

Enough lies!

FROM PAGE 20
hamlet fed up with the government's broken promises.

"You've been lying to us for years. No party is welcome in Podgora," reads a white banner strung across the main square of the 700-person village, which lies some 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the capital Sarajevo. Sunday's general elections will fill Bosnia's highest political offices, from a three-person presidency down to district assemblies.

But few are expecting significant change in a nation that has been paralysed for decades, in part because of unresolved conflicts dating back to the ethnic conflicts that engulfed Bosnia in the 1990s.

The war killed 100,000 and split the country into two largely autonomous regions linked by a weak central government.

Like huge swathes of the population, the people of Podgora are disillusioned by a political class known chiefly for corruption and dysfunction.

"Enough lies!" Adi Silajdzic, 47, told AFP when asked why he supported the village's politician blockade.

"We're fed up that every time they come they tell us stories and make promises to ensure votes."

"And every time, on the day after the elections, it is as if nothing had happened, as if they did not even come to see us," said the unemployed father.

A few political campaigners did not heed the warning and put up posters inside Podgora, which is home to Bosnian Muslims.

But locals quickly ripped them down. To underscore their point, someone scrawled another message on the back of the banner with a spray can: "Did you read it? People have had enough."

Families pitched in to pay for the 50-euro (\$58) banner -- a hefty sum in a community where most are unemployed, living off of small vegetable farms and livestock.

Sitting around a wooden table in the shade of a plum tree, a group of local men said Podgora has been neglected by authorities ever since the war, which left lasting damage on Bosnia's economy and infrastructure.

The Woolyneck

FROM PAGE 20
termed this species of stork "a former visitor of Bangladesh".

However, in 2015-16, our "former visitor" had made a sudden comeback in Rajshahi which was able to instill some hope in bird lovers of their return. This extraordinary event was recorded and reported in the Nature Quest published on March 11, 2016.

Since then, to the delight of bird-lovers across the country, the Asian-Woolyneck, along with other less rare storks, has been visiting the banks of the Padma every winter.

To add to this, at the onset of this year's monsoon, a pair of storks was observed nesting on a telephone tower in Premtali, a small town about 20 kilometers from Rajshahi, on the way to Chapainawabganj.

The two about-to-be-parents storks with their black-vermilion bodies, fluffy white necks and black-red bills were unmistakably Asian-Woolynecks.

Due to the high odds against any bird building its nursery on an exposed platform in Bangladesh, bird-lovers kept their fingers crossed for the Asian-Woolynecks and their plan to expand their family and species in the country. With ample food in the wet paddy-fields of Premtali, including frogs, grasshoppers, crickets, earthworms and moles, bird-lovers and nature enthusiasts knew the birds had whatever they needed. However, what the people were most afraid of were nest robbery by telephone technicians, killing or trapping of the parent-birds by local hunters or recurrent visits by photographers.

The tower, however, proved to be a satisfactory nesting site when Asian-Woolynecked fledglings flew out of their nest in August. Birdwatchers are now relieved as they watch the stork family foraging in the nearby paddy-fields every day.

After more than a century, these storks chose not to stop at a revisit but brought and are also raising their children right here on our land. Thus, our "former visitor" became a breeding stork in Bangladesh. The question that now remains is that, as they are resident breeders in wetlands with trees, will we see more of these storks setting up their nests here?

The Asian-Woolyneck is a species that lives only in east and far east Asia and, unlike the White Stork, it does not migrate far to breed. As bird-lovers in Rajshahi rejoice in the presence of these iconic birds and help make their neighbourhoods more bird-friendly, we can hope that the number of breeding storks will increase.

In four years, the baby Woolynecks of Premtali will become adults looking for their own nesting sites somewhere on the riverbanks of the Padma, and it is up to us to help them feel right at home.

Can't take action

FROM PAGE 1
Contacted, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Sayeed Khokon said, "Right now, we cannot take any action. If we do, there will be mixed reactions from political leaders.

"Many of our party men paste posters which contain photos of Bangabandhu, our party chief, secretary and mine. These are thousands in number and out of our control. But we do not encourage them to do so.

"Different party political leaders are putting them up and if we try to remove them now, they will react."

Asked about posters with his photos on them, he said that no one took his consent before pasting those.

"If you ask me about political posters, I'll say we're helpless. We have nothing to do in this case. Political leaders need willingness to remove posters," said Dhaka North City Corporation's (DNSCC) Chief Waste Management Officer Commodore M A Razzak.

