

CTG LANDSLIDE-PRONE SLUMS

40 shanties removed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Chittagong district administration yesterday began drives to permanently evict the illegal slum dwellings on the risky hill slopes in Lalkhan Bazar area in a bid to prevent casualties from landslides caused by heavy rainfall.

The evicted people of the slums would be shifted to six schools located in Lalkhan Bazar, Motijharna and Tiger Pass areas, said district administration. However, several evicted families said they had not been informed as to where they would be shifted.

A team of the district administration, led by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) SM Abdul Kader, conducted the drive at Tankir Pahar and Motijharna in Lalkhan Bazar area and demolished 40 shanties built on hill slopes.

Local sources said Jafar, a staff of Chittagong Wasa, his brother Bashar, and one Nasir developed the slums there and rented them out to low-income people.

The drive started at 10:00am with

the help of law enforcers. The dwellers were seen to leave the slums with their household furniture and necessities.

Some local youths, however, started an altercation with the law enforcers and tried to obstruct the drive at around 12:30pm.

"They (district administration) have not issued any prior notice to evict our houses," said Md Osman, a mason who lived in a slum at Tankir Pahar. He also added that the authorities had locked their houses four days back and asked them to leave the slums and return after the incessant rains had stopped.

"But they are now smashing our homes. Where will we go with our children now?" said another slum dweller, Parvin Begum, a garment worker.

Contacted, SM Abdul Kader said they were permanently removing the houses from the hill slopes and the evicted people have no chance to return to these slums.

"The district administration is

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Residents pile up their belongings after authorities concerned evicted them from the valley of Tankir Pahar in Lalkhan Bazar of Chittagong yesterday. The valley is prone to mudslides.

PHOTO:
ANURUP KANTI DAS

BIMAN FLIGHT DISRUPTION

Passengers suffer 24-hr delay in S'pore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The grounding of two Biman aircraft has led to schedule disruption in the last few days with passengers taking the brunt.

An Airbus A310 has been grounded since May 10 and a Boeing 737-800 since Monday.

A flight to Dhaka from Singapore suffered a 24-hour delay because of this and Biman had to send one of its long-haul Boeing 777-200ERs to bring the stranded passengers Tuesday night, Biman sources said.

A top Biman official wishing anonymity claimed that most of the passengers were told beforehand about the delay and that "only 20 passengers went to the airport in Singapore to hear about the delay".

Biman officials said there would not have been the schedule

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Bosses bigger than parties

FROM PAGE 1

officer of the party and she has powers to control, supervise and coordinate the party's overall activities.

For this purpose, she is empowered to exercise her authority over the national council, national executive and standing committee, and subject committees, and committees formed on the basis of her nominations. She can also control, supervise and coordinate the activities of those committees.

If she deems necessary, she can take punitive action against any members of those committees. And if she thinks, she can dissolve those committees and replace them with her own.

As chief of the national executive committee, she also enjoys the authority to determine the powers and functions of the members of this committee.

The BNP charter empowers her to preside over the meetings of the national council, national executive committee and national standing committee. If she wishes, she may

authorise anybody to preside over those meetings.

She enjoys the authority to fill any vacancy in the national executive committee and national standing committee.

The national council is the largest forum of the BNP. It consists of the party's several thousands of grassroots level leaders countrywide and all central leaders and MPs. Its functions are to elect the party chief and all other office bearers of the party's national executive and standing committees. The national council is also empowered to amend the party charter.

The national executive committee consisting of more than 300 members led by Khaleda Zia enjoys fewer powers than those Khaleda personally enjoys. It controls, supervises and coordinates the activities of the party's front organisations and follows the directives of the national standing committee.

The national standing committee, the highest policy making body, is

comprised of 19 members, including the party chief.

Khaleda Zia also enjoys sweeping authority over the BNP's parliamentary party. The parliamentary party must consult her to elect its leader, deputy leader, chief whip and whips. If any party MP ignores the party chief's any decision on parliamentary matters, s/he will lose the party's membership.

Enjoying such powers, Khaleda Zia has been leading the BNP for three decades since her election to the party chairperson's position on May 10, 1984. She has been prime minister thrice.

The AL charter does not empower Hasina, as party chief, to control, supervise and coordinate the overall activities of the organisation. She cannot dissolve any committees of the party.

