

Evict illegal

FROM PAGE 20
The court also issued a rule upon the authorities concerned of the government to explain in ten days why they should not be directed to evict sand traders from the river banks and protect the areas from encroachment.

Secretary to the ministry of shipping, chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, director general of the Department of Environment, deputy commissioners of Dhaka and Narayanganj and nine other government officials concerned have been made respondents to the rule.

The bench came up with the order and rule following the writ petition filed by advocate Manzill Murshid on behalf of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB).

Murshid submitted the petition on Monday following reports in The Daily Star and the daily Prothom Alo.

A photo on encroachment of the bank of the river Turag was published by The Daily Star on November 2 while the daily Prothom Alo published a report on encroachment of the Shitalakkhya at Kanchpur on August 31.

Popular vote

FROM PAGE 1
The last time a tough contest took place was in 1960, when Democratic Senator John F Kennedy narrowly defeated Republican Vice President Richard M Nixon.

At this year's election, it is hard to predict which of the two candidates will come by the mandatory 270 electoral votes needed to claim victory. A curious feature of US presidential elections has been the electoral vote alongside the popular vote. The popular vote refers to the votes cast by citizens in all the constituent states of the United States of America. If that were the only measure by which the results of elections could be arrived at, any candidate winning more votes than his rivals would be declared elected.

The American political system, however, has devised somewhat a check and balance system. It is this: each state, on the basis of its population, gets a certain number of electoral votes. By that measure, California will have a much larger number of electoral votes than Rhode Island.

And how do electoral votes become a decisive factor at the election? In 48 of the 50 states, the system is a winner-take-all, even if the margin of victory by popular voter is extremely narrow. The candidate who gets a majority of votes in these 48 states gets all its electoral votes, which means that even if nationwide Barack Obama or Mitt Romney wins a majority of the popular vote, his performance will be counted on the basis of how many states he has won or what his tally of the combined electoral vote of the states is.

At this election, as in some earlier ones, the total number of electoral votes is 538. To win the White House, a candidate must collect at least 270 of those votes. Now, what happens if the improbable happens in America today? What happens if Obama and Romney each acquire 269 electoral votes? Unlike the French system, there is no second round of elections. So who will be president? Or can both lay claim to the presidency?

The answer to that last question is simple: yes, they can, and so cause a crisis. And yet a decision must be made. And this is how a solution will be found, assuming that there is a 269-each tie between Obama and Romney: the House of Representatives will vote for the man it thinks should be president; the Senate will decide who will be vice president.

By present calculations, with Republicans looking to hold on to their majority in the House, Mitt Romney will be president. In the Senate, where Democrats are on course to keeping their majority, Joe Biden will continue to be vice president.

It is a hypothetical situation, an improbable idea. But, who knows? It just might happen. Or Obama could manage to squeak through. Or Romney could cause an upset.

Key moments

WAR ON WOMEN

A federal mandate requiring religious institutions to offer contraception insurance coverage to employees sparks a "war on women" fight between Democrats and Republicans from January to March.

ETCH A SKETCH

Romney aide Eric Fehrnstrom on March 21 said on CNN's "Starting Point" that the fall campaign is "like Etch A Sketch. You can shake it up and we start all over again."

PRESUMPTIVE NOMINEE

Romney became the presumptive nominee after his closest rival, former US Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, suspended his campaign April 10.

DREAM ACT-LITE

In an election-year policy change, the Obama administration on June 15 announced it will stop deporting young illegal immigrants who entered the United States as children if they meet certain requirements.

OBAMA CARE UPHELD

The US Supreme Court on June 28 upheld the Affordable Care Act, Obama's signature health care reform legislation and a law that cost both he and congressional Democrats tremendous political capital.

ROMNEY'S TRIP

In July, Romney made verbal gaffes in questioning London's ability to host the Olympics to angering Palestinians by suggesting Israel's culture played a role in its economic success.

YOU DIDN'T BUILD THAT

Obama told a crowd in Roanoke, Virginia, on July 13 "if you've got a business, you didn't build that; somebody else made that happen".

BENGHAZI ATTACKS

When US Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens and three others were killed in Benghazi on September 11, the subsequent fallout was fuel during the presidential debates.

THE 47%

On September 17, in one ill-fated fundraiser, Romney managed to offend Palestinians, Latinos and nearly half of American voters, some of the same people he's counting on for support at the polls.

