



## CIVIL SOCIETY TALKS WITH EC Call for army in polls, 'no vote' system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
Most civil society members during talks with the Election Commission yesterday spoke for restoring "no vote" system and ensuring a level-playing field for all political parties to hold the next election in a free, fair and participatory manner.

- KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Create level-playing field
  - Dissolve parliament before election
  - Ensure voting rights for expatriates
  - Bring key ministries under EC during polls
  - Hold direct voting in reserved seats for women

They also suggested army be deployed alongside regular law enforcers during the polls, due in January 2019, to remove fear among voters, candidates and election officials.

Most of the participants disagreed with the chief election commissioner's recent remarks that the EC had nothing to do if activities of a registered political party are hampered before the polls schedule is announced.

The civil society personalities urged the EC to work for bringing back people's confidence in it and suggested that the Jatiya Sangsad be dissolved ahead of the election.

As part of its election roadmap, the EC had invited 59 civil society members to join the talks in which 35 participated while some others expressed their inability to attend for personal reasons.

The dialogue began around 11:00am at the EC Secretariat with the chief election commissioner in the chair and ended

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**A NARROW ESCAPE...** A bus teeters on the ramp of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. The decrepit bus carrying 26 hajj pilgrims from a Mirpur hajj agency office malfunctioned and rolled backwards smashing through the railings around noon yesterday. All the pilgrims managed to exit safely. Later, they left for Saudi Arabia on time.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Govt to go ahead with Rampal work Says PM's energy adviser

STAR REPORT  
The government would go ahead with the construction of Rampal power plant near the Sundarbans and take measures to mitigate adverse effects, if necessary, upon the strategic environmental assessment (SEA).

Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, prime minister's energy affairs adviser, made the comment yesterday, a day after the Unesco made it clear that no large-scale industrial or infrastructural development should be allowed to proceed in the vicinity of the Sundarbans before Bangladesh carried out the SEA for its south-west region.

"...What happens now is [construction of Rampal plant] will continue. If we see that we need to take mitigating measures upon the environmental assessment, we'll do so," he said.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah and Anu Muhammad of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral

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## Crime, politics meet to fetch him a fortune

M ABUL KALAM AZAD, from Bogra

It is apparently the criminalised politics of our country that made it all possible. A high school dropout became a millionaire and one of the most notorious figures in Bogra just in a decade.

Born into an ultra-poor family, he now owns at least two cars, a lavish home and a multi-storey building in the town. He recently bought a flat in Dhaka.

The other members of his family also made a fortune, courtesy of political and criminal connections. His father and one of his elder brothers, both once meat sellers struggling to make ends meet, are now wealthy hide traders.

The man, suspended Sramik League leader Tufan Sarkar, is now in his 30s. Before his arrest on Friday night over the rape and torture of a female student, he had made crimes his daily routine.

He was a drug peddler, specialised in Yaba and Phensedyl trades, and made crores from extortion in transport sector. An accused in at least one murder case, he would move around with guns and armed gang members, police sources and locals say.

Tufan has been able to create his own crime racket, first with the help of his elder brother Motin Sarkar, a Jubo League man, and then with the blessings from a senior leader of district Awami

League. There was none to challenge him in Bogra.

Before Friday, he was detained only once.

In 2011, then senior ASP of Bogra Rab Sumit Chowdhury raided a house in the town's Chaksutrapur and seized two bags of Phensedyl. It was later found that the illegal substances were kept there by Tufan.

The officer captured him and after interrogation found 5,000 Yaba tablets from his computer hard disc.

"Actually his brother Motin was the godfather and Tufan was peddling drugs under his supervision," said Sumit, now an additional SP in Rajshahi.

Both Tufan and Motin were sent to jail and charge-sheeted in a drug case. But they got out using their clouts and Sumit was transferred to Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Locals said Tufan got engaged in drug peddling soon after he dropped out of school

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## LOWER COURT JUDGES SC wants the president's power

Says law minister  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court wants the power of the president regarding the discipline of lower court judges, provided under article 116 of the constitution, said Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday.

"They [SC judges] have revised the [disciplinary] rules which show that they want the power of the president ... How can I give it? You give me a verdict ... I cannot give it," he said.

The law minister was speaking at a preparatory meeting organised by Bangabandhu Awami Ainjibi Parishad at the Supreme Court Bar Association for holding a convention.

Article 116 says, "The control [including the power of posting, promotion and grant of leave] and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and magistrates exercising judicial

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## Padma rail link deal with China by this year

5 projects involving \$6.8b finalised  
REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh and China are going to sign final deals on the Padma Bridge Rail Link and four other projects involving \$6.8 billion by this year.

The deals have been finalised after months of negotiations following the Chinese president's Dhaka visit last October. China would provide both soft and commercial loans to finance the projects.

These are part of the 27 agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) signed during official talks between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

China has agreed to five out of eight projects Bangladesh pushed forward for Chinese financing in 2017, said a finance ministry official.

The projects are Padma Bridge Rail Link (\$3.14 billion), Expansion and Strengthening of Power System under DPDC (Dhaka Power Distribution Company) Area (\$1.65 billion), Power Grid Network Strengthening Project under PGC (Power Grid Company of Bangladesh) (\$1.32 billion), Installation of Single Point Mooring with Double Pipelines (SPM) (\$550 million) and Development of National ICT Infra-Network for Bangladesh Government Phase III (Info-Sarkar) (\$150 million).

The Padma rail link would facilitate train communications between Dhaka and southern region, power projects would help strengthen transmission and distribution capacity, Info Sarkar Phase-III would help shape over 4,500

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## SIDDIQUR'S EYESIGHT Little hope of recovery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is still uncertain whether Titumir college student Siddiqur Rahman, whose eyes were damaged in police action in Shahbagh on July 20, would ever get his eyesight back.

Doctors see little hope even if a surgery is conducted. On hearing that, Siddiqur broke down in tears, said his brother Nayeab Ali, who is with the victim undergoing treatment at Sankara Nethralaya in India's Chennai.

"The physicians left it up to Siddiqur to take a decision about the operation Siddiqur said he would go for the surgery taking it as the last hope," Nayeab told The Daily Star over phone last night.

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