

2 surveyors monitor 10,000 registered vessels!

PANKAJ KARMAKAR

Only two surveyors are working to verify fitness of around 10,000 registered and a good number of unregistered water vessels across the country.

Of them, Eng AKM Fakhru Islam is now working as acting chief engineer of the Department of Shipping (DoS) and only one ship surveyor, Eng Muinuddin Zulfiquer, posted in Khulna is sole responsible for surveying all inland water vessels.

If both of the surveyors were every working day, they can examine fitness of more than 7,000 vessels in a year. But due to lack of cooperation of the owners, they can survey hardly 1,000 vessels per year, said a source at the DoS.

He also recommended having at least eight to ten surveyors across the country to bring all water vessels under supervision.

Lack of monitoring on the vessels is increasing risks of accidents on waterways.

On an average 22 accidents occur every year on different river routes across the country leaving around 300 people dead, reveals a survey conducted last year by Safe Waterway Implementation Movement, a non-government organisation.

The unregistered and unfit vessels are causing tragic accidents leaving hundreds of people dead and incurring a loss of at least Tk 40 crore per year on an average, said the study.

Due to lack of monitoring on the inland water vessels, the owners do not care about verifying fitness of their vessels regularly.

"The vessels owners are not interested to get their ships surveyed as it costs around Tk 50,000 for a ship legally. But, if they do an underhand dealing with an inspector of the department, they can manage it at a much cheaper rate," said an official of the DoS requesting anonymity.

Besides the registered ones, there are thousands of

unregistered vessels including trawlers and sand carrying cargos plying the rivers without caring about the fitness or survey certificate, the department sources said.

The Department of Shipping has four posts of ship surveyor in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Barisal and Khulna and the government is sitting on a proposal of increasing the number to six.

"It's humanly not possible to physically survey the ships by a surveyor. So, the inspectors generally conduct the physical monitoring and the surveyors approve them seeing the papers," said the source at the DoS.

Over the last 15 years, the government did never fill up more than three posts of ship surveyor. Even the government never took any initiative of proper inspection and fitness of the vessels, he said.

According to a government survey revealed last year showed that 9,948 different kinds of vessels are plying

different inland riverine routes across the country, while a non-government organisations showed that the number of water vessels is over 20,000 and two-third of them are unregistered.

The accidents of MV Cocco-4 in Lalmoan of Bhola in November 2009 and passenger trawler ML Nurussunna in Kishoreganj in December the same year are a burning example of giving fitness certificates without monitoring the vessels properly.

ASM Nazmul Haque, gave fitness certificate of both the vessels, was withdrawn from the post of ship surveyor and transferred to Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) after the accidents.

Talking to The Daily Star, Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan said, "Manpower crisis is not a problem of my ministry only but also of all other ministries. There are nine departments under my ministry. I hope to fill up all the vacant posts immediately."



Traffic comes to a grinding halt at Paltan intersection in the city yesterday as BNP organised a rally at Muktangan in protest against the alleged vote rigging in the by-election at Bhola-3 constituency.

Edn policy to be placed in next JS session likely

Says Adviser Alauddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed national education policy is expected to be placed in parliament at its next session, said Prime Minister's Adviser Alauddin Ahmed yesterday.

"We have drafted the national education policy aimed at bringing qualitative change in education. The proposed policy is at its final stage. It might be placed in the next parliament session for passage," he added.

Alauddin said this as the chief guest at a discussion on 'Realities and challenges of education for all (EFA) and sharing of the findings of a study 'Reality Check Bangladesh 2009 on Education' organised by Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) in cooperation with Sida

Bangladesh at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

The government will take steps to ensure EFA in the country, he said, adding: "As per our election pledges, we are working to achieve cent percent enrolment by 2011. We will take initiatives to ensure EFA by 2014."

The adviser called on the educated people both in rural and urban areas to get involved in the education management system and to increase their surveillance on the system.

Presenting the findings of the study, Enamul Huda, member of the study team, said financial crisis is the key reason of dropout of children at school level.

Teacher's training programmes cause teachers' crisis because they have to stay

on leave during the period. It greatly hampers the education process in schools.

The study also suggested introducing food programme for school-going children instead of stipends to encourage both children and their parents.

Huda stressed the need for introducing lively and recreational education system for children to make them more attentive.

Campe Chairperson Kazi Rafiqul Alam chaired the session while Executive Director Rasheda K Chowdhury, Programme Manager KM Enamul Haque, AusAid Regional Education Adviser Dr James Jennings and Sida Country Director Samuel Egero were present at the programme.

HARASSING FEMALE TEACHER Suspension of JU teacher demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agitating teachers of Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday demanded the superintendent of directed of Pirojpur to arrest within 48 hours the persons involved in occupying lands of Hindus in the district.

The court directed the SP and officer-in-charge of Mathbaria Police Station of the district to appear before the court on May 6 for explaining the incidents of land grabbing.

It also asked the inspector general of police to submit a report within 30 days to it after investigating into the incidents.

The court also issued a rule upon the government and the police authorities to explain within two weeks why they should not be directed to take legal action against the land grabbers and provide security to local Hindus.

The HC bench of Justice A H M Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Md Delwar Hossain came up

HINDU LAND GRABBING HC asks Pirojpur SP to nab culprits within 48 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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BHOLA-3 BY-POLLS AL bins allegation of intimidating voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday rejected the allegation of intimidating voters on the day of Bhola-3 by-election, saying that the government did not interfere in the election in any case.

