

AL to go for polls

FROM PAGE 1
Reiterating that the cases filed against Hasina are false and fabricated, he demanded immediate withdrawal of those cases and the release of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The AL leader blamed Jamaat-e-Islami and its student front Islami Chhatra Shibir for the violence on October 28, 2006 and demanded the caretaker government bring the culprits to book.

Meanwhile, the AL's committee for dialogue with the Election Commission (EC) on electoral reforms sat at Hasina's political office at Dhanmondi to discuss different conditions set by the EC about registration of political parties with the commission.

The meeting decided that they will formally oppose a number of the EC's conditions including not using anyone's picture on posters except the party chief's, having at least 33 percent women all unit committees, and dismantling front organisations and foreign unit committees.

The AL will also ask the EC to simplify the registration rules.

On the use of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's picture on posters, committee member Latif Siddiqui said, "If the present government declares Bangabandhu as the Father of the Nation and bestows national honour on him, then we would consider not using his picture on party posters."

AL Organising Secretary Mahmudur Rahman Manna joined the discussion and said if the party is run based on the principles of Bangabandhu then why are we not allowed to use his picture on posters?

A number of other leaders also joined the debate and said it would be tough for them to meet the EC's condition of keeping 33 percent women on all committees. Most of the leaders said they want empowerment of women but reaching such a high goal suddenly could be impossible.

AL Organising Secretary Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed told the meeting that the EC must carry out all necessary reforms for a free, fair and credible election and must omit the "anti-state and anti-people" conditions.

AL leader Abu Sayeed, who is entrusted with the task to prepare a set of proposals based on how different political parties got registrations in different countries, placed a five-page proposal which the meeting asked him to give to Abul Mal Abdul Muhith, who is preparing the party's draft proposals.

After the meeting, AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed, who is the chair of the 21-member committee, told journalists that they would place their proposals based on the AL-led 14-party's 31-point reform proposals.

The committee will meet tomorrow again and finalise the draft proposal, which will be placed before the party's Central Working Committee on November 1 for approval.

UK envoy

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but trade and investment, and at a time when trade and investment are seen to be suffering from an unforeseen and paradoxical consequences," he said.

Talking about the ongoing anti-corruption drive, Choudhury said the drive has upset the old ways, the old system of understanding, and this has led to a near collapse in business confidence as people sit on the fence to discover how and if the new system will work and sustain.

"As a result of this and other factors, economic growth this year is predicted to be lower, may be up to 2 percent lower," said the British high commissioner.

Replying to a query from an investor, Choudhury said the UK is not only one of the biggest development partners but also a political and international partner of Bangladesh.

BSF kills 1

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishia

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday shot dead a Bangladeshi youth near Baradi border of Damurhuda upazila in Chuadanga.

The dead was identified as Aminul, 18, son of Tokab Ali at Bhajha of Damurhuda upazila.

BDR said BSF members of Bijoypur camp fired on Aminul when he went to a field near Baradi border to graze cattle at about 5:45am.

Hedied on the spot.

On information, Damurhuda police recovered the body.

Yaba business

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syndicates will soon be revealed once the interrogation is completed," said the Rab official.

Huda and Ahsanul are now on seven-day remand in two cases filed with Gulshan Police Station under the Special Powers Act and the Narcotics Control Act.

Rab busted Huda's office in Gulshan in the city on Thursday and arrested him and Ahsanul. The elite force members also seized 1.3 lakh Yaba tablets, huge amount of chemicals and a machine used to make Yaba and 5,000 ice pills.

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) is convinced after conducting tests at its laboratory that 1.3 lakh Yaba pills are genuine.

In another development, members of Rab-10 arrested two including a woman with 450 Yaba tablets in Shyampur in the city on Saturday night.

Acting on a tip off, Rab members arrested Mohammad Shahjahan in front of Amin Super Market with 43 pills and a motorcycle around 7:30pm.

Following his statement, the crime busters arrested Papia Sultana in Boubazar and seized 407 pills and Tk 80,000.

Mobile court

FROM PAGE 1
242 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and record the statements of the accused after informing him or her of the charges, according to the ordinance.

The punishments however may be meted out only if the accused confess, and those must stay within the bounds of financial penalties only.

But, if a confessed violator of law does not want to pay the penalty he or she may be sent to a maximum of three months of imprisonment.

And if the accused intends to dispute the allegations, he or she will be sent to the judicial magistrate for investigation and trial.

The accused may also file an appeal with the district and sessions judge.

Talking to reporters at the Bangladesh Secretariat before the approval of the ordinance, Law Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday said the government is not bringing any change to the CrPC while introducing the new law.

"It's going to be an independent, stand alone law," he said.

"If anyone is fined wrongly by a mobile court, there will be provisions for appeal against it," the law adviser told reporters after a meeting at the housing and public works ministry.

"The government has a responsibility to separate the judiciary from the executive, and it also has the responsibility to keep the administrative service efficient and active for good governance," Mainul said.

The law is to ensure that the administrative service cadres are properly equipped to carry out the necessary preventive measures like imposing section 144, convening mobile courts, and running anti-adulteration drives, he said.

"These powers have been there for administrative cadres in some other laws including in the customs laws. Those are now just being incorporated in the new law."

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Hasina files

FROM PAGE 1
under sections 161/ 163/ 164/ 165/ 165 (Ka)/ 109 of the Penal Code and section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947.

The foreign company Wartsila Power Development Ltd Consortium and its partners Summit Group and United Group won the deal during the tenure of Hasina-led government from 1996 to 2001.

According to the case statement the former prime minister had received the kickbacks from the three companies between October 7, 1997 and November 24 that year in exchange for the permission to set up the power plant.

