



Passengers, arriving at Paturia terminal by launches, head for buses on Monday. As the operation of ferries became uncertain, more of people opted for launches. Right, a BIWTA tugboat pulling a ferry stuck in the Padma.



PHOTO: RAHSEED SHUMON

Ferry service

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10:00am yesterday, but failed due to the strong currents, said Mohiuddin Rasel, assistant manager (commerce) at BIWTC.

The BIWTA, responsible for ensuring navigability by dredging channels, says the situation cannot be improved until the middle of this month, as dredging had to be stopped on Sunday due to the currents near Daulatdia terminal.

Despite the deployment of four dredgers on Friday, said the chief engineer, they failed to prepare a new channel.

Accompanied by the BIWTA and BIWTC chairmen, Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan visited Paturia and Daulatdia terminals yesterday evening.

The minister said four ferries were shifted from the route to Mawa terminal, as many vehicles had been taking that route, our Manikganj correspondent

reports.

On Monday, ro-ro ferries were making trips with half or even one-third the capacity.

BIWTA Chairman Shamsuddoha Khandaker said erosion upstream has worsened the situation. "Heavy silt from the eroded soil [from nearby villages] is accumulating so rapidly on the riverbed that shoals form within hours."

With the tailbacks on both the terminals becoming longer, several bus companies re-routed their services using Kushtia-Dhaka route via Bangabandhu Bridge.

Sharif Hasan, a driver of a private bus company, said the alternative route is costing the company an extra 131 litres of diesel a trip.

Meanwhile, BIWTA and BIWTC officials are blaming each other for failing to handle the situation.

Nokia exits handset business

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"Both Nokia and Microsoft really missed the boat in terms of smartphones, and it is extremely difficult to claw your way back from that."

Nokia, based in Espoo, Finland, racked up losses of more than €5 billion over nine quarters as Elop's comeback efforts failed to eat into the dominance of Apple Inc and Google Inc's Android platform in the smartphone market. The stock has slumped more than 80 percent in the five years through yesterday.

As part of the agreement, Microsoft will pay €3.79 billion for Nokia's devices division and €1.65 billion for patents, according to a statement from the companies. The all-cash transaction, subject to Nokia investors' approval, is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2014.

Nokia said it will book a gain of €3.2 billion, with the sale "significantly" accretive to earnings. It also said it aims to return its debt, which is ranked junk by all three major rating companies, to an investment grade. Chairman Risto Siilasmaa, who will become Nokia's interim CEO, said

the company may return excess capital to shareholders.

The takeover is the largest for a wireless device maker after Google's purchase of Motorola's handset unit in 2012, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. For Microsoft, the deal including the payment to license Nokia's patents is its second-biggest behind the \$8.5 billion purchase of Internet telephone company Skype in 2011.

With the latest sale, the original pioneers in the mobile-phone industry -- Motorola, Nokia and Ericsson AB -- have all ceased to be independent handset manufacturers or given up on the business. BlackBerry Ltd said last month it's considering putting itself up for sale.

Microsoft becomes the last major developer of smartphone operating systems to get into manufacturing. Apple makes its own handsets, which use its iOS operating system. Google's acquisition of Motorola Mobility gave it its own lineup of phones.

Microsoft's other recent significant move into hardware -- the Surface tablet --

has trailed expectations and the company wrote down inventory last quarter.

To break even on an operating basis, Microsoft will need Nokia to sell about 50 million smartphones a year, it said in a presentation. Nokia has a run-rate of about 30 million units. In the second quarter, Nokia sold 7.4 million smartphones under the Lumia line.

Microsoft acquired the Lumia brand to use with smartphones, while it will license the Nokia brand to use with low-end phones for 10 years, Elop said at a press briefing yesterday. Microsoft will later decide what to call its future smartphones.

Microsoft will face a balancing act owning Nokia and keeping its other hardware partners, including HTC Corp and Samsung Electronics Co, committed to its Windows Phone. Aiming to reassure other phone makers that Microsoft will still support them, Ballmer said that the company was "100 percent" committed to helping its manufacturing partners.

