

HC halts DNCC mayoral by-polls

AL, BNP trade blame after 3-month stay order
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court's three-month stay on the process of Dhaka North City Corporation polls yesterday triggered a blame game between the Awami League and the BNP.

The voting was scheduled to take place on February 26.

The BNP held the AL and the Election Commission responsible for the situation while the ruling party claimed that the BNP was "guilty of the same crime".

The HC also questioned the legality of the schedule of the DNCC mayoral by-polls and the elections to 18 new wards under the city corporation on February 26. Besides, it issued two rules asking the authorities concerned of the EC and the government to explain in four weeks why the schedule should not be declared illegal.

The bench of Justice

REMOVING DNCC POLLS UNCERTAINTY LGRD ministry holds the key

A move by the ministry could remove legal complexities
SHAKHAWAT LITON

It appears the mayoral by-polls to the DNCC have become uncertain following yesterday's High Court stay order. But the legal complexity can be removed and the LGRD ministry holds the key.

Newly added wards, the root cause for the polls process to grind to a halt, could be excluded from the Dhaka North City Corporation for the time being so that the elections could be held.

This will not be something new.

Sixteen years ago, the LGRD ministry swiftly removed all legal complexities over redrawn boundaries of three city corporations, including Dhaka, clearing the way for the polls.

The same ministry in 1998 increased the number of wards in Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna city corporations. In September 1998, the Election Commission redrew the boundaries of the wards issuing a gazette notification and moved for holding the polls.

But it faced legal hurdles. At least 10 writ petitions were filed challenging the new boundaries, five of the petitions were filed in Dhaka.

In response to those petitions, the HC stayed all work related to the elections and the stay order was extended several times. As a result, the polls to the three city corporations could not be held on time.

The first elections in the three corporations were held in January 1994 when the BNP was in power. Fresh elections were supposed to be held in 1999 when the Awami League was in power.

Assuming office on October 10, 2001, the BNP moved to hold the polls to the Dhaka City Corporation quickly, to unseat the then DCC mayor who was an AL leader.



THEY'RE STILL AT IT

A double decker of a public university goes against traffic on the middle lane of Minto Road on Tuesday near Sheraton intersection in the capital. Even though police claim that they have clamped down such violation of rules in the capital, vehicles continue to put people's lives at risk. More photos on page 2.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

FREEDOM FIGHTERS Minimum age now only 12.5 years!

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The liberation war affairs ministry has once again lowered the minimum age for being recognised as a freedom fighter.

The ministry yesterday issued a gazette notification fixing the minimum age at 12-and-a-half years, down from 13, to be eligible for earning the status of a freedom fighter.

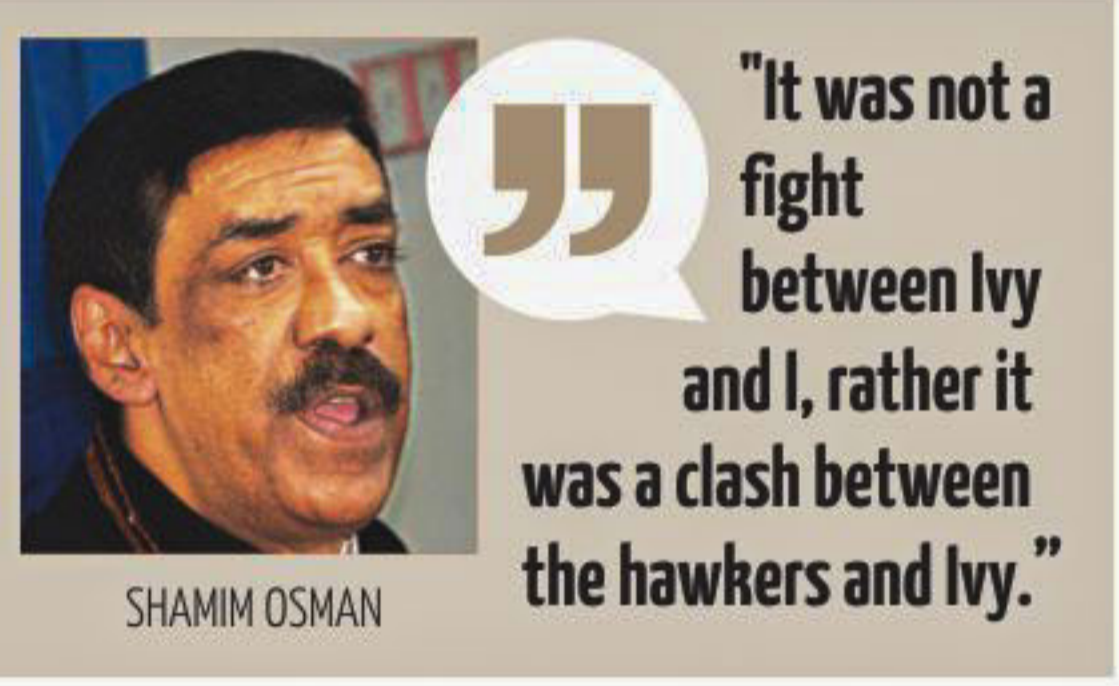
Under the revised age limit, people who were aged at least 12-and-a-half years on November 30, 1971 will be eligible for applying for the status.

