

EC warns 19 more candidates

UNB, Dhaka

The Election Commission yesterday warned 19 more candidates for violating the election code of conduct.

The EC in separate letters cautioned them to take corrective measures and refrain from the offence, saying failure will result in imposition of fine in cash.

The latest warnings raised the total number of candidates warned by the EC to 176.

The warnings were issued to the candidates following recommendations of the district electoral inquiry committees.

Following is the list of candidates warned for various reasons:

Moulvibazar-3: Azizur Rahman (AL) for procession with trucks and motorcycles. Saifur Rahman (BNP) for the same reason.

Satkhira-2: Nazrul Islam (AL) for provocative posters hurting religious sentiment.

Gaibandha-2: Lutfar Rahman (AL) for using loudspeakers prohibited during specified hours.

Pabna-3: Anwarul Islam (BNP) for graffiti.

Mymensingh-5: A K M Mosharraf Hossain (BNP) for coloured posters. Rashida Mohiuddin (AL) for the same reason.

8 powerful blasts

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Khulna and at a CPB rally at Paltan Maidan and Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital seems to have made little progress till now.

Explosions at the CPB rally and Bangabandhu Avenue left seven people killed and more than 50 injured on January 20 this year.

Seven people were killed and 10 injured in the blast at Kadiani mosque on October 8, 1999.

The investigators have so far submitted charge sheet only in the case concerning the first such incident at a Uidchi function in Jersso which left 10 people killed and over 100 injured on March 6, 1999.

An explosion at Narayanganj Awami League office claimed 22 lives and left 100 people injured on June 16 this year.

On June 3, 10 people were killed and at least 30 injured in a bomb blast at a Catholic Church at Bariarchar in Gopalganj. Both the incidents in June took place while police were conducting a special drive across the country.

Bush authorises

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American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), told the Times that the two generals will make the decision only as a last resort and if there is no time to consult Bush or a higher-ranking general.

Eberhart, citing security reasons, would not speculate exactly when shooting a plane down could be deemed necessary.

"We've improved our ability to communicate with the FAA (the Federal Aviation Administration)," Gould said, adding: "We really never had the need to respond like this before."

US citizens

FROM PAGE 1

It urged the US citizens in Bangladesh "to defer non-essential travel within the country and to exercise extreme caution from September 30 to October 7".

The advisory added, "Americans are requested to be alert to their surroundings, and limit local travel. All Americans should adopt a low profile, avoid crowds, gatherings and congested areas, and remain inside residences, schools, and workplaces to the maximum extent possible".

Air, sea ports on alert

FROM PAGE 1

extending a number of facilities that will help the country's economy grow and democracy flourish.

Dhaka is learnt to be expecting permission from Washington for quota- and duty-free access of its readymade garments to the US market. Nearly 45 per cent of the country's readymade garments are produced for the US market.

Washington, by allowing unrestricted access of garments into the US, will contribute to empowerment of nearly two million women already working in the sector. Besides some ten million more people are indirectly associated with the RMG sector.

Besides, entry of quota- and duty-free access of Bangladeshi goods into the US market will contribute to more economic growth, strengthening of democratic institutions and political stability in Bangladesh, which the US now considers a key ally in the region.

It was learnt that the US has already extended 32 least developed countries (LDCs) in the sub-Saharan and Caribbean regions duty and quota-free access in the RMG sector.

Bangladesh was learnt to be expecting more benefits for boosting the IT sector including easier obtaining of work permits for computer programmers. It also expects better facilities for more than three hun-

Hasina: AL to win

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pre-election scenario marked by terrible bomb blasts at Awami League's election rallies at different places including Bagerhat, Sunamganj and Rangpur leaving many of her party workers dead.

Blaming her opponents for this unabated terrorism that has vitiated the election atmosphere, she said even minority voters are being intimidated so that they do not turn up at the polling centres on October 1.

