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EC studies emergency rules to know how those can affect polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the demand for withdrawal of the state of emergency before the next parliamentary polls growing, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said general elections were held under martial laws in 1970, 1979 and 1986.

"Many people are referring to these facts. I am only saying that elections were held in Bangladesh in situations of restrictions in the past," he said replying to a query at a press briefing.

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EC unveils new list of constituencies

18 districts see decrease in seats; Dhaka has 20

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday unveiled the new district-wise list of constituencies with 18 districts seeing either an increase or a decrease in the number of seats representing them in parliament.

According to the list, Dhaka has now 20 electoral areas, up from 13. The new seven seats would be earmarked for the metropolitan areas considering the high density

of population.

The number of seats in Dhaka division, however, has risen by only four to 94 from 90 as four districts—Faridpur, Kishoreganj, Manikganj and Munshiganj—each lost a constituency.

Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions—all have seen a decrease in the number of their constituencies. Chittagong has been allocated 58 seats against its previous 59, Barisal 21 against 23 and Khulna has got 34 against its previous 37

seats.

The number of parliamentary slots in Sylhet (19 seats) and Rajshahi divisions (72 seats) remain unchanged. Sirajganj under Rajshahi division lost a seat to Rajshahi City Corporation area.

Two constituencies—one lying between Mymensingh and Netrakona and the other between Pirojpur and Barisal—have been deleted from the parliamentary map.

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Resource sharing may greatly cut regional poverty
CA tells outgoing Saarc secy-gen

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said Bangladesh firmly believes that sharing of resources among the Saarc member countries can help remove poverty from this region.

Majority of the world population living below the poverty line are in South Asia, he said when outgoing Secretary General of Saarc Lyonpo Chenkyab Dorji made a farewell call on him at his office.

Dorji said Bangladesh has been playing a major role in promoting

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RMG workers again fight with cops at Mirpur: 100 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Mirpur area of the capital turned into a virtual battlefield yesterday afternoon as several thousand garment factory workers locked into a fierce clash with police.

More than 100 people including 50 workers and 20 police personnel suffered injuries during the clash that started around 5:30pm and continued till 9:00pm.

Police lobbed at least 40 teargas shells and fired rubber bullets at the agitating workers who retorted

by pelting the law enforcers with brickbats.

The agitating garment workers also went on a rampage and attacked several factories damaging window panes and other furniture.

Commuters going home suffered the most as vehicular traffic to and from Mirpur were grinded to a standstill.

The clash ensued when police clubbed the workers of MBM Garments around 5:30pm. The workers of MBM were demonstrating on the street at Mirpur Section

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Selim Al Deen no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Selim Al Deen, the legendary drama icon of the country, passed away yesterday.

The 58 year-old playwright breathed his last at around 2:00pm at Labaid Cardiac Hospital in the capital.

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\$5.2b transport plan for Dhaka okayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The communications ministry yesterday approved the Strategic Transport Plan (STP), a \$5.2 billion mass transport scheme incorporating an underground railway system, to ease traffic congestion and improve the communications system in Dhaka.

The ministry will send the plan to the council of advisers in a week for approval. The project will commence on completion of a two-year feasibility study and will take 20 years to complete.

Other components of the project are development of traffic management, introduction of bus rapid transit (BRT), non-motorised transport (NMT) lanes, pedestrian facilities and railways, and completion of eastern portion of the circuit.

lar waterways.

BRT allows buses to operate on exclusive bus-only lanes separated from other types of traffic and usually permits high speed and thus helps ease traffic congestion.

On November 4, 2007, the government decided to introduce metro service before starting the work of elevated expressway or light rail under the STP.

The metro, involving \$3.1 billion, will have underground railway service from Tongi and Gabtoli to Jatrahari and from Gulshan-2 to Gulshan-1 via Asad Gate, Shyamoli and Mohammadpur, SM Salehuddin, additional executive director of Dhaka Transport Coordination Board, told reporters at a briefing in the communications ministry yesterday.

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PHOTO: STAR

Garment workers pelt police with brickbats on a street at Mirpur Section-13 in the capital yesterday. The clash erupted as police charged truncheons on their procession demanding pay rise.

DU teachers, students against 'undignified' release of peers

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students and teachers of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday warned that they will not accept any 'undignified' release of their detained peers.

Expressing their concern that there might be a repetition of the controversial incidents that took place at the time of the release of the detained Rajshahi University teachers, they said release of their peers after conviction will not be accepted.

The detained Rajshahi University teachers were freed after conviction by a court followed by a presidential pardon for them, and after their release the govt claimed that they had been pardoned by the

president following a petition from the convicted teachers' families.

At a news briefing yesterday the DU students, agitating for their peers' and teachers' release, urged the government to drop all charges against the detainees before freeing them.

The agitating DU teachers and students said the government yet again is dilly dallying to release their peers even after yet another promise to do so.

There was no sign of government move to release the DU detainees till filing of this report late last night, although the night before Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman had said at a media briefing in the capital that the

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A soul expansive in creative dimensions

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

In conversation with a journalist not many years ago, Selim Al-Deen took positive pride in the way the farmers in his tales reached heights as sublime or as heroic as the characters in the old Greek plays. And that about sums up Selim Al-Deen's attitude to the world of drama, indeed of all creativity. By the time he died on Monday, not yet having arrived at the age of sixty, he had created enough of an impression to qualify as one of the foremost of theatre figures who were destined to dominate the drama scene in post-liberation Bangladesh. There is Kifonkhola which firmly established Al-Deen as a prime personality in Bangladesh's theatre. But, then again, it was a position that the artist's background had thoroughly prepared him for.

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aamra
the power of WE

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Today we embrace the world with a new name and a new identity – aamra. This Bangla word for "WE" best

encapsulates the guiding principles of our beliefs. It primarily recognizes the power that partnership and cooperation have in achieving any goal. Only when we harness the ability and capability of each one of us, will we be able to achieve the highest level of accomplishment.

Together we can stand tall.
Together we can face all adversity.
Together we can triumph.

aamra
the power of WE