

Bloodshed

FROM PAGE 1
suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

While the world was reeling from the shock and horror of the World War II, the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, adopted the UDHR, recognising the integral role that transparent and open elections play in ensuring the fundamental rights to participatory government.

When these words were penned in 1948, less than half of the world's nations chose their leaders by elections. Now almost all countries do to uphold human rights.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1966 also stressed the need for free and fair elections.

The UN's history and mandate are closely linked to electoral processes. Since the 1960's, elections have played a central role in the implementation of the UN mandate to maintain peace and security.

The UN experts have provided technical assistance in more than 110 countries over the last 25 years to ensure free and fair elections in those countries.

The European Convention of Human Rights also upholds the importance of elections. Article 3 of the first protocol of the convention provides for the right to regular, free and fair elections.

It is because, according to European leaders, the right to free elections is crucial to establishing and maintaining the foundations of an effective and meaningful democracy governed by the rule of law.

Our constitution also speaks unequivocally for democracy and human rights. According to article 11 of the constitution, Bangladesh shall be a democracy in which fundamental human rights and freedoms and respect for the dignity and worth of the human person shall be guaranteed, and in which effective participation by the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels shall be ensured.

Democracy means a form of government in which people choose leaders by voting. In the local government system, union parishad is the lowest tier of the administration and in which

UP POLLS AT A GLANCE	
RESULT OF 3,290 CHAIRMAN POSTS	
AL	2,195
BNP	315
JP	41
Ind	697
Other parties	42
ELECTED UNOPOSED	
2016	220
2003	34
1997	37
1992	4
1988	100
DEATH	
2016	113
2011	27
2003	80
1997	31
1988	80

SOURCE: EC, SHUJAN, DEMOCRACY WATCH, MEDIA REPORTS

effective participation of people must be ensured through their elected representatives.

Article 59 of the constitution upholds the spirit stipulated in article 11 by saying that a local government body shall be composed of people elected according to the law.

According to a definition stated in the local government (union parishad) election rules 2010 "election" means direct election to chairmen and members of union parishads.

The term "direct election" means an election in which citizens vote directly instead of having representatives voting for them.

To ensure free and fair elections, our constitution provides the Election Commission with considerable powers.

The local government (union parishad) election rules 2010 also criminalise electoral irregularities like capturing polling stations and stuffing ballot boxes. An individual may be sentenced to jail for up to six years if s/he is found guilty of committing an electoral offence.

But nothing could boost the EC to deliver on its mandate. It appears to be just an eyewitness to rampant electoral irregularities. Lack of actions keep deteriorating the situation, increasing the death toll in election violence.

Yet, the EC remains nonchalant. Therefore, the ongoing elections to union parishads cannot be compared to any international practice or a definition of election.

It has become our own model developed by the current EC-led by Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad and his colleagues.

A model that is nothing but a mockery of elections.

HC asks district admin

FROM PAGE 1
On May 18, the HC bench issued the suomoto rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in two weeks as to why they should not be directed to take necessary legal actions against local lawmaker Salim Osman and others, who were involved in humiliating Shyamal Kanti Bhakta.

The court also directed the DC, the SP and the OC to submit separate reports on the steps taken against the perpetrators responsible for the humiliation.

The HC yesterday expressed dissatisfaction as there was no specific explanation on the steps taken against the perpetrators, said lawyers MK Rahman and Mohsen Rashid, who placed different newspaper reports before the court on the incident for a necessary order on May 18.

Deputy Attorney General Motaher Hossain Sazu told The Daily Star that the HC yesterday received four separate reports from the education ministry and the three government officials concerned.

The government officials submitted progress reports on their actions but did not mention what criminal offence had taken place through the humiliation of the schoolteacher and

what steps were taken against the perpetrators, he added.

He further said the education ministry has submitted a detailed report although it was not directed by the HC to that end.

The HC has kept all the reports in the record, he added.