Hasina, who ended her cross-country marathon election campaign and returned to the capital late Wednesday night said people are eagerly waiting to vote for Awami League.

"We want free, fair, impartial and peaceful election," the former Prime Minister said.

Bomb scare

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yesterday morning.

An unidentified person told the college by phone that a bomb had been planted at the college premises.

But the phone call proved phoney, as a hectic search failed to find out any explosives.

FEMA

FROM PAGE 1

conduct and performance of election officials and others concerned.

Ahsan said the situation is still marked by apprehension, uncertainty and a sense of insecurity. "There has been a steady increase in violence across the country and in most areas at an unacceptably high rate, affecting more than half of the constituencies." The situation has taken a serious turn in Bhola, Pataukhali, Bagerhat, Sunamganj and Chittagong, he said.

Arms recovery drive did not make any significant progress in more than 50 per cent of the constituencies. Violation of election code of conduct over the last two weeks has raised questions about enforcement of rules by the authorities. If this trend continues, it may affect voting, Ahsan added.

He feared that voters would not be able to cast votes safely and peacefully unless concerted efforts are made to check violence and improve law and order. Political parties should ask their supporters to show utmost restraint, he felt.

About reports on resignation of FEMA officials, he said those were exaggerated or not true. "Our accounts are open to inspection, we work in a transparent way."

FEMA will deploy two observers at each polling station on the election day and have a coordination centre at Sonargaon Hotel in the city on October 1 and 2.

FEMA general secretary Firoz M Hasan and vice-chairman Ataur Rahman were also present at the press briefing.

ETV broadcast

FROM PAGE 1

Ten people were killed and more than 20 injured in an explosion at Ramna Batalum in the city on April 14 this year.

Detective police are investigating the incident. Nine persons were arrested.

CID investigators submitted charge sheet in the Uidchi case indicting BNP leader Tariqul Islam and a number of leaders of a regional smuggling syndicate.

But initially CID investigators had pointed fingers at 'fundamentalists'.

In view of repeated incidents of powerful bomb blasts and recovery of bombs, police have specially trained some personnel but they are yet to be equipped with necessary weapons, police officials said.

Meanwhile, various circles are also raising questions about the role and efficiency of intelligence agencies as they failed to give prior warning about any of the seven bomb incidents and planting of bombs in different parts of the country in the last 30 months.

takes off out of Boston and, minutes later, crashes into New York City."

"This is a whole new ballgame," he said.

Air Force Brigadier General Michael Gould, commander of NORAD's operations centre, told the Times that the military is "trying to game this out and anticipate where terrorists could strike next."

"We've improved our ability to communicate with the FAA (the Federal Aviation Administration)," Gould said, adding: "We really never had the need to respond like this before."

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no experience. I am now confident about running the state affairs smoothly, tackling any situation and bringing revolutionary changes in the country."

Asked if other component parties of the 4-party alliance will be included in the cabinet even if BNP gets a simple majority in parliament, she said: "We will include our alliance partners in the cabinet even if my party gets two-thirds majority. We have decided to form government together to build the country."

The petitioners also pointed out that ETV did not obtain any clearance certificate, needed under the Telegraph Act, to function as a TV channel. It set up key-point installations (KPI) at BTV building without permission from the National Security Intelligence (NSI).

Attorney General Mahmudul Islam, Additional Attorney General Mahbub-e-Alam moved the case on behalf of the government. Barrister Riqiqul Huq and Barrister Moniruzzaman represented ETV. Barrister Abdur Razzaq moved on behalf of the petitioners.

Meanwhile, ETV Audience Forum at a meeting yesterday alleged that a vested quarter was engaged in a conspiracy against ETV and condemned it.

Taliban invite Jackson to broker peace

FROM PAGE 1

Security Council was likely to approve it "within days".

