The Paily Star

## **EC** explains delay in result announcement STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The declaration of the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) polls results was delayed for some time as it is a time consuming task to sort out and compile all the ballots when they start coming from different centres at a time, the Election Commission (EC) secretariat explained yester-

day. The EC explanation came yesterday following reports published in different newspapers about the suspension of the result declaration SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Observers term polls fair Tell of false voting, intimidation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different election monitoring organisations yesterday termed the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) polls free and fair but reported some incidents of false voting, intimidation and mismanagement. Jatiya Nirbachon Parjobekkhon

Parishad (Janipop), a nongovernment election monitorina organisation, and International Republic Institute (IRI), a US-based SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Mother sells daughter for Tk 3,000

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A divorced mother yesterday sold her newborn daughter at a cost of Tk 3,000 to an issue less couple of Sultanpur in the town.

Parul, 35, the divorced wife of Moslem Gazi of village Bardal in Assassuni upazila, gave birth to a daughter at Satkhira Sadar Hospital on April 30. But Moslem Gazi refused to accept the infant, claiming that he divorced Parul four years ago.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

# FENCHUGANJ POWER PROJECT **PMO** questions unfit bidder's getting nod

percent of the project cost to Harbin

contract for the Tongi 100mw simple

cycle power plant of the PDB. The

plant was launched in March one

year beyond schedule and it is yet to

go into full operation due to techni-

repeatedly re-tendered due to

The Fenchuganj project was

cal glitches

In 2002, Harbin was awarded

before its implementation began.

#### **STAR REPORT**

The Prime Minister's Office has sent back the files on the 90 megawatt Fenchuganj power project, okayed by the cabinet purchase committee, asking the power ministry to explain how Chinese company Harbin

qualified to get the project, sources said. Harbin Power Engineering Ltd was earlier disqualified as a bidder for this project that was re-tendered five times. A special committee formed during the third re-tender found Harbin had inadequate expe-

rience attempts of different lobbies to bag But during the fifth re-tender late the project through bid manipulalast year, Harbin mysteriously got tion. Against this backdrop, the 'qualified' in the Power government two years ago formed a Development Board (PDB) evaluaspecial committee to look into the

tion. In April, the cabinet purchase bid evaluation during the third recommittee approved the bid and in tender. The committee disqualified less than a week, the cabinet com-Harbin after reviewing the documittee on economic affairs bent ments rules to allow down payment of 10

When the PDB floated the sixth tender for the project in October last year, two companies participated in -- Japanese Sumitomo Corporation and Chinese Harbin Power Engineering Ltd.

In the re-tender, the PDB qualified Harbin on the basis of the documents it submitted. This prompted the other bidder --Japanese Sumitomo -- to accuse the PDB of siding with Harbin. Sumitomo ultimately withdrew from the bid as PDB refused to play fair.

Harbin has a partner in the Fenchuganj bid --Doosan Heavy SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal men pelt stones at trucks carrying supporters of Mayor ABM Mohiuddin going to join his victory procession in Laldighi Maidan vesterday afternoon.

## PEACEKEEPING IN SUDAN Sending of troops from May 23

#### SHAKHAWAT LITON

Bangladesh is likely to start sending troops to the UN peacekeeping mission in Sudan from May 23, army sources said.

The first batch comprising 200 passed a resolution on March 24 troops is now preparing to leave about deployment of peacekeep-Dhaka while an advance team of 70 troops leaves for the African country on May 8 construct camps for the troops in southern Sudan,

the sources said. "We hope we will be able to start sending our troops on schedule," a senior army official told The Daily Star yesterday, wishing anonymity.

Over 1,600 troops, the biggest number of Bangladeshi peace

cops to explain clubbing of FFs UNB, Dhaka The home ministry yesterday issued an order asking the officials conkeepers serving in any UN mission,

cerned to explain why police charged will be stationed in southern batons on war-maimed freedom Sudan, "The sector headquarters fighters on May 7 in the capital. of Bangladeshi troops will be set up The order was issued following The United Nations (UN)

newspaper reports and editoria comments on the police action against the freedom fighters when they were proceeding toward the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), home ministry officials said.

The war-injured freedom fighters took out a procession from their office at Mohammadpur and were marching toward the PMO to submit a memorandum protesting the reported move to sell Tabani Beverage Company, owned by Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust.

At least 20 freedom fighters, many on them in wheelchairs, were injured in the police action. Two of them were admitted to Orthopaedic Hospital.

The demonstrators then sat on the road in front of the PMO and staved there for more than an hour. Police later took seven of them to the PMO where they handed over the memorandum to an official.

## Home asks CEC still embarrassed at RO's actions

## Stresses need for reforms

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Syed yesterday stressed the need for reforms in the Election Commission (EC) and said that the EC should be more independent and stronger.

"I am in favour of the demand for reforming the Election Commission. There are some weaknesses in the present structure of the commission," the CEC told reporters at his office.

