

Local polls

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system and practices at the grassroots level."

Elections to local government bodies are non-partisan according to the existing laws, but in reality they are held in a partisan manner, he said.

The minister mentioned that if parliament doesn't go into session before December, the President could promulgate an ordinance amending the laws. And the upcoming municipality polls would then be held in a partisan manner.

The EC is now making preparations to hold the municipality polls across the country in December.

Since assuming power in 2009, the ruling AL has been advocating partisan local body polls. On February 12 last year, the AL Central Working Committee, the party's highest decision-making body, unanimously agreed that all local body polls should be partisan.

If political parties are allowed to participate in local body elections, the elected representatives will implement their parties' political commit-

ments, LGRD ministry sources said quoting the proposal to be made before the cabinet.

This will encourage them to act more responsibly and to be more active in providing services. Besides, the parties would strictly monitor the activities of their representatives, they said.

The BNP, however, has opposed the government move, terming it a conspiracy.

At a press conference on Friday, BNP Spokesperson Asaduzzaman Ripon said the move to make local body polls partisan is a "blue print" of the government to divert public attention from the demand for holding national elections immediately.

A number of AL leaders believe if local body elections are made partisan, it will help the party minimise intra-party conflicts and reduce the number of rebel candidates during polls.

Since 2009, the AL couldn't achieve desired success in local body polls because of its rebel candidates. This was the case also in the upazila elections held between February and March last year, they added.

Bullet found

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the foreigner, he added.
Police had recovered three projectiles from the spot immediately after the killing.

Meanwhile, a Japanese team met Rahat Anwar, deputy commissioner of Rangpur, at his office yesterday noon.

During the meeting, Japanese security officer Kinzu and forensic physician Kursia Martia sought "overall cooperation" from the Rangpur district administration, the DC told reporters later.

"We assured them of full support," he added.

Sweet Ahmed, brother-in-law of Humayun Kabir Hira, who was detained from Shalgariya area in Pabna on Friday, was released yesterday noon.

Hira is a suspect in the case and has already been on police remand. Sweet is

a cousin of Sultana Khatun, Hira's wife. Talking to The Daily Star, Sultana has confirmed the release of Sweet.

Family members of Murad Hossain, Monnaf Ali, Zakariya Bala, Abdur Rashid, Abed Mian and Abdullah said the police were still interrogating the detainees without producing them before the court. Of the detainees, Monnaf and Murad were at Kaunia Police Station.

Abdus Samad, duty officer at the police station, said the men were kept in police custody for their "own security".

Asked about the detainees, Abdur Razzak, superintendent of police in Rangpur, said they all were "witnesses", and "Police were examining their statements".

The body of Hoshi was still at the mortuary of Rangpur Medical College, said sources there.

'Missing' MP

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allegation brought against him. Moksadul further said it was not decided when they would move the petition before the HC.

Contacted, Attorney General Mahbub Alam said his office would seriously oppose the bail petition.

The lawmaker from Gaibandha-1 stands accused of shooting 10-year-old Sourav Mia in Sundarganj upazila on October 2.

Sourav's father Saju Mia filed a case with Sundarganj Police Station the next day.

Liton and his family members went into hiding after the incident.

He surrendered his two firearms to the police through his men. Later, the licences of those firearms were cancelled.

Law enforcers have repeatedly been claiming they could not trace Liton.

The shooting incident caused a furore across the country. Different socio-political organisations brought out protest processions in Dhaka and Gaibandha in the last few days, demanding punishment to the lawmaker.

Yesterday, hundreds of people formed a human chain in Sundarganj, demanding immediate arrest of Liton, reports our Gaibandha correspondent.

They carried placards and chanted slogans against the lawmaker. They also termed him a lunatic.

Abdullah-Al-Mamun, mayor of Sundarganj municipality, said they had called off agitation after the prime minister assured them of taking steps against the MP, but Liton was yet to be arrested.

Faiza finds home

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"She has withstood a lot and survived. So, we named her Faiza which means victorious," said DMCH Director Brig Gen Mizanur Rahman.

