

1.11cr voters unexplained

BBS census report shows voters on new list should not be more than 8.02cr with zero deaths and no left-outs

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The draft voter list shows at least 1.11 crore unaccounted for voters if one goes by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) census report, 2001.

The Election Commission (EC) came up with a 9.13 crore total voter number in its draft list published Wednesday, but the BBS report shows the number of people aged 18 years and above, the age for a person to be eligible for voting, should stand a maximum of 8.02 crore if no deaths occur during this period and if every eligible person

is listed.

The calculation is based on the BBS 2001 census report completed soon after the last voter list was made ahead of the elections. The report showed the number of people in the age bracket of 13 years and above at 8.02 crore. Those who were 13 years in 2001 reach the voter age in 2006 five years down the line.

So, there is no way that the number of voters in 2006 could go above this figure and reach the EC's 9.13 crore. In fact, it should be less than the 8.02 crore number as at least 10 lakh people in the age

group died in this five years. Moreover, if the standard calculation that at least 5 per cent voters do not get listed for various reasons is factored in, then another 40 lakh would reduce. This means the actual number of voters should be around 7.5 crore.

Officials of the BBS, the main source of official statistics in Bangladesh, termed the sharp rise in the numbers of voters "unusual" and too high in comparison to the country's demography. The EC maintained silence about the issue yesterday.

The officials at the EC

Secretariat, however, questioned the accuracy of the census report, a charge outright rejected by the BBS officials.

"We stand by our report. We were very careful regarding people's age to maintain accuracy while preparing the census report," Muhammad A Malik, director of census, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Dr AKM Nurun Nabi, professor of population science department at Dhaka University, said they also rely on the BBS statistics.

About the rise in numbers of

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Petrol pump owners call off strike

Govt assures them of raising commission

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Petrol Pump Owners Association (PPOA) has called off its planned indefinite strike from May 8, officials said.

The announcement was made after a fruitful meeting between Energy Advisor Mahmudur Rahman and leaders of the association yesterday.

"We had some misunderstandings. Now the misunderstandings are over," Rahman told journalists after the meeting.

On increasing commission of the dealers, the advisor told the

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Inflation raises its head again

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Inflation rate on a point-to-point basis rose in March after a steady decline for three consecutive months, and the upward trend was more pronounced in the rural areas than in the urban ones.

In March, the overall inflation rate rose by 0.47 percentage point from the previous month. The rise in the rural areas was estimated at 0.59 percentage point and in the urban areas it was 0.14 percentage point.

According to an estimate of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh

(TCB) yesterday, prices of all essentials rose by 4 to 123 percent over the last one year while the rise was 3 to 40 percent in the last one month.

The relentless price spiral of essentials has made life miserable for the middle and low income group people. A mid level female officer of a private firm appeared furious at the way things are going.

"Could you please give me the commerce minister's telephone number? I want to tell him about the situation and ask him what he is doing about it," she said in a telephone call to The Daily Star after returning from a market yesterday

morning.

After a record inflation rate in November last year, it continued to drop in the next three months.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) data say 7.95 percent national inflation rate in November came down to 7.07 percent in December last year, 6.59 percent in January and 5.72 in February this year.

But the trend changed in March again when inflation rose to 6.19 percent.

In case of food items, inflation rate increased by 0.56 percentage point to stand at 6.08 percent in

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Lawmaker says his name is not on voter list

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) lawmaker Ekabbar Hossain alleged in the parliament yesterday that his name has been dropped from the draft voter list published Wednesday.

Raising the issue on a point of order, the main opposition lawmaker described the draft voter list as "erroneous" and "full of fake voters" to manipulate the next general elections.

"I did not find my name on the

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AL says fire at B Chy's house not accidental

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday in parliament demanded forming a 10-member parliamentary body headed by the speaker to investigate the incident of arson at former

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

This pond-size water body is all that is left after the filling up of Bashabo Jheel in the capital in violation of wetland law.