The decision to reduce the age limit was made at the 50th meeting of Jatiya Muktiyoddha Council (JMC) on October 19 last year. This is the third time the minimum age limit has been revised.

Sources said Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq at the meeting opposed the proposal of lowering the age limit, but the decision was reached under pressure from an influential minister and a former Awami League state minister.

They tried to kill me

Mayor Ivy says about Tuesday's attack on her; will take legal steps against those responsible



STAR REPORT

Narayanganj city Mayor Selina Hayat Ivy yesterday alleged that an attempt was made to kill her from just "two yards away" during Tuesday's mayhem on Bangabandhu Road in Chashara.

"I will take legal steps... 100 to 150 people were wounded. I suffered injuries in my leg. I was unarmed and so were my people," she told reporters at her Nagar Bhaban office.

The mayor was briefing journalists a day after supporters of local Awami League lawmaker Shamim Osman allegedly attacked Ivy and her followers over eviction of street hawkers, leading to a fierce clash. Ivy

Tk 137CR MISAPPROPRIATION ACC sues ex-MD, businessman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday filed a case against former managing director Kazi Fakhrul Islam of BASIC Bank Ltd and Managing Director Faisal Murad Ibrahim of Bay Navigations Ltd for misappropriating around Tk 137 crore.

Mohammad Sirajul Huq, assistant director of the ACC, filed the case with Motijheel Police Station, Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, a spokesman for the ACC, told The Daily Star.

This is the 58th case filed related to BASIC Bank loan scams that took place between 2009 and 2014 when Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu had chaired the board of the state-owned bank.

According to the case statement, Faisal opened letters of credit worth \$95 lakh with the Dilkusha branch of BASIC Bank in November, 2011, to import a ship, MV Crystal Sapphire.

After getting the loan, the client failed to repay. The bank then kept the imported ship as mortgaged property against the loan.

But according to an assessment in December 2016, the ship was estimated to be worth around Tk 20 to Tk 22 crore, much lower than the disbursed loan.



They rear their head as polls near PM tells JS, blasting 'vested quarters'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday told parliament a vested quarter has once again become active ahead of the next election and it wants to go to power through unconstitutional means.

"There is a section of people who are the real problem for the country and its people," she said responding to a supplementary question from opposition lawmaker Fakhrul Imam.

"As they do not have the ability to come to power through elections, they always look for unconstitutional ways. ... They don't see any development work done by the government," she added.

Referring to the last army-backed caretaker government, the PM said those



Sikandar Raza (R) was involved in everything during Zimbabwe's tense 12-run win against Sri Lanka at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, scoring an unbeaten 81 off 67 before dismissing Kusal Perera and taking catches to send back captain Angelo Mathews and the dangerous Thisara Perera.

SEVEN RINGS CEMENT
www.ssgil.com

Zimbabwe upstage Chandika's Lanka

SAKEB SUBHAN

The quality of the match was befitting of an occasion that the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) failed to commemorate to the satisfaction of the spectators, as Zimbabwe brought the tri-series to life by defeating the more-fancied Sri Lanka by 12 runs yesterday in an exciting match that was also the hundredth ODI hosted by the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The BCB deemed it fit not to include Bangladesh on the momentous occasion of Mirpur becoming the fastest venue to the mark, but it was fitting that Zimbabwe -- who played

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