

Buet develops electronic voting machine

KAMRUL HASAN KHAN

The Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT) of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) has developed an electronic voting machine (EVM) to make the voting process easy, smooth, accurate and reliable.

"The EVM, which has been made considering our common people's level of technological knowledge, will reduce the cost of voting process to a great extent," said IICT Director and Supervisor of the project Prof Dr SM Lutful Kabir yesterday.

"The use of the machine by a voter or a polling agent or a presiding officer is as simple as operating the switch of a fan or light," he claimed.

"Battery-run EVM does not bring radical change in the traditional voting system, rather, in EVM main voting structure remains unchanged and it introduces 'vote switch' system instead of using seal," he added.

The machine comprises four units- ballot, control, display and

battery units.

The ballot unit contains candidates' names and their electoral symbols with separate buttons below them.

After getting green signal from control unit, a voter will have to press only the button below his/her chosen symbol.

When the button is pressed, the machine will reply "voting completed" if it is cast successful or say "vote again" if it is not done properly.

The display unit will show the number of votes cast while the battery will continue the system up to 72 hours.

"Through this process vote recording will be safe and perfect. There is no possibility of failed vote, vote rigging or any other anomalies in the EVM," Prof Kabir said.

Three ex-students of Buet worked for the project under his supervision.

They are KM Masum Habib, lecturer of IICT, Rajib Mikail, lecturer of Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and Mahmudul Hasan Sohag, founder

and director of Pi Labs, a research and development company.

The team began to work on the project in the middle of 2005 with IICT finance.

"Our students are so brilliant that within two months they showed me a proto-type of the machine," Prof Kabir said in a proud voice as his three students were present on the occasion.

He said they sent a letter to the Election Commission around 10 days back with a request to demonstrate the machine and they are now waiting for a positive response.

The most significant feature of the EVM is its simplicity, accuracy and less cost, Prof Kabir said.

"The most important thing is to convey the message to common people that everything of traditional voting system with which they are used to is not changed radically. We only modified the system taking into account the possibility of anomaly and ambiguity in the process of voting," he added.

The machine had a successful field test last year.

15 teachers of Bhasani varsity quit positions

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Fifteen teachers of Maulana Bhasani University of Science and Technology (MBUST) at Santosh yesterday quit their administrative posts as the university vice-chancellor (VC) did not resign by the 72-hour deadline set by the agitating teachers.

The stepped down teachers include proctor, assistant proctor, provost, assistant provosts and chairmen of different departments in the university. They would also refrain from their academic duties from now on as well.

At a press conference at Tangail Press Club on Sunday, the agitating teachers announced the deadline for the VC to step down for his alleged corruption, otherwise they would quit, they had said.

The agitating students and teachers yesterday held a demonstration at the Shaheed Minar on the campus. The angry students also locked up the administrative building for several hours.

The teachers and students of the university had been agitating for the last two weeks demanding the VC's resignation.

On Wednesday, at a rally at the same place, speakers said that resignation of the VC is the only way to remove the prevailing deadlock in the university and the teachers would not cooperate with the VC, as he is an "incompetent and corrupt person". With MBUST Teachers' Association President Dr AKM Mohiuddin in the chair, the rally was addressed by, among others, its general secretary Motiur Rahman.

VC Dr Mohammad Khalilur Rahman, who is in Dhaka since February 22, meanwhile told The Daily Star when contacted over phone yesterday that he had no intention of stepping down. He was not coming to the campus due to lack of security, the VC added. He also denied any allegations of corruption against him.

Cattle trader slaughtered

UNB, Chuadanga

A trader was slaughtered at Asmankhali Naodapara when he was returning home from Alamdanga cattle market after selling cattle on Wednesday night.

The body of Abdul Hakim, 36, was recovered from an isolated field. He hailed from Bakshipur in Alamdanga upazila.

Police suspect that underground activists slaughtered him at around 8:00pm and took away the money he had from the sale of cattle.

The mayor's

FROM PAGE 1

But the CCC officials and staffs never dared to speak out their agonies, let alone protest Mohiuddin's behaviour.