OBAMA'S DEBATE DISASTER

Obama blew it in the first presidential debate on October 3 by failing to actively engage Romney on key points and looking down, as if he was bored or annoyed.

'BINDERS FULL OF WOMEN'

In the second debate on October 16, Romney's comments about using "binders full of women" while Massachusetts governor to help diversify his cabinet led to Internet quips and criticism.

BAYONETS AND HORSES

On October 22, in the third presidential debate, an energised Obama proved once again that he was full of sharp tongued-snark when he lashed Romney by explaining the military uses fewer "bayonets and horses."

SUPERSTORM SANDY

On October 29, Chris Christie's praise of the Obama administration's handling of post-storm efforts further

Last-minute

FROM PAGE 1
dramatically outpaced John McCain in early voting. While Obama has maintained a lead in early voting in most states this year, Mitt Romney and the Republican Party made early voting a high priority.

But Obama may have gained early voting momentum in recent days.

All indicators last week pointed to scenarios in Florida, Ohio and North Carolina where Romney was well situated to overtake

Obama in Election Day voting -- possibly offsetting any of the president's early vote advantage.

But McDonald says that there are too many complicated variables still in play to predict what will happen. Chief among them is how many voters actually show up.

In 2008, Obama was 21 percentage points ahead of McCain in North Carolina early voting, and so even though McCain won the balloting on Election Day, he

HALL-MARK SCAM

Chairperson shown held in 6 graft cases

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Hall-Mark Group Chairperson Jasmine Islam, wife of the company's managing director Tanvir Mahmud, was shown arrested yesterday in six of the 11 corruption cases filed by the ACC in connection with a loan scam.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Hasibul Haque passed the order after investigation officers (IO) submitted separate petitions for showing her arrested in the cases.

Deputy Assistant Director of the Anti-Corruption Commission SMM Akhter Hamid Bhuiyan, IO of one of the six cases, also submitted a seven-day remand prayer for quizzing Jasmine. The court in response fixed tomorrow for hearing the remand petition.

According to a Bangladesh Bank investigation, Hall-Mark in collaboration with some bank officials swindled out more than Tk 2,600 crore out of the Ruposhi Bangla branch of Sonali Bank against forged document.

On October 4, the ACC filed 11 cases against 27 top officials of Sonali Bank and the Hall-Mark Group for the loan scam.

AKM Azizur Rahman, former manager of the Sonali Bank branch, was also shown arrested in a case filed against him for misappropriating more than Tk 214.39 crore of depositors' money.

Jasmine was arrested on October 18 in Manikganj while Azizur on October 14.

On October 18, Tanvir Mahmud gave a confessional statement, in which he named a number of people who had helped him take loans from the bank.

Meanwhile, another Dhaka court remanded Destiny Group Chairman Rafiqul Amin and Destiny 2000 Ltd Chairman Mohammad Hossain for nine days each in a money laundering case.

narrowly lost the state. Yesterday, Obama's early lead was down to 16 percentage points, leaving him less wiggle room.

Early voting is also playing a role in what is shaping up as 2012's biggest prize and biggest potential nightmare: Ohio. Nearly one-third of Ohio's electorate has already voted -- 1.8 million ballots have been cast -- with a recent CNN-ORC poll showing the president with a hefty advantage, 63 percent to 35 percent.

Americans vote in nailbiting finish

FROM PAGE 1
than 31 million people who voted early this year.

Vice President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill Biden, were among the first voters yesterday at a polling place in Greenville, Delaware, Biden's home state, reports Associated Press.

Smiling broadly, Biden waited in line with other voters and greeted them with a handshake. Outside, he sent a message to people across the country who may encounter crowded polling places. "I encourage you to stand in line as long as you have to," he told television cameras.

The men on the GOP ticket each voted with their wives at their side yesterday morning in their hometowns -- Massachusetts Governor Romney in Belmont, and Ryan in Janesville, Wisconsin -- then headed to meet in Cleveland for some retail politicking at restaurants and other unannounced stops.

In a contest reflecting the nation's deep political chasm, Obama and Romney ran dead even in final polls that hinted at a result rivaling some of the closest presidential elections in history.

The first polling results of

the day in New Hampshire's Dixville Notch did nothing to change that notion. It was a tie.

Obama and Romney each received five votes, reports CNN.

The town in the state's northeast corner has opened its polls shortly after midnight each Election Day since 1960 - but yesterday's draw was the first in its history.

