



OFFICE COPY
CIRCULATION

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

Plus Star Campus

People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XVIII No. 157

DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 22, 2008

ASHAR 8, 1415 BS

JAMADUIS SANI 17, 1429 HIJRI

24 PAGES PLUS STAR CAMPUS PRICE: Tk 10.00



Upazila polls must before nat'l election

Assert advisers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Adviser Anwarul Iqbal said yesterday that the government would hold the Upazila Parishad elections before the parliamentary polls.

The adviser, talking to journalists, said that the law required to hold the upazila elections is at its final stage. The Election Commission (EC) would declare a schedule for the polls as soon as the President approves that law.

Anwarul was attending the publication ceremony of a 'Policy Paper and Guideline on the Role of Local Governments in Early Childhood Care, Development and Education' as the chief guest.

He said, "the Upazila Parishad elections would definitely be held before the general polls. Holding the polls is routine work for the EC, and the political parties have no right to question these processes," he said.

The adviser also laid emphasis on the fact that holding local polls first would not hamper the schedule for holding the parliamentary

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Rice yield to leap on less irrigation

Reveals BADC study

PORIMOL PALMA

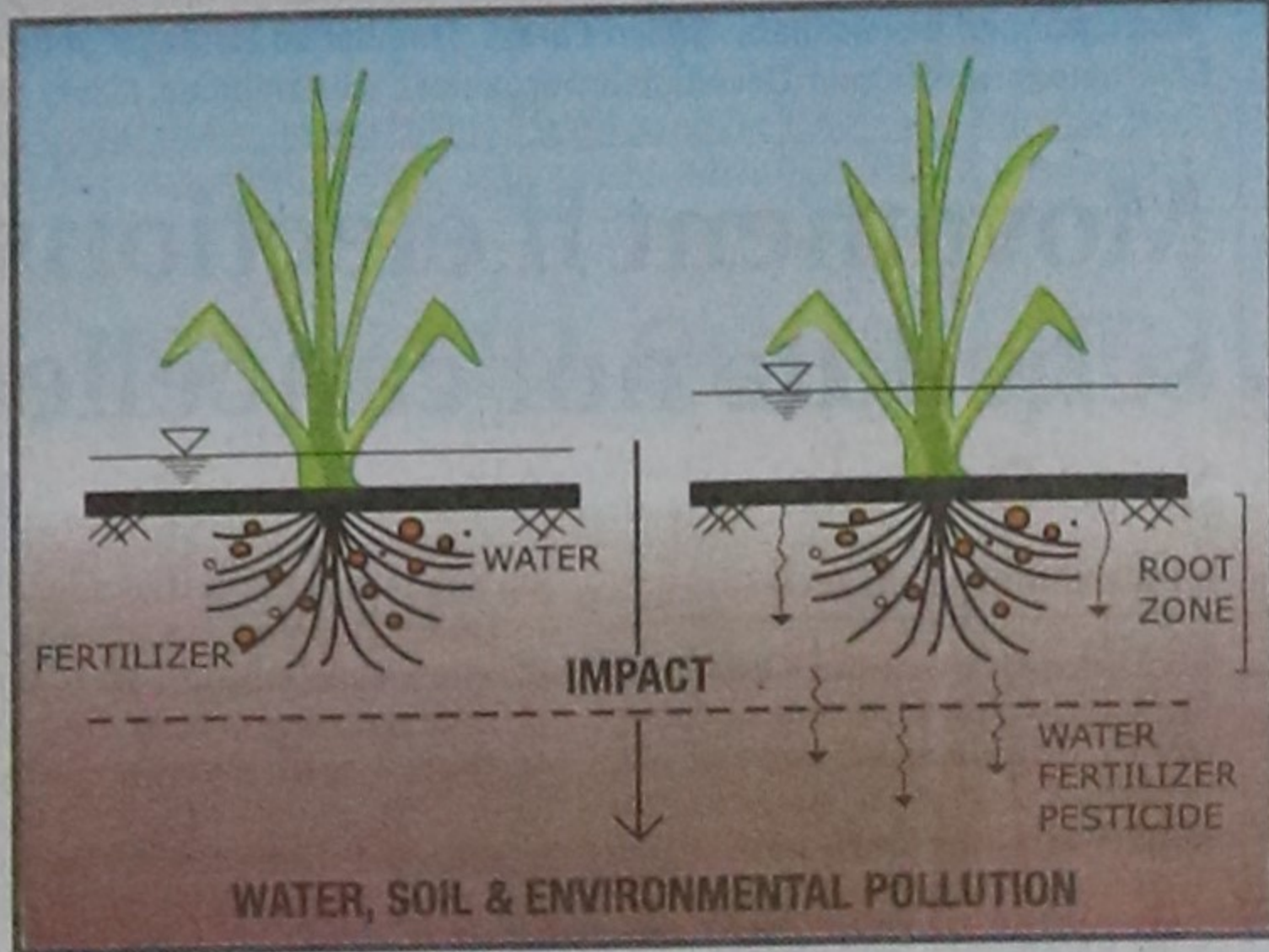
Bangladesh can produce seven crore tonnes of rice a year, more than double the present production, by ensuring proper irrigation and use of fertiliser, and bringing cultivable fallow lands under irrigation.

