



3-month stay on Gazipur city polls

EC was in dark when an HC bench issued the order after 30-min hearing on Savar AL leader's writ petition

"A court shall not pass any order or direction, ad interim or otherwise, in relation to an election for which schedule has been announced, unless the Election Commission has been given reasonable notice and an opportunity of being heard."

ARTICLE 125 (C) OF THE CONSTITUTION

"We don't know why the election was stayed. I saw the news on television."

CEC KM NURUL HUDA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Just 10 days before the voting day, the High Court yesterday stayed the Gazipur City Corporation election for three months with the Election Commission entirely in the dark about the development.

"Truly speaking, I came to know about the matter from television scrolls," said Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda, who was in Khulna yesterday for holding talks with mayoral candidates of Khulna City Corporation.

Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukder, who was in his office yesterday, was also surprised.

He said he was not even aware of the grounds for the stay order. "Yet, I verbally ordered the returning officer of Gazipur city polls to suspend all activities related to the election showing respect to the court order."

EC Secretary Helal Uddin, who is travelling with the CEC, said he too knew nothing about the petition. "We all came to know about it later."

Article 125 (c) of the constitution says, "A court shall not pass any order or direction, ad interim or otherwise, in relation to an election for which schedule has been announced, unless the Election Commission has been given reasonable notice and an opportunity of being heard."

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Abduction suspect dies in DB's custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man, who was detained in connection with a kidnap on Saturday, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

The body of Aslam, 45, had numerous bruises, hospital sources said. There were bruises and blood clots in lower parts of his knees and on a wrist.

Detectives, however, claimed that Aslam fell sick while in custody and was taken to DMCH around 12:30pm. He died at 5:45pm while awaiting some medical tests.

Several DMCH officials told The Daily Star that Inspector of DB Mahbub Hossain, who took Aslam to the hospital, tried to register the death as a normal one. But he failed as the officials insisted that the body had bruises.

The body was later sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy to determine the cause of death. No one claimed the body when the report was filed at 10:00pm.

Abdul Baten, joint commissioner of Detective

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An SSC examinee is overcome with joy after receiving her results while her mother applauds her achievement of securing GPA 5. The photo was taken from Vigarunnisa Noon School & College yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

English, maths drag results down again

Rajshahi board outshines others in SSC; girls do better than boys

WASIM BIN HABIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) results suffered a fall in success rate for the second consecutive year owing to the students' poor performance in English and Mathematics.

The fall in success rates wasn't the only negative thing this time around as this year's exams were marred by widespread allegations of question leaks.

The pass percentage of the SSC exams under the eight education boards came down to 79.40 percent,

dipping 1.82 percentage points from last year's, according to the results published yesterday.

This is the lowest pass rate in the last eight years.

Rajshahi board again topped the charts in terms of success rate with 86.07 percent.

Although the number of students who had failed increased, the number of schools with 100 percent pass rate decreased and the number of institutions with zero pass rate rose.

The number of students under eight boards achieving the highest grade -- GPA (Grade Point Average)-5 -

- increased to 1,02,845 this year from 97,964 last year.

The combined pass rate of all the 10 education boards, including Dakshil examinations under the madrasa board and SSC vocational examinations under the technical board, also declined to 77.77 percent from 80.35 percent last year.

Girls fared better than boys in terms of success rate.

The number of GPA-5 achievers in the 10 boards rose to 1,10,629 from last year's 1,04,761.

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BUSINESS

New luxury hotels set to enter the fray

SOHEL PARVEZ

Dhaka will see half a dozen international hotel chains over the next couple of years thanks to the growing influx of business travellers.

Bengal Group is constructing a 370-room hotel in the capital's Niketan area for about Tk 600 crore.

Jamuna Group has struck a deal with Marriott International, the American luxury hospitality chain, to set up 700-room JW Marriott Dhaka.

Marium and Premier are entering the fray too.

Altogether, the new hotels are expected to bring investment of about Tk 5,400 crore, according to industry insiders.

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Blatant violation of int'l law

Says the OIC's council of foreign ministers' Dhaka declaration about atrocities carried out in Rakhine

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation member states have sought strong international support to resolve the Rohingya crisis and full implementation of the Kofi Annan led advisory commission recommendations in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

"We express deep concern over the recent systematic brutal acts perpetrated by security forces against the Rohingya Muslim community in Myanmar that has reached the level of ethnic cleansing, which constitute a serious and blatant violation of international law," the OIC's Dhaka Declaration reads.

The 45th OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) adopted the 39-point declaration before concluding the two-day event yesterday at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC).

The declaration underlined the importance of the OIC member states continuing to engage in the UN system, especially the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council as well as other relevant interna-

tional organisations, to address the human rights violations in Rakhine State.

The CFM also adopted a resolution regarding the situation of Rohingyas in Myanmar and agreed to form a ministerial-level ad-hoc committee to address the crisis.

The declaration reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian people to regain their right to self-determination, and to the independence and sovereignty of the State of Palestine on the pre-1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

It also declared support for the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes in accordance with international law and UNGA Resolution 194 (III).

The OIC CFM then rejected the United States' recent recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and termed the decision to move its embassy to the city on May 14 illegal.

The Dhaka Declaration called for immediate release of all Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons and detention centres.

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PADMA BRIDGE RAIL LINK Khulna in four hours promised

Construction begins in a month; expected to be completed in 4 yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to start constructing the Padma Bridge rail link in a month and 23 kilometres of the 215km rail lines would be elevated.

Once the project is done, it will take just four hours to go to Khulna from the capital, Railway Minister Mujibur Haque said at a press conference yesterday.

The implementation of the project, expected in four years, would lead to the economic development of the country and the GDP would increase by 1 percent, he said.

Amjad Hossain, director general of Bangladesh Railways (BR), said the travel time between Dhaka and Kolkata would also come down significantly.

"The distance between Benapole [in Jessore] and Kolkata is around 70 kilometres. Once the project is implemented, it would not take more than three to four hours to reach Kolkata from Dhaka."

The project would bring four districts -- Munshiganj, Shariatpur, Madaripur and Narail -- under the coverage of the railway network, says a press release from the BR.

Currently, it takes more than nine hours to make the distance of about 412km from Dhaka to Khulna. The minister said once the project is done, the distance would be reduced to 213km.

The railways ministry organised the press conference at the Rail Bhavan after the Economic Relations Division (ERD) signed a \$2.67 billion loan agreement for the project

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