

Voter listing hits snags as EC fails to complete procurement

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Completion of the task for preparing a voter list with photographs within the time specified in the roadmap now seems uncertain as the Election Commission (EC) cannot complete the procurement of equipment for the task on time.

According to the roadmap, the procurement and deployment of all sorts of hi-tech equipment for voter listing are supposed to be completed in next October but it will now require additional two months as the EC's earlier move for timely procurement of the equipment has apparently failed.

After over two months since floating of the first tender for purchasing the equipment, the EC yesterday asked its secretariat to

float tender once again as the technical evaluation committee (TEC) disqualified bids on most of the equipment, sources in the EC said.

Once the tender is floated again, it will require around three months from the date of floating to complete the process for awarding the contracts for supplying the equipment, a senior official at the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) under the planning ministry said, referring to the Public Procurement Rules (PPR) 2003.

In addition to this time, the bidders, who will be awarded the contracts, will have to be granted a few weeks for supplying the equipment to the EC. The present tender gave four weeks' time for completing supply of equipment to the EC

after a bidder is awarded the job, sources at the EC Secretariat said.

So, the procurement is expected to be completed in December and in that case the field level task for preparing the voter list with photographs is unlikely to be started on a large scale before January next year whereas the EC in its roadmap had announced to start the task on a large scale in October this year.

The EC is searching options to complete the procurement process as soon as possible by complying with the Public Procurement Rules (PPR) 2003, sources in the EC said.

Contacted by The Daily Star yesterday, Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain said completing the procurement may be delayed as the PPR 2003 made it mandatory to follow a time frame to

complete a government purchase.

About 15 weeks is required to complete only the tender process for awarding the contracts to a bidder for supplying goods, said a senior official at the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) under the planning ministry.

The EC however can appeal to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs for reducing the required time in the PPR to complete the task of procurement, he said.

Asked whether the EC will ask the government to relax the provisions in the PPR to complete its procurement, Election Commissioner Sohul said they are

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Take action against those doing politics defying ban

Dr Kamal urges CG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday demanded that the caretaker government take action against those who have been carrying out political activities defying the ban.

"Some people will keep doing politics despite the ban while others will not be allowed to do the same is not acceptable," he said at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

The law should be equal for all, observed the noted jurist. He said the interim administration should issue warnings for those who are flouting the rules, and let the law take its own course.

"We want neutral and effective use of the law against the corrupt and criminals," he said adding that they want to know the sources of income of all the political leaders.

Referring to Sunday's motorcycle procession in Manikganj by Ferdous Ahmed Qureshi's Progressive

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Impossible task of crime investigation

SHARIFUL ISLAM

An investigation officer (IO) of a case gets a little over Tk 3 a day as conveyance although he has to travel to many places for investigation purposes besides regular duties; the IO also gets Tk 10 a day as the cost of three meals for an accused in police custody.

An investigator who has a government motorcycle gets around 1.7 litres of fuel a day—50 litres a month, but one who has his personal motorcycle gets only Tk 127 a month as motorcycle allowance.

IOs who do not have government or personal motorbike get only Tk 100 a month as conveyance allowance which is slightly over Tk 3 a day.

Most IOs who happen to be sub-inspectors (SIs) of police do not have any motorcycle. Police officials said there are around 700 government motorcycles against 11, 211 SIs in the force.

Many SIs said they often simply discard the thought of withdrawing the money they spend for the meals of an accused in custody since it even takes two years to get the

money "less than the alms of a beggar". They said they often have to undergo such ordeal to get other bills like the conveyance for visiting the previous work place for giving deposition as a witness in cases he had investigated.

"Because of long procedure it

INVESTIGATOR'S DISINCENTIVE

Fuel cost: Tk 28/month

Meal cost: Tk 10/day (for accused in custody)

**No allocation for medical test on repressed women, children

costs Tk 20 to withdraw Tk 10 from the fund of the district magistrates concerned," said an investigator, adding that one has to visit the district magistrate's office several times and appease the staff to get the bill.

Talking to The Daily Star, many

SIs alleged that most often the money allocated against such bills is less than half the actual cost—so, many of them refrain from submitting any bill at all.

"I once withdrew a bill of Tk 1,300 in my 14 years of service," said an SI of Tejgaon Police Station. The money the IOs do not claim is spent in other sectors of the department, sources said.

But, this has led to bribery in the police force, said the policemen. Two SIs said an investigator has to visit frequently the places of occurrence, interview witnesses, arrange repeated drives for the arrest of suspects, visit the court for hearing of cases and laboratories for forensic test of seized items, and take accident victims to hospitals.

All these cost an IO a huge amount of money but they get almost no allocation.

Moreover, an IO has to make at least four copies of each case investigation report, each containing 30

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Criminals gun down 2 hotel staff in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two hotel staff were killed and another was injured as criminals opened fire on them at a residential hotel in city's Gulistan area yesterday.

The dead were identified as Lokman Hossain Manik, 25, a hotel boy, and Zakir Hossain Amir, 24, a cleaner of Hotel Swagatam International.

Hotel manager Sharafat Ali, 32, who was critically injured in the incident, is undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH).

Police picked up two hotel boarders Mithun Sarkar and Babul

Mandal for questioning.

Police said a group of three to four criminals stormed the hotel reception at about 8:15 am and opened fire on the hotel employees without saying anything.

Two were killed on the spot while Sharafat was injured critically. Later, he was rushed to the DMCH.

Police reached the scene about an hour and a half after the incident and sent the bodies to Sir Salimullah Medical College for autopsies.

"We heard three gunshots and saw people going upstairs in panic. We waited inside the room locking

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



Incessant rain and flooding make life more difficult for women as the job of collecting drinking water becomes even trickier. The Photo was taken from Thrimohoni on the outskirts of Dhaka yesterday.

