

Army starts patrolling today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In order to maintain law and order, the army will start election duties for five days from today in 97 upazilas of the country, which are going to poll Wednesday.

A platoon comprising 33 members will patrol each upazila. Besides, additional army men and other regular law enforcers will be deployed in the upazilas susceptible to violence, said EC officials.

In the first phase, election will be held to 98 upazilas, including one on February 24.

"We want the army to intensify their patrol at every locality of the upazilas with the aim to make their presence visible to voters," an election commissioner told The Daily Star.

The army men will not discharge duties inside polling centres, he added.

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MILKY MURDER CASE

SC stays HC bail to Lopa

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed for four weeks a High Court order that granted bail to Fahima Islam Lopa, an accused in the Juba League leader Riazul Haque Khan Milky murder case.

On February 9, the HC granted ad-interim bail for six months to Lopa, wife of Juba League leader Maruf Reza Sagar, a close aide of Milky.

Chamber judge of the SC Justice Hasan Foez Siddique yesterday stayed the HC order after hearing a petition moved by Attorney General Mahbub Alam.

Milky was shot dead in front of a shopping mall in the capital's Gulshan on July 30 last year.

Milky's brother Rashidul Haque filed the murder case with Gulshan police the same day.

On August 3, law enforcers arrested Lopa in connection with the murder.

Road crashes kill five

CITY DESK

Five people were killed and 37 others injured in road accidents in the country yesterday.

Our Netrakona correspondent reports, two unidentified persons were killed and 20 others injured when a bus carrying them fell into a ditch beside Netrakona-Kalmakanda road at Gumai in Kalmakanda upazila yesterday.

The injured were admitted to a local health complex.

Our Brahmanbaria correspondent adds, a person was killed and 15 others were injured when a bus of Ena Paribahan collided head-on with a truck on Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Baishamura village yesterday.

The deceased was the bus driver, Khairul Bepari, 40, of Madaripur district.

Meanwhile on Comilla-Sylhet highway, Md Parvez, 24, of Brahmanbaria, died when the car he was driving

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Students of Jagannath University burn tyres to block the Rayersaheb Bazar intersection in the capital yesterday, demanding recovery of 10 of their dormitories from illegal occupation. Of the 10, Tibet Hall is allegedly occupied by Awami League leader and independent lawmaker Haji Mohammad Selim. The demonstration caused partial disruption to the traffic flow. The students launched the movement on Wednesday.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

E-marketing may give farmers edge over middlemen

Roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Farmers can gain substantial negotiating power over middlemen if they use an internet-based e-market to directly contact consumers, said speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

Farmers in rural areas sometimes sell their produce at cheaper price because they do not know that their products become two to three times costlier once they reach the city, they added.

The discussion was organised by the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) at the CPB office in the capital.

Prof MM Akash of Dhaka University said farmers in Andhra Pradesh have successfully reduced middlemen's control over price by directly contacting buyers in the city through e-mails and social networking websites.

The union information service centres set up by the government can be used for the purpose with little effort and expense, he added.

Mujahidul Islam Selim, president of CPB, said farmers' organisations with proper leadership alone can ensure that the farmers get reasonable prices for their harvest.

IMPLEMENTATION OF BUS RAPID TRANSIT IN CAPITAL

No coordination with flyover projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The biggest hurdle for the 22-kilometre Uttara-Keraniganj stretch of the proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is coordination with two flyovers, the under-construction Shantinagar-Satratra one and a proposed one connecting Shantinagar with the Dhaka-Mawa highway, said project officials yesterday.

Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA) Transport Adviser Frits Olyslager said it would be difficult to accommodate two stations near Hatirjheel and Moghbazar due to the under-construction flyover.

He pointed out an alternative route, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, from Mohakhali but Secretary to the roads division MAN Siddique ruled it out saying it might create another conflict with the proposed metro rail along the avenue.

The officials were addressing a workshop DTCA organised in the capital's Chameri House to present a report on the aforementioned stretch's design.

Local Government Engineering Division (LGED) embarked on the flyover's construction although they were alerted time and again to maintain the coordination, said MAN Siddique.

As per proposed plans, BRT comprises a 42-kilometre route stretching from Gazipur to Keraniganj/the Jheelmil residential scheme, occupying two central lanes of existing roads.

The Uttara-Keraniganj route goes along Mohakhali, Teigaon, Moghbazar and Kakrail and then branches into two before converging at Babubazar.

One branch goes through Kakrail, Abdul Ghani Road, Golapshah Mazar and North South Road and the other through Rajarbagh, the DIT extension road, Bangabhaban, Kaptanbazar and Balda Highway.

MAN Siddique said the government intended to complete construction of the Uttara-Keraniganj section by 2018 and the Gazipur-Uttara section by 2016.