However, Mohiuddin's current term as the CCC chief allegedly started with favouring relatives and people of his choice.

It is alleged that he removed then chief health officer Dr Sarfaraj Khan Chowdhury, a freedom fighter, and appointed his son-in-law Dr Selim Chowdhury despite the fact that Selim was one of the most junior health officers at the CCC.

Blessed with all types of patronage from his "powerful" father-in-law, Selim also turned very quickly into the most influential man in the health department.

Earlier in September 2002, then country director of Asian Development Bank (ADB) Toru Shibuchi in a letter to the mayor expressed his disapproval of Selim's activities and involvement in corruption. Selim was then the programme manager of the Urban Primary Healthcare Project.

In the letter, Shibuchi asked the mayor to immediately remove Selim and take stern actions against him.

Mohiuddin, however, awarded Selim first with a promotion as health officer and then to the top post of the CCC health department.

The LGED ministry also wrote two letters to the CCC mayor on July 17, 2003 and June 1, 2006, accusing his son-in-law of irregularities and asked him to take necessary actions in this regard. But Mohiuddin simply overlooked the complaints.

It is alleged that Mohiuddin also cancelled a tender won by two firms—Mizan Enterprise and Silk Enterprise—for the construction work of the CCC-owned Mammon Maternity Hospital unit-2 to award it to Selim. He even paid Selim Tk 55 lakh in advance for the work, sources said.

The mayor himself held the post of coordinator of the CCC Pharmaceutical Factory on Sagarika Road under Paharati Police Station and once went to Mumbai and Kolkata to procure machinery and materials for the factory, sources alleged.

During his current tenure Mohiuddin also defied laws and ignored the civil society outcries for protecting the scenic setting of the port city and cut many hills to build housing projects under the banner of the CCC. He also built many markets and a private university by encroaching on government land.



PHOTO: STAR

Foreign affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury speaks at the closing ceremony of 'Indo-Bangladesh Dialogue on Media and Culture' organised by CPD in collaboration with India International Centre (IIC) at Brac Inn Centre in the city yesterday. On his left are CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan and former Indian High Commissioner Dev Mukharjee and on his right is CPD Executive Director Debapriya Bhattacharya.

'Increase registration fee of luxurious cars in budget'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Society for Urban Environmental Protection (SUEP) yesterday urged the caretaker government to increase registration fees of the luxurious cars, which are above 1300cc and worth about Tk 52 lakh, in the upcoming budget in order to decrease import of fuel as well as save foreign reserve.

"About one forth of the national budget goes to energy sector and if the government increase registration fees of the luxurious cars considering the present fuel price as well as the economic situation, a huge amount of money will be

saved," said Akhtar Hossain Babu, general secretary of SUEP, at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) in the city.

He also said the import of luxurious cars, microbuses or jeeps, whose engine capacity are over 1300cc should be discouraged as the cars consume heavy fuel and need higher cost of maintenance.

"We will use cars that serve the purpose and require cheap maintenance cost as the maintenance cost put pressure on the foreign reserves," Akhter said.

The SUEP proposed to form a team comprising Bangladesh Road Transport Authority members, Rab

and traffic police for examining driving licences once a month.

Stressing use of four-stroke motorcycle, they urged withdrawal of supplementary tax on motorcycle and changing road tax on the motorcycle users for two years instead of 10 years considering the economic condition of the motorcycle users.

The present government should encourage import of CNG-run vehicles, SUEP said.

SUEP President Advocate Mollah Maqbul Hossain and SUEP Treasurer Golam Kibria Chowdhury also spoke at the conference.

Director of drug rehabilitation centre jailed

DU, Buet canteens fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six mobile courts in the city yesterday in separates drives jailed director of a drug rehabilitation centre, fined three canteens at Dhaka University and Buet including Madhur canteen. The courts also fined three hospitals and at least 25 food manufactures and sellers.

The mobile court led by Metropolitan Magistrate Rokon Ud-Doula raided Punarjibon Madakasakta Niramoy Kendra in Kafur and found that it does not have permission from DC and Directorate of Health.

