

e-VOTING SYSTEM

Samyabadi Dal says yes, Janata League no

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal (ML) yesterday supported introduction of electronic voting (e-voting) system in upcoming general election while Krishak Sramik Janata League opposed it saying the system is not enough to prevent vote rigging.

Leaders of the two parties expressed their opinions in separate dialogues with Election Commission (EC) at its secretariat in the city as part of its ongoing dialogue with 38 registered political parties till July 14.

EC launched the dialogues on Tuesday for opinions on key issues like use of e-voting machine; Representation of the People Order; laws on demarcation of constituencies and appointment of election commissioners.

Both parties stressed on the need for establishing a free and powerful EC to conduct a neutral election.

Leading a 10-member delegation, Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal General Secretary Dilip Barua, also industries minister, said a neutral, independent and powerful EC could help overcome the recent political crisis over caretaker government system.

Following EC's proposal of fixing the number of constituencies in Dhaka City Corporation at 10, the delegation suggested specifying constituencies irrespective of number.

On appointment of chief election commissioner (CEC) and other commissioners, they recommended including academicians and media personnel in the committee proposed by EC to choose eligible figures.

Leading a 12-member delegation, Krishak Sramik Janata League President Kader Siddiquee said technology used in the newly proposed electronic voting system requires more development to prevent rigging.

Other recommendations include incorporating National Human Rights Commission chairman in the committee choosing eligible figures, appointing two women commissioners; bringing down candidate's deposit money from Tk 10,000 to 5,000; and transparency of EC-proposed "public fund" spending.

CEC Dr ATM Shamsul Huda and two commissioners M Sohel Hussain and M Sakhawat Hossain were present during the talks. Shamsul said the government has no influence over EC to introduce the e-voting system, which is an EC initiative.

"We planned this two years ago. The prime minister started talking about the issue recently, making it seem political," he said. Meanwhile, main opposition BNP firmly opposed introducing the e-voting system saying the government plans to use it to rig the next election.

While visiting the US and the UK, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia said BNP would not participate in the election if the e-voting system is introduced.



This covered van flipped on its side Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed road in the city's Tejgaon while trying to take a turn after coming down the flyover linking Bijoy Sarani and Tejgaon on Tuesday night.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

India to export more 10 lakh bales of cotton

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India yesterday decided to allow export of an additional 10 lakh bales of cotton during the ongoing season in the wake of a sharp fall in prices in the domestic market.

The decision was taken during a meeting attended by a group of ministers. Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee chaired the meeting.

They earlier calculated an exportable surplus of 55 lakh bales but decided to allow another 10 lakh bales in the current season, resulting in a total export of 65 lakh bales, Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma told reporters after the meeting.

Muggers shoot trader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of muggers shot and injured a trader as they failed to snatch belongings from him at Darus Salam of Mirpur in the city yesterday.

Locals caught a mugger with the help of police while the gang tried to leave the scene. The arrestee is Abdul Hakim, 22.

The injured trader was identified as Abdus Sattar, 45, an owner of Shahin VCD and Phone Centre at Mazar Road of Darus Salam. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Quoting Sattar, his brother-in-law Mashiur Rahman, said in disguise of customers three muggers entered the shop and tried to snatch valuables at gunpoint but Sattar engaged into scuffle with them. At one stage, one of them opened fire and left Sattar injured, he added.

DMCH sources said Sattar bore three bullet marks on his body.

Ensure fair price of jute

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday urged the government to take necessary steps to ensure fair price of jute and reduce price of jute products for expanding its market locally and globally.

The made the call at a seminar titled "Strengthening of Collaboration for Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres Research and Development," organised by International Jute Study Group (IJSJ) at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in the city.

They stressed the need for public-private partnership to expand the market of jute products in a bid to encourage farmers.

They also emphasised applying new technology for producing diversified jute products like pulp, paper, carpet and insulation board.

Addressing the seminar as the chief guest, Textiles and Jute Minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui urged India to ensure co-existence between the two countries in the global market for exporting jute products.

Md Ashraf Moqbul, secretary of the ministry said the government enacted a new law in 2010 to make jute packaging mandatory to increase usage of jute products.

William Hanna, ambassador of European Union (EU) delegation to Bangladesh, said Bangladesh exported the highest amount of jute products in European countries last year.

He assured the seminar that EU will continue its support in this regard.

Rajet Mitter, high commissioner of India to Bangladesh, Sietse van der Werff of CFC, Bhupendra Sing, secretary general of IJSJ also spoke at the seminar.

'Millionaire' burglar held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, City

He has some fish projects, five CNG-run auto-rickshaws, huge land property and a building in his village. He donates to different mosques and madrasas. He has even floated his candidacy for chairmanship in the upcoming union parishad (UP) election in his own union.

This person, Badiul Alam alias Nasir, is the leader of a burglar gang that committed many burglaries in the port city and some other cities and towns, said police.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) yesterday arrested Nasir along with his four accomplices on charge of committing burglary at the office of Mishmak Development Ltd at Golpaharon on June 1.

Other arrestees are Biplob Das, Jamal, Alamgir and Abdul Aziz.

CMP Commissioner Abul Kashem yesterday at a press conference at the CMP headquarters said, "The arrestees are members of a professional gang and were arrested several times."

Police recovered stolen cash money worth Tk 12.10 lakh, out of looted Tk 23.5 lakh, from their possession, Kashem added.

Nasir, 38, son of late Janu Box of Dhonpachhori under Chandanaish upazila of Chittagong, told journalists, "We have committed many big burglaries in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Feni."

"I thought to vie for election in the upcoming UP election but at last I have changed my decision," Nasir said. He said they took Tk 19.5 lakh from Mishmak office while Mishmak officials on June 1 demanded that the burglars looted Tk 23.5 lakh.

Tagore song evening tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pancham, a cultural organisation, will organise a Tagore song evening in the auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in the city at 7:00pm tomorrow.

Mizanur Rahman Taslim will perform at the function. Tagore singer Mita Haque and director general of Shilpakala Academy Liakat Ali Lucky will speak at the programme.



Others wait their turn as one kid tries to slice open a jackfruit discarded by traders at Shyambazar in the city where a huge quantity of the national fruit arrives for sale every day.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL



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