"We will sit with Local Government

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Govt must keep cops, judiciary neutral

Says Dr Kamal; recalls contributions of Gen Osmani on his 30th death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said the state must ensure neutrality in the police force and judiciary to establish the rule of law.

"In a multi-party democracy, the application of laws must be unbiased, and the judiciary must be 100 percent neutral. The state also ensures impartiality in all constitutional institutions," he told a discussion on the 30th death anniversary of Gen MAG Osmani at the capital's Osmani Memorial Hall.

Recalling the outstanding leadership of Osmani, commander-in-chief of the Liberation Forces in 1971, Dr Kamal said the state could not allow any vested quarter to politicise its military and police forces.

He also said the achievements of the Liberation War heroes could not be destroyed by politicisation of different sectors and recalled the aim of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and General Osmani for building a non-communal Bangladesh.

Speaking as chief guest, Social Welfare Minister Syed Mohsin Ali said the state must take initiatives to inform the nation of Osmani's contributions.

Some other discussants demanded that the death

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(Sitting from left) Rabeya Khatun, Shahnewaz Dilruba Khan, Begum Suraiya, Selina Aktar Shilpi and Sufia Begum Rozi with awards they received in recognition of their feats in fighting adversities and contributing to society. The award was presented by the Department of Women Affairs in association with Dhaka Deputy Commissioner's Office at the capital's Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, marking International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and Begum Rokeya Dibash 2013. Standing from left are the programme's moderator Munira Yusuf Memi, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroz Chumki, and Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Zillar Rahman.

PHOTO: STAR

Five Dhaka division women awarded for their feats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was not a good start for newly-wed Rabeya Khatun. Her husband's income could not bring together enough for the two of them. Using indigenous methods, she started to hatch hens' eggs artificially. After a few decades, she became the owner of a big poultry farm.

When she was receiving an award in recognition of her feat yesterday, Rabeya said, "My children are well-educated and gained standing in society. I am happy."

Rabeya was among five women honoured for their feats under five categories. She won the award for making financial achievement.

The Department of Women Affairs in association with Dhaka Deputy Commissioner's Office at the capital's Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy honoured the five, marking International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and Begum Rokeya Dibash 2013.

They were chosen from 85 women of Dhaka division.

Of the remaining four, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Gazipur District Administration Shahnewaz Dilruba Khan was awarded for success in education and job, Begum Suraiya for successful mothering, Selina Aktar Shilpi for pressing on braving repression, and Sufia Begum Rozi for contribution to society.

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ABM Mohiuddin gets permanent bail in graft case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chittagong court yesterday granted permanent bail to Awami League Chittagong city unit President ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury in a case filed for concealing wealth and amassing wealth not supported by his known sources of income.

Chittagong Divisional Special Judge SM Ataur Rahman passed the order after Mohiuddin's lawyer prayed for his bail.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case in December 2007 accusing Mohiuddin of concealing wealth worth around Tk 2.37 crore and amassing wealth worth Tk 1.45 crore beyond his known income sources.

ACC Public Prosecutor Mahmudul Huq Mahmud

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Drizzle fails to dampen increase in sales

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The continuous drizzle throughout yesterday could not dampen the rise in book sales starting February 14 in Amar Ekushey Granthamela 2014, stated salespersons in most stalls on both the Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Uddyan premises in the capital.

Expressing satisfaction, Shawkat Hossain Litu, owner of Parijat Prakashani, told The Daily Star, "Sales are good today despite the bad weather."

Though their numbers were low, most of the visitors yesterday were found to be carrying packets of books.

The observation also came up in Bangla Academy Director General Dr Shamsuzzaman Khan's half-monthly review of the fair at a press briefing in the academy yesterday.

"The other publishers will not give you their sales figures for business reason, but we

can say that even the academy, this year, is daily making on an average double the sales compared to what was last year," he said.

He expressed hope that the academy's sales will reach Tk 1 crore by the end of the fair.

Comparing the fair to the one in Kolkata, he said the former retained its cultural touch because of Bangladeshis' love for language and literature.

"However, their fair is much more professional... Their publishers have their own editor, reviewers, proofreaders and standard print quality that many of our publishers lack."

Regarding problems visitors and publishers encountered for the shifting of a portion of the fair to Suhrawardy Uddyan, he said, "We took the decision on January 22, so had little time for full preparation."

Yesterday, 59 books arrived and publication ceremonies of 14 were held.

26 houses gutted in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Twenty-six houses were gutted in separate fire incidents in Chittagong city yesterday.

Seventeen tin-shed houses were gutted by a fire that originated from an electric short circuit at one of the houses around 4:30am at Kaborasthan Colony in Bayezid area, said fire service officials. They estimated the damage at worth Tk 5 lakh. Fire fighters doused the fire around 6:30am.

Meanwhile, another fire originating from a gas stove gutted nine houses at Hindu Para in Bandar area causing damage worth Tk 5 lakh, said the officials. Fire fighters extinguished the blaze around 11:55am.

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