Ballmer declined to say whether Elop would

become CEO, or had been a candidate to succeed him.

Ballmer called Nokia's Siilasmaa shortly after the new year to initiate discussions on an acquisition and the two met in February at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, according to Microsoft. Talks heated up in recent months and a deal was lined up before Ballmer announced his retirement last month, the company said.

Microsoft and Nokia have had a close relationship through Elop, who had run Microsoft's Office unit. He left the software maker in September 2010 to take the top job at Nokia.

In February 2011, Elop struck a deal with Ballmer to switch Nokia's smartphones from its own Symbian operating system to Windows Phone. In exchange, Microsoft ponied up more than \$1 billion dollars to pay for Nokia marketing and developing products on Windows.

Nokia had the largest share of the mobile phone handset market until it was overtaken by Samsung in 2012, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Crisis to deepen

FROM PAGE 1

parliament during the time of the election.

But the situation is now back to square one through her Monday's announcement that the election would be held without the dissolution of parliament.

In the view of political analysts, this may add fresh fuel to a deepening of the ongoing political crisis centring on the polls.

Hasina is now relying on a constitutional provision reintroduced by her government in 2011. The provision stipulates that polls will be held within 90 days prior to the expiry of a parliament's tenure. If parliament is dissolved before its tenure ends, the election will be held within 90 days of its dissolution.

This odd provision had actually been present in the country's constitution since 1972. But the provision was never applied as none of the parliaments between 1972 and 2001 actually completed their tenures.

With the introduction of the caretaker government system in 1996, this peculiar provision was

replaced by a new one that said elections would be held within 90 days of a parliament's dissolution.

In line with this provision, which the premier has now clearly opted for, the forthcoming polls will be held any day between October 27 this year and January 24 next year. The present parliament will complete its five-year tenure on January 25.

The prime minister's statement raises the question of whether, given that MPs seeking re-election will remain in office at the time of the election, a level playing field will be ensured for all political parties before and during the voting.

Countries like the UK, birthplace of the Westminster system; India, the world's largest parliamentary democracy; New Zealand, Canada, and Australia do not have such provisions in their constitutions. Parliaments in those countries get dissolved before general elections.

It is learnt that Hasina changed her position following the opposition's rigid stance on its demand for a restoration of the non-partisan care-

taker government system.

This reminds one of almost a similar event which took place more than a decade ago.

In her first term as prime minister, Hasina backtracked from an announcement she had made regarding parliamentary polls.

In response to her archrival BNP chief Khaleda Zia's demand on March 7, 2001, for holding the eighth parliamentary polls in May the same year, a few months before the due time, Hasina announced that the Awami League was ready for the polls before June 12.

Three days after Khaleda Zia had raised the demand, Hasina made the announcement at a views exchange meeting with Bangladeshi expatriates in Saudi Arabia.

Even on March 19, 2001, she stated that she would hand over power to the caretaker government any day after April 17.

The BNP-Jamaat-led four-party alliance, however, showed little patience with Hasina's announcement and issued an ultimatum on

March 21 asking the government to resign by March 30. The alliance threatened to enforce a non-stop hartal on April 1 and 2 if the demand was not met.

Hasina reacted sharply to the ultimatum. On March 23, she gave a challenge to Khaleda to oust her government if they could before July 13, 2001, the last day of her government's tenure.

Her shift from the announcement to hold the polls before the due time did not make the election uncertain. Her government handed over power to the caretaker government on July 15, 2001. And the eighth parliamentary election was held in October 1, 2001.

This time, the situation is the reverse. The scrapping of the caretaker government system allows the Hasina government to stay in office during the next polls, a situation the BNP-led opposition has vehemently been opposed to.

Such a state of affairs only raises the level of uncertainty over the fate of the next general election.

