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WOMEN'S RESERVED SEATS Polls schedule by Aug 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The schedule for election to 45 reserved seats for women in parliament will be announced in a week.

"I hope the schedule will be announced by August 7," Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed said yesterday while briefing journalists at his office.

Asked whether the government will invite Awami League (AL) to dialogue if it decides to refrain from participating in the election, the minister said, "Why shall we go for dialogue? It is a matter of the Election Commission."

If the AL does not take part in the election, open election will be held to nine seats allocated for AL on the basis of its representation in parliament.

The minister hoped that the main opposition party will join the election.

11 to die for killing Jurain tycoon Alam

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced two sons-in-law of the slain business tycoon Alam and nine others to death for killing him and his three maids in January 2002.

Six others were sentenced to different terms of imprisonment.

Alam, 64, and his three maids -- Rahima, Sakhina and Kamala -- were murdered at his New Jurain residence in the city's Shyampur area on the night of January 2, 2002.

Judge Mohammad Rabiul Hassan of the Second Additional

Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court handed down the verdict in a packed courtroom under tight security.

The accused were produced before the court at 11:45am and the judge read out the highlights of the 117-page judgement in five minutes.

The convicts are Alam's two sons-in-law, Motiur Rahman alias Jamai Motin, 35, and Mohammad Ali Babul Hasan alias Babu Jamai, 30, as well as Mohammad Kabir, 30, Sohag Bepari, 31, Mohammad Sohel, 28, Yusuf Miah, 32, Jahanara

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Alam

New Bangladesh envoy to Delhi yet to get credentials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka is unhappy as the Indian government is yet to give credentials to the Bangladesh high commissioner designated for New Delhi.

The government appointed Bangladesh ambassador to the Hague, Liaquat Ali Chowdhury, envoy to India after Hemayetuddin was made foreign secretary on March 13.

Sources said Liaquat has been waiting his credential for about three months, but is yet to receive a date for the ceremony.

Highly placed sources at foreign ministry said the delay in giving

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30 lakh eligible voters to miss next poll roll

Legal obligations to deprive them of franchise

SHAKHAWAT LITON

About 30 lakh adult people in the country will be deprived of their franchise rights in the next parliamentary polls, as it will not be possible to include them in the electoral roll due to legal obligations.

"For binding [legal] obligation, the election commission will not be able to register as voters a large number of adult people. The figure might be over 30 lakh," a senior EC official told The Daily Star requesting anonymity.

The people who have become

adult after January 1, 2005 and those who will be in 2006 will be considered ineligible to be on the roll, according to an electoral ordinance. Only those who are not less than 18 years of age on January 1, 2005 will be allowed to register to vote.

Once the people are kept out of the voter list, most of them will not have the chance to practise their constitutional rights to vote in the next general election, scheduled for January 2007, unless they have their names listed on the roll on their own initiative.

But after a voter list is published, the process for the people to be on the register on their own gets much more difficult, which is why they display an indifference to the matter, said electoral experts.

It seems the EC itself is not aware of the provision. Talking to The Daily Star, an election commissioner yesterday expressed his ignorance about the provision. He, however, said they will look into the matter.

The commission this month will

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WORKERS' TRAINING Japan team due Aug 4

RAFIQ HASAN

A three-member team from Japan led by Kagefumi Ueno, senior vice president of Japan International Training Cooperation Organisation (Jitco), will arrive in Dhaka August 4 on a two-day visit for negotiating with the government about training of industrial workers for.

The visit is a follow up to an agreement signed between Bangladesh and Japan during Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's recent visit to Japan.

According to the agreement, Japan will take Bangladeshi workers on a payment basis for around 60 types of technical jobs in private and public sector enterprises and provide training for enhancing their expertise.

The other members of the delegation are Masaki Tachikawa and

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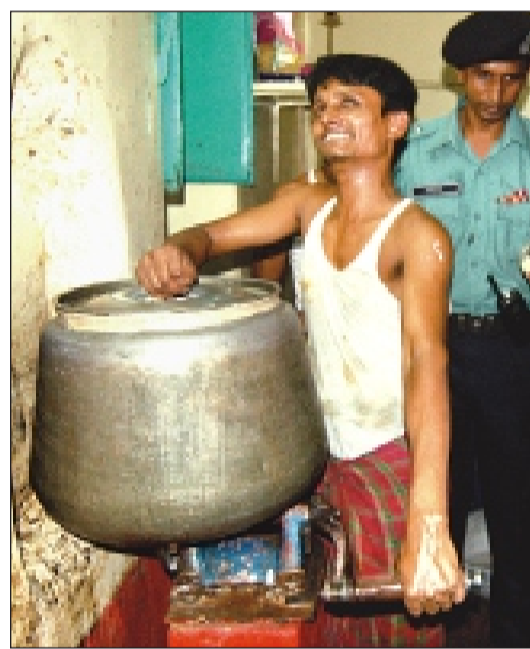


PHOTO: STAR

Mobile court men seize a 'mixture machine' for preparing adulterated ghee, left, and poisonous colour globules from Rajdhani Ghee House at Patuatuli in Old Dhaka yesterday.