Excessive irrigation for Boro cultivation and lack of it for Aman now drastically reduce the yield of both.

This is revealed in a study conducted by Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC).

The country now produces around three crore tonnes of rice a year with Boro output 3.66 tonnes per hectare and that of Aman a little above two tonnes. But Boro yield can be raised to six tonnes and Aman output to five tonnes a hectare, the study said.

The major factor behind the



wide gap between present yield and potential output of Boro is excessive irrigation, says M

Eftekharul Alam, assistant chief engineer of the BADC, who carried out the study for more than two

decades.

Explaining this, Eftekhar said, "On an average our farmers use water 50 percent more than is needed for Boro cultivation. Such excessive use of water allows fertiliser to go so deep in the soil that paddy plants cannot collect nutrient from there. This waste of fertiliser reduces yield."

Quoting a report of the International Rice Research Institute, he said irrigation efficiency in Bangladesh is the lowest in the region. Cost of irrigation in Bangladesh is \$117.60 per hectare compared to \$25.58 in India, \$17.94 in Thailand and \$17.98 in Vietnam.

In Bangladesh, farmers traditionally do not irrigate Aman field, even during panicle initiation and flowering, which decreases yield.

Farmers now have average knowledge on use of seeds and fertiliser but very poor knowledge

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Here lies evidence to prove war crimes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Evidence lying buried in the Mirpur Jalladhkhana water tank is enough to prove the crimes of war criminals.

"This evidence will help enormously when the trial process begins," Akku Chowdhury, trustee of the Liberation War Museum, told The Daily Star yesterday as the museum marked the first anniversary of the opening of the Jalladhkhana Killing Field Memorial Park.

Visitors, who thronged the memorial park in Mirpur yesterday to mark the anniversary, kept asking themselves why the war criminals are yet to be brought to trial when such essential evidence of their crimes lies at hand.

"This is very emotional for me, to come to the place where my father has been lying for the past 36 years," said Abul Ahsan, son of martyr Khandkar Abu Taleb, whose mutilated body was thrown into the underground water tank of the pump house at the Jalladhkhana.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Govt trashes claim of liquidity crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Banks are not disbursing loans to industrialists to set up new plants as they are facing a liquidity crisis, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Annisul Huq said yesterday, differing with Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam about the availability of bank loans.

"It needs a syndication of a few banks to disburse even Tk 50 crore loan," he said.

He made the remarks at a discussion between industrialists and Finance Adviser Mirza Aziz at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday where the finance adviser said there is no liquidity crisis in the banking sector.

Annisul Huq said the banking sector may be facing liquidity crisis for two reasons—first, higher bank borrowing by the government, and second, hoarding of Tk 500 notes by households and people in the bordering areas.

Urging Bangladesh Bank authorities to investigate the matter, the FBCCI chief said, "The

government could ban the notes of Tk 500 denomination to find out this."

Denying the liquidity crisis in banking sector, Mirza Aziz, however, said the government has no plan either to investigate the matter or ban the notes Tk 500 denomination.

At present there is Tk 12,000 crore of excess money in the banking sector, he said at the post-budget discussion with industrialists.