"A false allegation has been brought against AL. Why would we go for intimidating voters since the public sentiment was in favour of Awami League?" said Mahbul Alam Hanif, acting general secretary of the party, about some newspaper reports on intimidating voters.

Addressing a press conference at the party president's Dhanmondi office, he claimed the election was held in a free and fair manner and people mandated the AL candidate in a peaceful atmosphere.

People did not forget what the BNP candidate and his party men did immediately after the 2001 election and what he did during the caretaker government tenure, he added.

Hanif said Hafiz tried to break up his party during the caretaker government period, which Bhola people did not welcome and, for this reason, they did not work for him in the election.

The AL leader called on BNP to accept the people's verdict and act democratically.

He warned that if BNP tries to create an issue for movement or destabilising law and order situation centring the polls, his party would face it politically.

Hizb-ut chief placed on fresh remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Banned Islamist outfit Hizb-ut Tahrir Bangladesh chief Mohiuddin Ahmed was taken on a fresh remand for four days yesterday in three separate cases under Anti-Terrorism Act-2009 by Uttara police.

Police produced the Hizb-ut chief before the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate seeking remand for seven days and after the hearing, magistrate Rokhsana Begum Happy granted for four days.

Earlier on April 20, Mohiuddin, who is an associate professor of Institute of Business Administration (IBA) of Dhaka University, was on a three-day remand hours after his arrest by police from his Green Road residence at IBA Teachers' Quarters.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina offers munajat after laying foundation of the 150MW combined cycle power plant in Chandpur yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Frame rules to recruit judges'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday demanded formulation of rules for recruitment of higher court judges in the light of the Supreme Court (SC) guidelines.

As per the SC guidelines, the judges will be appointed in consultation with chief justice, senior judges of the Appellate Division and High Court Division, SCBA president, attorney general and vice chairman of bar council, SCBA President Khandaker Mahbub Hossain told The Daily Star.

The demand was made at an urgent general meeting at SCBA's south hall with the SCBA president in the chair.

Pro-BNP lawyers TH Khan, Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin, Aminul Haque, and Zainul Abedin and SCBA Secretary Badruddoza Badal also spoke.

'By-election held peacefully'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Working Group (EWG), an observer organisation of Bhola-3 by-polls, in its report yesterday said the election was held in a peaceful manner amid some sporadic incidents of violence.

The organisation said it observed 44 centres out of the total 86 centres.

The security arrangement was ample, most of the voters including religious minority voters did not face any violence or intimidation but some voters did complain, it added.

Those who talk about war crimes do not think of prevailing crises: Nizami

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami yesterday claimed that people who talk about the trial for crimes against humanity do not think about crises of countrymen.

"I believe that the allegations of committing crimes against humanity against any Jamaat leader will not be proved even after searching with microscope," he said while speaking at a view exchange meeting with newsmen at a city restaurant.

Nizami further claimed that the trial was organised with an aim to deceive people.

"Some people say that those who talk about water, electricity and gas crises do not want the trial of war criminals to be conducted, there is a reverse version too, that is those who talk about war criminals do not think about the problems of the countrymen or they don't have the ability to solve their problems," Nizami said.

Although repeatedly asked not to talk about trial of war crimes, Nizami could not get out of the topic as the issue always found its way through Nizami's speech.

The programme was titled as a view exchange meeting with journalists but none was allowed to ask any question to the Jamaat leaders as Jamaat's Dhaka city unit general secretary Hamidur Rahman Azad said, "You will be able to give suggestions but can not ask any question."

Modasser wins WHO award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister's Health and Social Welfare Adviser Prof Syed Modasser Ali has been nominated for a World Health Organisation (WHO) award for his contributions towards tobacco control.

He along with three others will receive the award formally on May 31 at the WHO headquarters on the 'World Tobacco Free Day 2010'.

Prof Modasser Ali has been working against tobacco for last two decades and now he is the vice chairman of Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Currently 27.2 percent people are smokers in the country and suffering from different health problems due to smoking. The poor and marginal people are the worst sufferer of using tobacco, said a WHO report last year.

After publishing the report, Prof Modasser urged all the leaders of the world for formulating a law and smoking control policy and led a national and international campaign in this regard.

The deputy prime minister of Cambodia and the health minister of Egypt have also been nominated for this prestigious award.



Rakib, Sidur DUJA president, general secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rakib and Sidur of The Daily Star and Ahmadur Rahman of the Daily Ittefaq have been unanimously elected president and general secretary of Dhaka University Journalists' Association (DUJA), a platform of DU correspondents.

Other office bearers are Vice President Hasan Nitul of ATN Bangla, Joint Secretary Solaiman Tusher of the Daily Manab Jamin, Treasurer Dilshad Hossain Dodul of The New Age, Office Secretary Tariqul Islam of the daily Destiny and Executive Members Mahiuddin Mahi of Amader Shamay, Abdul Alim Dhrubo of banglanews24.com and Asaduzzaman Sagor of the daily AmarDesh.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said in a forecast.

Mild to moderate heat wave, which is sweeping over the regions of Rajshahi, Pabna, Jessore and Kushtia may continue.

It said day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:25pm today and rises at 5:27am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 40.2 degree Celsius was recorded today at Jessore and lowest 19.5 degrees Celsius at Sylhet.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	36.8	25.2	63	63
Chittagong	30.0	26.8	76	77
Rajshahi	39.0	23.4	79	55
Khulna	36.7	28.0	73	64
Barisal	34.6	27.3	70	69
Sylhet	27.3	19.5	86	77
Cox's Bazar	35.0	26.5	66	71