

# BNP says no to EC reconstitution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP will not accept reconstitution of the Election Commission without consultation with political parties, said party acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday.

"It won't be acceptable to BNP if the government tries to reconstitute the election commission unilaterally," he told reporters at the inaugural ceremony of a Canada-based Bengali language web portal at the party's Nayapalton office in the capital.

The tenure of the present election commissioners is scheduled to expire early next year.

MK Anwar, a BNP standing committee member, meanwhile, at a human chain in front of the National Press Club yesterday said the commission must be reconstituted through discussions with political parties.

The ruling alliance scrapped the caretaker government system to stay in power forever and now it wants to reconstitute EC on its own to ensure easy win in the next election, he added.

Reiterating the party's stance, Anwar said they will not allow the ruling party to hold the next parliamentary election under a political government.

Jatiyatabadi Sangskritik Dal, a pro-BNP body, organised the human chain demanding the restoration of the caretaker government system which was annulled through the 15th amendment of the constitution.

On September 27, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia categorically declared that her party will not allow the ruling alliance to hold elections without a caretaker government.

She will lead a road march towards Sylhet on October 10 demanding the caretaker system. The main opposition's next road march from Dhaka to Rajshahi will start on October 19.



From right, Iftekhar Enayetullah, director of Waste Concern; Sanjay Prakash, chief executive officer of HSBC Bangladesh; Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star; and Talukdar Noman Anwar, head of marketing for HSBC, are pictured at the launch of the HSBC-The Daily Star Climate Awards 2011 at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka yesterday. (Story on Page 20)

# \$ 2m health project launched

METRO DESK

Unicef has received a grant of US\$2 million from Korea International Cooperation Agency (Koica) to implement a health project that aims to scale up home-based essential maternal and newborn care interventions in Tangail.

"Tangail Maternal Neonatal and Child Health Project" will be implemented in three low performing upazilas of the district over a period of three years (2011-2013), says a media release. The project was formally launched at a city hotel yesterday.

Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Taiyoung Cho, Koica Resident Representative Jung-Wook Lee, Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare AKM Amir Hossain, and Unicef Bangladesh Representative Carel de Rooy were present in the launching. Director General of Health Services Prof Dr Khondhaker Md Shefayet Ullah and Director General of Family Planning MM Neazuddin were also present.

# PM reaffirms equal religious rights

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reaffirmed her government's strong commitment to ensure equal rights of people of all religions in performing their respective religious rituals and enjoying their democratic rights.

"In the holy Qur'an, Allah, the Almighty, assured the rights of the people of all religions. In 1971, the people of all faiths fought the War of Liberation together under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"So, we are firmly determined to establish the rights of people," she said.

Hasina was addressing a function organised on the occasion of her visit to the puja mandap of

*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the constitution was amended to establish all the democratic rights of people*

Ramkrishna Mission in the city yesterday afternoon.

Awami League Advisory Council Member Suranjit Sengupta, Sector Commander Maj Gen (ret'd) CR Dutta and Puja Ujjapan Parishad President Advocate Subrata Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

Golden Bangla as dreamt by the Father of the Nation."

She said the government was successful in implementing 93 percent of the Annual Development Plan and "that is a record".

Besides, some 2,200 megawatts of electricity was added to the national grid so far, she said.

"Despite the recent global economic downturn, our government was able to maintain a 6.7 percent growth, which shows Bangladesh's capacity to emerge as a strong economy," she added.

Hasina thanked the law-enforcing agencies for successfully handling the law and order situation and expressed her happiness as a total of 196 puja mandaps were set up in the capital while 28,000 across the country.

# Fake currency gang busted in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police early yesterday busted a fake currency-making factory and arrested a youth with fake notes and machineries from the city's Pallabi.

The owner of the factory Masud Rana, 35, was arrested with counterfeit notes of different denomination worth Tk 389,500 from his resident at section 7, block-B of Arambagh in the area.

Police also recovered 667 pieces of printed papers, a bundle of white papers with sticker of Bangladesh Bank, dyes, two scanners, two printers and checkbooks of a private bank from the flat.

Police said they detained Masud's wife and two children but set them free following a primary interrogation, as they were not found involved. Masud was placed before a Dhaka Court seeking seven days remand but the court granted four days remand for interrogation.

House owner Kazi Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star that Masud rented the flat at the fourth floor of his six-storey building three years ago claiming him a vegetable trader of Karwanbazar.



# Zafar Iqbal gets Rotary SEED Award

METRO DESK

Prof Dr Muhammed Zafar Iqbal has received the Rotary SEED Award 2011 for his contributions in the field of education, says a press release.

The recognition came for his efforts in popularising mathematics among Bangladeshi youths at local and international level, generating much awareness and enthusiasm.

