

BRAHMANBARIA Youth shot dead during UP polls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A youth was shot dead as two groups of people clashed during a union parishad by-election in the district's Bijoynagar upazila yesterday.

The dead, Babul Mia, 32, was son of Abdul Hakim of Sathirpara village.

Abdur Rob, officer-in-charge of Bijoynagar Police Station, said supporters of Hamidur Rahman Hamdu, who won the election to Champaknagar union parishad, and his rival candidate Jahangir Hossain Shah Alam were locked in an altercation over casting fake votes at Petuajuri Government Primary School polling station around 4:00pm.

At one stage, the two groups attacked each other with locally made weapons and traded fire. Babul, a supporter of Hamidur, was hit by bullets.

Babul was taken to Akhaura Upazila Health Complex where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Twenty-two other people were also injured in the clash. Five of them sustained bullet injuries. The injured were admitted to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital and the upazila health complex.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control after firing rubber bullets.

The chairman post of Champaknagar union parishad recently fell vacant following the

Addict kills

FROM PAGE 16

father Alauddin, 70, wife Beauty Begum, 32, and daughter Amina Begum of Brahmangaon village.

Al Amin, officer-in-charge of Dakkhin Sunamganj Police Station, said Alfu, a drug addict, demanded some money from his father around 10:45pm on Saturday. But his father refused to give him the money.

"Failing to get the money, Alfu became angry and hacked his father indiscriminately, leaving him dead on the spot," he said.

Alfu also stabbed his wife Beauty and daughter Amina. Beauty was trying to save her father-in-law, Alauddin. The duo died on the spot, the police official added.

On information, police recovered the bodies and sent those to Sunamganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies.

Pro-BNP, Jamaat

FROM PAGE 5

At a meeting at SCBA yesterday, Khandker Mahbub Hossain, vice chairman of bar council, said with the latest amendment to the constitution, the judiciary would now be controlled by the present government.

Khandker Mahbub, also the president of SCBA and an adviser to the BNP chairperson, said, "Litigants will not get justice and will not have faith in the judiciary, if it is politically controlled."

Banning Jamaat

FROM PAGE 16

"The Jamaat is a bloody party ... I hate it," he said.

Asked about rumours that the government had an understanding with the Jamaat over the war crimes issue, the minister said, "It is rubbish ... totally rubbish ... That was deliberately created by the Jamaat, and the BNP is with them".

The issue had been discussed at a meeting of the Awami League central working committee on Saturday, said the minister.

Is it believable that the AL would have talks with the Jamaat, he asked.

On Jamaat's hartal to protest the Supreme Court verdict that sentenced Jamaat leader Delawar Hossain Sayeedee to imprisonment until death, Muhith said, "They do not believe in Bangladesh. This bloody party should not exist in the country. This is my personal opinion."

Asked whether the government is under any internal or external pressure over the one-sided January 5 national elections, Muhith said there is no pressure from outside except for the USA.

The US is putting pressure on the government over different issues that are "totally bogus", he said.

Dismissing the opposition's threat of a tougher anti-government movement in the coming days, Muhith said the AL-led government would complete its five-year term.

Asked whether he would continue as minister, Muhith said, "It will depend on the condition of my health. I am already 81. If there is no health problem, I will serve as minister for full term."

Taxpayers get no service

FROM PAGE 1

the tags and the new number plates.

More than four lakh vehicles had these installed and the government took nearly Tk 130 crore from vehicle owners since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina launched the project on October 31, 2012.

"It was a total waste of my money," said Zillur.

Launched rather whimsically and portrayed as "yet another step towards Digital Bangladesh", the project did not help the authorities check vehicle theft or use of vehicles in criminal activities.

Before and during the launch, it was widely hyped that the new number plates would stop people from changing plates. It was also said the number plates would be clearly visible from 40 feet away, be it day or night, helping identification of a vehicle. Even some ministers and officials wrongly described the number plates as "digital".

It was also said that crimes using vehicles would be checked. But vehicles, especially cars and microbuses, are being used at will for snatching, kidnapping and extortion in the capital and elsewhere.

For transport owners, the new number plates carry no meaning at all, but they were very hopeful that the RFID tags would be able to track vehicular movement and help recover stolen vehicles. But it turned out the tags could easily be peeled off.

BRTA officials said a move to introduce new number plates was first made in 2004. A fresh move incorporating the option of RFID tags was made when Syed Abul Hossain was communications minister in 2009. Some officials and experts had then suggested introducing GPS, which has a proven mechanism to track vehicles constantly all over the country.

But the ministry opted for the less effective, time-consuming and costly RFID system, saying GPS would be pricier.

Without even floating a tender, the government gave Bangladesh Army the job to import plates and the tags. The army went for a deal with an American company that supplies the number plates and the tags manufactured in Poland.