On June 9, the finance adviser proposed the national budget for 2008-09 fiscal year with a deficit of Tk 30,580 crore of which more than Tk 13,500 crore would be borrowed from banks.

At yesterday's discussion, Mirza Aziz advised industrialists to raise money from the stock market to set up new industrial plants with a view to reducing burden on bank borrowing.

"You can go to the overvalued and oversubscribed stock market to raise money to set up new industrial plants," he said. "Even the public enterprises such as Jamuna

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

More documents seized from Hasina returned

UNB, Dhaka

Police yesterday returned more documents and property of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina that were seized from Sudha Sadan after her arrest on July 16 last year.

Advocate Quamrul Islam quoted Dhanmondi police as saying that they will return rest of the seized documents, including register of Bangabandhu Memorial Trust, cash books and cheque books of different banks within a few days.

Dhanmondi police returned three passports of Hasina on June 9, car and mobile phone sets on June 11 while computer and CPU on June 17.

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina was released by an executive order of the caretaker government on June 11. She is now in the USA for medical treatment.

AL slates CG for bid to hold local govt polls

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) central leaders yesterday strongly criticised the caretaker administration for going to hold local-body elections, which they termed "violation" of constitution.

Talking to reporters in Gazipur, AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed said they want only one election under the caretaker government and that is parliament election.

He opposed the schedule for local-body polls and asked the government to lift emergency and hold national election.

Asked whether AL rejects the schedule for local-body polls, Tofail said Awami League Central

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Rubber pipes are connected to a Dhaka Wasa water supply line at Mirpur-11 in the capital, bleeding the main supply grid illegally putting legitimate clients of Wasa in a water crisis.

Over 1 lakh illegal links in Wasa supply network

Tk 35cr a year trickles away in systems loss

HELEMUL ALAM

Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) loses around Tk 35 crore a year because of 35 percent systems loss caused mainly by illegal connections, cracks in old supply lines and underhand dealings of unscrupulous officials.

The 2,534km-long Wasa supply network in the capital and Narayanganj has over 1 lakh illegal connections, which causes the most systems loss. The Wasa is deprived of Tk 1 crore a year for 1 percent systems loss, said an official of the organisation.

Wasa Managing Director Raihanul Abedin said the number of illegal connections from Wasa

supply lines is huge because the Wasa covers areas beyond the city corporation area.

"We have requested the Army through the LGRD ministry to conduct a customer survey—which will take about six months to complete—and then we will know the exact number of illegal connections," Abedin said.

"Then we will be able to take proper action in this regard," he added.

Most illegal connections exist in Mirpur, Postagola and the old town and at the slums, said a Wasa official.

Illegal connections and cracks in supply lines are also causing water supply deficit, he added.

The Wasa presently produces 170 crore litre water a day against the demand for 210 crore litre in the capital and Narayanganj, he said.

According to Wasa statistics, it presently has about 2,46,977 connections in Dhaka and Narayanganj, of which 2,37,288 residential, 6,032 commercial, 1,667 industrial, 1,212 are service-oriented and 777 for offices. Of these connections, 10,000 are in Narayanganj.

Mohammad Abul Kalam Azad, deputy chief revenue officer of Dhaka City Corporation, said according to their records as of April this year, the number of holdings in Dhaka city is around 2,17,454.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Confusion over EPR relaxation

SHAKHAWAT LITON

A confusion has arisen regarding the recent relaxation of the Emergency Powers Rules (EPR) in four city corporations and nine municipalities where local government polls will be held on August 4, since the home ministry notification did not specify the timeframe for the relaxation.

The Election Commission (EC), in its proposal sent to the government last week, had sought relaxation of EPR from the day the poll schedule was announced till publication of the election results in official gazettes, sources in the commission said.

But since there is no specified timeframe for the relaxation in the home ministry notification, some ministry and EC officials are apparently under the impression that the moment poll campaigns will

become banned according to the electoral rules, the relaxation of EPR will also expire, while some others are thinking that the relaxation is for an indefinite period of time.

The electoral rules ban campaigning 32 hours before the polling begins at 8:00am on August 4, and if the assumption of the first group of officials is correct then that will in effect reinstate the total state of emergency at 12:00am on August 3, paving the way for holding of the first ever public elections under a total emergency in the country.