The Chhotomoni Nibas authority was overwhelmed by the number of people pouring in to adopt the baby.

"We are telling them to go to a court first for adoption approval as we don't have the authority," said Deputy In-charge of the children's home Selina Akhter, who took over Faiza from the DMCH authority.

At the DMCH seminar hall, Faiza was formally handed over to Selina around 1:00pm.

At Chhotomoni Nibas, Faiza was doing well. She had her milk and giggled on a number of occasions before falling asleep, Selina told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

On September 15, locals found the newborn wrapped in a polythene bag at the end of a runway of the Old Airport in the capital.

Some children were playing there when they heard the crying of a baby. When they started looking around, they saw a stray dog dragging the bag with the child in it towards them.

A woman, named Tania Begum, then rushed the baby to the DMCH as she had suffered injuries in the nose, upper lips and fingers, possibly while being dragged to safety by the dog.

Despite media reports, nobody came to the hospital to claim the child. Tania said she would adopt Faiza if the law permitted her to.

Meanwhile, DMCH Director Mizanur said they would conduct reconstructive plastic surgeries on the baby when she is three months old.

Bribe-taking

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from service seekers, Mamoon said, adding that the ministry issued the order for his withdrawal yesterday morning.

"We are very serious about it, and will take very tough action against him if he is proved guilty in further investigation. We have zero tolerance for any corrupt practices," said the senior secretary.

Video clips available on the social media shows Shahidul counting notes at his office in Motijheel, bargaining with service seekers over the amount of bribe and putting the cash in his trouser pocket.

It was unclear when the video was shot. But commerce ministry sources said their top officials came to know about it before Eid-ul-Azha.

A committee led by the ministry's Joint Secretary Sadar Ali Biswas was formed on September 21, and it launched a probe into the matter

after the Eid vacation.

Asked about the video tapes, Shahidul on Thursday said this was all part of a conspiracy by some officials at his office and outsiders.

Shahidul joined the public service in 1985. Before being made controller at Dhaka office, he held important positions at the commerce ministry, the Tariff Commission, and the Export Promotion Bureau.

According to the rules, businesses have to obtain registration certificates from the CCI&E to import or export goods. The fees for imports and exports are fixed, and they vary depending on the volume of the goods.

A number of businesspeople alleged that they had to pay bribes for getting certificates even though they had submitted all required documents. And Shahidul led the group that took bribes from service seekers at Dhaka office of the CCI&E.



Plenty of hilsa were on sale at the Fish Landing Station on Port Road in Barisal yesterday after a 15-day ban on catching of hilsa ended. However, most of the fish were jatka (young hilsa), like the one in the photo, going for Tk 16,000 per 37.5kg.

PHOTO: ARIFUR RAHMAN

Mission Syria

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go to Syria, it said.

"Apart from recruiting mujahideens and sending them to Syria, the ultimate goal of Samiun was to carry out subversive activities in South Asia and destabilise the region in keeping with the vision of al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-Continent (AQIS)."

The accused had also plans to destroy the country's integrity and disrupt public safety, it read.

According to the charge sheet, Samiun fought in Syria for pro-al-Qaeda terrorist group "Nusra Brigade" from September to December in 2013. He was arrested by British police at the end of December that year for his involvement in militancy.

"He came out of jail on bond and went to Syria again through Turkey. Later, he came to Bangladesh from

Turkey on February 25 last year to recruit mujahideens for IS and Nusra Brigade."

Shuvo and Tanzil were arrested from the city's Segunbagicha on September 24 last year and Samiun after four days from Kamalapur Railway Station. A case was filed against them with Shahbagh Police Station under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

DB Inspector Aslam Ali Sheikh, who investigated the case, said in the charge sheet that all the allegations against the accused were primarily proved and they should be brought to trial.

Meanwhile, investigation into two other cases, filed with the Cantonment Police Station against five arrested suspects, primarily found that these accused too were planning to collect members for IS and go to Syria.

