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TRANSCOM
ELECTRONICS

SURVEY

85pc wants reforms in political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political parties need reforms for the betterment of the country's democratic process, speakers yesterday said at a seminar on the outcome of a survey in which over 85 percent participants supported all proposed electoral reforms.

Bangladesh Manobadhikar Samonny Parishad (BMSPP) organised the seminar on its public opinion survey on electoral reforms proposed by the Election Commission (EC).

"Election is not the end in itself but a means to the end. We have witnessed how parliaments failed in the past to play their role and

remained dysfunctional after free and fair elections," former adviser to the caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan said at the seminar.

He said Bangladesh has always had backward movement in its way to democracy rather than forward movement. Once elected, lawmakers remain outside parliament and instead start getting involved in all sorts of facilities work like wheat distribution.

Of the reform proposals, Hafizuddin opposed the provision for raising the election expenditure because "the lawmakers try to realise the money they spend for election purposes".

Another former adviser ASM Shahjahan also observed that there is no other option but to implement the reforms.

Emphasising the role of political parties in democracy, he said bad politicians are driving out the good ones.

"In the name of elections, Bangladesh has had 'auctions' where nominations were sold to black money and muscle power," Shahjahan said, adding that the elections should be held after proper reforms.

Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Citizens for Good Governance, urged the EC to

CRP founder Valerie sidelined by board

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The board of trustees for the Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) yesterday "arbitrarily" removed the organisation's founder and main promoter Valerie Taylor from her position as coordinator.

She would remain in the CRP as an adviser.

In a letter issued by the board chairman, they also removed Taylor's name as coordinator from all parts of the organization, citing her engagement in activities that are "prejudicial and detrimental to the interest of the CRP".

Sources, however, said the board removed Taylor as coordinator of the Sagar-based CRP over a two-and-a-half-year disagreement between her and a section of the board who decided to raise the fee for the patients.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Wolfowitz readies his defence

White house backs him

AFP, Washington

Embattled World Bank president Paul Wolfowitz is expected to fight to keep his job yesterday after an investigation found he put his "personal interests" above bank rules and jeopardized the very mission of the development lender.

The former US deputy defense secretary is accused of personally arranging a lucrative pay-and-promotion package and transfer to the State Department for his companion and fellow bank employee, Shaha Riza.

He was due to appear before the bank's 24 executive directors at 5:00 pm (2100 GMT) to explain his actions.

"Again we support him, but we also know, and he has said, that he

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

7.5pc GDP growth can see Bangladesh in middle-income group

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh can become a middle-income country by 2016 if it raises its GDP growth a little more to a sustained 7.5 percent a year, the World Bank (WB) country director said yesterday.

At the current pace of growth, Bangladesh will become a middle-income country by 2023, Xian Zhu further said.

He was speaking at the monthly luncheon meeting of American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham) in Dhaka.

"Bangladesh will need to employ its labour and capital much more productively and increase the

investment rate by more than 5 percentage point relying on higher domestic savings," Zhu said referring to a WB analysis on how Bangladesh can raise its growth performance.

Achieving a 7.5 percent growth per year could be challenging but not impossible, Zhu said. "GDP growth in China has averaged over 9 percent since 1975, while Korea and Thailand each attained 8 percent growth for two decades and India is now close to joining this group of high growth performance."

On the recent growth performance of Bangladesh, he said resilience of its economy was

demonstrated once again in fiscal year 2006-07, a year in which the country is going through a very difficult period of political transitions.

On the projected growth, the WB country director said, Bangladesh appears to be achieving over 6.5 percent GDP growth in FY07 compared with 6.7 percent in FY06 and 6 percent in FY05. "This is a creditable performance by any standard and particularly considering the internal disturbances the economy had to weather in the first half of FY07."

He identified three challenges—diversification of export basket;

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Kamal vows to rally for RMG woman workers without umbrella

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned lawyer and politician Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said he will stage sit-in demonstrations in front of garment factories if he sees woman garment workers coming out of any factory without umbrella during rain.

Speaking at a roundtable

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Gujarat bus fire kills 29

AFP, New Delhi

The death toll from a head-on smash between a passenger bus running on compressed natural gas and a chemical tanker rose to 29 yesterday, the Press Trust of India said.

Police told the news agency they had recovered 29 bodies and that another 14 people were injured in the accident, which occurred when the bus tried to overtake another

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Two gunned down in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people were gunned down by a gang at Sayedabad in the city last night.

The victims were identified as Muhammad Badol, 30, a grocer, and Babu Miah, 25, a bus driver.