The court arrested one of the owners and Director of the organisation Nazrul Islam.

It also sentenced him a ten-month imprisonment and fined Tk 1 lakh 25 thousand and issued warrant against its Chairman Jahurul Islam.

The court also sentenced one-year imprisonment and fined Tk 1 lakh to Mokbul Hossain, owner of Miracle Cosmetics in Mirpur section-10 for not having required papers and marketing shampoo without BSTI approval.

Mokbul was also fined Tk 2 lakh 75 thousand for importing readymade cosmetics and packaging and marketing locally without proper approval from the govern-

ment authorities.

The court also issued warrant against Rehana Afroze, daughter of Hossain.

The mobile court led by Metropolitan Magistrate Towfiqul Alam fined a total of Tk 2 lakh and 20 thousand to three confectionaries and six restaurants in Sadarghat area and five ghee manufacturers in Patuatoli Gheepatti.

The three confectionaries were fined for selling bread and biscuits without BSTI approval while the restaurants were fined for shabby and unhealthy environment and using burnt oil for preparing foods.

The ghee manufacturers were producing and marketing ghee without BSTI approval. They were fined ranging Tk 25 thousand to 35 thousand.

A mobile court led by Metropolitan Magistrate Nani Gopal Biswas fined Dhaka General Hospital at Swamibagh with Tk 50 thousand for the hospital lacks X-ray protector and technicians. None of the nurses of the hospital has diploma certificate.

The mobile court fined Tasmeri and Company in the same area with Tk 50 thousand for using palm-oil to manufacture coconut oil.

The court also fined Monwara General Hospital in Golapbagh area for half of it's nurses do not have diploma on nursing.

'BNP Palli': Fast completing structures

FROM PAGE 1

also next to each other in 'Banani BNP Palli'.

Despite Rajuk's claim of suspending the process of allotment, the construction work is going on at a fast pace because most of the once high and mighty allottees, many of whom are in preventive detentions right now, already have land registrations to their names.

A number of the allottees had other real estates in the city before getting plots in 'Banani BNP Palli', which is in violation of Rajuk rules.

Engineer AKM Harun, chairman of Rajuk, said they have yet to cancel the allotments.

"We just stopped the process of the file movement regarding the allotments," he told The Daily Star.

Rajuk registered the plots to the allottees in 2005 soon after those had been allotted under direct supervision and decision of Mirza Abbas, former housing and public works minister, currently in detention.

Only 10 months ago the valuable land was flat but now it is divided into 50 five-katha plots, a half of which have buildings under construction on them. It is a virtual development blitz in the small pocket of Banani, just opposite the NAM apartments facing the lake, which has dramatically transformed the once serene horizon of the area in the last ten months.

During a visit to 'Banani BNP Palli' last week this correspondent found most of the construction workers busy and tight-lipped, some of whom were bending iron rods, some were mixing sand, cement and brick bats to make concrete, some were hitting nails on wood planks or bamboos.

Siddique, a manager of workers on the construction site of former state minister for liberation war affairs Prof Rezaul Karim's building, said they have been working there for a few months. They have already completed three storeys of the planned six-storey building. The building of Asadul Habib Dulu already has already six storeys completed. Alamgir Kabir's building

has three storeys completed, Fazlur Rahman Patal's have all the six storeys completed, and the construction of the two mayors' buildings just started.

The owners of the buildings have not been visiting the construction sites for more than a month now due to an 'uncomfortable environment' for them created by the current interim government's rather unprecedented drive against alleged corrupt politicians.

Only, Moniruzzaman Mia, former member of the Anti-corruption Commission and former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, visited his site a couple of days ago.

Mia and some other allottees hired developers to construct their buildings. Some of the buildings constructed by the developers are already habitable with some of the apartments already sold.

"Rajuk registered the land to me in 2005. It cost me a total of 55,00,000 taka to get the land registered. I deserve the land as I don't have any other piece of land in this world," Moniruzzaman Mia told The Daily Star.

