

Updated draft voter list to be published today

BSS, Dhaka

The Election Commission (EC) will begin publishing updated draft voter list in three phases across the country from today, excepting Dhaka district.

In the first phase, the EC will publish the draft voter lists of 17 districts, including Barisal, Patuakhali, Pirojpur, Barguna, Jhalakathi, Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Noakhali, Habiganj, Sunamganj, Sylhet, Chandpur, Feni, Laxmipur, Cox's Bazar and Chittagong, EC sources said.

The EC will accept petitions containing demands, objections and amendments related to the voters' list until March 23, and those will be resolved by March 30.

In the second phase, draft voter list of 20 districts will be published on March 15, while draft the voter list of 26 more districts on March 22.

The final voter list will be published on April 29.

Probe body formed on DU teacher harassment

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University authorities yesterday formed a one-member probe committee to investigate into the teacher harassment incident at the Faculty of Fine Arts.

The committee with Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Harun-or-Rashid has been asked to submit its report within 72 hours.

Chairman of the History of Art Department Nahid Akhter on Saturday allegedly slapped Sheikh Munir Uddin, an assistant professor of the same department following a dispute over breaking lock of a teacher room at the department.

The victim yesterday submitted a written allegation to the Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique seeking justice.

Prof Harun told reporters that the committee started its activity yesterday. He hoped that it would be able to submit a report within the fixed time.

US team calls on DU VC

UNB, Dhaka

An 18-member team of teachers and students from Vanderbilt University of the United States called on Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique at the latter's office yesterday.

The team included Jonathan M Gilligan, Steven L Goodbred, David Wood and Brooke Ackerly.

During the meeting, they discussed academic matters and socio-economic and educational development.

The visiting team is at present conducting a field-work on water and environmental issues in Bangladesh in cooperation with the Geology Department of Dhaka University.



Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman inaugurates a rally at Rabintra Sarobar in the city yesterday aimed at taking a vow to fight acid violence in society. Acid Survivors Foundation and the Prothom Alo organised the event to mark the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day-2010. (Story on Page 1)

PM apprises president of Kuwait tour

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called on President Zillur Rahman and apprised him of the outcome of her recent Kuwait visit.

During the 20-minute meeting, the prime minister informed the head of state of the official talks and consultations in various forums in the oil-rich Gulf country.

Hasina went to Kuwait on February 7 on a three-day visit. She met Kuwait's Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, sister of Kuwaiti Emir Anthal Al-Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah and Speaker of Kuwait Parliament Jassem Al-Khorafi.

Four agreements were signed between Bangladesh and Kuwait during the visit. The agreements are on cultural promotion, joint commission, economic and technical cooperation, and promotion of tourism.

Hasina also visited the Bangladesh Military Contingent deployed in Kuwait under UN Peacekeeping Mission at Sobhan Cantonment in the Gulf state.

Women's role in decision making vital for good governance

Minister tells roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women's equal status and effective participation in decision making are vital for good governance, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury said at a roundtable yesterday.

The state should create atmosphere conducive to exploiting the

full potential of women, she said at the discussion on 'Role of Women Members of Parliament in Establishing Good Governance'.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised the roundtable at Brac Centre Inn in the city.

Matia Chowdhury said democratic stability is also vital for good

governance and women's advancement with economic emancipation and political empowerment. It is neither men nor women but honest persons that is crucial for good governance.

Various militant outfits involve women in carrying out terrorist and other unlawful acts in clear violation of the tenets of Islam that

speaks for peace, she said.

Shagufta Yasmin Emily, a ruling party whip in parliament, said that women's equal status and political and economic empowerment depend on the level of a nation's education and social awareness.

Emergence of religious militancy is a major obstacle to the advancement of women, she said, adding that corruption negates the women's development significantly.

Tahura Ali MP said that women must get due importance at the family level to empower them at the national level.

Nilufar Chowdhury Moni MP said that effective women's empowerment is not possible without economic emancipation and equal access to resources.