Rotary Club of Metropolitan Dhaka introduced the "award of distinction" in recognition of original, outstanding works, and significant contributions in the fields of Science, Education and Economic Development (SEED) that benefit the nation.

Prof Zafar Iqbal teaches at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology. He is a devoted social activist and has mobilised a nationwide movement to popularise mathematics and informatics among the students of Bangladesh. The academician holds the position of vice-president of Bangladesh Mathematics Olympiad Committee, Dhaka since its inception.



(From left) Dr Sarwar Ali, a trustee of the Liberation War Museum; Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) AK Khondker, minister for planning; and Rushanara Ali, the first British MP of Bangladesh origin; at a publication ceremony of a compilation of accounts by global personalities on the human tragedy perpetrated on Bangladeshis by the Pakistan occupation forces. The museum and Oxfam Bangladesh jointly organised the discussion on the former's premises in the city yesterday.

# 1971 testimony yet afresh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India and the Soviet Union stood by the freedom-loving people of Bangladesh in 1971 as the Pakistan army perpetrated genocide in the country. Their stand was in clear contrast to the position adopted by many democratic countries, which looked the other way.

This was stated by Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) AK Khondker, minister for planning and deputy chief of the liberation army in 1971, at a commemorative discussion in the city yesterday.

Referring to the responsibility India took for ten million Bangladeshi war refugees, Khondker termed the gesture as incomparable.

The Liberation War Museum and Oxfam Bangladesh jointly organised the discussion on the premises of the former in observance of the publication of Testimony of Sixty, a compilation of accounts by global personalities of the human tragedy perpetrated on Bangladeshis by the Pakistan occupation forces.

In his remarks, Dr Sarwar Ali, a trustee of the Liberation War Museum, noted that

after the Second World War, the highest number of people were killed in the shortest period of time during the liberation war of Bangladesh.

Oxfam, in the course of the liberation war in 1971, gathered testimony from sixty eyewitnesses, whose accounts of the war clearly indicate the sheer scale of the mass killings, torture, displacement and rape which went on.

It contains first hand accounts from Mother Teresa, Senator Edward Kennedy and journalists from the international media along with relief workers.

The high-profile witnesses described the liberation war as a horrifying story of millions of people 'hounded, homeless and dying.'

Rushanara Ali, the first Bangladesh origin British MP now on a visit to the country, said that it is was time for Bangladesh to thrive on her potentials.

Gareth Price Jones, country director of Oxfam, said the need for a collection of testimony on the war is still fresh alive four decades into Bangladesh's independence.

The liberation museum has been observing the day for the last three years.

# EVM to be used from NCC polls

Says Election Commissioner Sakhawat

UNB, Dhaka

The Election Commission is moving ahead with its plan to introduce the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) in the upcoming elections, including the Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) polls, despite the opposition BNP's objection.

"We're moving ahead with the EVM project," Election Commissioner Muhammad Sakhawat Hussain told reporters at EC Secretariat office in the city yesterday.

He said the EVM would be used in all centres of the nine wards during NCC polls.

About BNP's opposition to the EVM system that it's a weapon to manipulate vote, he said there is no similarity with the system that was recently shown by them (BNP).

Sakhawat said: "The EVM system we're applying and going to apply is not used in Germany and the United States. And it won't have connection with the

central server."

"Every electronic machine will remain separated and nobody will be able to change the software of all the machines at a time," he said, adding that technical experts from all political parties will be allowed to check the machines while uploading software in the machines.

Sakhawat mentioned that the programmes of introducing electronic machines and ID cards in the elections were actually taken by the previous Election Commission, headed by Mohammad Abu Syed in 2003. "And we started that in 2009 to infuse dynamism into the commission's works. The CEC (Syed) had also brought two EVMs from India at that time."

About the BNP's stance, the election commissioner said BNP should have come up with specific problems about the EVM through discussions with the commission or sent a proposal to it about loopholes of the system.

"BNP, as a political party, has given its opinions to the media about the system

and it would be better if they come to us and pinpoint the problems after really seeing the Electronic Voting Machine," he said.

Sakhawat, however, admitted that any technological system may have some weak points in use or it could be misused. "In many advanced countries, money has been withdrawn through computer hacking. Question is what system has no loopholes."

Terming the NCC polls as non-partisan ones, the election commissioner urged all political parties to extend their cooperation with the commission without extending open support to the candidates.

"As the Narayanganj City Corporation polls are non-partisan by laws so let the elections be held in a non-partisan manner."

Asked whether army to be deployed in the NCC polls, he said the commission would take decision later considering all the necessary aspects whether the army will be deployed during the polls.



Aparajeya Bangladesh forms a human chain in front of Wasa Bhaban in Karwan Bazar in the city yesterday marking Child Rights Week 2011.