The education ministry probe finds that the Piyar Sattar Latif High School committee forced Head Teacher Shyamal Kanti Bhakta to resign with unproven allegation that he had hurt the religious sentiment of the Muslims.

The allegation brought against Shyamal was not found to be true, the probe body said, adding that relevant rules were not followed in suspending him.

The probe body also recommended that he could be reinstated.

Shyamal, headmaster of Piyar Sattar Latif High School in Bandar area, was beaten up by a mob and made to squat holding his earlobes in presence of local Jatiya Party lawmaker AKM Salim Osman on May 13.

The locals 'punished' him for allegedly making offensive comments about religion while meting out corporal punishment to a student on May 8.

A video clip of the incident had gone viral on social media, triggering public outrage and a firestorm of protests on different social networking sites.

700 migrants

FROM PAGE 1
Giovanna Di Benedetto, Save the Children's Sicily spokeswoman, told AFP that survivors of Thursday's wreck said around 1,100 people had set out from Libya on Wednesday in two fishing boats and a dinghy, before running into trouble.

"The first boat, carrying some 500 people, was reportedly towing the second, which was carrying another 500. But the second boat began to sink. Some people tried to swim to the first boat, others held onto the rope linking the vessels," she said.

According to the survivors, the first boat's Sudanese captain cut the rope, which snapped back and decapitated a woman. The second boat quickly sank, taking those packed tightly into the hold down with it.

The Sudanese captain was arrested on his arrival in Pozzallo along with three other suspected people traffickers.

"We tried everything to stop the water, to bail it out of the boat," a Nigerian girl told cultural mediators, according to La Stampa daily.

"We used our hands, plastic glasses. For two hours we fought against the water but it was useless. It began to flood the boat, and those below deck had no chance. Woman, men, children, many children, were trapped, and drowned," she said.

Those who survived told mediators the dead included "around 40 children, including many newborns", La Repubblica daily said.

"I saw my mother and 11-year old sister die," Kidane from Eritrea, 13, told the aid organisations. "There were bodies everywhere."

A bout of good weather as summer arrives has kicked off a fresh stream of boats attempting to make the perilous crossing from Libya to Italy.

Italian news agency Ansa said more than 15 boats had been setting off

every day for the past five days.

Italy's Interior Minister Angelino Alfano said Europe needed "a quick agreement with Libya and African countries" to halt the crisis.

Italy wants to persuade African countries to help close migrant routes to Europe and take back some of those arriving via Libya in exchange for increased aid and investment.

Germany has made it clear, however, that it is against one of the elements of Italy's plan: the issuing of EU-Africa bonds to finance it.

The chaos in the Libya since the fall in 2011 of late dictator Muammar Gaddafi has been exploited by people traffickers.

Migrants interviewed by La Repubblica in Sicily told the newspaper a new "head trafficker" called Osama had taken control of departures from Libya's beaches and was offering "cut-price" deals of 400 euros for the boat journey to lure in new customers.

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) doctor Paola Mazzoni warned that "the number of women arriving pregnant or with newborns appears to be on the rise, with many saying they have been raped in Libya".

As newly arrived migrants docked in the port of Palermo, including a pregnant minor who said she had been raped, MSF mediator Ahmad Al Rousan said: "Violence is growing in Libya -- we see it in the marks left on these boys and girls."

Many of the recent arrivals, largely Eritreans and Somalians, said they had balked at the idea of boarding the rickety vessels and dinghies once they saw them, but were forced on in Libya at gunpoint.

Meanwhile, nineteen people have been rescued from the English Channel after an inflatable boat they were in started taking on water, the British coastguard said yesterday. Kent Online website described the 19 as migrants.

Fizz IPL's first

FROM PAGE 1
The Tournament, 'Rising Star' and 'U-23 Success of the Tournament' throughout the tournament's nine-year history.