The gang comprising around five elements fired indiscriminately at Koratitola near Sayedabad bus terminal at about 10:30 pm.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Ex-PM Khaleda's assignment officer sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Dr Firoz Hasan Mahmud, assignment officer of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, was sued for extortion.

Abdul Hamid, a resident of Chhoyghoria in Bogra, filed the case with Shibganj Police Station against Firoz and two others on Monday night. The other accused in the case are Fazlulbari and his wife Mafela Begum of Asangari village under Shibganj upazila.

In the case, the complainant alleged that Firoz took Tk 2 lakh from him on September 16, 2005, promising to give him a job as fireman in the Fire Service Department.

"Firoz did not keep his promise and later demanded another Tk 50,000 from me," said the complainant.

He further alleged that Firoz, also a friend of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, took the money in the name of giving it to "Hawa Bhaban".

Suicide bomber kills 25 in Peshawar hotel

AFP, Peshawar

A suicide bomber blew himself up at hotel in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar yesterday killing at least 25 people, mainly Afghan refugees, and injuring dozens more, officials said.

The powerful blast partly demolished the three-storey Marhaba Hotel in the centre of the strife-torn city near the Afghan border, an AFP reporter at the scene said.

Body parts littered the road outside the hotel, opposite the historic Mahabat mosque, and television footage showed frantic passers-by wheeling badly mutilated bodies into local hospitals on wooden carts.

Interior Ministry spokesman Brigadier Javed Cheema told AFP that 25 people were killed, most of them Afghans.

"It is now confirmed that it was a suicide attack," said Malik Zafar Azam, the law minister for North West Frontier Province, of which

Peshawar is the capital.

"Police have found two severed legs. One leg bears a marking in Pashto language saying 'This will be fate of those who are American spies,'" he said.

Attacks on people suspected of spying for US forces across the border in Afghanistan have escalated in northwestern Pakistan in recent months, especially in its lawless tribal areas near the frontier.

Azam said the blast was also thought to be linked to a suicide attack at nearby Charsadda on April 28 which killed 29 people and injured the country's interior minister.

An employee of the hotel, Abdul Rashid, told reporters that the owner, an Afghan refugee, and his three sons were killed in the blast. Officials said the hotel was popular with Afghans.

Hospital and police sources said two women and a child were among the dead. At least 46 people

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Prayer Timing		
May 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-40
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Rejoinder, our reply

Islami Chhatra Shibir sent a rejoinder to a The Daily Star report headlined "Shibir's Secret Training of DU Students" published on May 12, 2007. In the rejoinder it also attached a statement allegedly signed by Md Abrar Ahmed's elder brother and sister. The statement claimed that Abrar was slightly mentally disturbed. They also claimed that he was forced to make the statement against Shibir.

Our Reply: Md Abrar Ahmed came to The Daily Star office spontaneously and made a statement.

He submitted a similar statement to the provost of Szt Zahurul Huq Hall. While Abrar was writing

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Held robber killed in Rab 'crossfire'

2 gunrunners also die in shootout

STAR REPORT

The suspected robber arrested by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Monday after he allegedly shot a top Rab official was killed in "crossfire" between his accomplices and Rab personnel at Mugdipara in the capital in the early hours yesterday.

Akter Hossain, 35, was arrested with a loaded pistol after he shot and injured Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) BM

Nuruzzaman, an assistant director of Rab 3, during a tussle between them near Moghbazar intersection.

Meanwhile in Chapainawabganj, two 'arms dealers' were killed yesterday in crossfire between criminals and Rab in a mango orchard at Ranihati in Shibganj upazila.

On Monday in Dhaka, the tussle took place when the Rab official challenged a group of six youths

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7 killed in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Seven people were killed and 32 others injured in a road accident on the Rangpur-Kurigram road in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred when a Dhaka bound passenger bus from Kurigram fell into a roadside ditch at Jurabandha at around 9:45am, as the driver of the bus lost control over the steering while trying to save a cow crossing the road.

Six of the dead were identified as

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Final ODI rained off

MOHAMMAD ISAM from Chittagong

Heavy rain coupled with cyclonic weather forced the third and final one-day international between Bangladesh and India to be called off here at the Divisional Stadium yesterday.

India, who will play the hosts in a Test match from May 18 at the same venue, had already won the ODI series 2-0 but it was significant for the Tigers as it was the last

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

HC agrees to hear graft case against Hasina

BSS, Dhaka

A division bench of the High Court yesterday ordered inclusion of the Meghna Ghat Power plant corruption case against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina in the cause list for hearing today.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

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