The accused -- Abdullah al Galib, Fida Muntasir Saker, Faiyaz Islam, Asif Pathan Rahat and Sabbir Hossain -- were conspiring to attack some key institutions and kill important persons in the country, according to the case statements.

"They had plans to collect fund and arms from IS," read statements.

The government has ruled out any IS presence in Bangladesh after the global terror body reportedly claimed responsibility for the murder of Italian aid worker Cesare Tavella and Japanese citizen Kunio Hoshi.

However, amid concerns by foreign diplomats and international bodies, law enforcers have taken some additional measures, including frequent patrolling in the capital's diplomatic zone, to ensure security for foreigners.

Fresh unrest hits Gaza

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concerned" by Israel's "indiscriminate and even deliberate" use of fire on demonstrators.

"These are extrajudicial killings against unarmed civilians," Mariam Farah, the spokeswoman for Amnesty International in Israel, said.

On Friday, a video emerged showing a number of Israeli soldiers surrounding a young Palestinian woman allegedly holding a knife before they shot her with live bullets multiple times. Israa Ayed, 29, was critically injured.

"There is no proof whatsoever that Israa was holding a knife. The same goes for Alloun. They did not appear to have posed enough threat to the soldiers to use deliberate lethal force [on them]," Amnesty's Farah told Al Jazeera.

Since the beginning of the latest wave of violence in East Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank, 23 Palestinians were killed and 1,991 injured by Israeli security forces, according to the Palestinian health ministry.

On the Israeli side, four Israelis were stabbed to death by Palestinians, while 63 others were injured.

Human Rights Watch told Al Jazeera the sheer number of cases of injuries among the Palestinians "raises concerns that Israeli forces are violating international law".

The US-based organisation said one of its staff members was injured by Israeli fire on Tuesday while she was observing a demonstration near a checkpoint outside Ramallah.

Border clashes that broke out Friday came as Hamas's chief in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, called the overall violence an intifada and urged further unrest.

In response to the air strike, a Hamas spokesman said "this shows the occupation's desire to escalate."

"We warn the occupation against continuing this foolishness," said Sami Abu Zubri.

Also yesterday morning, Israeli security forces said they foiled an attack when an explosion seriously wounded a Palestinian woman and lightly injured an Israeli policeman.

Explosives had not been used in the week of violence that has led to an Israeli crackdown, with a wave of stabbings sparking fear among Israelis.

While Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and president Mahmud Abbas have sought to avoid an escalation, frustrated Palestinian youths have defied efforts to restore calm.

The office of French President Francois Hollande said yesterday that "everything must be done to... end this cycle (of violence) which has already caused too many victims".

US Secretary of State John Kerry shared his "deep concern" Saturday over the spiraling violence during telephone calls with Netanyahu and Abbas.

Both Abbas and Netanyahu have put the blame for the situation on the other.

Rioting has seen Palestinians throwing stones and firebombs at Israeli forces, who have responded with live fire, rubber bullets, tear gas and stun grenades.

Fourteen stabbing attacks have targeted Jews since October 3, when a Palestinian murdered two Israelis in the Old City.

One revenge stabbing has occurred, with a 17-year-old Jew in the southern Israeli city of Dimona wounding two Palestinians and two Arab Israelis on Friday.

Fifty dead as Boko Haram pounds Lake Chad area

AFP, Yaoundé

Twin suicide blasts yesterday killed at least nine people in far northern Cameroon, a day after 41 died in triple explosions in Chad that were blamed on Boko Haram.

Both nations are part of the coalition that has been fighting the jihadists, which in recent months have been launching bloody assaults well beyond their traditional fiefdom in northern Nigeria.

Two female suicide bombers carried out the attacks in Kangeleri village, around 30 kilometres (19 miles) from the town of Mora in Cameroon, security and local sources said.

Nine people died when the first woman detonated a bomb in a tiny milk and donut restaurant. The second suicide bomber killed only herself, a local authority official said.

Many of the 29 injured were "very badly" hurt, added the official, who asked not to be identified.