Mustafizur, along with seam partner Bhuvneshwar Kumar, formed the one-two punch of Hyderabad's bowling attack, drying up runs when they were at their most valuable -- from overs 16 to 20. Mustafizur is the owner of the best economy rate in that period this season. He also has the best economy rate overall for bowlers who have bowled more than 20 overs.

It was just not the economy rate, he also took 17 wickets, the fifth-highest of the season. His 17th wicket, that of Shane Watson in the final at M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore in the late stages of the Bangalore's innings, was one of the final nails in the Bangalore coffin.

Although the final saw him concede 37 runs for the wicket of Watson -- his second-most expensive bowling analysis of the season -- it will not take the gloss off a season which saw the man with the mysterious slower cutters emerge as arguably the most sought-after rookie player in the world.

He has played a crucial hand in most of Hyderabad's important wins, including in the final when -- apart from his wicket -- he briefly stopped the carnage of Virat Kohli and Chris Gayle by conceding just four runs in the fifth over.

Saudis

FROM PAGE 16
Saudi officials have said an Iranian delegation wrapped up a visit to the kingdom on Friday without reaching a final agreement on arrangements for pilgrims from the Islamic republic.

The Saudi hajj ministry said it had offered "many solutions" to meet a string of demands made by the Iranians in two days of talks.

Agreement had been reached in some areas, including to use electronic visas which could be printed out by Iranian pilgrims, as Saudi diplomatic missions remain shut in Iran, it said.

It would be the first hajj in almost 30 years to take place without the participation of pilgrims from Iran.

Riyadh-Tehran ties were severed for four years after more than 400 people were killed in Makkah during clashes between Iranian pilgrims and Saudi security forces in 1987.

In January, relations were severed again after Iranian demonstrators torched Saudi Arabia's embassy and a consulate following the kingdom's execution of a prominent Shia cleric.

Another contentious issue has been security, after a stampede at last September's hajj killed about 2,300 foreign pilgrims, including 464 Iranians.

Joy says

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claimed he had visited Joy's office in Washington last year.

Joy also said it was "shameful" that BBC Bangla broadcast "this obviously fake interview without verifying facts. This really hurts their credibility as a news source".

On Saturday, Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif had also dismissed Safadi's claim and termed it a BNP drama.

Hours after Joy uploaded the Facebook post, the BNP yesterday claimed that people did not believe what the PM's son was saying.

At a press briefing at the party's Naya Paltan central office in the capital, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed said people were waiting to see what action the government would take over the "meeting" between Joy and Safadi.

He also accused the government of having double standards over the matter.

On Thursday, police filed a seditious case with Gulshan Police Station against arrested BNP leader Aslam Chowdhury for allegedly hatching a conspiracy with Likud Party and Israel's intelligence agency Mossad to oust the government.

Known to be a trusted lieutenant of BNP's Senior Vice-chairman Tarique Rahman, Chittagong-based businessman Aslam came under severe criticism both in and outside the party after several photographs, showing him with Safadi, also chief of Israel's International Diplomacy and Public Relations, went viral on social media.

The two had met in India this April.

After Aslam's arrest, several Awami League leaders alleged that the BNP was conspiring to topple the government with the help of Mossad.

The BNP, however, termed the allegation "a cooked-up story". Aslam said he met Safadi "accidentally".

Bangladesh has no relations with Israel.

PM assures investors

FROM PAGE 1
business leaders in Tokyo, the premier also urged them to invest in various sectors by taking advantages of huge youthful workforce and emerging opportunities in Bangladesh.

"Let me again assure you: my door is open for you I want our Japanese friends to take advantage of our youthful workforce and emerging opportunities in Bangladesh," she said.

In this connection, Hasina informed the leaders that she has instructed the authorities concerned to ensure the highest possible security for the Japanese individuals and installations operating in Bangladesh.

"You surely are pondering about safety and security of investors and foreign nationals because of some incidents in Bangladesh in recent times ... I would assure you that my government has a zero tolerance towards any form of terrorism or extremism," she said.

