Dhaka city polls within 180 days proposed

UNB, Dhaka

The local government ministry has sent a proposal to the Cabinet Division to amend the existing provision for holding elections to Dhaka North and Dhaka South city corporations within 180 days instead of 90 days.

Local government secretary Abu Alam Mohammad Shahid Khan told the news agency that if the proposal was endorsed by the cabinet, it would be sent to parliament for adoption.

Replying to a question, he said he expected that the next cabinet meeting would consider the proposal.

Shahid Khan said the ministry had proposed extension of time for holding the elections since the incumbent Election Commission had declined to arrange the elections within 90 days as its tenure expires on February 14 as well as other evolving problems.

He said the ministry had already taken the opinion of the law ministry about the extension of time.

Parliament on November 30, 2011 passed the Dhaka City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2011 splitting it into Dhaka North City Corporation and Dhaka South City Corporation with a provision to hold the elections within 90 days.



Hindu devotees seek the blessings of Goddess Saraswati, the personification of knowledge - arts, science and crafts, during Saraswati Puja at Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University yesterday.

AL to resist conspiracy

Says Qamrul

Jamaat leaders.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday in two: separate programmes said Awami League and its asso-: ciate organisations would ' resist the conspiracy to foil · war crimes trial by BNP and

State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam warned the STAFF CORRESPONDENT opposition not to commit any illegal activities in the name of political programme.

Criminals: Conspiracy of . Reporters' Unity.

programme, at the Awami nesses [in court]". League (AL) central office at · Bangabandhu Avenue in the : city, former home minister Mohammad Nasim said the conspiracy in army was hatched as a part of BNP-Jamaat's plot.

AL general secretary: Conference Centre in Mofazzal Hossain · the capital yesterday. Chowdhury Maya said BNP-: Jamaat and Hizb ut-Tahrir ; the ongoing trial were trying to create anar- · would be completed chy in the country to come to : by 2012, adding that power through the "back; another tribunal was

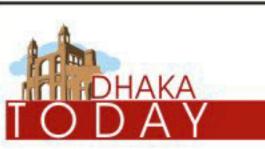
Hearing on charge framing against Quader Mollah today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal will hear today on charge framing against Assistant Secretary General of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Abdul Quader Mollah in connection with crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War in 1971.

Detained Quader Mollah, who faces seven specific charges of crimes against humanity, would be brought to the tribunal today, tribunal registrar Shahinur Islam told The Daily Star.

The prosecution on December 18 last year submitted the formal charges against Quader Mollah to the tribunal.



Discussion

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote will hold a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Shilpakala Academy; Time: 4:00pm.

General meeting

Dhaka Union of Journalists will organise its biennial general meeting; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

Workshop

Government of Bangladesh, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Health Organisation (WHO), Unicefand One Health Bangladesh will arrange a workshop; Venue: Hotel Radisson; Time: 6:00pm.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Witnesses being threatened

the ongoing trial

would be completed

by 2012, adding that

another tribunal was

expected to begin

operations by March

this year

Says law minister Shafique

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed has said prosecution witnesses in the ongoing trial of He was addressing a those charged with committing crimes discussion on "Trial of War: against humanity are "being threatened".

The witnesses were being told that they BNP-Jamaat in the Country · might face trouble if the government and Abroad" at Dhaka: changed, he said. "It should be understood that this is a reason why the prosecution is In another discussion . not being able to produce a number of wit-

The minister said this while addressing a dialogue on 'Trial of Crimes Against · Humanity: Ensuring Transparency, · Accountability and Due Process of Law' at Bangabandhu

: International The minister said

expected to begin operations by March this year.

The formation of more tribunals would depend on the findings of the investigators and on how much evidence was

available for the prosecution, he said. The National Human Rights Commission

(NHRC) organised the dialogue.

Speakers at the programme said the failure to produce witnesses before the International Crimes Tribunal indicated a lack of preparation on the prosecution's part; and the defence could take advantage of it.

In response, prosecutor Saiful Islam ruled out the notion that the prosecution lacked preparation.

"The witnesses, victims, their family members are under threat. They are worried," he said, adding that the witnesses must be mentally and physically healthy to

appear before the court.

On the question of international standards in the trial being maintained, the speakers said there was no universal standard that needed to be maintained.

"There is no such thing as an international golden standard," Gowhar Rizvi, the international affairs adviser to the prime minister, said, adding, "What our law reflects are the best practices seen around the world."

However, another concern surrounding the ongoing trial is that it was very urbancentric, pointed out Information Commissioner Prof Sadeka Halim.

"I have visited 29 districts over the last two

years and found that the rural people have very little knowledge The law minister said of the trial," she said.

The information commissioner said more people could seek help through Right to Information (RTI) to learn more about the trial, which would only strengthen the process.

