,490,684
Bogra	8	772,379	436,172	432,207
Narayanganj	5	907,401	476,023	434,267
Faridpur	2	444,615	223,723	220,892
Gopalganj	5	825,373	410,433	414,940
Madaripur	3	504,433	246,939	255,494
Shariatpur	3	513,366	255,808	257,558
Bunaganj	5	511,075	252,170	256,905
Sylhet	6	901,613	447,971	453,642
Moulvibazar	4	747,486	370,195	377,291
Barisal	4	812,624	398,999	413,625
Comilla	6	1,090,498	539,440	551,056
Chittagong	22	2,048,094	1,014,450	1,034,646
Feni	3	1,013,773	513,614	509,466
Noakhali	6	1,027,429	533,297	494,132
Laxampur	4	594,469	318,108	379,361
Cox's Bazar	15	2,919,753	1,487,444	1,332,307
Khagrachari HT	4	726,706	372,814	353,892
Rangamati HT	1	216,532	114,729	101,803
Bandarban HT	1	234,962	129,069	105,893
Total :	300	56,716,935	28,759,994	27,956,941

(Source: Election Research and Development Cell of Election Commission Secretariat).



Celebrated pop artiste Azam Khan holding aloft the crest awarded to him at a ceremony organised by the Coca-Cola in the city yesterday.

Govt making allout efforts to hold peaceful polls: Ishtiaq

Adviser for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed yesterday said, now there is no scope of any doubt that the elected representatives of people would come to power through the ensuing election, reported UNB.

The caretaker government is making allout efforts to hold the election in a free, fair, impartial and peaceful manner, he said in his speech as chief guest at the opening session of a workshop on election monitoring for lawyers here in the morning.

Barrister Ameerul Islam presented the keynote paper on the 'Role of Election and the Empowerment of People'.

Justice Kemal Uddin Hosain, Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, Justice Naimuddin Ahmed, Barrister Fakhrul Islam and Mahfuz Anam took part in the discussion. Chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council and Attorney General M Nurullah presided.

The day-long workshop, organised by Bangladesh Bar Council, was participated by lawyers from across the country. Two lawyers from each district later took part in the training session held in the afternoon at the Public Library auditorium.

Barrister Ishtiaq said nobody can win the election

through indiscipline, irregularities or acts of terrorism. 'Where such incidents will occur, the Election Commission will cancel the voting, whatever might be the number of centres,' he asserted.

The adviser said election monitoring and observation have become a part of the international electoral culture. This is why the caretaker government welcomed observer groups from home and abroad to monitor the coming election.

He made it clear that army will be deployed on the polling day to assist the civil administration as per the country's existing laws and under the supervision of the Election Commission.

Ishtiaq said the caretaker government is fully transparent. It has no secrets, nor has it done anything that could transgress the neutrality of the Election Commission which is working with complete independence.

Barrister Ameerul Islam, in his keynote paper, stated that election should be the means of empowerment of the people. But in our country, he said, it is always used as the means of going to power and the elected representatives

think that all powers vest in them through the mandate of the election.

He said elections had turned into a 'seasonal exercise' or 'ritualistic practice' in Bangladesh, and the electoral process and its sanctity and objectivity violated frequently.

Popular participation and true representation of people should be ensured in the polls for their empowerment, he added.

Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam accused the political parties of not exercising democracy in their respective parties. He emphasised on ensuring the central role of parliament, rather than the government, by strengthening the parliamentary system.

Round-table confce on the role of media

By Staff Correspondent

Media Watch, a research organisation for monitoring mass media and newspapers, will hold a round-table conference at the VIP lounge of the Jatiya Press Club on the role of media and its impact on conducting free and fair elections today, according to a press release issued yesterday.

The conference will be presided over by the president of the Jatiya Press Club and the Chief Editor of The Financial Express, Reazuddin Ahmed.

Other participants of the conference are Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, the Vice chancellor of the Dhaka University, Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, chairman of the Press Council, Barrister Moinul Hossain, chairman of the board of editors of the Daily Ittefaq, Shafiq Rehman, editor of the weekly Jay Din, Matiur Rahman of the Daily Bhorobor Kagoj, Mahbubul Alam, editor of The Independent.

To apply for a place in the course (or for further information), please write to: Head, Training & Education Department, ICDDR, B, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212 by July 10, 1996.

Applications must contain detailed education background, experience, current employment status, contact, telephone and fax number and a statement indicating how the knowledge and skills gained at the course will be utilized. Applications of the institutional candidates must be sent through proper channel.

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