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UZ polls: EC to watch political situation first

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission will monitor the political situation for a couple of weeks before deciding on holding Upazila Parishad elections.

The three-member Commission headed by Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena decided this at a meeting yesterday.

"The Commission will watch developments in the political arena to see whether a congenial atmosphere is there for holding the elections," said a top official of the EC Secretariat. "They would make a final decision about the polls in the mid-November."

The deadline for Upazila polls ends December 28.

The Commission, however, did not discuss anything about city corporation elections yesterday. EC sources said, adding that they are likely to discuss the issue in a day or two.

The deadline for holding See Page 11 Col 7

Ban on 16 companies may be lifted soon

The ban on transaction of shares of 16 listed companies will be withdrawn soon.

An official at Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) told UNB yesterday that it would consider permitting the 16 to come to the market at the request of Bangladesh Association of Stock Exchange Listed Companies.

They are also responding positively to the requirements needed to withdraw the ban, he said.

After an emergency meeting with the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), the DSE and CSE imposed the restriction on the sale of shares of the See Page 11 Col 3

8 addl judges of HC take oath

Five advocates of the Supreme Court Bar Association and three judicial officers yesterday took oath as additional judges of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court on a two-year term, reports BSS.

Chief Justice Mustafa Kamal administered the oath of office yesterday morning at his office. The lawyers who were appointed the High Court Judges are: Mohammad Abdul Rashid, Khademul Islam Chowdhury, Surendra Kumar Sinha, Mohammad Abdul Wahab Miah and Mohammad Momtazuddin Ahmed.

The three others, belonging to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs who took oath are: Sikder Moqbul Haque, the Secretary-in-Charge of the ministry, Mohammad Abdus Salam, the Solicitor (Joint Secretary) and Mohammad Arasuddin, a Joint Secretary.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed earlier appointed them as judges.

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Prayer Timings

October 25

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:40	5:20
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:00	4:15
Maghrib	5:32	5:37
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Used disposable syringes being imported, reused!

By Naimul Haq

Hundreds of thousands of pieces of used disposable plastic syringes are imported and marketed in the country.

At least 17 lakh pieces of such syringes from South Korea arrived at Chittagong Port recently. Many more such legal shipments arrive every year.

Around two lakh disposable syringes are used every day in the country, most of those imported. Disposable syringes are also manufactured locally.

According to sources concerned, local traders import used plastic syringes, mostly from South Korea, Malaysia and China. In the import documents, traders mention that the reason for importing these syringes is recycling the plastic material to manufacture other plastic items.

However, an investigation

by The Daily Star revealed that the syringes are cleaned without any safety precaution, packed in plastic containers without being sterilised and sold for huge profits.

Those packing and marketing such 'unhygienic' syringes said each imported syringe costs Tk 0.40 on an average. But they sell those in the wholesale market, mostly in Mitford, at a price of Tk 2.70 each. Ultimately, its retail price stands at about Tk 3 each.

According to experts, specially sterilised 'blister' and 'ribbon' packs are globally recommended and used for safety. The syringe should be 'properly discarded' after use so that it cannot be used again.

"This practice should be made mandatory for hospitals and clinics. Each hospital and

clinic must have devices to destroy the used syringes properly," said a leading physician.

There are at least two dozen 'factories', mostly in the old city, engaged in such trade. They open letters of credit to import used syringes at throw away prices. The syringes are regarded as 'garbage' in the countries those are made and exported for recycling the plastic," one source pointed out.

Import of such products is allowed by the commerce ministry and not the health ministry. "There is virtually no control over this. The issue of safety is not considered here. And for this, the business is going on unhindered," said a trader.

One such factory at Gandaria in the old city, which claimed it See Page 11 Col 3



Used disposable syringes being imported and marketed in the country.

— Star photo

WB reminds risks of investment in new pvt power projects

Star Report

World Bank representatives from Washington yesterday reiterated their stance on Bangladesh's power sector saying that the government was pursuing new private power projects without considering their negative impact on the balance of payment in the future.

The WB representatives yesterday met officials of Economic Relations Division (ERD) and the Power Development Board (PDB) to discuss various issues of the power sector.