No hope for immediate solution to power crisis

State minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood yesterday told parliament that he is not optimistic about resolving the ongoing power crisis in a short time.

"The problem of load-shedding will not be resolved even after implementation of all power projects by the present government,"

the state minister said while responding to a volley of questions both from the opposition and treasury benches on power shortage.

Defending his position, Iqbal said, "One term in office is not enough for development of power sector. You (Awami League) were in power and you know the problems in implementing power projects."

Even the ruling BNP and Jamaat lawmakers joined in criticising the state minister for failing to improve the power situation.

"Power crisis sometimes may even force a government to step down," Jamaat lawmaker Riasat Ali Biswas warned the state minister and asked about government steps to free the people from the power crisis.

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CPD protests Inqilab report on dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) yesterday protested a daily Inqilab report published on April 30, saying CPD Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya was misquoted in the report.

A CPD press release said the report on the regional dialogue held in Mymensingh on April 29 had quoted Dr Debapriya as saying, "Jamaat is a religion-based fundamentalist party, it is doing

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HEROIN SMUGGLING TO UK Firm tries hard to get off the hook

SHARIFUL ISLAM

King and Company, a sister concern of BD Foods Ltd and accused with four other companies of smuggling 75.5kg of heroin to the UK, continues intense lobbying to clear its name.

In their latest effort, the company authorities have sent a letter to Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, requesting him to intervene and have the smuggling charges against the company dropped, said a source at the finance ministry.

The letter signed by Managing Director of King and Company Badrul Haider Chowdhury and dated April 30 claims that the National Board of Revenue (NBR) investigation did not find its involvement in drug smuggling.

Copies of the letter were sent to Prime Minister's Office (PMO), secretaries of different ministries and intelligence agencies.

However, sources said the NBR has many reasons to suspect the company of drug running.

Mainuddin, manager of the company, while representing BD Foods before an NBR investigation team last year, had provided false information about the company's former staff Nazmul Haider Bhuiyan Bulbul. BD Foods sacked Nazmul only after a newspaper had reported about his role in the smuggling.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested Nazmul on April 20. During interrogation, he admitted his involvement in smuggling heroin to the UK.

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Opposition MPs question sources of money of TV channel owners

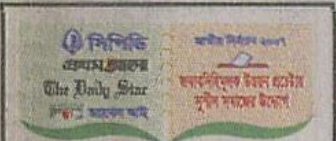
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Minister for Information Abdus Salam in parliament yesterday avoided opposition queries about the sources of money and identities of owners of recently launched private television channels.

During the question answer session, opposition lawmakers also alleged the government has been delaying transmission of Ekushey Television (ETV) despite High Court (HC) directives. They also enquired why BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman receives huge coverage on the state-run BTV.

As the one-hour question-answer session ended, senior Awami League (AL) lawmaker Abdur Razzak raised the issue. He alleged the ruling party leaders and

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Notice

The Channel 1 telecasts a special programme today at 5:00pm on the Regional Dialogue that was held in Mymensingh on April 29.

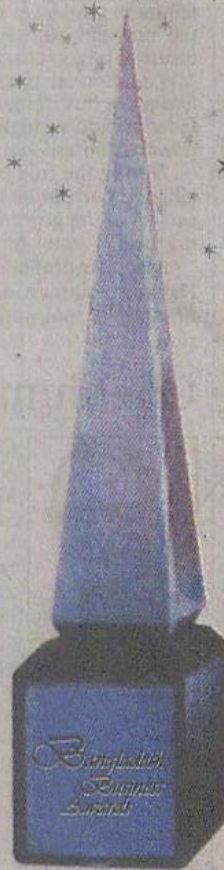
The dialogue took place as part of a series programme of the Civil Society Initiative, taken by Centre for Policy Dialogue, the daily Prothom Alo, The Daily Star and Channel 1, for accountable development and nomination of honest and competent candidates in the national election 2007.

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