The confusion also puts the voters in an unwarranted uncertainty about the duration of the temporary increase in their political rights in the city corporations of Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet, and in the municipalities of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

BNP at odds over city polls participation

Leaders wait on Khaleda's directive from Tuesday's court appearance

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

BNP appears divided over the issue of forthcoming polls to city corporations and municipalities with some led by Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain calling for a boycott and others favouring participation in the vote.

Delwar on Thursday announced that the BNP-led four-party alliance would resist the local elections since holding those before the parliamentary election is 'unconstitutional'.

Besides, he said, the Election Commission (EC) and the government are out to implement an 'evil plot' when most of the political parties want the parliamentary election to precede other polls.

A group of pro-Khaleda leaders, on the other hand, believe that the

elections slated for August 4 would be an opportunity for BNP to reorganise itself. They think the party that has long been in disarray would further fall behind if it opts out of the polls and Awami League (AL) takes part in those.

Some of them allege that the secretary general made the announcement of plans to resist the polls without discussing the matter at party forum. He has been taking all decisions in consultation with partners in the four-party alliance, they add.

Both the groups however hope that detained Chairperson Khaleda Zia would give necessary instructions on the matter while appearing before a court Tuesday.

Meanwhile, leaders close to Delwar plan to convince the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

2,842 hectare farmland to be devoured this year

Predict UNDP, water board

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

At least 2,842 hectares of cultivable land on the banks of the Jamuna and the Padma along with 31 educational institutions will disappear due to river erosion this year, United Nations Development Project (UNDP) and Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) predict.

About 3,970 hectares of land and 40 educational institutions along with five government offices were wiped out last year.

A survey report of UNDP, based on satellite images prepared by Centre for Environmental and Geographic

Information Services, revealed this in April this year.

SK Abdul Momin, superintendent engineer BWDB (Bogra O&M circle), said the department has taken additional precautionary measures to protect 43 vulnerable points including Kalitola and Hasnapara groin areas of Shariakandi upazila in Bogra and district headquarters like Sirajganj on the Jamuna and the Padma.

The report says that more than 451 hectares of land with settlements on it will be eroded on the banks of the rivers during this season. Last year it was 530 hectares.

At least 6.1km of district, upazila and rural roads and 5.16km of embankment are also likely to be damaged due to heavy rain and river erosion this year.

The report says that at least 15 government and three non-government offices are likely to disappear into the rivers—one in Gaibandha, three in Jamalpur, eight in Sirajganj, one in Faridpur, one in Munshiganj and four in Shariatpur.

The Putimari Community Clinic at Chilmari upazila in Kurigram and a health and family planning centre at Shahzadpur in Sirajganj

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Dr Kamal wants national unity for democracy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday urged the people to forge national unity to establish democracy in the country.

"We have to elect honest and competent candidates in the next elections," Dr Kamal said while addressing a meeting on Kamsat Abbasbazar Girls' School premises in Chapainawabganj.

"Those who managed to garner votes in previous polls making promises to people, did not keep their pledges. Rather, they worked against people. We must stand against them unitedly," he said.

Dr Kamal said the caretaker government must hold the national elections by next December as per the electoral roadmap.

He also said there is no legal bar to holding the local government polls before the general election.

"In democracy, opposition

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Luxury car of Khaleda's brother seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police seized a luxury car of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's younger brother Shamim Iskander in Dinajpur Friday in connection with a corruption case.

Officer-in-charge at Kotwali Police Station in Dinajpur said they seized the car after the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) made a request from Dhaka.

Their mother Begum Tayeba Majumder, who lived in Dinajpur, would use the car.

The ACC filed the corruption case against Shamim with Ramna Police Station on May 5 this year on charge of hiding information about his wealth in his statement to the watchdog.



PHOTO: STAR

The mighty Jamuna devours its banks prompting Bangladesh Water Development Board to dump sandbags at the groyne at Kalitola under Shariakandi upazila in Bogra yesterday in an effort to stop the erosion.

The Daily Star means Business

On Tuesday Star Business goes pink. The same rich blend of company and economic news, the same mix of analysis and features, but all served in a new, distinctive colour, the global colour of business journalism. Star Business has become an indispensable meeting place for businesspeople and policymakers. From Tuesday it will be a meeting place that is even easier to find.

The Editor