Your Right to Know







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SHAHADAT CHARGED

Police press charges against the cricketer for abusing maid

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GRAFT CHARGES

Former Israeli PM Ehud Olmert to serve 18 months in jail for bribery

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MUNICIPALITY POLLS TODAY

Credibility test for EC, govt

SHAKHAWAT LITON and PANKAG KARMAKAR

Elections are test times. Today, it's a crucial credibility and popularity test for the major political players.

People, who are usually ignored over the years, will cast their votes today in 234 municipalities deciding the fate of Awami League, BNP, Jatiya Party and other parties contesting the mayoral battle of ballots.

The daylong polling environment will also show if the efforts of the AL-led government and the Election Commission have restored people's confidence in them in being able and willing to ensure a free and fair election.

Their credibility took hits due to the last faulty parliamentary election and the widespread anomalies in the polls to upazila parishads in 2014 and three city corporations in 2015.

This time around, their role is already being questioned. In the last one month, after the announcement of the poll schedule, field level government administration officials engaged in electoral duties could not take effective measures in most cases to prevent electoral anomalies and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



POUSH 16, 1422 BS | RABIUL AWAL 17, 1437 HIJRI

Total Municipalities	323
Voting at	234
Mayoral Aspirants	945
Councillor Aspirants	12,171
Polling Centres	3,555
Voters	70,72,511
Polling Officials	66,768
Law Enforcers	1,17, 304
SEVEN MAYORS ELECTED HINDE	DOCED

Officials taking polls materials from the returning officer's office in Bogra town yesterday to send them to polling stations ahead of today's municipality polls. For the first time ever municipal elections are being held on partisan lines.

PHOTO: MAMUN-UR-RASHID

CONTENDERS FOR **MAYOR POSTS**

	AL	234
V	BNP	223
V	JP	74
	Islami Andolon Bangladesh	57
1	JSD	21
Á	NPP	17
1	WPB	8

JP-Manju

16 12 other parties 285 Independent

945 TOTAL

NEWS ANALYSIS

'No' is tradition

History says ruling parties faced debacles

SHAKHAWAT LITON

There is no doubt that holding a fair and free election in a democratic manner brightens a ruling party's image. Why, then, do the parties in power seldom follow the path to take its image to new heights?

It is a paradox that a free and fair high-voltage election held in a democratic manner never went in favour of the party in power in this country.

Consider the history of election for the last two and a half decades. Neither the Awami League nor the BNP, when in power, has ever demonstrated political goodwill by holding free and fair parliamentary polls. They were only able to set examples of some good elections in the local govern- irregularities during voting, ment bodies.

The results in those good local elections however have disappointed them : stern action against them," all the time as people cast ballots saying "NO" to the ways the party in power: he told reporters at the governed the country.

During the BNP-led government, elections to Dhaka and Chittagong City: secretariat. Corporation in 1994 and polls to Chittagong City Corporation again in : 2005 were largely free and fair.

In those battles, the BNP-backed mayoral candidates faced humiliating: warned polling officers and defeat to their opponents supported by the then opposition AL.

Those two polls signaled that BNP's popularity had taken a nose dive and : anyone of them got it faced defeat to the opposition AL in the subsequent parliamentary: involved in anomalies. elections in June 1996 and in December 2008.

The AL-led government had brightened its image by demonstrating its: officers and law enforcers political will to have free and fair polls to Chittagong City Corporation in : to perform their electoral SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

CEC talks tough on anomalies

মালতিশগর সরকারি প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়

(१म ७ इस् छला)

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad yesterday directed polling officers and law enforcers to take action against those involved in irregularities : during the voting today.

"If any candidate or his supporters try to commit : polls officials will take : media centre of the EC

He hoped the voting would be festive. He also : law enforcers of action if

"I am instructing polling

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6 :

BNP men come under attack

Face intimidation from rival AL nominees; 3 hurt in clash over ballot-stamping rumour

STAR REPORT

Clashes, and attacks and arrests of BNP men marked the day before the much-hyped municipality polls today, casting doubt over the election's being free and fair.

In some places, rebel candidates too reportedly came under attack and were being "intimidated to quit" the mayoral race.

In most cases, supporters of the ruling Awami League candidates were blamed.

The BNP even alleged that the government had drawn up a "blueprint" to take the election results in all 234 municipalities in favour of the AL-nominated candidates. The AL on the other hand asked the party-men to assist

: the Election Commission and the local administrations in making the elections fair. Against this backdrop, both parties sent delegations to

the EC and sought its interference in the alleged anomalies that may raise questions over the elections' credibility. The BNP told the commission that three of its men were

killed and over 3,000 injured in pre-election violence and SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

> PHOTO: STAR



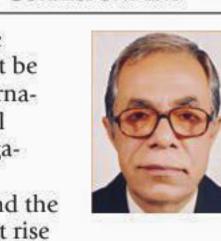
"Don't mind. I know that you have taken up journalism as a profession as there is not enough employment opportunity in the

OPPOSITION LEADER **RAUSHAN ERSHAD** AT A PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY

There might be int'l incitement

President on recent attacks STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There might be "international instigation" behind the recent rise



in militant activities in Bangladesh, President Abdul Hamid told BBC Bangla at the Bangabhaban yesterday.

The recent attacks on mosques or the threats to and assaults on non-Muslim people were unfortunate for the country, he "It is unexpected. This

cannot happen in Bangladesh because we all -Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians -fought together to liberate

this country." Hamid also mentioned that a number of Muslimmajority countries are in a state of unrest, and the

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT More than 44 million

Textbooks

Govt hopes to provide free

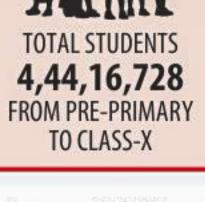
books to 4.4cr students on

on time

first day of 2016

primary and secondary level students are set to receive new textbooks on the first morning of 2016, as around 33 crore copies of textbooks are ready for free distribution.

"I'm telling you with conviction that all textbooks have been printed and dispatched to the doorways of the respective education institutions. All arrangements have been



TOTAL TEXTBOOKS

33,37,62,760

made to distribute the books on January 1," Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid told reporters at a press briefing at his Secretariat office yesterday.

The minister added like the previous years, the first day of the New Year would be celebrated as the "Textbook Festival" day across the country.

"All education institutions will remain open that day with books to be handed over to the students," Nahid said. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to formally

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