These blasts came as security sources bumped up the death toll to

41 in triple explosions Saturday in a Chadian city on Baga Sola on the shores of Lake Chad.

Another 48 people were wounded, the Chadian government said in a statement, after provisional figures by security sources late Saturday put the death toll at 37 with 52 wounded, some seriously.

The Chadian and the Cameroon armies have since the start of this year been involved in a regional offensive against Boko Haram, which has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group operating in Syria and Iraq.

Boko Haram has been hit hard by the multi-national offensive, losing territory, but it has launched attacks and bombings in response.

Boko Haram has waged a bloody insurgency since 2009 marked by mass abductions, village massacres and suicide bombings, sometimes by women and teenagers.

The attacks on Sunday are the 14th and 15th suicide attacks attributed to Boko Haram in far northern Cameroon since July, causing more

than 100 deaths.

The powerful explosions in Chad struck at around 4:00 pm (1500 GMT) Saturday, with one blast targeting the fish market at Baga Sola and the other two occurring at a refugee camp on the outskirts of the city.

It was the first such attack on Baga Sola, and the belief that it was relatively safe had led tens of thousands of Nigerian refugees and Chadians displaced by Boko Haram violence to seek shelter there.

Humanitarian and security sources say several people blew themselves up in the middle of a crowd.

While climate change has reduced the lake's surface in recent years, it contains many islands and islets used by fishermen and its banks have dense vegetation, which makes infiltrations by Boko Haram Islamists much easier.

At least 17,000 people have been killed and more than 2.5 million made homeless since the Boko Haram insurgency began.

GOLD SEIZURE

3 Malaysians on remand

UNB, Dhaka

A Dhaka court yesterday placed three Malaysian nationals on a three-day remand in a case filed for the recovery of 45kg of gold from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

The foreigners are Hee Wool Khong, 28, Johari Bin Harun, 41, and Mohd Azwan Bin Salihin, 21.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Asaduzzaman Noor passed the order after Sub-Inspector of Airport Police Station Kabirul Islam, also the investigation officer of the case, produced them before the court, seeking a 10-day remand.

Customs officials arrested the trio along with 45kg of gold while they were passing through the green channel of the airport on Saturday morning.

The Malaysian citizens arrived at the airport by a flight of Malaysia Airlines from Kuala Lumpur.

War reporters win prizes

AFP, Bayeux

France's prestigious Bayeux-Calvados award for war correspondents on Saturday honoured journalists covering conflicts in Syria and Ukraine, as well as Europe's worst migrant crisis since World War II.

Two of the awards went to correspondents covering the Islamic State group's game plan and its atrocities.

The text category award went to German Der Spiegel's Christoph Reuter, who wrote an in-depth story on the shadowy mastermind of IS's strategy in Syria and Iraq.

Dhaka in dark

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without their permission."

Babul advised the victims' families to contact the foreign ministry which will deal with the matter.

The secretary also came down heavily upon the Saudi government for its "disrespectful handling" of the bodies after the September 24 incident at Mina.

"The way the Saudi security officials removed the bodies from the site seemed as if they were dumping garbage."

"The stampede has laid bare the Saudi authorities' mismanagements," he said.

Asked if the Saudi government will compensate the victims, Babul said he had no information on this either.

At least 79 Bangladeshis were killed in the stampede and 70 others are missing. "The death toll may rise," he said.

Another 129 Hajj pilgrims from Bangladesh -- 105 men and 24 women -- died of natural causes this year, the secretary added.

The Saudi government claims a total of 769 people died and 934 injured in the stampede.

However, many countries that sent pilgrims to this year's Hajj estimated the number of deaths in stampede alone at more than 1,000.

News agency Associated Press claimed that at least 1,453 people died in the incident, making it the deadliest event to ever strike the annual pilgrimage.

The AP count, based on statements and officials' comments from 19 countries, is 684 higher than what the Kingdom claims it to be.

The Saudi government hasn't yet returned bodies to any countries except Iran. They returned 104 bodies on October 3 after Iran threatened "fierce" actions if the bodies were not handed over.