As party president, she is empowered to preside over all meetings of the party's national council, national committee, central working committee and the presidium.

Hasina enjoys the power to direct, advise and control the AL parliamentary party or its members. But she needs to consult with the presidium to exercise this power.

If any MP ignores her directive and violates the AL constitution, she may place the issue before the AL central working committee in consultation with the presidium to take necessary action to this effect.

She has the authority to nominate 26 members to the 73-members AL central working committee. But again, she needs to consult with the presidium to exercise this power.

Hasina enjoys the power to issue rulings explaining any provision of the party constitution.

She needs to consult with the presidium to nominate members of the committees on various subjects.

The AL chief has the power to form a 41-member advisory council of the party. She needs to consult with the advisory council on national and international issues.

She has, however, unilateral

authority to form departmental sub-committees.

If any party office bearer fails to perform his/her duties, as the chief Hasina can take action against him/her. But she needs to have her action approved by the AL central working committee meeting.

The AL council consists of several thousand grassroots level and central leaders empowered to elect the party chief, general secretary, 13 presidium members and other office bearers on the central working committee.

The party's 166-member national committee led by Hasina is empowered to coordinate between the AL central working committee and the national council. It has powers to consider appeals against the central committee's actions against any party member. Its decision will be final.

With such powers, Hasina has been leading the AL for more than three decades since her election as party chief in 1981. She is in her third term as prime minister.

Power price goes higher, loss too

FROM PAGE 1

2011-12 and 2013-14 by Tk 4,000 crore and Tk 5,100 crore respectively.

All the while, the government kept on increasing bulk tariff to minimise this loss. Now the bulk tariff stands at Tk 4.7 per unit, which is significant compared to the tariff of 2009 but still not enough to cover the costs.

"The volume of power we sell has also increased over the years, adding up to the loss," says a PDB official. Back in 2009, the PDB sold 2,700 crore units of power and now it sells 3,700 crore units, the official adds.

However, the power cost has declined to below Tk 6 a unit in the last one year, as some gas-based large power plants have started operation and around 500 MW power is being imported from India.

"The government may not hike power tariff this year and we project that the loss this fiscal year will stand at Tk 4,500 crore," the official notes.

If the government pushed up the bulk tariff to Tk 5.2 per unit as per the PDB's next plan, the loss would stand at Tk 2,000 crore.

The government expected that the rise of power generation cost would begin to drop from 2014-15 when some large coal-based power plants would come into operation and it would not need any fuel-based plants to operate. Coal-fired power is costlier than gas-based power but is way cheaper than oil-based one.

The government also believes that by 2017, it would be able to add around 8,000 MW new power, which is more than what the country produces today.

PDB SEEING RED

2009-10: Loss Tk 1,100cr by selling 2,700cr unit power

- PDB bought power from plants for Tk 2.75 per unit
- PDB sold power to bulk buyers (Desco etc) for Tk 2.36 per unit

2010-11: Loss Tk 4,500cr by selling 3,000cr unit power

- PDB bought power for Tk 4.15 per unit
- PDB sold power for Tk 2.67 per unit

2011-12: Loss Tk 4,000cr by selling 3,500cr unit power

- PDB bought power for Tk 4.86 per unit
- PDB sold power for Tk 3.74 per unit

2012-13: Loss Tk 5,100cr by selling 3,700cr unit power

- PDB bought power for Tk 6.12 per unit
- PDB sold power for Tk 4.70 per unit

2013-14: Projected loss Tk 4,500cr

- PDB buying power for lower than Tk 6 per unit

But former PDB chairman Alamgir Kabir noted that implementation of many large plants, which would be able to save the day, was being affected by various factors that must be addressed immediately.

He believes coal power projects

like the 1,320 MW Rampal plant or two 600 MW Orion power plants are unlikely to begin commercial operations before late 2018.

"Once the government signs a contract with a company for a project, it should look at that project as a partner and should not leave the contractor on its own. This will help the government understand the problems with the implementation," Kabir observed.

He added that all private power investors were facing problems getting low interest international finance. The government may not give all of these investors "Sovereign Guarantee", but it can still help them in many other ways to get these international finances.

He said the government might also open an Insurance Fund of \$3-4 billion from its foreign exchange reserve that would provide the international financiers insurance for giving loans to these power projects. The government also needs to redesign its other financial arms like IDCOL with the same philosophy.