Protection of witnesses should not only be the responsibility of the state, said barrister M Amir-Ul

Islam, adding that the defence had a role to play here as well. NHRC Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman said each of the defence counsels repre-

senting the accused at the tribunal was invited to the dialogue. But in a letter on Thursday, the defence had turned down the invitation. General Secretary of Sector Commanders Forum Lt Gen (retd) Harun-Ur-Rashid, Chairman of Law Commission Prof M Shah Alam, War Crimes Fact Finding Committee

Chairman MA Hasan and coordinator of the

investigation agency Abdul Hannan, also

took part in the dialogue.

Bana Vante on life support

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Sadhana Nanda Mohasthabir, widely known as Bana Vante, abbot of Rajban Bihar in Rangamati, is yet to regain consciousness, said attending doctors in the capital's Square Hospitals Ltd yesterday.

The 93-year-old venerable spiritual leader, sufferings from multi-organ diseases and respiratory problems due to old age complications, was on life support at cabin number nine of the Intensive Care Unit till filing of this report last night. "We are optimistic on his

recovery," said Dr Sneh Kanti Chakma, overseeing Bana Vante's treatment.

The revered leader fell ill on Thursday night and was unconscious when he was being flown in to the hospital from Rangamati Circuit House in Rangamati town by helicopter Friday noon.

Industries Minister Dilip Barua, State Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Affairs Dipankar Talukdar, Chakma Raja Barrister Devashis Roy and former deputy minister for CHT Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan went to see him at

the hospital. Hundreds of devotees have been thronging Rajban Bihar since yesterday and are praying for his early recovery.

Because of his spiritual authority acquired through years of meditation inside the deep forests of the hill tracts, local Buddhists consider Bana Vante to be a living embodiment of the values of Lord Buddha.

Cancel power plant near Sundarbans Demands Bapa

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concern over the probable adverse effects on the bio-diversity of the Sundarbans, Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) yesterday demanded immediate cancellation of a proposed coal-fired power plant near the mangrove forest. In a statement, Bapa said the power plant would emit

toxic chemicals, threatening the bio-diversity of the Sundarbans, the largest single block of tidal halophytic mangrove forest in the world. Moreover, hot water dumped from the power plant

would adversely affect the various species of marine life in the nearby water bodies, pushing them towards extinction, it added. The organisation condemned the initiative to sign an agreement between Bangladesh and India for setting up

the proposed power plant at Rampal upazila in

Bagerhat. Implementing the project will violate existing environmental laws. It should therefore be shifted elsewhere from the Sundarbans, it added.

Meanwhile, 25 eminent citizens yesterday also demanded relocation of the project.

celebrated STAFF CORRESPONDENT Hundreds of Hindu devotees

Saraswati Puja

and visitors from all walks of life celebrated Saraswati Puja at Dhaka University

through traditional gaiety as

elsewhere across the country yesterday, with prayers for wisdom and arts. As in the previous years, the Jagannath Hall playground wore a festive look with 52 colorfully decorated Puja mandaps (pavilions) that different departments

Saraswati. Sujan Mandol, a student of mass communication and journalism, said his department also built a mandap to offer prayers seeking blessing of the Goddess for increase of wisdom.

"Holding a book in a hand

and a violin in the other,

of DU erected to offer

prayers to Goddess

Goddess Saraswati is the image of the knowledge of arts, science, and crafts. Therefore, children of Hindu community, on the day, are taught how to read and write for the first time", said the hall priest, Bidhan Chakraborty.

Students of the fine arts faculty installed a 35-foottall idol of Goddess Saraswati in the hall pond, which, they claimed, is the largest idol of the world made of jute. The Bani Archana, one of

the vital parts of the Puja, was also performed at Begum Rokeya and Shamsun Nahar halls at the university. Saraswati Puja is per-

formed on the Vasant Panchami day every year. Educational institutions remain closed on the occasion.

Saraswati Puja was also celebrated at Dhakeswari temple, Siddheswari temple, Ram-Krishna Mission, Supreme Court premises and in many educational institutions, including Buet, Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka Medical College, Stamford University, Dhaka College, and Eden Girls College.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses a meeting with Awami League leaders and activists of Laxmipur at Gono Bhaban in the city yesterday.

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PHOTO: BNP

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia chairs a standing committee meeting of the party at BNP's Gulshan office in the city yesterday.

১২৯০ টাকা খরচ করে ডিনার করবেন? নাকি জুম আল্ট্রা কিনবেন? ১২৯০ টাকা দিয়ে জুম আল্ট্রা কিনলে পুরো ১২৯০ টাকাই ..কারণ জুম আল্ট্রা সংযোগসহ মোডেম কিনলে ফেরত পাবেন পুরো টাকা বাংলাদেশে প্রথমবারের মতো সরাসরি 🕒 🖂 🖂 চ্যাট করুন আপনার সিটিসেল নাম্বার থেকে প্রমোশনাল অফার: ৫০ পয়সা/এসএমএস (৩ মার্চ, ২০১২ পর্যন্ত) এমন অনেক কিছুই হবে যা কেউ ভাবেনি আগে

THE FASTEST MOBILE BROADBAND IN BANGLADESH