Alim's trial at final stage

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As per relevant laws, after hearing the closing arguments the tribunal will either keep the case waiting for verdict or set a date for delivering the verdict.

Alim, a member of late president Ziaur Rahman's cabinet, is facing 17 charges for his alleged involvement in crimes against humanity and genocide committed in Joypurhat during the Liberation War in 1971.

Of the 17 charges framed on June 11, 2012, 15 were in connection with his alleged involvement in the killings of at least 585 people in 15 incidents. The two other charges were in connection with looting, arson, deportation and detention of unarmed civilians.

Arrested on March 27, 2011, the 83-year-old former BNP lawmaker has been on conditional bail since March 31, 2011 on health

grounds.

The prosecution produced 35 witnesses and exhibited a number of documents to prove Alim's involvement in crimes like genocide, murder, arson and looting.

On the other side, the defence produced three witnesses, including Alim's son, and several documents to prove their client's alibi.

On Monday, Sazzad defended his father, saying he was not involved in any war crimes. Prosecutor Rana Dasgupta completed his cross-examination yesterday in around two and a half hours.

Replying to a court query, Sazzad said his father had surrendered before a court on February 28, 1972 following the government proclamation under the Collaborators Act, 1972 and a case was filed against him under the same act on

March 9, 1972. Sazzad claimed his father was acquitted from the case for lack of evidence.

But according to a petition of the defence, a special tribunal ordered police to go for further investigation into the case and "in the meantime" the High Court on January 14, 1974 granted him bail and Alim was released on January 18. Sazzad said after the withdrawal of the first case, another case was filed against his father under the same act, but police gave the final report.

The petition also said in January 1974 Alim was arrested again through an emergency order under the Security Act and was released on August 6, 1975 following "an order of the then president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

Replying to a question from Rana Dasgupta,

Sazzad said he was not aware that his father was the president of Joypurhat Union Board before 1971 and the vice-chairman of Bogra District Council in 1971.

The witness said his father contested the 1970 election as a candidate of Convention Muslim League but conceded defeat.

Rana suggested that Alim had taken part in the provincial by-election in 1971 and was elected uncontested, but Sazzad rejected the claim.

Sazzad said his father had become a member of Ziaur Rahman's cabinet in 1978 when Shah Azizur Rahman was prime minister. In September 1971, Shah Aziz, a collaborator of the then Pakistan government, led the Pakistan delegation to the UN General Assembly on behalf of the murderous Yahya Khan junta.

have been killed by state officials during protests since July, and thousands arrested. All but two of the Brotherhood's most senior officials are now either in hiding or under arrest and its command structures are severely curbed.

In news emblematic of the group's predicament, the Brotherhood's spiritual leader, Mohamed Badie, has suffered a heart attack in prison, while Morsi himself -- prosecutors announced on Sunday -- will face charges for allegedly inciting

murder during his presidency. However, Brotherhood members argue the group has survived worse. "This is simply the latest crisis to add to the list," said Kotb al-Araby.

But if few doubt that an organisation that has been so deeply embedded in Egyptian society since 1928 can survive, a more pertinent question is whether it is capable of adapting and responding to what many members see as a failed experiment in power.

S African gold miners to strike over pay

AFP, Johannesburg

Tens of thousands of gold miners are set to go on strike yesterday after wage talks broke down, threatening to cost millions of dollars in lost output in the troubled sector.

Powerful labour group the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) -- which represents the bulk of 120,000 workers affected -- called for stoppages following its members' rejection of a 6.5 percent wage hike last week.

NUM spokesman Lesiba Seshoka said early yesterday that the strike would kick off on the 6:00 pm (1600 GMT) shift. "We will go until Christmas," he told AFP.

The gold sector stands to lose 761 kilogrammes in production each day, worth around \$34 million, gold industry spokeswoman Charmane Russell told AFP.

Give us security

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Mahathero pleaded.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina remained standing beside him as the chief of Ramu Central Sima Vihar described how Islamist fanatics destroyed the centuries-old communal harmony in the region, vandalising and torching Buddhist temples and houses in Ramu and Ukhia of Cox's Bazar on September 29 and 30 last year, following a fake Facebook post that demeaned the Quran.