In the morning, the president visited a campaign office in Chicago, where he called and thanked several startled volunteers in Wisconsin and then spoke briefly to the reporters who were travelling with him, congratulating Romney for having run a "spirited campaign."

"I also want to say to Governor Romney, congratulations on a spirited campaign," Obama said.

He was sure to observe his Election Day ritual of playing pickup basketball with friends and close advisers. The one time he skipped the tradition, he lost the New Hampshire primary in 2008.

Romney was asked on WTAM radio in Cleveland whether he agreed that voters always get it right in the end. "I won't guarantee that

they'll get it right, but I think they will," Romney replied.

Romney argued that Obama had his chance to help Americans financially and blew it. "If it comes down to economics and jobs, this is an election I should win," Romney told Cleveland station WTAM.

With both sides keeping up the onslaught of political ads in battleground states right into Election Day, on one thing, at least, there was broad agreement: "I am ready for it to be over," said nurse Jennifer Walker in Columbus, Ohio.

The forecast for Election Day promised dry weather for much of the country, with rain expected in two battlegrounds, Florida and Wisconsin. But the closing days of the campaign played out against ongoing recovery efforts after Superstorm Sandy.

Election officials in New York and New Jersey scrambled to marshal generators, move voting locations, shuttled storm victims to polling places and take other steps to ensure everyone who wanted to vote could do so.

In New York City, authorities planned to run shuttle buses every 15 minutes yes-

terday in storm-slammed areas to bring voters to the polls. In Ocean County along the New Jersey coast, officials hired a converted camper to bring mail-in ballots to shelters in Toms River, Pemberton and Burlington Township.

Election Day came early for more than a third of Americans, who cast ballots days or even weeks in advance.

An estimated 46 million ballots, or 35 percent of the 133 million expected to be cast, were projected to be early ballots, according to Michael McDonald, an early voting expert at George Mason University, who tallies voting statistics for the United States Elections Project. None of those ballots were being counted until yesterday.

The election played out with intensity in the small subset of battleground states: Colorado, Iowa, Florida, New Hampshire, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia and Wisconsin. Romney's late move to add Pennsylvania to the mix was an effort to expand his options, and Republicans poured millions into previously empty airwaves there.

Jamaat men on the rampage

FROM PAGE 1
Thakurgaon, Natore, Narail, Chapainawabganj and Kushtia.

At least 124 people, 85 of them Jamaat-Shibir activists, were wounded in the clashes countrywide. Police arrested 207 Jamaat-Shibir men for attacking the law enforcers and carrying out destructive activities.

Earlier on Monday, at least 260 people, 54 of them policemen, were injured as Jamaat-Shibir men fought pitched battles with law enforcers in Dhaka and 10 other districts.

During yesterday's clashes, the Jamaat-Shibir supporters beat up law enforcers with bamboo sticks, pelted them with brickbats and threw cocktails at them. Police responded by charging batons and firing rubber bullets and teargas canisters.

In the capital, at least 15 people, including eight policemen, were wounded. Police arrested 38 people for attacking them at Malibagh, Mouchak, Rampura and Motijheel.

Jamaat in a written statement said more than 300 of its leaders and workers were arrested and 400 wounded in police action across the country. The statement, signed by Matiur Rahman Akand, assistant secretary of publicity department, called on the

people "to build up a mass movement against the fascist government".

In Rajshahi, 30 policemen were wounded in the Jamaat-Shibir attack. In the 40-minute clash that began around 5:30pm, the attackers snatched a rifle from a policeman, said Golam Mahmud, deputy commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police.

Equipped with bamboos and pipes, the Jamaat-Shibir men swooped on police constables Mosharraf Hossain and Saiful Islam of Boalia Police Station and started beating them with their rifles, leaving one of the rifles broken, police said.

Of the injured policemen, Sub-inspector Shahidul Islam and constables Mosharraf Hossain and Saiful Islam were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

As police fired teargas shells to disperse the demonstrators, they hurled hand-made cocktails, said the RMP deputy commissioner.

Earlier in the morning, police detained 35 Jamaat-Shibir men from different areas of the district for attempting to commit destructive activities.

In Noakhali, some 50 people, including seven policemen and a journalist, were hurt during the clashes between police and Jamaat-

Shibir activists.

The Jamaat-Shibir men hurled at least 25 cocktails, police said.