The US-Pakistan deal to hunt down bin Laden, the main suspect in the September 11 raids against the United States that left nearly 7,000 dead, was seen as a key step to pinpointing the Saudi radical's location and paving the way for a military operation to capture or eliminate him.

Despite progress by investigators and signs that the Taliban's grip on power is weakening five years to the day since they marched into Kabul, the regime continued to defy calls for cooperation.

Mullah Omar made it clear that Afghanistan had no intention of backing down in its face-off with the West and vowed to defeat any US invasion or bid to install a puppet regime.

"In the event of intervention in Afghanistan there will be no difference between Russia and America," he said in a statement released through the AIP.

He was referring to the former Soviet Union's military debacle in Afghanistan which it occupied between 1979 and 1989.

Meanwhile, a series of linked anti-terrorist operations was in progress worldwide.

In Abu Dhabi, the central bank of the United Arab Emirates ordered frozen the accounts and investments of 26 individuals and organisations suspected of financing



PHOTO: STAR
Lawyers formed a human chain in front of the National Press Club yesterday protesting the threats on the voters belonging to minority community across the country.

Clashes leave one dead

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Jamaat at Polashia village in Sadar upazila yesterday, according to UNB.

Police and witnesses said a procession of Jamaat came under attack when it was passing Awami League leader Megu chairman's house at about 5:30 pm.

Of the injured, Nanda Mia, Dulal, Maju, Abed Ali, Habib Uddin and Maju Ali were admitted to local health complex.

Police have been deployed in the area to avert further untoward incident.

In Gaibandha, 18 people were injured in two separate clashes between the supporters of Awami League and BNP supporters at Sadullapur and Saghata upazila yesterday.

Some 15 houses were also looted and eight shops at Moulvir Hat set on fire reportedly by the BNP supporters during the hour-long clash started at about 5.30 pm.

Police said the trouble ensued when some BNP cadres attacked the house of Thana AL vice president Habibur Rahman and assaulted his wife.

Hearing the news, AL supporters from the nearby AL election office came and locked in the clash where several rounds of gunshots were fired.

Army and police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. They also arrested three people from the spot.

Three BCL activists who received bullet injuries in the clash

were identified as Shamsul Islam, Shahabuddin and Abul Kalam.

Earlier, in the morning BNP supporters allegedly damaged three election offices of Awami League at Badamtali in Chandanaish.

In Panchagarh, at least 10 people were injured in a clash between Awami League and BNP activists at Chandanbari in Boda upazila on Wednesday night.

Police said the clash took place at about 9 pm when election processes of the two rival parties confronted near Milonbazar Primary School.

Of the injured, Shah Alam Manu, Zakaria, Rajen, Panchanan and Arif were admitted to a local hospital.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. They also picked up an AL activist, Zaherul Islam, from the scene.

In Bagerhat, pre-election clash between the supporters of Awami League and BNP at Shialkabi area of Kachua upazila left 15 people injured.

Sources said the clash ensued yesterday morning between the activists of the rival political parties over playing an election cassette.

Six of the injured were admitted to Kachua and Chitalmari health complexes. The condition of local Awami League leader Zellal Sheikh, 45, was stated to be critical. Besides, eight election camps were damaged during the clash.

Alliance to curb corruption

seats."

Khaleda Zia claimed that BNP would win the maximum number of seats in greater Mymensingh, Sylhet and Barisal districts.

She however replied in the negative when asked whether an atmosphere for free and fair election has been created.

She said the voter list should have to be corrected. "Controversial and partisan officials must be removed from vital positions. Recovery of illegal arms and arrest of terrorists are prerequisites for a free, fair and peaceful polity."

The former prime Minister said the AL government in the last six months of its tenure gave arms licences to more than 10,000 party cadres, leaders and their wives and sons.

"As member of the Army, my family is entitled to licensed firearm. But we have not availed this facility", she said.

She said that the BNP has demanded of the caretaker government effective measures against any possible 'media and administrative coup' as was done in 1996 polls.