He added that the late Annisul Huq had taken some steps to stop the practice but things became harder without him.

Mokhlesur Rahman, president of AL's Ramna and Hatirjheel unit, whose posters can also be seen in many areas, claimed to The Daily Star that he had nothing to do with putting them up.

"Some of the boys have put up those [posters]. They do it to make us happy," he said, citing examples where some party men put up pictures with their superiors in order to please them.

Interestingly, most of the posters of Mokhlesur only contain pictures of him and Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

He also added that although they do not give any money for the posters, they do pay to print some during special occasions, such as Eid, to send their greetings to their constituents.

A similar condition was seen in other places of the capital, including Mohakhali, Gabtoli, Mirpur, Malibagh, Moghbazar, Jatrabari, Motijheel, Segunbagicha, Gulistan, Paltan, Shantinagar and Khilgaon.

"They [candidate seekers] turn the city ugly....You cannot expect a good future from ugly minds," said Md Khairuzzaman, an official of a private bank.

Wishing anonymity, a caretaker at a house in Moghbazar, said he hung a

notice on their building's wall for not pasting posters, but to no avail.

"Look at the wall. How ugly it has been made," the caretaker said, adding, "I used to tear off the posters, but it didn't stop. Besides, the posters are now of the local influential people. So, I gave up doing it."

Under the relevant act, permission must be obtained from the Union Parishad and city corporation to poster non-designated places.

The act has given the city corporations a mandate to designate places for posters.

For Dhaka North, there are 20 such areas adjacent to -- Uttara BDR Bazar, Jasimuddin Road, Kalshi Road, Shialbari, Rainkhola, Notun Bazar, Banasree, Taltola Market, Nayatola Shishu Park, Tolarbagh, NITOR, two location near Farmgate's Ananda Cinema Hall, Mohammadpur Krishi Market, Mohadmmadpur Town Hall, Asad Gate, Khejur Bagan, Fertility Centre in Mohammadpur, Rayerbazar and Gulshan Shooting Club. However, DSCC are yet to designate any areas.

Moktar Sarder, councillor of ward no-35, whose poster has also been seen at different places, said, "As far as I know, not only Moghbazar, no ward has such designated place for posters."

"Our acting mayor [of DNCC] recently told us to remove all posters soon before announcing the election schedule. I have already given directives to do so," added Moktar, also organising secretary of AL's Dhaka city north unit.

Taking a bold move, DNCC, in December 2017, cancelled the licences of six renowned coaching centres for violating its instruction by not removing their illegal banners, posters, festoons and signboards from the city's roads.

But the authority continues to overlook the posters of local political leaders, including those of their councillors.

2 killed

FROM PAGE 20
Among the injured, Motalib died on way to hospital.

The injured were rushed to Sadar Hospital and among them, four were sent to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, he added.

Additional police members were deployed in the village to avert any untoward situation.

US mulls withdrawal from arms treaty over Russian 'violations'

AFP, Geneva

The United States yesterday hinted that it might withdraw from a landmark Cold War nuclear arms reduction treaty if Russia does not stop "violating" the accord.

Washington has complained for nearly two years that a ground-launched missile system deployed by Russia breaches the 1987 Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF).

"This situation is untenable, and we have to take measures to deal with this continued violation of this very important treaty," US ambassador on disarmament Robert Wood told reporters in Geneva.

He said that pushing Russia to "come back into compliance" with the INF would be a top US priority at disarmament meetings at the United Nations in New York next week.

But he added: "I just don't know how much longer we can continue to live up to our obligations under this treaty with Russia violating this treaty so blatantly and openly."

Russia has repeatedly insisted its 9M729 missile system does not breach the treaty, but Wood said Moscow had long denied the weapon even existed.

"The Russians continue to obfuscate, deny, because this is what they do best," he said.

His comments came after the US ambassador to Nato, Kay Bailey Hutchison, said Tuesday that Washington was looking to "take out the missiles that are in development by Russia".

She later clarified that she was not suggesting the United States would launch pre-emptive strikes on Russia, but underlining the need for Western allies to find ways to counter any escalation.

Nato leaders have also raised concerns about the 9M729 system, and have urged Moscow to engage in dialogue to ensure the future of the INF treaty.

No legal

FROM PAGE 20
challenge the HC order.