Another aspect that needs urgent government attention is that every project implementation in recent years has faced resistance from the locality to get as much money as possible from the contractors for land or sub-contracts. This can stall a project for months.

Experts observe that the government has created too many companies in the power sector and many of these are not being run by efficient people. The government should merge some of them and put in efficient people who understand the power business as the sector was becoming massive.

Osmans vs N'ganj people

FROM PAGE 1

However, with the AL's blessings, Shamim was elected MP unopposed from a Narayanganj constituency in the controversial January 5 polls.

But his close link to Noor Hossain, the prime suspect of Narayanganj's gruesome seven-murder incident, brought him in the limelight and the criminalisation in politics of the city has been a crucial issue in the run up to the by-polls.

His brother Selim Osman nominated by Jatiya Party is facing huge challenge to his bid to get elected from independent contender SM Akram, a former AL lawmaker with a clean image.

Politics centring the by-polls has taken an interesting shape and is likely to determine the outcome of the battle.

Selim's late brother Nasim too contested the January 5 polls with JP ticket and was elected unopposed. Though his party has no stronghold there, Nasim came out victorious in 2008 parliamentary election as a JP candidate with AL's support.

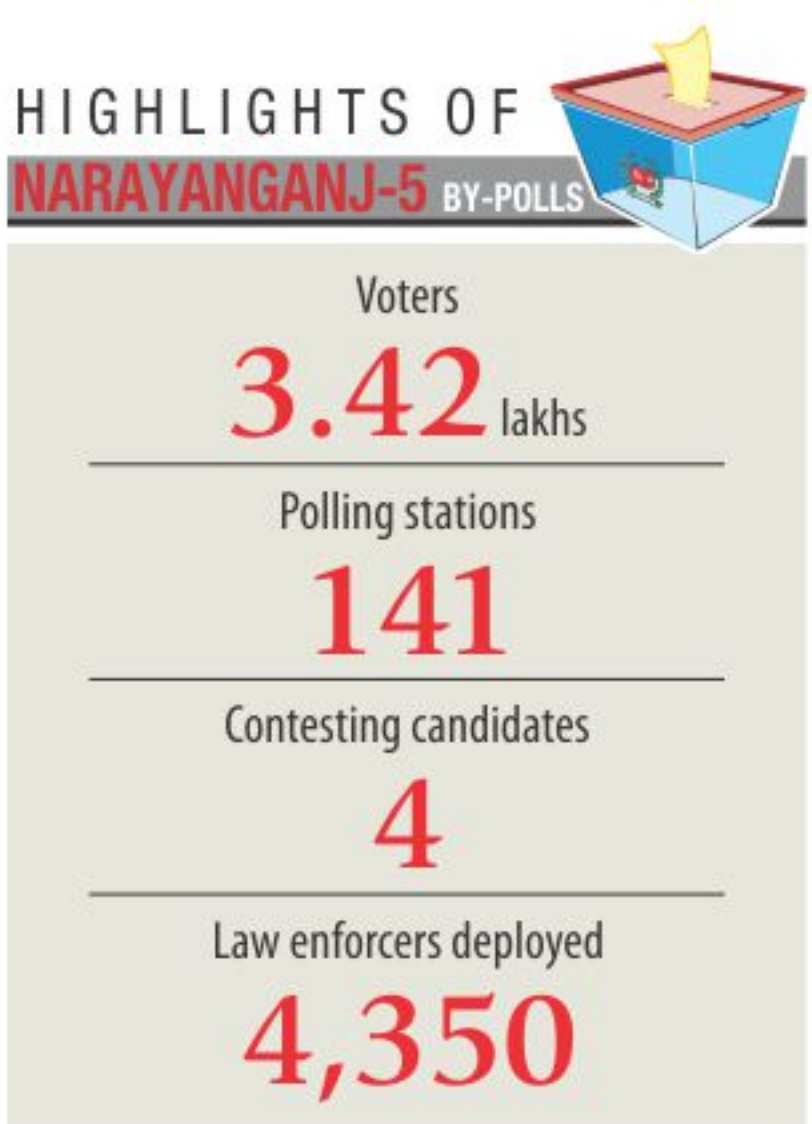
Like the previous two parliamentary polls, the AL did not field any candidate this time as well in support of Selim.

