



COMMITTED

TO  
People's Right to Know

www.dailystarnews.com

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XI NO. 89

DHAKA FRIDAY APRIL 19, 2002

16 PAGES PLUS MAGAZINE PRICE: TK. 10.00

INSIDE TODAY

Article 4

The paradoxes, MB Naqvi writes from Karachi

Asia 5

Narita gets a shorter second runway, Monzurul Huq writes from Tokyo

Comment 6

Hasnat Abdul Hye's The selfish giant, Mohammad Badrul Ahsan's A pair of eyes

Environment 8

Dr Sudhireswar Sharma's Confronting the water privatisation push

Rezaul Karim's Paving the path for Cartagena Protocol

Economics of electioneering

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It costs around Tk 800 to hire an announcer, a loudspeaker and a rickshaw for the whole day. An energetic young man gets Tk 100 a day for participating in noisy processions that pass through roads, lanes and by-lanes in each ward in the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC). The ward commissioner candidates in the 25 April DCC election also have many other expenses but the ceiling of their polls expenditure is Tk 55,000 each, set by the Election Commission (EC).

Printing of posters, recording of promotional music, telephone, transport, food, wall writing, makeshift offices for campaigning and overhead arches also cost a lot. Although some of these are done in violation of the electoral code of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Switch off cell phones, home ministry warns police again

ABUL KALAM AZAD

The home ministry has directed the police headquarters to take actions against those police officers who are still using cell phones, violating its earlier order.

Police officers across the country have been using cell phones, defying an order issued in November last, the ministry observed.

Ban on the use of cell phones by police officers under the rank of assistant superintendent of police (ASP) was imposed to maintain secrecy in the police service and snap links with criminals. But most officers-in-charge and even sub-inspectors frequently use mobile phones.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Criminals in DCC fray

## Police alter list

CEC finds most constituencies vulnerable; hoodlums can't be nabbed as they "campaign at night"

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Syed yesterday said many of the constituencies in the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) are still violence-prone with only six days to the elections.

"You should rather ask which areas are not vulnerable," the CEC told reporters after emerging from a meeting on the security steps ahead of and during elections to three city corporations slated for April 25.

According to the latest police list, 15 wanted criminals are running for the offices of ward commissioners only in the Dhaka city. Earlier, there had been 28 listed criminals in the DCC fray. It is still unclear how the number came down or whether the charges against the 13 have been dropped, of late.

Source said when the CEC lashed out at the

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner MA Quaiyyum for their failure to net the listed criminals running the race, he told Syed the criminals go into hiding during daytime and canvass at night, which makes the police's job difficult.

"Let's see if it works," said Syed to the reporters while talking about his venting anger at the meeting.

Later, the police commissioner said to reporters, "We must bring them (the listed criminals) to book before the election... they simply cannot escape arrest."

Amid growing fears of massive violence, the Election Commission (EC) yesterday decided to take massive security measures to ensure peace and fairness in the polls to Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna city corporations.

The CEC also said the EC has agreed on mobile courts for summary trial of election offend-

ers and other trouble mongers, and separate roving teams of army, BDR and police personnel before, during and after the polls.

Recent instructions by the prime minister and the CEC to nab the criminals ahead of the city corporation polls have so far yielded little results.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at a meeting of the cabinet committee on law and order earlier this week expressed her dissatisfaction over the police failure to nab listed criminals.

A joint meeting of the EC and the police authorities of the three cities decided the measures. Besides, the election commissioners and EC officials, the divisional commissioner of Dhaka, the police commissioners of the three

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

Curious campaigning... cows, keys and umbrellas rule election processions of Dhaka City Corporation ward commissioner hopefuls while women visit different city areas to seek votes for mayoral candidate Sadek Hossain Khoka.

## SB gets kind to Tk 170cr loan defaulter

STAR REPORT

The Sonali Bank last week waived Tk 46 crore of interest including Tk 11 crore in applied interest, of a top defaulter, Rahman Group, with a conditional rescheduling facility to loans that had been secured through gross anomalies.

Sources said the Sonali Bank board last week approved rescheduling of loans amounting to Tk 173.82 crore taken against 11 organisations of the group.

Although the Sonali Bank board recommended the rescheduling, the facility will be subject to clearance from the central bank.

Highly placed sources said a number of influential ministers got themselves involved in creating pressure on the bank authorities for getting the loan rescheduling approved by the board.

## Nine die after taking potka fish in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Nine people died after taking 'potka fish' in Digholia upazila of the district yesterday.

Only two of the dead were identified till filing of this report last night.

They were Mizanur Rahman, 30, of village Panighati and Dhalamia, 40, of Hajigram.

According to OC of Digholia thana, 30 people of Panighati and Hajigram villages fell sick after eating potka fish purchased from the Digholia bazar yesterday noon.

They were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital in critical

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## Rajuk wracks residential plots

MOSHED ALI KHAN

The Rajuk is converting all residential plots along 'any' 60-foot-or-more-wide road in Gulshan, Baridhara, Banani and Uttara into commercial one without any planning or clearance.

Top Rajuk officials admitted that they were permitting 'non-residential' use of residential plots in these areas on the basis of the 'Dhamondi example'.

In 1996 four Dhamondi roads were declared 'viable for non-residential use' because, in the initial stage of planning in 1962, the then Dhaka Improvement Trust (DIT) had failed to acquire the land earmarked for shopping complexes and commercial area, leaving the area without markets or shops.

Planners, architects and engineers believe that such unplanned conversions are set to create enormous urban problems in the near future.

Roads and other infrastructures of these areas were laid for residential use, hence do not meet the criteria for commercial use, they said.

"Technically, it is not possible to convert a residential area into a commercial zone," said Professor Dr M Shahidul Ameen of the Faculty of Architecture at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology

(BUET).

Before conversion into commercial zone, the authorities must first ensure adequate infrastructure, including proper parking facilities and unhindered pedestrian movement, he added.

Dr Ameen said that parking alone was not all for a shopping centre.

"One has to ensure that vehicles can enter a building without hampering others' right to movement, drop the passengers, find a place for parking and finally pick them up. This pattern of vehicle circulation is vital for a commercial complex."

He also emphasised on the need to "discern between shops and shopping centres".

"In residential areas we can only allow corner shops, pharmacies or may be a grocery shop for meeting the residents' urgent requirements," Dr Ameen explained.

The Rajuk has applied the 'Dhamondi example' to places like Gulshan, Baridhara, Banani and Uttara, notwithstanding the fact that these areas, unlike Dhamondi, have designated commercial sites with all sorts of facilities.

Sources in the Ministry of Housing and Public Works termed the move "nothing but a way to make more

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



Once a tranquil neighbourhood, Uttara is today more than a shopping place with restaurants, shopping malls and what-nots sprouting along residential roads under Rajuk's dubious approval.

4 graft cases against Altaf withdrawn

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The

Special

Court

for

Dhaka

Division

yesterday

granted

the

petition

seeking

withdrawal

of

the

four

graft

cases

against

Altaf

withdrew

the

order

following

a

petition

submitted

by

the

public

prosecutor

on

Wednesday

Judge

Mohammad Siddiqur Rahman

Miah

(in charge)

passed

the

order

submitted

by

the

public

prosecutor

on

Wednesday

to

the

Special

Court

for

Dhaka

Division

on

Wednesday

to

the

four

graft

cases

against

Altaf

withdrew

the

order

following

a

petition

submitted

by

the

public

prosecutor

on

Wednesday

to

the

Special

Court

for

Dhaka

Division