UNHYGIENIC RESTAURANTS, FOODS

Raids, fines fail to change situation

PINAKI ROY

The situation has not improved in those restaurants and sweetmeat shops that the government-formed mobile court fined last week for having unhygienic environments.

A visit yesterday to Momin sweetmeat, a shop in Nazimuddin Road, is a case in point. The recently formed

mobile court raided the shop a couple of days ago, throwing their sweetmeats down the drain and the owner in jail for a month.

Nonetheless, cockroaches could be seen moving on the sweetmeats awaiting sale in a bowl.

When this was pointed out to Sohor Ali, one of the shop's employees, he just removed the cock-

roaches from the bowl and said it was an unusual incident.

Meanwhile, rotten sweetmeats and sugar syrup were also seen on the first floor of the shop, emitting a foul odor.

"We do not use the color anymore as our owner was sent to jail," said Monju, a shop worker. The

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Food traders threaten with 2-day strike

STAR REPORT

A combine of five food traders associations yesterday threatened to observe a 48-hour strike protesting what it said was harassment by mobile courts that continued raiding restaurants and shops to check production and sales of unsafe food.

The combine, Bangladesh Khadya Byabasayi Parishad (BKBP) demanded of the government to stop "harassing traders with

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Govt to carry stay silent policy

Hopes amnesty issue will die down eventually

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and
SHAMIM ASHRAF

Irked by Law Minister Moudud Ahmed's role in controversial presidential pardon to double-murder convict Mohiuddin Ahmed Jhinto, the government high-ups find it wise to keep silent to let the issue die down.

Moudud, who has been relentless to dissociate himself from the pardon controversy by shifting the blame on the home ministry, suddenly started staying mum about the issue from yesterday.

Even his lawyers, who were

moving in the High Court yesterday in a corruption case filed against the law minister during the 1991-96 BNP rule, side-stepped the matter before the press.

The law minister was vigorously defending the pardon decision till Saturday. But during a press briefing at his office yesterday, he bucked the questions regarding the issue and said he would not welcome any question or entertain any request for comment about the clemency from now on.

The law minister's recent statements aroused controversy not only

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Minister blames bureaucrats for blocking power sector dev

UNB, Dhaka

State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood yesterday criticised the bureaucrats for creating obstacles to development of the power sector which results in difficulty keeping up pace with a growing demand for electricity in the country.

It is the bureaucrats who have obstructed all the development projects in the power sector through giving their "so-called notes" in the last four years, he told a seminar in Dhaka.

The ministry's performance is under heavy criticism these days.

Mahmood said "In my last four years' experience I have seen

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Khulna BNP factions threaten showdown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The two factions of the ruling BNP's city unit yesterday challenged each other for a showdown anytime and anywhere in Khulna Metropolitan City.

Cadres of both the mayor-Lobi and Whip Ashraf Hossain-Manju factions were seen taking preparation for a showdown at their party offices. The city unit BNP is run by two offices under the

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LIFE AFTER BLASTS

INAM AHMED, FROM LUTTON

Face to face with 'Jihadis'

They were walking down the narrow lane of the rundown Lutton's Berry Park area. Three of them, all in flowing beards, young and with an air of desperation, as if they are brimming to do something. One of them is fair and tall with reddish hair. The others short and stocky. All of them in their early 20s and none of them would give their names.

"When you live in this country,

you know it is not worth living," said the stocky one with thick black hair blowing up to his chest. "A man, a Muslim cannot live in this country; it is an immoral place. That is why we need to change it."

Others nodded in agreement.

"That is why the slap came," the man said. "7/7 was a slap for the Kafirs. How many slaps they gave us? Now we gave them one slap.

What do you do when someone slaps you? You also slap back." And then he utters some Arabic verses and translates them: "It is blood for blood, eye for eye."

As they turn and pass Lutton's Madina Mosque, they glance at the prayer house hatefully and the fair one says: "Muslims have become derailed, they don't follow the true

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