This, however, does not mean that all AL leaders, activists and supporters will vote for Selim. The AL in Narayanganj faces a split between the supporters of Osman family and those against them. Shamim Osman, along with his men, is working relentlessly to ensure his brother's win.

In the secrecy of polling booths, the anti-Osman people, however, may opt for SM Akram, who resigned from the ruling party protesting the AL's support to Shamim Osman instead of Ivy in the 2011 city mayoral polls.

It is almost certain that those loyal to city mayor Ivy, also an AL leader who waged a war on criminal activities of the Osmans, wish Akram a win in this battle.

Besides, local BNP leaders have already announced that they would work to ensure defeat of Osman family in the by-polls. So, the BNP's present stance is supposed to appear as a blessing for Akram to overcome the hurdle. A few local BNP leaders, however, are secretly



working for the Osman family, according to sources.

Akram is likely to draw votes of those who are associated with different cultural and civil society organisations and have been vocal against criminal activities in Narayanganj for a long time and blaming the Osman family for most of these.

The outcomes of the battle will also drag Prime Minister Shiekh Hasina in the discussion as she has recently promised to stay beside the Osman family.

Given all these aspects, the by-election has taken the centre stage in the current political situation. The high voltage polls also triggered fear of violence and rigging.

It also appears to be a crucial issue for the Election Commission to hold the polls in a free and peaceful manner. It would be interesting to watch the EC role in Narayanganj today particularly after the apathy the commission displayed to extensive rigging and violence in the upazila polls earlier this year.

On EC's directives, the local administration has beefed up security to maintain peaceful atmosphere during polling.

"But there is still an amount of uncertainty whether the administration and the law enforcement agencies will play effective role in ensuring free and fair election," an EC official working for the by-polls told The Daily Star yesterday.

Medical report

FROM PAGE 16

Inspector General of Prisons, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"But we didn't give the report [on Nizami's health] today [Wednesday] as it would have been incomplete since he is still under observation at his prison cell in Dhaka Central Jail," he said.

"We hope to submit the complete health report tomorrow [Thursday] morning to the International Crimes Tribunal," he added.

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 on Tuesday postponed the verdict "due to the illness" of the 71-year-old Nizami as the three member court found it "irrational to deliver judgment in the absence of accused".

Nizami, a former minister in the BNP-led four-party government, faces 16 charges, including of genocide, committed during the Liberation War in 1971.

When asked why Nizam had not been sent to any public or even jail hospital, Iftekhar said, "He [Nizami] had complained of physical discomfort on Monday night, which was later diagnosed as a rise in blood pressure."

"But there was no chest pain. So the doctors did not think it necessary to shift him to a hospital," he said, adding that a jail doctor treating Nizami at his prison cell.

A source in the jail said Nizami started feeling nervous around midnight early Tuesday. When two jail doctors came around 3:00am and checked him, they found his blood pressure high.

There was a discussion on shifting him to a hospital but finally it was not done, the source claimed.

Meanwhile, AKM Nasiruddin Mahmud, registrar and spokesperson of the tribunal, said once received, the report would be submitted to the tribunal judges.

"On the basis of the report, the tribunal will determine the next step," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The tribunal on Monday fixed Tuesday for delivering the verdict in Nizami's case. But the court for the third time kept the verdict waiting for an indefinite period of time due to Nizami's "sickness", prolonging justice seekers' decades-long wait.

6 Ctg cops sued for 'murder'

FROM PAGE 16

Saimul Chowdhury, lawyer of the plaintiff.

The accused include Panchlaish Police Station's Sub-inspector Amir Hossain and constables Mizanur Rahman, Moslem, Khokon Mia and Akbar and Bakalia Police Station's Assistant Sub-inspector Enayet Hossain.

The court also ordered deputy

commissioner of Detective Branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police to investigate the matter and submit a report in this regard by July 23, said Iftekhar.

Police nabbed Rokon, 45, a real estate businessman, from his residence in the city's Bakalia around 1:20am on June 19 in connection with a rape case filed with Panchlaish Police Station.

On the way to the police station, Rokon fell ill and police rushed him to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where on-duty doctors declared him dead, police sources said.

Rokon's family alleged that he was beaten to death in police custody. However, police denied the allegations and claimed Rokon died of "complications".