TIB assistant fellow Fatema Afroz in a presentation made recommendations for effective women's participation in decision-making, increase in reserved seats from 15 percent to 33, direct election to the reserved seats, nomination of women candidates in increased number by the political parties, and parliamentary caucus with women members to ensure their equal development.

Syeda Ashifa Ashrafi Papia MP, Ashrafunnessa Mosharaf MP, Jahanara Begum MP, Rasheda Begum MP, Farida Rahman MP, Shammi Akhtar MP, Noor Afroza Ali MP and women's rights activist Rokeya Kabir also spoke.

TIB Chairman M Hafizuddin Khan chaired the discussion moderated by its Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman.



Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury speaks at a roundtable organised by Transparency International Bangladesh at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday. On her right is TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman and on her left are TIB Chairman M Hafizuddin Khan and ruling party whip Shagufta Yasmin Emily.

Schoolboy burnt to death in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

An 11-year-old boy was killed and 13 houses were gutted in a fire at Fateyabad village in Hathazari upazila of Chittagong early yesterday.

The victim, Omker Das, 11, was a class-six student of Fateyabad High School and son of Kajal Das.

An electrical short circuit started the fire in a thatched house at around 2:30am and soon engulfed 12 adjacent houses, fire service sources said.

Omker was burnt to death as he could not come out of the house.

At least 12 domestic animals were also killed in the blaze put out by two fire brigade units at around 3:00am.

MiG-29 SCAM CASE

Hearing on Hasina's petition begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday adjourned until today the hearing on a writ petition filed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina challenging the proceedings against her in the MiG-29 purchase scam case filed during the BNP-led four-party alliance rule.

The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Borhan Uddin started the hearing on the petition yesterday. More hearing will be held today.

The same bench on March 4 quashed all proceedings against the Awami League president in three corruption cases involving Bangabandhu Novo Theatre.

During the hearing yesterday, Barrister Sheikh Fazole Noor Taposh argued that the divisional special judge's court violated the Code of Criminal Procedure by framing charges against Hasina in her absence on August 20, 2008.

As per section 242 of the

Code, the court must frame charges against defendants in their presence so that they can plead guilty or innocent, he said, adding that Hasina had filed an application requesting the trial court not to indict her in her absence, but to no avail.

The now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac) had filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station on December 11, 2001.

Seven persons, including Hasina, were accused of causing a loss of Tk 700 crore to the state exchequer for corruption in the purchase of eight MiG-29 fighter planes. Hasina was also the prime minister when the purchase was made.

Following the petition filed by Hasina, the HC on September 18, 2008, stayed trial proceedings against her, and issued a rule on the government, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the trial court to explain why framing charges against Hasina in her absence should not be declared illegal.

JAYANTI MURDER

Azam Reza to serve life in jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld a High Court verdict that commuted death sentence of banker Azam Reza to life imprisonment in a case filed against him for killing his wife Jayanti Reza.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim pronounced the order after dismissing two separate leave-to-appeal petitions filed by the government and Azam Reza against the HC verdict.

In 2005, a speedy trial tribunal in Dhaka convicted and sentenced Azam Reza to death for killing Jayanti Reza, an architect and also a teacher of Australian International School, in January 2004.

On July 21, 2008, The HC in its verdict reduced the death sentence to life sentence.

The government and Azam Reza later filed separate leave-to-appeal petitions with the SC against the HC verdict.

The government in its petition prayed for upholding the trial court judgment that sentenced Azam Reza to death, while Azam Reza in his petition prayed for his acquittal.

After holding hearing arguments from the counsels for the petitioners, the apex court yesterday passed the order.

On January 9, 2004, the police recovered the body of Jayanti hanging from the ceiling fan in their Banani house.

Azam Reza was arrested the next day after Jayanti's mother Lusil Sadekin had filed a case with Gulshan Police Station.

Advocate AK Badrul Huq appeared for Azam Reza, while Deputy Attorney General SM Abdul Mobin and Assistant Attorneys General Khandaker Diliruzzaman and Fazilatunnesa Bappi stood for the government.

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Admission Test: April 09, 2010