There is no legal bar for Shahidul to continue getting division facilities in jail following the SC order.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam argued for the government while Sara Hossain, Sharif Bhuiyan, Jyotirmoy Barua and Tanim Hossain Shawon represented Shahidul.

Shahidul has been getting division facilities in jail since September 7 following the HC order passed on September 5.

The 63-year-old photographer was arrested and sent to jail in a case filed under the Information and Communication Technology Act accusing him of spreading propaganda and false information against the government.

He was picked up by plainclothes men from his home in the capital's Dhanmondi on August 5. Police filed the case against him the following day.

The High Court yesterday continued for second day the hearing of the bail petition of Shahidul.

The bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice SM Mozibur Rahman fixed 2:00pm on Sunday for resuming the proceedings.

During yesterday's hearing, Mahbubey Alam argued that there were serious allegations against Shahidul that needed to be investigated.

He said Shahidul gave an interview to Al Jazeera English provoking people against the state during demonstrations for safe roads.

Shahidul's lawyer Sara Hossain said he has been languishing in jail for a long time in the case filed on false and baseless allegations.

Shahidul submitted the bail petition to the HC on September 18, saying that the allegations against him did not fall under section 57.

This was his second plea moved before the HC seeking bail in the same case.

A trial court rejected bail to the photographer on September 11.

EC decides

FROM PAGE 20
committee chief, chaired the meeting.

He said nine regional election officers had been recommended for promotion to the fourth grade and 29 officials to the fifth grade as deputy secretary.

Also, the job status of 37 officials has been recommended for upgrade to senior assistant secretary.

Mahbub told reporters that the EC would try to fill the newly created posts before the 11th parliamentary election scheduled to be held at the end of December.

Events unreal

FROM PAGE 1
In the case statement, Moniruzzaman claimed that leaders and activists of Hazaribagh thana unit BNP and some miscreants gathered on Salam Sarder Road, blocking traffic around 4:40pm on Sunday.

They were carrying sticks, brick chips and pieces of glass. As police tried to disperse them, the accused threw brickbats and broken glass at police. Later, other policemen rushed to the spot and chased the troublemakers away, the FIR said.

Police also arrested seven activists of Jubo Dal, BNP's youth front, from the scene. Police learned the identities of the other accused by quizzing the arrestees, it added.

Moniruzzaman also claimed in the case statement that he and other on-duty policemen were injured in the attack, but did not mention any number or names of his "injured" colleagues.

Over the last few days, The Daily Star spoke with at least 20 people who have shops or live within 100 yards of the spot to verify the police claim.

Each of them said they were unaware of any procession, rally, road blockade or attack on police that day.

"We did not see any BNP procession in the last couple of months. It is impossible that I would not notice such an incident. I open my shop early in the morning and close it deep into the night," said Sadek, whose teastall is just a few feet from the alleged scene.

Ekram Ali Mia, officer-in-charge of Hazaribagh Police Station, insisted they filed the case only because the "incident happened".

Police filed 38 similar cases against several thousand leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations within 12 hours of BNP's rally on Sunday at Shurawardy Udyan. At the rally, top BNP leaders instructed party activists to prepare simultaneously for movement and the national election.

About 300 BNP leaders and activists have been arrested in connection with these cases whose charges are almost identical.

In some of the cases, police claimed that the BNP men vandalised buses at different places, but failed to mention the registration number of any of those buses.

The Daily Star reporters visited the 10 spots named as "place of occurrence" in the cases filed with Hazaribagh, Dhanmondi, Kalabagan, New Market, Kamrangirchar, Motijheel, Paltan, Shahbagh, Ramna and Jatrabari police.

We spoke with more than a dozen roadside vendors, shop owners and their employees and local residents around each of those spots. None of them could recall any incident of attack on police, vandalism and obstruction of police duty.

However, two vendors near Matsya Bhaban, which is close to the rally venue, said that they "heard about a chaos" in the area. But they do not know of any attack on police or vandalism.

According to the case filed with Motijheel police, 111 known and many unknown leaders and activists of the BNP and its front organisations hurled brickbats and blasted crude bombs targeting police with an intent to kill, vandalised buses and obstructed police from doing their job at Dainik Bangla intersection at 5:30pm on Sunday.

"I am hearing about any such incident for the first time since Sunday from you," said Mozifuz Islam, owner of a restaurant at the intersection.

At least 50 other people said they neither saw nor heard of any such incident.

The New Market police sued 150-200 leaders and workers of the BNP and its front organisations.

