

Special discount for Picnic party

Just dial 01912256723 & get the products at your step

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

Today's issue 24 pages plus 24-page tabloid size Ekushey Special & Rising Stars

LCD HD TV
47PFL7422
42PFL7422
37PFL7422

PHILIPS
sense and simplicity

TRANSCOM
0810388-8, 01712-665463

COMMITTED TO
People's Right to Know

REGD. NO. DA 781 • VOL. XVIII No. 38 • DHAKA THURSDAY FEBRUARY 21, 2008 • FALGUN 9, 1414 BS • SAFAR 13, 1429 HIJRI • 24 PAGES PLUS EKUSHEY SPECIAL & RISING STARS PRICE: Tk 10.00 • www.thedailystar.net

EC decides to bar war criminals from polls

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) seeks to bar war criminals permanently from contesting parliamentary elections.

In response to demands from most political parties, the EC has incorporated provisions in this regard in the proposed electoral laws for parliament.

Earlier, it had proposed inclusion of similar provisions in the existing electoral laws for city corporations and municipalities, barring war criminals from elections to those local government bodies.

Once the proposals are finalised following the second round of electoral reform talks with political parties scheduled to begin on

February 24, the EC will send those to the government to make them laws.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said, "We also want to prevent war criminals from contesting elections. But we can't do so unless they are convicted by courts."

But the caretaker government is yet to take any initiative for trial of war criminals despite growing demands for this. The proposed laws will have no effectiveness if they are not tried, sources pointed out.

According to the EC's proposal, a person cannot contest parliamentary elections if he or she is convicted by a national or international court for war crimes.

Participating in the first round

of electoral reform talks with the EC in between September to November last year, most of political parties had demanded barring war criminals from parliamentary polls.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed had also said it would be unwarranted if war criminals contest the elections.

The EC has now prepared a comprehensive report incorporating the political parties' views on its proposed reforms in electoral laws and sent the report to 15 political parties on Tuesday with the invitations for second round of talks.

Meanwhile, the EC has not yet given any decision on the demands for not registering Jamaat-e-Islami and other anti-liberation forces as

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

ARTICLE 70 EC to suggest constitutional changes: CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) will make recommendations to the government on some crucial issues including article 70 of the Constitution that has long been blamed for preventing lawmakers from discharging their due role in parliament.

The EC, however, did not yet decide whether to recommend repealing the article 70 or modify it for allowing the lawmakers play their role without fear of losing their memberships to the parliament.

"We will give our recommendations to the government since the issues have been raised by the political parties. It's the government that will decide the fate of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed stand in solemn silence after placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar, leading the nation to pay tributes to the Language Movement martyrs in the small hours today.

CA gives away Ekushey Padak

Asks all to start afresh taking lesson from past UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said now is the time for people to turn around and make a fresh start on the right path to progress by taking lesson from past mistakes.

"As a nation we have a tradition of struggle, indomitable will force, exemplary tolerance and intense devotion to work. Common people of the country are advancing in the struggle of life regularly facing various kinds of disasters. A nation that has earned independence through a great liberation war cannot concede defeat," said the chief adviser.

He was speaking at the Ekushey Padak (Award) 2008 giving ceremony organised by the Cultural Affairs Ministry at Osmani

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Substandard cylinders used for CNG seized from Savar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities yesterday seized five carbon dioxide cylinders from Savar that were being used for filling with compressed natural gas (CNG) as the drive against illegal CNG conversion plants and substandard cylinders continued for the second day.

Of these, three cylinders were seized from Sarmano Engineering Services, a CNG conversion workshop at Raj Phulbaria, and the others from a truck at Amin Bazar.

With the latest seizure, a total of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Musharraf refuses to quit

Calls for a harmonious coalition; Zardari alleges post-poll rigging as authorities withhold results of several seats

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf rejected demands to quit yesterday and called for a "harmonious coalition" as victorious opposition parties mulled a grouping that could force the key US ally from power.

Musharraf was making his first official comments since Monday's crucial parliamentary vote, which left him fighting for his political life after his allies suffered a heavy defeat.

"The President emphasised the need for harmonious coalition in the interest of peaceful governance, development and progress

of Pakistan," a foreign ministry statement said after Musharraf met a visiting US congressman.

"The elections have strengthened the moderate forces in the country," it quoted Musharraf as saying.

Nawaz Sharif, the man Musharraf removed from office in a 1999 coup, and the widower of assassinated former premier Benazir Bhutto both said they wanted to work with other opposition groups after the polls.

Sharif urged Musharraf to quit, while Asif Ali Zardari said he would not work with anyone associated with the party that backed Musharraf in the last parliament.

Despite the intensifying pressure on Musharraf, he told an American newspaper that he has no plans to resign.

Asked by the Wall Street Journal whether he would resign or retire, Musharraf said: "No, not yet. We have to move forward in a way that we bring about a stable democratic government to Pakistan."

At a press conference yesterday, the husband of slain former prime minister Benazir Bhutto alleged that Pakistani authorities are withholding the results of parliamentary elections and are attempting to change them.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Bush wants Musharraf to stay

HAMID MIR from Pakistan

The Bush administration still considers Pervez Musharraf as its best choice for the president of Pakistan despite a big "no" from Pakistani voters on February 18 against the most trusted friend of the USA. Efforts are going on to bridge the gap between Musharraf and PPP Co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari who declared the president of Pakistan as the "Gorbachev", immediately after the assassination of Benazir Bhutto on December 27.

The US government is pushing the PPP to develop a "working

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

AMAR EKUSHEY TODAY Nation pays homage to language martyrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Flowers as a symbol of love from deep in the heart, solemn honour for supreme sacrifice and humming "Amar bhaiyer rokte rangano Ekushey February" is the expression of homage to the Language Movement martyrs today.

As the clock struck one minute past zero hours, President Iajuddin Ahmed placed a floral wreath at the altar of the Central Shaheed Minar as tribute to the gallant Bangalees who laid down their lives 56 years

ago to uphold the honour of Bangla language.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed then paid his homage to the Language Movement martyrs.

Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Shafiur, Jabbar and a few other brave sons of the soil sacrificed their lives on this day to establish Bangla as one of the state languages of the then Pakistan. The day has since been observed as the Language Martyrs Day, which the Unesco later declared as the International Mother Language Day.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Bangladesh should have own brand of democracy

Gen Moeen says at his book launch UNB, Dhaka

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday said Bangladesh should have her own brand of democracy as he observed Westminster model is not truly followed by the party in power.

The army chief, whose force is backing the caretaker government in sweeping reforms in the interim period, observed that Westminster-type democracy had

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



কিছু প্রতিবাদ- শিখা অনির্বাণের মতো
কিছু শ্লোগান- অমরত্বের সুরে মিশে থাকে
কিছু আত্মত্যাগ- রক্তে জ্বালিয়ে দেয় অধিকারের নেশা
কিছু অক্ষর- চিরদিনই অবিনশ্বর
কিছু মুখ- চেতনার আলো ছড়ায় সারা বিশ্বে

সেই চেতনার দৃষ্ট শপথে
সত্য জুড়ে আছ তোমরা, শুধু তোমরা-ই

মোদের গরব

গ্রামীণফোন