The co-accused are former energy secretary Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, former Power Development Board (PDB) chairman Noor Uddin Mahmud Kamal, Managing Director of Summit Industries and Mercantile Corporation Private Ltd Aziz Khan and Director Farid Khan, United Group Chairman Hasan Mahmud Raja and Director Abul Kalam Azad.

This is the fifth case filed against the AL chief, now detained in a sub-jail on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises.

He said the project would be very suitable for Bangladesh as the country lacks adequate funds to link all districts to its network of gas pipeline.

Speaking of the advantages of such portable filling station, Kamal said the units do not require any permanent land and can supply the fuel during crisis situation when natural gas supply through the national grid is breached for any reason.

The proposed unit has a control panel, a dispenser and 140 CNG storage cylinders to carry 6,000 cubic metres of compressed natural gas. A fully loaded unit can fill up 600 vehicles, said the sources.

Similar portable filling stations are popular in remote areas of Germany, USA and Argentina where gas supply is not available through pipelines.

In the project proposal submitted to power, energy and mineral resources ministry, the firm proposed that the government pay them a service charge for every cubic metre of CNG dispensed.

Since the government policy would require them to purchase and sell each cubic metre of CNG at the same rate, Tk 8.50, they asked the government to pay the service charge, Kamal said.

The firm also sought permission from the National Board of Revenue to allow duty-free import of parts and machinery of the portable CNG units.

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personal staff Manu Majumder of extorting Tk 3 crore in 1998.

In another case filed by Noor Ali, managing director of Uniqe Group, with Tejgaon Police Station on June 13 Hasina, her cousin Sheikh Helaluddin and his wife Rupa Chowdhury were charged with extorting Tk 5 crore for mediating between PDB and his (Noor Ali) firm to finalise a power plant deal in 1997.

A number of other cases against her have long been pending from the tenure of the immediate past BNP-led coalition government. The cases include frigate and MIG-29 purchase cases.

CNG stations

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for a refill. This situation could be improved significantly if the government approves the mobile CNG filling stations, said MF Kamal, managing director of the company.

To improve the ongoing crisis of CNG, the portable filling stations could be placed at any convenient locations inside the city as well as at the entry or exit points of the city, Kamal added.

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Potato farmers

FROM PAGE 1
this year, encouraged by last year's Tk 10 lakh profit from 22 bighas.

He said his expansion plan is now in uncertainty as he has got only 13 sacks of urea whereas some 80 sacks of urea, 80 sacks of TSP, 40 sacks of potash, 1000 kgs of gypsum, 50 kgs of zinc and 50 kgs of Boron or 150 kgs of Sohag are needed for potato farming on 30 bighas of land.

Other farmers gave vent to the same frustration, seeking intervention of the agriculture adviser to end the crisis.

The shortage of urea is also affecting cultivation of Rabi crops in most areas of Manikganj district, farmers said.

In many areas farmers are returning home disappointed after waiting in vain in long queues at dealer shops.

This correspondent, who visited different areas of Manikganj sadar, Ghior and Shibabala upazilas in last couple of days, saw a long queue of farmers in front of the dealer shop at Tarai Bazar in Shibabala upazila, where authorities have deployed police to prevent any untoward incident.

Farmers at Betila Mitorea union accused the local dealer of selling fertiliser at a price higher than that fixed by the government.

Angry farmers at Rajibpur Bazar in sadar upazila beat up a dealer and assaulted four sub-assistant officers of agricultural department on Tuesday.

Deputy director at Agriculture Extension Department, Mokbul Hossain Talukdar, blamed the farmers for the problem as he said they, fearing crisis in the coming days, tend to buy more fertiliser than what they really need.

The agriculture official said he got 2,135 tonnes of fertiliser he asked for October, adding that the authorities have also allocated the department 4000 tonnes for November.

Deputy commissioner Manikganj, Ataur Rahman, denied any fertiliser crisis in the district and claimed that management and distribution of fertiliser is good and there will be no problem.

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Judgment in graft

FROM PAGE 1
others to submit the probe report by November 28.

HARRIS CASE
The court recorded statements of 16 prosecution witnesses including complainant and the IO before setting the date.

During the argument, Special Public Prosecutor Syed Mizanur Rahman told the court that he was able to prove the charges against Harris beyond doubt.

The case was filed on March 25 this year as Harris allegedly, through abusing power, got hold of a government automobile belonging to National Tea Company and later handed it over to Amin Badal, one of Harris' accomplices.

Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) Assistant Director Monayem Hossain, also the IO, submitted the charge sheet against Harris and Badal on July 22.

Harris is on the run since the joint forces started clamping down on the alleged corrupt bigwigs.

The proceeding of the case against Badal was earlier stayed on an order from the High Court.

Harris was earlier convicted for three years in connection with a case filed for not submitting his wealth statement to the ACC within the deadline.

He was also handed down three years' simple imprisonment for possessing illegal foreign and local currencies at his Gulshan residence.

HUDA CASE
Judge AKM Ishtiaque Hussain of the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge's Court yesterday heard on charge framing against the accused.

Five others are Huda's brother Kamrul Huda, Yunus Ali Khan, Nasiruddin Bowali, Giasuddin Bowali, and Sub-Inspector Shahidul Haque of Dohar Police Station.

Of them, Huda, Kamrul and Yunus are now in the custody while the rests have been absconding since the case was filed.

Ayub Ali of Dohar filed the case with Dohar Police Station on March 6 against the accused for extorting Tk 2 lakh from him in 2004.

TARIQUE CASE
Metropolitan Magistrate Mizanur Rahman set the date after the case file was placed before the court yesterday.

The ACC sued Tarique, his wife Dr Zubaida Rahman and mother-in-law Iqbal Mand Banu on September 26 for conce