It set up a small workshop at Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory in Gazipur where the number plates and RFID tags are prepared.

People visiting BRTA offices across the country for fitness certificates or tax tokens are forced to pay for the new number plates and RFID tags.

The number of registered vehicles in the country is about 21.22 lakh,

whereas there are only 12 tag reading devices in the capital and there's none elsewhere.

These devices can collect information when the vehicles are within 11 metres. The information is then transmitted to a central monitoring system at the BRTA Elenbari office.

The 12 tag readers hardly play any role in tracking and recovering lost or stolen vehicles or vehicles used in crimes.

The devices are useless during power cuts and the monitoring is only done during office hours.

The victims usually seek help from the police, who then contact the designated BRTA official to know about the movement of a vehicle, but the police get no help.

Assistant Commissioner Md Raihanul Islam who works with the Anti-Vehicle Theft Team of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said they were not getting any help of the BRTA scheme in investigation relating to vehicles. "It would be very helpful if the scheme had global positioning system [GPS]."

BRTA Deputy Director Sitangsu Shekhor Biswas, who works with the scheme, however, is hopeful. "We will be able to track most vehicles once the entire capital and major parts of the country are brought under the scheme."

He added that RFID tags now help limited tracking and assess traffic volume at 12 points. The tags will also be used to collect toll later on.

Transport planner and expert Prof Shamsul Hoque saw some prospect of the system working if major cities, major roads and highways were covered in future.

He, however, said there were cheaper options available and being used worldwide for successful tracking of vehicles, goods and assets.

Meanwhile, the BRTA is taking Tk 555 from vehicle owners for issuing digital blue books for their vehicles, saying it would prevent duplication of the blue books and help people pay for tax and fitness from across the country.

So far, more than 10 lakh owners were forced to pay the money but only a few hundred got the new blue book due to complexities in data enrolment, BRTA officials said.

Data of many owners were registered wrongly, forcing them to pay again. Worst of all, many owners were charged twice due to faulty data entry system.

In fact, most people who paid for the new book are least bothered about it, as it requires them to visit the BRTA offices for photographs and fingerprints.

Local media reports have said a visit to Japan by Putin planned for this autumn was now uncertain following Tokyo's sanctions on Moscow over the crisis in Ukraine.

But public broadcaster NHK

reported that both leaders "expressed positive attitude towards a summit meeting" in Sunday's talks.

In response to Putin who said he hoped for a summit, Abe replied he was hoping to hold such a meeting on the sidelines of the APEC meeting in Beijing in November, NHK said.

Abe also explained Japan's position on Ukraine and said his country stresses the importance of the rule of law, it added.

The foreign ministry said the leaders "discussed the bilateral relationship between Japan and Russia, and the situation in Ukraine" in the telephone conversation proposed by the Russian side.

"Both leaders agreed to continue dialogue" on the issues, it said in a statement, adding Putin congratulated Abe on his birthday on Sunday.

Abe had actively sought to forge closer diplomatic and economic ties with Russia before it took control of the southern Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea in March.

He would dearly love to solve a longstanding dispute over a group of islands seized by Soviet troops in the closing days of World War II, and still claimed by Japan.

A fragile European-brokered ceasefire sealed on September 5 has overall dramatically scaled back the fighting across industrial eastern Ukraine.

But sometimes deadly shelling and gunfire is reported almost daily around the flashpoint city of Donetsk.

Face-to-face talks aimed at finding a way to end the war began on Friday in the Belarusian capital Minsk, trying to build on the ragged ceasefire.

The goal here is to resolve the situation and for Russia to take a step to work this out on a diplomatic basis so that Ukraine can get back to the business of healing itself and growing its economy."

Opposition to Russian President Vladimir Putin's attendance at the summit in Brisbane intensified after a Malaysia Airlines plane was shot down over eastern Ukraine in July, killing all 298 onboard, including 38 Australian citizens and residents.

"Lets hope that (the talks) will lead to a peace agreement and the situation where the Ukraine as a country is fully sovereign and its borders are respected," Katainen said.

"Nobody knows how fast parties can find each other for the solution, but of course everybody hopes as soon as possible and then the normal international cooperation... can start again."

US hopes Russia crisis ends before G20 meet

AFP, Cairns

in the northern city of Cairns, said Saturday the consensus was that Russia should attend to help address the geopolitical tensions.

Lew said the US and Europe were prepared to keep working together on sanctions "as long as Russia continues to threaten Ukraine's sovereignty, to participate directly or indirectly in the military actions there".

US Treasury Secretary Jack Lew said following a two-day meeting of G20 finance chiefs "the goal between now and November is for this to be resolved so that these issues are on a path towards improvement."