When asked what will happen to the land since the owners have already contracted developers to construct buildings there, the Rajuk chairman could not give an answer.

"You just write we have suspended the official process of plot allotment. But we have yet to obstruct the construction work," said the Rajuk chairman.

Out of the 50 plots, five were allotted to ministers, 10 to state ministers, two to mayors, 24 to BNP lawmakers and two others to Awami League and Jatiya Party lawmakers. Besides, a former vice-chancellor, a former adviser to the foreign ministry, son of the president, a sister-in-law of former housing minister Mirza Abbas, and three businessmen known to be close to Hawa Bhaban also got plots there.

Mirza Abbas influenced the Rajuk authorities to allot a plot to his

A mobile court led by Metropolitan Magistrate Jahangir Alam conducted drive at four canteens of Dhaka University and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

It fined Madhur Canteen Tk 20 thousand for unhealthy and unhygienic environment. It fined one of the canteens at Buet Tk 50 thousand for unhealthy and unhygienic environment, using rose water in food and storing cooked foods with uncooked meat together in the refrigerator.

The court issued warrant against the owner and manager of the canteen inside SM hall of Dhaka University as they ran away sensing the presence of mobile court.

However, the court found canteen inside the Rokeya Hall up to the mark.

The mobile court led by Metropolitan Magistrate Abdur Rauf Khan fined Ayesha Memorial Hospital at Mohakhali for not having technician. It also fined Kosturi-1 and Kosturi-2 restaurants with Tk 5 thousand and 10 thousand respectively for unhealthy and unhygienic environment.

KAZI ZAHIR MURDER CASE

1 gets death, 4 life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A court in Chittagong has sentenced one person to death and four others to life imprisonment for the murder of Kazi Zahir that took place in Brahmanbaria in 2005.

Judge AHM Mostaq Ahmad of Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal in a verdict on Wednesday gave the capital punishment to Yusuf Ali Khan, son of Ali Asgar Khan of Madhyapara under Nabinagar upazila of the district.

The lifers are Humayun, son of Alfu Mia, Jalal Khan, son of Ali Asgar Khan, Md Yusuf, son of Phul Mia and Shuklal Ghosh. Of them, Jalal and Shuklal are at large.

The court acquitted eight other accused in the case.

According to the prosecution, the convicts led by Jalal abducted Zahir's eldest daughter Ashaka Khanam alias Tinni, 15, from the victim's house at Madhyapara on April 16, 2005.

As Zahir filed a case in this connection on the next day the convicts started harassing and threatening the victim's family with dire consequences repeatedly.

On August 21, Yusuf opened fire on Zahir who was trying to resist them from entering his house by force. Zahir died on the way to hospital.

His cousin Md Monir filed a murder case with Nabinagar Police Station in this connection on the following day.

The chargesheet of the case was submitted on January 10, 2006 accusing 13 people and the case was sent to Chittagong Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal on September 4 of last year.

The court gave the verdict after hearing fifteen witnesses.

PP Ahmed Kamrul Islam Chowdhury and Advocate Masud Salaudinn appeared for plaintiff while Advocate Ashfaq Ahmed for the defendants.

UNGA president lauds Dhaka's role in promoting gender equality

BSS, Dhaka

President of the United Nations General Assembly Haya Rashed Al Khalifa appreciated the role of the government of Bangladesh in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women.

She expressed her appreciation during a meeting with Women and Children Affairs Adviser Geeti Ara Safiya Choudhury at the UN Headquarters in New York on Wednesday, according to a message received yesterday.

The adviser explained how the female education was given high priority and how Bangladesh has managed to empower women by providing them with micro-credit and non-formal education.

She also apprised the UNGA president of various measures being taken by the government to put an end to violence against women.

The adviser also discussed the recently established 'Poverty Eradication Fund' in the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and its modality of use.

Haya Rashed Al Khalifa suggested that Bangladesh should be eligible to have its programmes financed by the IDB Fund and the government should submit suitable projects.

She also assured the adviser that she would use her good offices to expedite release of resources once the programmes are approved.