Equipped with sticks, they swooped on the law enforcers when the latter tried to intercept a procession, demanding the release of their top leaders, witnesses said.

They also snatched a shotgun from a policeman and damaged several vehicles. The injured policemen were taken to Noakhali Medical College Hospital.

The Jamaat-Shibir men claimed that 10 of their supporters were injured in police action. Following the clash, police raided the local Jamaat office from where they arrested 16 Jamaat-Shibir men and recovered a huge number of sticks, jihadi CDs and leaflets.

"We are trying to recover the shotgun and drives are on to arrest the looters," said Harunur Rashid Hajari, Noakhali Superintendent of Police.

In Rangpur, at least 50 people, including four policemen and a journalist, were wounded as the Jamaat-Shibir men fought with police at Shapla Chatter and Jahaj Company intersection.

In addition to hurling brickbats, the Jamaat-Shibir activists lobbed at least 25 cocktails. They also vandalised a police vehicle and a

motorbike, police and witnesses said.

The clash began around 11:00am when Jamaat-Shibir men brought out a procession from its Rangpur district office at Shapla Chatter.

Police fired five rubber bullets and 25 teargas shells to bring the situation under control.

Mahbubur Rahman Belal, Rangpur city unit Jamaat chief, said about 50 of their leaders and activists were injured in the clash.

According to reports sent by our Sylhet correspondent, more than 50 people, 32 of them policemen, were injured in a clash between police and Jamaat-Shibir men.

Eleven police personnel were admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, said Ataur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Sylhet Kotwali Police Station.

In Chittagong, around 500 Shibir activists in two groups brought out processions from Kazir Dewari intersection around 1:00pm carrying sticks, rods and stones, police said.

Five policemen, including Kotwali Police Station Sub-inspector Amar Kanti, were injured in the attack by the demonstrators, who vandalised a truck, said Swadip Kumar Das, inspector of the station.

Tajul barred from tribunal

FROM PAGE 20
Tanvir Ahmed Al-Amin--to explain as to why contempt charges should not be brought against them.

The same court earlier on October 22 had served another show-cause notice on Tajul for "misconduct" in the courtroom and asked him to reply within 15 days.

On Monday, before the prosecution began its closing statement before the tribunal, the defence told the court that its witness had been "abducted" near the High Court shrine by plainclothes policemen. The defence created a commotion and boycotted the courtroom when the tribunal took time to investigate the matter.

At one stage, the chaos forced the judges to leave the courtroom.

While boycotting the tribunal, defence counsel Mizanul Islam repeatedly called Chief Prosecutor Ghulam Arief Tipoo "a liar".

While issuing the show-cause notices yesterday, the tribunal, chaired by Justice Md Nizamul Huq, termed Tajul's Monday statement before the media "a high-grade contempt".

Tajul before the media had suggested that the tribunal might have been involved in the "abduction".

The tribunal asked Tajul to be present on November 22 and give his reply to the show-cause notice. On receiving the reply, the tribunal will take further steps.

Before the order was issued yesterday, Prosecutor Zead Al Malum

submitted news clips of the media before the tribunal and said the defence had staged Monday's chaos to obstruct the trial proceedings.

He prayed to the tribunal to take action against Mizanul and Tajul under Section 11 (4) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973.

Opposing the prayer, lawyer Abdur Razzaq claimed that Tajul had not meant it and had no ill intention.

In the order, Justice Nizamul Huq said besides the media reports, the judges used all the footage captured by the CCTV cameras.

"Tajul and Mizan called the chief prosecutor a liar, which should not be used in the courtroom," the tribunal chairman observed.

Pointing out Tajul's remark before the media, Nizamul Huq said, "It is nothing but hurling a direct allegation against this tribunal without any basis, which is high grade contempt."

The tribunal also cautioned Sayedee's son Masud Sayedee and other defence counsels.

Earlier, the tribunal fixed November 22 for submission and reply of Tajul on the previous show-cause notice issued on October 22.

The tribunal may punish anyone who obstructs or abuses its process or disobeys any of its orders or directions, or does anything which tends to prejudice the case of a party before it, or tends to bring it or any of its

members into hatred or contempt, or does anything which constitutes contempt of the tribunal, with simple imprisonment which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to Tk 5,000 or with both.

The prosecution yesterday placed its closing arguments in the crimes against humanity case against Sayedee all day long at the tribunal.