The PM also highlighted the scopes for effective collaboration between Bangladesh and Japan in various sectors.

"The readymade garment and agricultural sectors as well as developing industries, infrastructure and collaboration in energy, water resources and waste management are major explorable areas," she said.

As the Japanese society moves into a "robotic evolution", she said, Bangladesh economy will have much to collaborate in areas like "imaginative software", "shared/cloud-based processing" and, evolving generic computing architecture.

"Our pharmaceutical and shipbuilding sectors are new frontiers that may interest you ... our 'Blue Economy' offers a large menu of opportunities."

Referring to her conversation with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Japanese Revitalisation Strategy and the Partnership for Quality Infrastructure, Hasina said Bangladesh's young population, their skills and innovation, country's strategic location, development ambition and industrialisation plans can complement Japan's revitalisation plan.

Pointing out that Bangladesh is basically opening up new production possibility frontiers, the PM said her

government has planned to establish 100 Special Economic Zones and several IT Parks. "The work on 33 of those is already in progress," she said.

In four years' time, she said, the government expects to have additional 10 million of Bangladesh population in industrial manufacturing.

On this front, she added, Japan remains one of Bangladesh's most tested friends and the people of Bangladesh hold Japanese investors in high esteem for work ethic.

Five female

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Saturday, said Alamgir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Mithamoin Police Station.

The police official said around 4:30am, the engine-run small boat sank in the river near Mithamoin Bazar ghat as the passengers, mostly Ansar members, were getting on the boat hurriedly.

Due to strong current in the river, several passengers, including the five Ansar members, went missing while others managed to swim ashore, the OC added.

On information, police and Fire Service and Civil Defense officials rushed to the spot. They recovered the bodies from the river with the help of locals.

Later, the bodies were handed over to the victims' families.

An unnatural death case was filed with Mithamoin Police Station.

Contacted, Anwar Hossain Khan, superintendent of Kishoreganj police, said each of the victims' families got Tk 20,000 and 50kg of rice from the district administration.

Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque expressed deep shock at the death of the Ansar members and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved families.

In a condolence message, the IGP said the Ansar members set an example as they made the highest sacrifice while on important duty like maintaining law and order.

PM blames BNP-Jamaat

FROM PAGE 2
The PM said the trial of war criminals is the desire of the people as well as a pledge of her government. She also mentioned her strong conviction that her administration will continue the trial braving various obstacles.

She also accused BNP chief Khaleda Zia of continuing the killing of the country's innocent people for saving war criminals.

Hasina then recalled three months of atrocities what she said was carried out by the BNP-Jamaat last year when "450 people were burnt to death".

The PM said the BNP chief had announced that she would not return home from her office without ousting the government, but she did after failing to get any public response.

About the resumption of Dhaka-Tokyo Biman flights, the PM said she would look into it on her return home.

Urging the expatriates not to get disappointed, the PM urged them to work with sincerity so that Bangladesh could not be undermined.

She recalled that Japan had always extended its support to Bangladesh's overall development efforts.

Some 500 acres of land will be allotted to Japanese investor for invest-

ing and establishing industries in Bangladesh, she said.

She also talked about her government's steps to build 100 special economic zones across the country to attract more foreign investment.

Hasina said the government will set up special economic zones in particular areas considering the availability of raw materials of the localities concerned.

Citing the success of her government in winning maritime boundary cases with India and Myanmar, she sought cooperation of Japan in extracting resources from the huge sea areas as well as more foreign investment to this end.

Khaleda charged

FROM PAGE 2
In the second charge sheet, Khaleda and 26 others were charged with arson. The names of twenty-four accused, including Khaleda, are common in both the charge sheets.

The accused include BNP leaders Amanullah Aman, Habib-Un-Nabi Khan Sohel, Mir Sarafat Ali Sapu, Azizul Bari Helal, Sultan Salauddin Tuku, Khaleda's Special Assistant Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas and her Press Secretary Maruf Kamal Khan.

ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন
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