The CEC's observations on reforms came against the backdrop of the mainstream opposition parties and different other organisations calling for reforms in the EC as well as the caretaker government system

The CEC termed unfortunate the appointment of unqualified polling officials by the returning officer (RO) for Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) polls.

"We feel embarrassed at the appointment of unfit polling officials. We will have to watch out for such incidents in future," he said adding, 'We tried the utmost to hold the election in a free and fair manner, and we have done it.

"In future, we will be more cautious in appointing returning officers," the CEC said

Syed cited an example to point out the weaknesses in the function ing of the EC.

"I had brought a senior officer on deputation. But later when I asked the government to take him back, he was not withdrawn. And such are the obstacles to running the election commission smoothly and independently," he said adding, "Undesirable persons in the commission should be withdrawn without any hassles.'

The commission will soon send to the government a proposal regarding rules of appointment by the EC, Syed said. "The commis-

#### MEDITERRANEAN TRAGEDY

## 13 survivors back home BDNEWS, Dhaka

Thirteen Bangladeshi youths among the 15, who survived the February Mediterranean Sea trag-edy, returned home by a Bangladesh Biman flight from Dubai vesterday afternoon yesterday afternoon.

Twenty-six fortune seeker Bangladeśhi youths who chose ar llegal and risky way to reach Spain left the country by a Qatar Airways plane on December 22 and set out SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

### SCBA takes out black flag procession

Demands again

Faizee's removal STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday took out a procession at the Supreme Court premises, demanding the removal of High Court Additional Judge Faisal Mahmud Faizee Over 100 lawyers carrying black

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Outlaw killed in 'shootout' with police

sion should have the jurisdiction to **OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia** appoint and withdraw any official in

the interest of free and fair elec-Newspapers on several occasions have reported on conflict between the CEC and secretary to the EC. SM Zakaria, the secretary, has not been attending meetings for

When asked Syed declined to Jhankar, 33. comment on Zakaria's absence in the meetings preparatory to CCC

Replying to a query, he said electronic voting machines are already in use in neighbouring India, and sooner those will be introduced here as well.

tions.'

about a year.

"Ours is a populous country. We have more than 70 million voters. If electronic voting machines are introduced, ballot count will be much easier and faster while the expenses will come down." he said.

A listed criminal and regional leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP --Janaiuddho) was killed in a 'shootout' between law enforcers and the outfit members at village Pirpur under Sadar upazila in Chuadanga district early yesterday. The dead was identified as

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Prayer Timing		
May 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
ajr	4-10	4-45
ohr	12-45	1-15
sr	5-00	5-15
laghrib	6-36	6-40
sha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

ers in Sudan within 45 days of the passage of the resolution. Sources said the Armed Forces Division has almost completed all preparations for participating in the peacekeeping mission. Bangladesh Army has got the commanding post of peacekeep-SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

at Juba," the army official said.



#### **RAFIQ HASAN**

After shelving the idea of a magnetic train service between Dhaka and Chittagong, the communications ministry now plans to introduce a fast electric train service, aimed at covering the 346-kilometre distance between the two cities in three hours.

The government has received offers from 10 foreign companies for introducing an electric train system on the route, which now entails a journey of over six hours, sources said.

An evaluation committee of the Bangladesh Railway (BR) scrutinised the proposals and found six of them viable.

Another high-powered committee will further examine the propos-

als and give the final nod, said a high official of the BR.

The project will be implem-ented on a build, operate and transfer (BOT) basis, without any financial involvement from the government. Meanwhile, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda said his office has not abandoned the idea of introducing a magnetic train.

"We are thinking of an electric train service side by side with a magnetic one for a quick journey on this route." he said

But reliable sources said the idea of a magnetic train was shelved as the finance ministry did not find it viable

Nazmul Huda proposed the high SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

# 32 Nepal rebels killed in fighting

#### AFP, Kathmandu

Hundreds of Maoists stormed two army bases in southern Nepal, sparking a fierce battle in which at least 32 of the rebels and three security force members were killed, army officials said yesterday.

The latest battles, which erupted late Monday, came as US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Christina Rocca, visited the Himalayan nation to press King Gyanendra to restore democracy.

At least 32 rebels, one soldier and three policemen were killed in the fighting, the army official said, making it one of the deadliest clashes reported since Gvanendra seized power on February 1. "Security forces have recovered

the bodies of 32 rebels killed in the

clashes overnight and a search for bodies is continuing," said Major Sushil Dahal, speaking from army headquarters.

"They attacked two army battalions but our boys retaliated and they failed to overrun the army camps he said. "We're waiting for detailed reports."

"The rebels used locals as human shields and in the course of this 36 civilians were injured and they have been airlifted for treatment to a local hospital," said another senior army official who did not wish to be named.

The biggest number of rebel dead was in Bandipur where 27 rebel bodies were found, Dahal said. The rest were found in Chauharwa.