REFORM DIALOGUE EC hopes govt to lift or relax ban on politics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) hopes the ban on indoor politics will be withdrawn or relaxed this month allowing it to hold dialogue on electoral reforms with political parties from next month according to its roadmap.

The EC is already preparing for talks with the parties to implement the roadmap it announced on July 15.

A source close to the EC yesterday said, "The Election Commission believes the government will create a scope for holding talks with the parties either by

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

BNP too won't sit for talks if ban exists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP will not sit for a dialogue with the Election Commission (EC) unless the ban on indoor politics is lifted, party chairperson's adviser Brig Gen (ret) ASM Hannan Shah has said echoing what the Awami League had said earlier.

He also said BNP will take 'decision' against its dissident leaders led by party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan after withdrawal of the ban on indoor politics.

"Decision will be taken (against dissidents) when political activities

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Govt okays plan for 1 lakh low cost flats

Decides to offload shares of state oil companies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday approved in principle a proposal submitted by a Malaysian company for building one lakh apartments for low and middle income groups in the capital, but with a caveat that local companies must also have the opportunity to take part in the project.

In another decision the government yesterday decided to offload shares of Meghna and Jamuna oil

companies by October.

"We have approved the proposal in principle but the project will not be implemented the way the Malaysian company proposed," Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam told reporters about their decision regarding building low-priced apartments after a meeting of the advisers' committee on economic affairs.

"We want our local companies to participate in this mammoth

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

HASINA'S BAIL Full bench SC hearing today

UNB, Dhaka

The hearing of the state petitions seeking stay on High Court orders granting bail to detained Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina in an extortion case and on halting the ACC notice, asking her for submitting wealth statement will be held in the Supreme Court today.

The government initiated the move seeking leave to appeal for overturning the two orders of the High Court that stalled the process of action against the former prime minister.

A full bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin, will hear the state petitions, court sources said.

On August 7, the High Court, following a writ petition filed by Hasina, had granted her bail in connection with an extortion case filed by businessman Noor Ali and stalled the trial proceedings sans investigation. The court, on another writ petition filed by the AL chief, halted the operation of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) notice asking her to submit wealth statement.

In the writs, Hasina challenged the legality of government action

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Dead fish floating in a lake near Korail of Gulshan-1 in the capital yesterday. The fish allegedly died due to pollution of the lake.

PHOTO: STAR

DIARRHOEA Patients to be shifted to govt hospitals from ICDDR,B

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday decided to shift diarrhoea patients to different public hospitals from ICDDR,B to ease pressure on the country's lone institution for treatment of diarrhoea patients.

The decision was taken at a meeting between the health ministry officials and the ICDDR,B representatives.

"Public hospitals will send ambulances to ICDDR,B to take patients as per the capacity," Director (Disease Control) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) Moazzem Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday night. Shifting of the patients has already started, he added.

Meanwhile, patients' admission was very thin in the public hospitals where the government set up special units for treatment of diarrhoea patients three days back.

During a visit to the National Institute of Diseases of Chest and Hospital (NIDCH) yesterday it was found that not a single patient went

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Rain delays recession of floodwaters

STAR REPORT

Due to intermittent rain caused by the depression over West Bengal, India, recession of floodwaters in the central and south-central districts of Bangladesh is likely to be delayed.

As the well marked low pressure of the Bay intensified into a land depression over the West Bengal and adjoining areas of Bangladesh, the improvement of flood situation in Dhaka city may experience a brief halt, according to Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC).

FFWC Chief Engineer Saiful Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday, "The rainfall is likely to delay the recession of floodwater but still it is a welcome rain in Rangpur, Panchagarh, Dinajpur and Chapainawabganj where farmers are suffering from drought."

However, the flood situation in the districts of Manikganj, Munshiganj, Faridpur, Rajbari, Madaripur, Shariatpur, Gopalganj, Chandpur and Dohar and Nawabganj upazilas of Dhaka is likely to continue to slowly improve during the next few days.

The water levels of the Brahmaputra, Jamuna, Padma and the Meghna went down at all points.

The water levels of small rivers surrounding Dhaka and Narayanganj observed a slight rise and fall at different points. The water levels are expected to fall at a lower rate in the next 24-72 hours.

The Buriganga in Dhaka is now flowing 42cm below its danger level. The Lakhya at Narayanganj swelled 1cm and it was flowing 15cm above danger level yesterday morning. The water level of the Turag at Mirpur dropped 9cm and was flowing 35cm above danger mark and the Tongi canal dropped 3cm at Tongi and was flowing 61cm above danger level yesterday morning.

The water level of the Meghna at Bhairab Bazar continued to fall and as a result the flood situation in the districts of Narsingdi, Brahmanbaria, Kishoreganj and Gazipur will continue to improve, the FFWC expected.

A correspondent in Faridpur reports: Flooding in Faridpur took four more lives yesterday. However, the flood situation in the district is gradually improving as the water of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Army to work with civil admin for post-flood reconstruction

Says Gen Moeen

UNB, Narsingdi

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday said the army will work with the civil administration during the post-flood reconstruction work to prevent corruption as happened in the past.

"Army will join the civil administration in reconstruction of each road, bridge and culvert damaged by flood...We won't allow any corruption in reconstruction work," he told reporters after distributing relief goods among the flood victims in Raipura upazila.

He said one army member will be working with LGRD, LGED and local administration each so that every penny is utilised properly.

"Let's work together for the post-flood reconstruction," General Moeen said, adding all will have to face the challenge posed by the devastating floods.

The army chief reiterated that it is not the time for doing politics. "People won't forget those who're doing politics with floods."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3