The government officials began by expressing their grievances against the WB for withdrawing a decision to provide a risk guarantee to IFC for a loan for the 360-MW Haripur Power Project by US company

AES.

They told WB officials that Bangladesh's power sector needed investment and therefore had invited private companies to set up plants. The WB, which had not given any credit to the power sector of the country for nearly a decade now, should play a 'positive role' by providing the risk guarantee to IFC.

WB officials however reminded the ERD officials that the risks of investment in Bangladesh's power sector continued to be high as reform programmes, introduced in the early nineties, were going at a very slow pace.

They also observed that the level of system loss in the power

sector more or less remained at the same level as it was years ago.

The WB felt that the government must commit itself to expediting the reform programmes and improving the system loss status.

On the risk guarantee issue, WB maintained that Bangladesh had committed not to pursue new private projects as there were projects with 1330 MW capacity in the pipeline. Further projects would create heavy pressure on the foreign currency reserve of the country. Despite such a scenario, the government continued to pursue new ventures like the Meghnad-2, they said.

See Page 13 Col 8

Garbage dumped in front of Mir Nasir's house

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Oct 24: Huge quantities of garbage have been dumped in front of the residence of former Chittagong mayor and president of the BNP city committee Mir Md. Nasir Uddin at Chatteshari Road early this morning, family sources said.

Mir Nasir said Mayor A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury was behind the act committed when all his family members were asleep.

"In the morning, we could not go out as the stench-spreading rubbish was put on the premises of my house," Nasir told The Daily Star.

"It is the politics of perverted brains," the former mayor said and added that the present mayor had earlier threatened to dump garbage in my house.

He alleged that it was done to See Page 11 Col 6

20 hurt as police, pickets clash in Ctg during hartal

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 24: At least 20 people including six policemen were injured in pitch battles during today's dawn-to-dusk hartal here, police and witnesses said.

Of them, 10 were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital while the rest to private clinics.

Ten people were arrested from different parts of the port city during hartal hours.

A clash broke out in Chawkbazaar area at around 10am between pro-hartal pickets and

police when the latter chased some pickets, witnesses said.

Gunshots were fired and crackers exploded during the clash. Police fired from shotguns and lobbed teargas canisters to disperse the pro-hartal activists.

The situation was brought under control after half an hour, police said.

Another clash between police and pro-hartal activists took place in front of BNP office near Nur Ahmed Road at noon. See Page 11 Col 8

Holidays end, erratic power supply starts

By Staff Correspondent

The city suffered 100 megawatts (MW) of power shortage yesterday after having a comparatively better power supply during last few days.

A Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) official said the power situation in the last few days was better because of less demand as many mills, factories, business establishments and government offices remained closed due to holidays.

Mills, factories and shopping centres, which are the major electricity consumers, opened yesterday and the demand for power went up accordingly, the official said.

The power shortage occurred as DESA got 900 MW of electric-

ity from Power Development Board (PDB) against a requirement of 1,000 MW for the day, the DESA official added.

On the other hand, according to a PDB estimate the shortage in the country was only 84 MW. The PDB Control Room sources said DESA was asked to maintain 33 MW deficit in its command areas.

"Though the power supply from the PDB increased to 900 MW from usual allocation of 800 to 850 MW the DESA had to maintain some load shedding in its command areas," said a DESA official.

Apart from Dhaka metropolitan areas, DESA is See Page 11 Col 7

India readies track for railway link

CALCUTTA, Oct 24: The proposed railway link between India and Bangladesh through the Petrapole border was ready on the Indian side, according to railway board chairman V K Agarwal, reports PTL.

Railway tracks from Bongaon to Petrapole in north 24-Parganas district had been laid and the board, through the external affairs ministry, was in touch with the Bangladeshi authorities over formalities for track-laying up to the no-man's land.

Once the rail link was set up, goods train would be operated initially and subsequently passenger train services between the Bangladesh capital Dhaka and the Sealdah terminal here would begin. Agarwal said it will also connect Assam and Tripura by rail through that country.