According to the case statement, they blocked traffic, attacked police with brick chips and obstructed them from doing their job at Bata Signal at 5:30pm on Sunday.

But Mahfuzur Rahman, a security guard of an ATM booth near Bata Signal, said he did not see any violence, procession or rally in the area since the student protests for road safety ended in August.

"Some policemen took position here on Sunday afternoon and detained several pedestrians," said a roadside vendor, requesting anonymity.

In their case, the Paltan police said 62 identified and many unidentified

Biman fined

FROM PAGE 20
Sylhet Osmani International Airport on January 7 this year for Umrah after purchasing the tickets online. They were charged extra and the travel tax was taken from them by the Biman authorities at the airport before their flight to Saudi Arabia.

Foyez Ullah said Biman was instructed by the directorate that those who went to perform Umrah could not travel with tickets bought at the promotional price. But it was not clearly mentioned on the Biman website.

He said they told Biman that it should clearly state that tickets bought at the promotional price would not be applicable for those travelling to perform Umrah.

leaders and workers of BNP-Jamaat and the 20-party alliance put up a barricade at Purana Paltan intersection and obstructed vehicular movement at 3:15pm on Sunday.

The accused hurled brickbats at police indiscriminately to kill them, it said.

More than 30 shop owners, street vendors and locals The Daily Star talked to expressed their surprise when they heard about the police case. None of them saw or heard about anything like that.

"I saw a large number of police on the road since morning that day. In the afternoon police detained several people. There was no clash," said Abdul Kuddus, a hotelier at Puran Paltan intersection.

Mintu Majhi, a spectacle shop owner, also said he saw no incident involving police and BNP men. "I only saw police picking up some people passing through the intersection in the afternoon."

Similarly, locals in front of City College contradicted everything that police said in their case filed with Dhanmondi police.

According to the case statement, 22 named and 20-30 other unruly BNP supporters obstructed police from carrying out their duties and threw brick chips at them in front of the college at 4:45pm on Sunday.

This paper spoke with 15 people who have shops in the area or were present in front of the college at the time. None of them saw or heard anything of the sort.

The same is true about the case filed with Shahbagh police. The case statement claims 48 people, mostly BNP leaders and activists, attacked police with brick chips with an intent to kill in front of the High Court Mazar Gate at 5:30pm.

Duli Begum, who sells cigarettes near Mazar Gate and was at her shop at the time that day, said she did not see anything like that.

Eight other people in the area corroborated her version.

The police officers who filed the cases and the officers-in-charge of the stations said the cases were filed based on true incidents.

When The Daily Star shared its findings, they asked this correspondent to talk with their senior officers.

This paper called three deputy commissioners of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, but they declined to comment.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1
political party in the 2001 national election due to a deep-rooted conspiracy.

She said her government has been working not only for the present time, but also for the new and future generations so that they can have a better living condition.

The government reduced the poverty rate to 21 percent from 40 percent and increased the power generation capacity to 20,000 megawatts, the PM added.

Talking about the education sector, Hasina said the pass rate in the SSC examination increased significantly, but the students were still lagging behind in some subjects.

To overcome the situation, online digital lessons (Online Digital Path Sahayika) on Bangla, Mathematics and English have been introduced in this year's fair.

"We don't want anyone to lag behind. So, we've taken special steps to introduce online digital lessons in the development fair this year. It's a gift from me to the SSC examinees," Hasina said, adding that such online digital lessons on other subjects would be introduced in phases.

She said her government already made an online language app and people, particularly the overseas jobseekers, could use it to learn 10 languages.

Talking to the people of Rangpur's Pirganj upazila, the PM assured them of setting up an agricultural university in the northern region.

She also talked to people from Amtoli of Barguna, Fakirhat of Bagerhat and Lohagora of Narail.

In the capital, the fair is being held at the field of Dhaka International Trade Fair in Agargaon.

Successes achieved in different sectors under the leadership of Hasina are being exhibited in the fair.

Besides, information on 10 special initiatives taken by the PM, international recognitions, the visions 2021 and 2041, Bangabandhu Satellite, and mega projects, including the Padma Bridge and Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant have been displayed in the fair.

During the fair, the Directorate of Mass Communication will showcase the government's successes before the people through its district offices. Bangladesh Betar will air programmes on the government's development activities.

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Road Transport Minister Obaidul Quader, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, and prime minister's advisers HT Imam and Mashihur Rahman were present, among others.