"In the event that there's a meeting and the situation is not better, I think President Putin will hear directly what he is hearing through economic sanctions and other expressions now, which is that Russia's actions are unacceptable," Lew added.

The goal here is to resolve the situation and for Russia to take a step to work this out on a diplomatic basis so that Ukraine can get back to the business of healing itself and growing its economy."

Opposition to Russian President Vladimir Putin's attendance at the summit in Brisbane intensified after a Malaysia Airlines plane was shot down over eastern Ukraine in July, killing all 298 onboard, including 38 Australian citizens and residents.

Kiev and the West have accused separatists of downing it with a surface-to-air missile supplied by Russia -- a charge Moscow denies.

Australian Treasurer Joe Hockey, who chaired the G20 finance meeting

SpaceX cargo ship blasts off toward space station

AFP, Washington

SpaceX's unmanned Dragon cargo ship blasted off toward the International Space Station yesterday, carrying a load of supplies and science experiments for the astronauts living there.

The spacecraft launched aboard a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida at 1:52 am (0552 GMT).

"And Dragon is flying free, on its way to the International Space Station," NASA commentator George Diller said.

It is scheduled to arrive at the ISS early Tuesday. The space station's robotic arm is to reach out and grapple the spacecraft at 7:04 am (1104 GMT), Diller said.

The journey to the ISS is the fifth for SpaceX, and the fourth in a series of SpaceX's contracted supply missions with NASA.

Meanwhile, the BRTA is taking Tk 555 from vehicle owners for issuing digital blue books for their vehicles, saying it would prevent duplication of the blue books and help people pay for tax and fitness from across the country.

So far, more than 10 lakh owners were forced to pay the money but only a few hundred got the new blue book due to complexities in data enrolment, BRTA officials said.

Data of many owners were registered wrongly, forcing them to pay again. Worst of all, many owners were charged twice due to faulty data entry system.

In fact, most people who paid for the new book are least bothered about it, as it requires them to visit the BRTA offices for photographs and fingerprints.

Local media reports have said a visit to Japan by Putin planned for this autumn was now uncertain following Tokyo's sanctions on Moscow over the crisis in Ukraine.

But public broadcaster NHK reported that both leaders "expressed positive attitude towards a summit meeting" in Sunday's talks.

In response to Putin who said he hoped for a summit, Abe replied he was hoping to hold such a meeting on the sidelines of the APEC meeting in Beijing in November, NHK said.

Abe also explained Japan's position on Ukraine and said his country stresses the importance of the rule of law, it added.

The foreign ministry said the leaders "discussed the bilateral relationship between Japan and Russia, and the situation in Ukraine" in the telephone conversation proposed by the Russian side.

"Both leaders agreed to continue dialogue" on the issues, it said in a statement, adding Putin congratulated Abe on his birthday on Sunday.

Abe had actively sought to forge closer diplomatic and economic ties with Russia before it took control of the southern Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea in March.

He would dearly love to solve a longstanding dispute over a group of islands seized by Soviet troops in the closing days of World War II, and still claimed by Japan.

A fragile European-brokered ceasefire sealed on September 5 has overall dramatically scaled back the fighting across industrial eastern Ukraine.

But sometimes deadly shelling and gunfire is reported almost daily around the flashpoint city of Donetsk.

Face-to-face talks aimed at finding a way to end the war began on Friday in the Belarusian capital Minsk, trying to build on the ragged ceasefire.

European Commission Vice-President for economic and monetary affairs Jyrki Katainen said he was hopeful the talks would be successful, but would not comment directly on whether EU nations wanted Putin in Brisbane.

"Lets hope that (the talks) will lead to a peace agreement and the situation where the Ukraine as a country is fully sovereign and its borders are respected," Katainen said.

"Nobody knows how fast parties can find each other for the solution, but of course everybody hopes as soon as possible and then the normal international cooperation... can start again."

"The weather situation would be the same in many places of the country today, said the duty forecasting officer of the BMD yesterday afternoon.

"It might rain heavily in some places."

Due to the heavy rains, landslide may occur in many places over the hilly regions of Chittagong and Sylhet divisions.

The met office advised all fishing boats and trawlers over the North Bay to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution till further notice.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra were advised to continue hoisting local cautionary signal three.

Yesterday it drizzled in the capital for the whole day but torrential rains occurred in Mymensingh and other places, the met office said.

Though the sky was clear in Chittagong yesterday noon, some lower areas of the port city were inundated after the heavy rains on Saturday night, it added.

Heavy rain forecast for the next 24 hours from 9:00am yesterday.

The weather situation would be the same in many places of the country today, said the duty forecasting officer of the BMD yesterday afternoon.

"It might rain heavily in some places."

Due to the heavy rains, landslide may occur in many places over the hilly regions of Chittagong and Sylhet divisions.