Accountability of judiciary Constitution to dictate the process: Law minister

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government wants to ensure accountability of the judiciary to the law of the land and the Constitution, not to the executive branch, the prime minister or the Cabinet, Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru said yesterday.

"The provision of accountability of the judiciary is already there within the framework of the present Constitution," the minister told BBC radio last night, explaining PM's remarks on the issue

made the day before. The prime minister spoke of the need for accountability and transparency of the judiciary at a press conference in the city on Sunday.

For example, he said, the Article 109 of the Constitution provides for accountability of the lower courts to the High Court Division. And Article 96(3) says about the higher courts' accountability to the Supreme Judicial Council.

"But the reality is that the process of accountability has

become very weak due to shortage of judges and inadequate time of the honourable judges. And the system is not effective (now)."

Asked about the government's plans in this regard, Khasru said it would be done by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Citing examples from South Africa and Sri Lanka, he said the number of the High Court judges should be increased. "Say, we have now 40 judges in the High Court. If we See Page 11 Col 8

China wants to ratify CTBT



French first lady, Bernadette Chirac, dances with Chinese President Jiang Zemin at a function in Chaumeil, central France yesterday.

Jiang tells Chirac

SARRAN (France), Oct 24: Chinese President Jiang Zemin reiterated today that his country intended to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) despite the rejection of the pact by the US Senate, reports Reuters.

Jiang talked about the issue over breakfast with Jacques Chirac at the French President's chateau. Chirac's spokeswoman said.

"Jiang Zemin told him that China, which is a permanent member of the (UN) Security Council and a nuclear power, confirmed its support for a total ban on testing," she said.

See also page 9

"Our aim is to get the ratification of the treaty," she quoted Jiang as saying.

China has pledged to maintain its moratorium on test nuclear explosions. The CTBT, which would outlaw all test explosions, cannot go into effect until it is signed and ratified by all 44 nuclear-capable nations. Of the five declared nuclear powers, only France and Britain have so far ratified the treaty, leaving China, Russia and the United States outside the agreement.

China has pushed for global negotiations to ban all nuclear weapons. Jiang, who arrived in France on Friday as part of a six-nation tour, stayed overnight with Chirac in the French president's chateau in the heart of the country.

The spokeswoman said Chirac and Jiang had also See Page 11 Col 6

Bomb found

By Staff Correspondent

A bomb was found near the ticket counter of a bus company at Gabtali terminal in the city yesterday evening, police said.

"It resembled the grenade found at a mosque in Mirpur on Oct 8," a senior police official said.

Army explosive experts were called in to recover and examine the bomb. They took it to an open space nearby at about 10 last night.

Police said an unidentified caller telephoned the bus company's office in the evening that a bomb had been near their counter. A polythene bag containing an explosive device with two pencil batteries and a digital watch was found there.

Earlier in the day, police rushed to the BIRDEM Hospital and at the Mahanagar Natya Mancha auditorium in Gulistan area following bomb alerts which ultimately turned to be hoax.

4-day DG level border talks begin today

Star Report

Exchange of enclaves, demarcation of still unmarked land borders and fixing of pillars along demarcated borders will dominate the DG level meeting between Bangladesh Rifles and Indian Border Security Force beginning in the city today.

Border clashes and killing of Bangladeshis by BSF, push-in of Indian citizens into Bangladesh and trafficking of women and children by organised gangs will also come up at the talks, officials said.

Agreements on exchange of enclaves between the two countries were ratified by the Indian parliament in 1958 and by Bangladesh parliament in 1975, according to official doc-

uments. The ninth amendment to the Indian Constitution in 1958 ratified the agreement between the then Pakistan and India regarding exchange of enclaves, which is applicable for Bangladesh, the officials said.

After independence, the Mujib-Indira agreement of 1974 also provided for exchange of enclaves. The agreement was ratified by Bangladesh parliament in the next year.

But till the last DG level meeting between BDR and BSF, the Indian side had been insisting that the agreement was not ratified by the India parliament.

Over the years, the Indian side raised different pleas to de- See Page 11 Col 7

Sonia may be called as witness

Bofors arms scandal

NEW DELHI, Oct 24: India's opposition leader Sonia Gandhi was likely to be called as a witness in a Swedish arms scandal linked to her late husband, a report said today, reports AFP.

