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NO DOOR TO DOOR VOTER LISTING

EC decision illegal

Observe legal experts

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission's (EC) recent decision to revise the existing voter list in the office without going door to door contradicts the High Court (HC) directives as well as the commission's own decision taken on August 6 last year.

The EC on Monday asked people to come to the election offices in district and upazila headquarters to include their names in the list.

Legal experts and former election commissioners termed the EC decisions contradictory to the HC directives upheld by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court (SC).

"The Election Commission's decision definitely contradicts the High Court directives and it is tantamount to contempt of court," Justice Ghulam Rabbani, former judge of the Appellate Division, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The law has given the duty to the Election Commission to revise the electoral rolls. But the commis-

sion has directed people to get themselves registered in the voter list. How can they audaciously direct people to do the job? The directive is also illegal," he said.

"It is clearly an impudent device to bypass or ignore the directives of the High Court upheld by the Appellate division of the Supreme Court," Rabbani said.

Former election commissioner M Munsef Ali held the same view, saying it is not possible to prepare a voter list without visiting door to door and the EC's decision contradicts its previous decision.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed termed the EC decision "absolutely illegal".

The EC decided on August 6 last year to prepare the voter list for the ensuing parliamentary election following the Electoral Ordinance 1982 and Electoral Rolls Rules 1982 by visiting door to door as it did in 1983, 1990, 1992, 1995 and 2000.

Ignoring the opinions of the then election commissioners M

Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali who favoured revising the existing voter list, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz unilaterally decided to prepare the voter list afresh.

The decision was challenged in the HC and the court asked the CEC on January 4 this year to immediately call a meeting of the commission to decide and take appropriate

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

steps to implement the August 6 decision of the EC.

The commission filed an appeal with the SC Appellate Division on February 1, challenging two of the five HC directives. The two directives are: the commission should prepare the electoral roll taking the existing roll as a major basis and if there is a computerised database,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

"I, after examining, expunged from the records of the House proceedings all un-parliamentary words uttered yesterday (Monday) by the leader of the opposition and the ruling BNP lawmaker," Acting Speaker Akther Hamid Siddiqui

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Many may miss new roll

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts fear that huge number of eligible people will be deprived of their constitutional right to franchise in the next parliamentary elections, as the Election Commission (EC) for the first time has decided against the officials' going door to door to get the voters enrolled.

The EC documents show only 26 lakh people have been added to the existing voter list in last five years

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

while the election officials estimated that about one crore people have become eligible for registration in the voter list by this time.

The EC has now fixed only a one-month time limit to allow the rest of the eligible people to register their names in the voter list, asking them to go to the election offices in district, thana and upazila headquarters for the purpose.

It is a routine procedure that continues round the year as

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

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According to a BSF protest letter sent to the BDR, the dead was identified as Rajendra Sharma of Soladana BSF camp in Basirhat

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

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