

Huge election expenses bad for safety net programme

Says minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Candidates in the recently held union parishad elections have spent huge amounts of money, which is not a good sign for safety net programmes and warrants investigation, the food and disaster minister said yesterday.

Dr M Abdur Razzaque said public representatives including lawmakers and upazila and union parishad chairmen and members are mainly associated with implementing the social safety net programmes. "Those, who spent too much money to win the elections and won, would implement the safety net programmes, which is not a good sign".

The minister said the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) should investigate why the candidates spent much money in election. He also suggested that the Election Commission should toughen its monitoring so that election expenditures become limited.

Dr Razzaque made the comments during a report launch of Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) on social safety nets at Planning Commission in the city. Planning Minister Air Vice-marshal (ret) AK Khandker Bir Uttam and PPRC Chairman Hossain Zillur Rahman were present at the programme.

Al-Hikma chief remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Shahadat E al-Hikma chief Sayed Kawsar Hossain Siddiki Raja was placed yesterday on a two-day remand in a case newly filed against him for cheating people.



A slum dweller sits in her shanty at North Shahjahanpur Railway Colony in the city yesterday after a team of Government Railway Police and Bangladesh Railway security personnel conducted an eviction drive. (Inset) Mohammad Shahid, one of the slum dwellers, at Dhaka Medical College Hospital after he was allegedly shot by the team. PHOTO: STAR



EVICITION DRIVE
Slum dwellers clash with rly men: 10 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people were injured as slum dwellers and Bangladesh Railway (BR) security personnel clashed for around one hour in the city's North Shahjahanpur Railway Colony yesterday when the personnel went there on an eviction drive.

Four of the injured were slum dwellers, among whom Mohammad Shahid, 18, and Tara Bibi, 55, sustained gunshot wounds and were being treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. They claimed the personnel opened fire on them.

The six others were BR security personnel. Government Railway Police (GRP) detained four people in connection with the incident.

Witnesses said a team of GRP and BR security personnel led by a BR estate officer went to the colony around 11:00am to evict the slum dwellers.

When the team refused to give the dwellers time to shift their belongings, male and female slum dwellers armed with brickbats and sticks attacked the team, they said.

After one hour of chase and counter-chase, Motijheel police joined GRP, driving back the dwellers, they added.

One slum dweller Ilyas Akhand told this correspondent that the team launched the eviction drive without giving any consideration to the plight of the slum dwellers, who have been living there for a long time.

Ilyas claimed that the team charged baton and fired eight to 10 rounds of bullets, injuring 20 slum dwellers.

BR Divisional Estate Officer Ahmadul Haque denied the allegations of firing bullets and said the team, comprised of 30 GRP and BR security personnel and more than 100 hired labourers, left after demolishing 50 shanties.

'One crore suffering from Hepatitis B, C in country'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around one crore people have been suffering from Hepatitis B and C virus in the country, experts said at a seminar yesterday.

On the occasion of the World Hepatitis Day different organisations arranged programmes to make people aware of Hepatitis B and C virus, the leading cause of liver cirrhosis and liver cancer, which are taking an alarming turn across the globe.

The slogan of this year's World Hepatitis Day is 'This is hepatitis.....'

Currently one in every 12 has been suffering from Hepatitis B or C globally and the burden is much higher than HIV/AIDS, said the speakers at the seminar organised by the Liver Foundation of Bangladesh at Public Library auditorium.

According to the World Health Organisation, around 35 to 40 crore people across the globe have been suffering from Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and 20 lakh of them die every year. The prevalence of HBV in the country is seven percent, they said.

Though Hepatitis B can be prevented

through vaccination and has treatment, Hepatitis C doesn't. That is why it is important to create awareness in the society to prevent it, they said.

Hepatitis B and C can be transmitted sexually and through blood and blood products. New born babies also can be affected with HBV if their mothers are infected with the virus. Currently 3.5 percent of the pregnant women are suffering from HBV.

If a baby is given first dose of HBV vaccine within 24-hour of its age and then at the age of one month and six months, it could be prevented.

Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haque Mustafa Shahid was present as the chief guest. National Prof M R Khan, WHO representative to Bangladesh Dr Arun Bhadra Thapa, Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, Prof Anisur Rahman, Liver Foundation of Bangladesh Secretary General Prof Mohammad Ali and Prof Faruque Ahmed also spoke.

PM should apologise to nation: Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said yesterday Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has to apologise to the nation for curbing freedom of expression and snatching people's voting right by amending the constitution.

He said the ruling coalition dreams of the next parliamentary election excluding BNP, but they will not be able to stay in power if the poll is held without BNP.

Fakhrul was addressing a protest rally organised by Dhaka city unit BNP at Nayapaltan in the city as part of the party's countrywide demonstration against price hike of essentials and arrest warrant against the party's Senior Vice-chairman Tarique Rahman.

Several thousand leaders, workers, and supporters attended the rally with the party's Dhaka city unit convener Sadeque Hossain Khoka, also the city mayor, in the chair.

"You have to apologise for curbing freedom of expression and snatching people's right to vote. You have to apologise also for destroying democracy by the fourth amendment after the independence", he asked the prime minister, protesting her remark against Khaleda Zia.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday asked the BNP chairperson to apologise for her remark on the constitution that the present constitution would be thrown away if BNP comes to power.

Fakhrul said it is now clear to the people that the fifteenth amendment made the country's constitution contradictory.

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Global Tiger Day
2011

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