She would be asked to explain the relationship of the Gandhi family with Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi, one of five people accused of involvement in the 1986 Bofors arms scandal. The Asian Age daily said.

On Friday, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed the first charges in the kick-back case, naming Sonia's hus-

band, slain former premier Rajiv Gandhi, among the accused. It was the first time after 13 years of investigations that Rajiv had been officially named in the scandal in which the federal agency said 14.2 million dollars were allegedly paid as kickbacks to get a 1.3 billion dollar contract awarded to Bofors.

The CBI accused Rajiv of abusing his official position and stalling a visit by officials from the Swedish armament firm Bofors to inquire into the case in 1987.

See Page 11 Col 3



Writ for contempt of court against Nasim

By Staff Correspondent

A writ petition was filed with the High Court seeking to draw contempt of court proceedings against Home Minister Mohammad Nasim.

The court will hear the petition today.

Advocate Mohammad Ataur Rahman Khan filed the petition with a division bench comprising Justice Mohammad Mozammel Haq and Justice Mohammad Abdur Rashid.

The petitioner said Home Minister Mohammad Nasim violated Article 270 of the Rules of Procedure of parliament by making "objectionable remarks" on the judiciary and the judges in parliament on September 6.

He also sought a court order instructing the Parliament Secretary to submit to the court the House proceedings of the day. The petitioner said the rules of procedure prohibited making any objectionable comment and raising of question on the judiciary.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed appeared on behalf of the petitioner. He was assisted by Barrister Mahbubuddin Khokon.

Seats of 2 MPs BNP files writ, hearing today

By Staff Correspondent

Opposition BNP filed a writ petition with the High Court yesterday praying that the seats of its two former lawmakers -- Dr Mohammad Alauddin and Hasibur Rahman Swapan -- be declared vacant from the day they joined the government.

The court will hear the petition today.

Opposition Chief Whip Khondaker Delwar Hossain submitted the writ petition to a Division Bench comprising Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury and Justice Abdul Aziz.

Dr Alauddin was appointed State Minister for Water Resources and Swapan Deputy Minister for Industries after they joined the ruling Awami League in February last year.

The Election Commission in a verdict on October 11 declared their JS seats vacant with immediate effect for floor-crossing. But in the petition, Delwar argued that their seats should have been declared vacant from the day they crossed the floor.

The petition also sought an order that they return the money they got as salaries and allowances as ministers.

Dr Alauddin and Swapan were elected from Rajshahi-5 and Sirajganj-7 constituencies respectively with BNP tickets.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed appeared on behalf of the petitioner.

Two explosives recovered at Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 24: Police recovered two explosives near the podium of the three-day Prothom Uttarbanga Sangeet Sammelan at Gauriabon High School field at Kalibari Road in the town in the early hours of yesterday.

The incident took place at around midnight Saturday when the cultural programme was in progress.

Panic gripped the people enjoying the programme, which was postponed for the rest of the night after police recovery of the explosives.

None could be arrested till filing of this report, police said.

The district police chief Naim Ahmed told The Daily Star that police were guarding the place. They are trying to arrest the culprits involved in the incident.

The three-day programme began on Friday, which was inaugurated by State Minister for Information Abu Sayeed.

A case has been lodged with Sirajganj Sadar thana in this connection.

3-day match starts at Ctg today

From Hasan Masood

CHITTAGONG, Oct 24: The visiting England A cricketers will take on Bangladesh in a three-day match starting here at the M A Aziz District Stadium from tomorrow.

The match will begin at 9:30 am. Bangladesh Television will cover the match live while Bangladesh Betar Chittagong will provide ball-by-ball commentary of the proceedings.

This will be the first international match in the port city in 11 years. The last international match played here was in 1988, on October 27, when Bangladesh played against Pakistan in the Second Asia Cup.

Both the teams arrived in the city this evening, but could not have the feel of the ground due to a dawn-to-dusk hartal called in this region by the opposition political parties.

Details on page 13