Meanwhile, some lawyers of the Supreme Court at a press briefing at the Supreme Court Bar auditorium claimed the "abduction" of a defence witness from the court premises unprecedented.

They said it was done solely with a view to preventing the defence from discharging their responsibilities.

Rab quizzes

FROM PAGE 20
On Monday night, the elite crime busters also seized Tk 50,000 and his passport with an Indian visa from the premise of school run by him, said the Rab in a press conference yesterday.

The former Shibir leader according to his plan led a mob in vandalising the Buddhist monasteries in Ramu on September 29 and has been hiding in Sundarban since the mayhem was sparked.

He was planning to escape to India through Benapole border.

Filing of a case under arms act against Bahadur is under process.

Ramu attack was well-planned

FROM PAGE 1
pressed for time and had procedural limitations.

It suggested that a comprehensive and intensive investigation be undertaken to unearth the mystery.

The home ministry formed the four-member committee led by the Additional Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong, Mohammad Nurul Islam, on September 30.

The probe body submitted its report to the High Court through the attorney general's office yesterday as per the court's earlier order.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the 96-page report, which was finalised on October 17.

Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua filed a writ petition on October 2, challenging the "inaction" of the police in protecting the Buddhist temples and houses of locals in Ramu, Cox's Bazar.

The HC on October 15 directed the government to submit a report to it by November 6 on the security measures it had taken before and after the attack on the Buddhist community there.

The bench of Justice Mirza Hussain Haider and Justice Kazi Md Ejarul Haque Akondo yesterday fixed November 13 for passing an order on the issue.

The report came up with 22 recommendations and an observation that it was regrettable that there had been no

intelligence information about such a well-planned attack.

A mob destroyed 12 pagodas and more than 50 houses in Ramu on the night of September 29. The violence was apparently triggered by the image of a Buddhist youth's facebook page that had been photo-shopped, revealed The Daily Star investigation. The page had an image derogatory to Islam pasted on it.

In its report, the probe committee said the first out of the four phases of the plan execution was to create a religious sentiment while the second was for assembling people quickly.

In the third phase, the assembled crowd was made rowdy with provocation and in the fourth the attack, looting and arson were carried out, said the report.

However, the probe committee said the derogatory photo of the holy Quran was tagged in Uttam Kumar Barua's facebook account on September 18 and 26 more facebook friends of Uttam "liked" the photo.

"It means the violence in Ramu took place ten days after the tagging of the photo and the masterminds chalked out their design by this time," the report said.

The probe body mentioned several motives behind the attack. The motives include achieving political gains by putting the

government in an embarrassing situation, attempting to prove the government failed through deteriorating law and order, creating a sense of insecurity among the religious minority by damaging communal harmony and weakening the government's stance to prevent Rohingya intrusion.

The other motives include destroying the good relationship between Bangladesh and its neighbouring countries and development partners.

It, however, stressed the need for a combined intelligence agency effort and in-depth and comprehensive investigation to find out the main motive behind the incident.

The probe report gave a detailed description of the incident and mentioned that 205 people, including Uttam Kumar Barua, and Abdul Moktadir alias Alif, a student of a private polytechnic institute in Chittagong, were involved.

Local made arms--axes, iron rods, large knives--and diesel, petrol, gun powder, kerosene, bitumen, old tyres of cars, tree branches and bamboo sticks were used during the attack, said the report.

It also said a number of rioters were madrasa students and their teachers, wearing round-neck T-shirts and white caps on their heads.

The report recommended

identifying the people involved --- the planners, conspirators and instigators.

It said the officer-in-charge (on duty) at Ramu Police Station could not realise the gravity of the incident and that the situation could have been tackled had proper security measures been taken at the beginning of the incident. The probe body recommended security measures at Buddhist-dominated areas. It also argued for controlling measures so that humiliating and immoral contents, photos, and information that hurt religious sentiments could not be easily accessed on social communication sites like Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.

Ex-adviser

FROM PAGE 20
realising the money. Judge Iftekhar Bin Aziz fixed today for passing an order on the issue.

On November 3 last year, the court directed Matin and Motahar to pay Tk 25 crore to the enterprise as compensation for bypassing the lowest bidder, Shahadat's company, in the bidding process of a container handling job at the Chittagong port in 2008.

The court in its judgment said that if the defendants failed to pay the compensation, the plaintiff could get the money by selling the movable and immovable properties of the two.