"We had never thought that such unimaginable, mindless destruction might be carried out here. This violent incident was a severe blow to a community, a religious belief, communal harmony and mutual trust," said Satyapriyo, who has preached peace in different countries.

The former president of Bangladesh Sangharaj Bhikkhu Mahasabha, the



Pandit Satyapriyo

highest body of Buddhist leaders, has represented Bangladesh in many countries and received a prestigious award from Myanmar government in 2003 for his knowledge of the Tripitak.

"During the September 29 mayhem, my new car, which I had received during my 82nd birth anniversary, was also burnt down. I got a new car thanks to your kindness," he said as silence fell on Sima Vihar auditorium, with the religious leader narrating how the 350-year-old monastery was razed to the ground.

The locals, who are still haunted by the horrors of the mayhem, have expressed their gratitude to the prime minister and the administration for the rehabilitation of the victims and reconstruction of the temples.

The Buddhists leaders urged for the PM's intervention for proper and neutral investigation of the cases filed in connection with the attack and exemplary punishment of the perpetrators.

Thanking the PM for the victims' rehabilitation and renovation as also rebuilding of the temples, Satyapriyo appealed for raising the manpower of the district police and said: "It will allay the feelings of insecurity and lack of trust."

The Buddhist community also requested the PM to set up a permanent administrative cell on the security of Buddhist monasteries and the locality.

Egypt bans four Islamist TVs

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Misr comes two days after Egyptian authorities expelled three foreign journalists working as freelancers for the Doha-based network's English-language channel.

Egypt's authorities have accused Al-Jazeera Mubasher Misr of bias in its reporting of the coup that ousted Morsi.

In another blow to the Islamists, an Egyptian judicial panel has recommended the legal dissolution of Muslim Brotherhood.

On Monday a panel of Egyptian judges recom-

mended the Brotherhood's dissolution as a legally registered non-governmental organisation. It was a non-binding decision but one that -- with the new prime minister, Hazem el-Beblawi, already considering a possible ban on the group -- will further hinder the organisation's fight to remain anything more than a clandestine organisation.

And a military court yesterday sentenced 11 of Brotherhood members to life in prison for violence targeting the army in the port city

of Suez last month.

In the first such sentencing since the July 3 ouster of former president Mohamed Morsi, the military court also sentenced 45 Brotherhood members to five years in jail while acquitting eight others.

Muslim Brotherhood is in its worst crisis since a similar attempt to suppress it in the 1950s, with the turmoil even destabilising the Brotherhood's affiliate organisations in other countries across the Middle East. Hundreds of its members

have been killed by state officials during protests since July, and thousands arrested. All but two of the Brotherhood's most senior officials are now either in hiding or under arrest and its command structures are severely curbed.

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to get to Kolabagan, which had to pass through a bridge at Road 8, most rickshaw pullers refused to go back into the muddle.

Similarly, many guardians preferred to walk their children home, shouldering their heavy school satchels themselves.

Nafisa, a tenth grader, lives 20 minutes walking distance from her school. Yet she has to start at 7:10am to reach school by 8:00am.

"I don't like walking, my bag is too heavy to carry with all these books," she said.

Tasneem, a school teacher, claimed traffic sergeants do not always guard the intersections.

Gazi Rabiul Islam, assistant commissioner (Traffic) of Dhankhundi, said it is not possible to guard all the intersections all the time because of inadequate manpower.

"At present we have around 25 sergeants and 90 constables available.

Half of them are borrowed from other zones that have lighter traffic pressure. This means that if an emergency occurs in those places, the sergeants cannot leave their regular duty and take up this added responsibility," he said.

There are around 20 points within the area with large traffic in the morning, and around the afternoon. Managing this requires around 40 sergeants and 150 constables, added Rabiul.

Madness in the morning