

EC rejects

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directly or indirectly.

However, in the meeting at the Nirbachon Bhaban in the city's Agargaon, the EC yesterday approved two proposals of the reform committee that said animals could not be used to carry out election campaigns and clothes could not be used as election posters, EC Secretary Helaluddin Ahmed told reporters after the meeting.

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda presided over the meeting, while three other commissioners -- Rafiqul Islam, Kabita Khanam and Shahadat Hossain Chowdhury and senior officials of the EC were present. Another Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukdar was not present. He was abroad.

EC TO MEET 'PRESIDENT'

The chief election commissioner and four other commissioners are scheduled to call on President Abdul Hamid on November 1 at the Bangabhaban.

Talking to The Daily Star, president's Press Secretary Joyal Abedin said the commissioners would meet Hamid at 4:00pm.

Briefing reporters at the EC yesterday, its Secretary Helaluddin said the EC would announce the polls schedule after the meeting with the president. "The Election Commission will declare the election schedule on approval from the president."

'EC TO SERVE ONLY PEOPLE'

At a programme in the capital yesterday, CEC KM Nurul Huda asked the EC officials not to "entertain" political parties or politicians but to serve the people.

On the use of EVMs, he said, "The days of guarding the ballots the whole night have gone, and the Election Commission has to move towards the use of EVMs gradually."

Oikyafront

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Oikyafront leaders will visit the shrines of Hazrat Shahjalal (R), Shah Paran (R) and the grave of General MAG Osmani, he added.

Meanwhile, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader at a programme in the capital yesterday said police had given permission to Oikyafront, but its leaders were being unnecessarily dramatic.

He also said the prime minister instructed that everyone be allowed to hold rallies.

Police denied permission to Oikyafront to hold a rally on October 23 in Sylhet. The alliance then sought permission to hold a rally on October 24 and got rejected. Police suddenly gave the permission yesterday.

The Jatiya Oikyafront is an alliance of the BNP, Dr Kamal Hossain-led Jatiya Oikya Prokriya, ASM Abdur Rab's Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, and Mahmudur Rahman Manna's Nagorik Oikya.

The Oikyafront was formed on October 13 with the demands of a national election under a neutral government after dissolution of parliament and release of BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia from jail.

The alliance will invite four components of the 20-party alliance -- Liberal Democratic Party, Bangladesh Kalyan Party, Bangladesh Jatiya Party, and Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar-led faction) -- to join the rally.

After a meeting yesterday, ASM Abdur Rab said Dr Kamal would be the chief guest of the rally presided over by Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Ariful Haque.

He hoped that they would get the permit for holding a rally on October 27 in Chattogram too.

Rab urged the Election Commission to discuss with the alliance before declaring the polls schedule.

Don't step

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these man-made ponds full of colorful fish, visitors are required to take off their shoes and clean their feet. They can then enjoy a wide range of refreshments and snacks as Japanese carp and other small fish swim at their feet.

Amix Coffee is the brainchild of 23-year-old Nguyen Duoc Hoa, who wanted to take the concept of animal cafes to a whole new level. However, making her idea a reality wasn't the easiest thing in the world. Flooding, the first and second floor of the Amix Coffee building with around 10,000 liters of water and keeping it clean at all times proved challenging, but he eventually came up with viable solutions.

The cafe uses a triple filtration system to keep the water crystal clear at all times, and pumps that change between a quarter and half of the water on each floor to maintain optimum conditions for the fish.

However, preventing patrons from stressing the fish too much has proved much more difficult.

Hoa told Spanish news agency EFE that families with small children make up an important part of the clientele, and while most of them don't cause problems, some parents let their kids run after the fish, which isn't allowed.

4 bullet-hit bodies

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bodies of three jhut (scrap fabrics from garment factories) traders -- aged between 25 and 35 -- were recovered from Purbachal area in Narayanganj's Ruppangj.

Their family members had alleged that 15 to 20 men in vests inscribed with two letters "DB" picked them up from a bus near Paturia ferry ghat in Manikganj while they were returning from Jhenidah on September 13.

DEATHS IN N'GANJ

The four victims were shot in the head and there was no injury mark on other parts of their bodies, reports our Narayanganj correspondent, quoting the doctor at Narayanganj General Hospital who conducted "primary" autopsies.

"Each of them was shot once in the head from behind," said Dr Md Asaduzzaman, resident medical officer at the hospital.

Contacted, M Abdul Haque, officer-in-charge of Araihaazar Police Station, said that on information from locals, they went to the spot in front of Baitul Najat Jame mosque close to Dhaka-Sylhet Highway and recovered the bodies early in the morning.