Later, the adviser had a meeting with the UNIFEM Executive Director Noeleen Heyzer.

Obituary



Md Murtaza Reza, director of Aziz & Co. Ltd, passed away on March 6 at the age of 49, says a press release.

He was also a member of Dhaka Club Limited.

He is survived by his wife and two children.

Death anniversary

Today is the third death anniversary of Advocate ANM Shahidullah, former vice-president of Bangladesh Bar Association, says a press release.

He died at Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital on this day in 2004.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Chehlum

BSS, Dhaka

Chehlum of cultural personality Shamsuzzaman Khan Benu will be held at DOHS, Baridhara, mosque after Asr prayers today.

Friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the chehlum and doa mahfil.

Korean envoy calls on foreign affairs adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Outgoing Ambassador of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Seong-ung Park paid a farewell call on Foreign Affairs Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday morning.

During the meeting, they discussed the possibilities of export of Bangladeshi manpower to Korea under the new Employment Permit System Scheme. It is expected that a formal communication from Korea will follow soon in this regard.

They also discussed several matters regarding Korean Export Processing zone (KEPZ) in Chittagong, which will create a huge employment opportunity.

The adviser thanked the ambassador for his contribution to expanding bilateral relations during his tenure.



Kidney Awareness, Monitoring and Prevention Society takes out a colourful procession in the city yesterday to mark the World Kidney Day.

Indo-Bangla dialogue ends

FROM PAGE 20

rights, the economist noted adding that an initiative can be taken to translate the major literary works of both the countries.

On the electronic media, the dialogue suggested a survey to assess market demand for Bangladeshi programmes in India, producing programmes in English and add sub-titles in the Bangla programmes and establishment of an electronic news agency within South Asia.

The participants included eminent journalists, artists and academics from both the countries. They observed that the TV channel owners and cable operators of Bangladesh and India should come under one roof to identify ways how Bangladeshi TV channels could be broadcast in India.

"There is a need to understand the policies, laws and guidelines, which are in operation in both the countries for satellite cable television and electronic media to dispel misunderstanding," Debapriya read on.

Measures should be taken to make sure that Indian news channels cover Bangladeshi news, while a focus should be on the potentials of radio as well since there are a large number of listeners of radio channels in this region, he noted.

The participants observed that there is a need to have proper

information from the ministries concerned of both the countries so that the journalists are not accused of crossing the line or breaking the law of the countries while reporting, he added.

On the cultural cooperation, the dialogue suggested formation of Indo-Bangladesh Foundation to facilitate cultural exchanges through exchanges of artists and arrangements of joint music and film festivals.

The participants at the dialogue also recommended joint excavation of suitable archaeological sites in Bangladesh, allow entry of Bangladesh films to India, setting up a film laboratory by India in Bangladesh and introducing Indian scholarship programme for Bangladeshi students to study in India.

"Both the governments have to agree on a free trade regime to revive the theatre industry," Debapriya read.

Four organisations of Bangladesh and India -- Writer's Ink and Shadhona of Bangladesh and Sanskrit and India International Centre of India -- also announced formation of 'Indo-Bangla Cultural Initiative,' said a handout circulated to the journalists.

Speaking as the chief guest, foreign affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury said South Asia would lag behind in the world with-

out a sea change in the mindset of both the countries.

The suggestions put forward will enrich the governments of the two nations for taking decisions in the next SAARC summit, he hoped.

"In South Asia, together we are strong and a power to reckon in the global arena. Conversely, if we are separate, we are weak," the adviser said, adding that the caretaker government is putting high priority to cultivating close relations with all its neighbours including India.

Recalling the memories of Bangladesh's liberation war and creation of SAARC that linked the destinies of the two nations, he said, "Our intention is to use these linkages to build a harmonious relationship."

Emphasising the media's responsibility and its contribution, Iftekhar said, "We must create conditions for both our media to cooperate in the promotion of a common cultural ethos, at the same time, celebrating the distinctiveness and variety that lends it added richness."

Former High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dev Mukharji also spoke at the session chaired by CPD Chairman Professor Rehman Sobhan.