Police also recovered two locally made pistols and seized a private car from there.

He said the victims' heads were smashed, and that they were aged between 30 and 42.

Talking to this newspaper, Reshma Akter, wife of Lutfor, said her husband worked as a driver for the last 20 years.

She further said her husband had been missing since 1:00am on Saturday and that she filed a general dairy with Rampura Police Station at 2:00pm that day.

After watching a news report on TV, she went to Narayanganj General Hospital and identified Lutfor's body.

She claimed that her husband had not been accused in any case, and was not involved in politics.

Seeking anonymity, a resident of Panchrukhi area said four gunshots were heard early in the morning, and later it was known that four bodies were found in the area.

Alamgir Hossain, who runs a tea stall at nearby Bantibazar, said there were two police patrol teams within one kilometre of the spot.

Asked, Abdullah Al Mamun, additional superintendent of police in Narayanganj, said they were looking into the role of the patrol teams and things would become clear after investigation.

He further said they suspected that there was a clash between criminals or robbers as pistols were recovered from the spot.

However, the Araihaazar OC said the victims could have been killed elsewhere and their bodies were dumped in Panchrukhi Paschim Para area.

The killers had smashed the victims' heads so that their identities could not be known, he said.

Mainul gets

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On Tuesday night, Mainul, also former adviser to a caretaker government, hurled abusive words at Masuda Bhatti and termed her "characterless" at the talk show -- Ekattor Journal -- hosted by Mithila Farzana on Ekattor TV.

Masuda Bhatti, acting editor of Dainik Amader Notun Somoy, and Sakhawat Hossain Shayanta were present at the live talk show.

Mainul was connected to the programme through videoconference.

During the discussion, Masuda referred to a video [which went viral on the social media] that showed Mainul addressing a programme of Islami Chhatra Shibir, expressing solidarity with the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami.

She posed a question during the programme: "As a result, many are commenting that you are in the alliance [Jatiya Oikya Front] as a representative of Jamaat-e-Islami... Is it true?"

"Giving no response, he made a verbal attack and tried to tarnish my image and dignity. He instructed me to pose questions like that of an 'educated and gentle woman,'" she said later in a statement.

She added Mainul also shouted and raised his fingers in efforts to stop her.

Mithila Farzana warned him that he should not hurl such verbal abuses at a guest during the show.

Each victim

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At least one expert each from the legal and medical professions was recommended to be in the seven-member body.

On April 1, the HC issued a rule asking officials concerned to explain as to why the same victims should not be given Tk 1 crore each in compensation after hearing a writ petition filed by lawyer Amit Das Gupta.

On March 5, twenty-four patients underwent cataract operations at the hospital and a day after the surgery, all the patients were released.

But a few hours after returning home, 20 of them felt severe pain in their eyes due to infection.

Police are investigating whether the dead had any links with gangs of robbers, added the official.

In the capital, the decomposed bodies of two unknown men were found in a field at sector-16 in Uttara area around 12:30am yesterday, said Nurul Muttakin, OC of Turag Police Station.

The bodies were sent to Suhrawardy Medical College morgue for autopsy.

The OC suspects the victims, aged between 30 and 35, were killed at some other place, and the killers then dumped their bodies in the field.

Morgue sources said they would be able to ascertain the cause of death of the victims, clad in T-shirts and jeans, after conducting some chemical tests on the decomposed bodies.

Talking to this newspaper, rights campaigner Nur Khan Liton said that many people suspect involvement of law enforcers in such killings, considering the similarities in a number of incidents in the past.

Without any investigation, they issue statements that the deaths resulted from gunfights between two groups. But in many cases, family members claimed the victims were picked up, Nursaid.

"This issue could be resolved by conducting independent investigations and taking legal action against those responsible," he added.

Md Omar Faruk, associate professor of criminology and police science at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, said such incidents could happen because of local political rivalry, conflicts among locals and attempts to cover-up extrajudicial killings.

"The state has to take responsibility for these incidents..." Faruk added.

At least 243 suspected drug dealers and peddlers were killed since the nationwide anti-narcotics drive began on May 4.

Police claimed that of them, at least 50 were killed in gunfights between groups of drug dealers.

South Africa

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They tried to come out of the shop, but failed and were burnt to death, said the witnesses.

Later, firefighters doused the flame and recovered the charred bodies.

The victims' family, however, alleged that criminals locked the shop from outside and set fire to it.

Daganbhuiyan Upazila Nirbahi Officer Saiful Islam Bhuiya said Feni district administration would take necessary steps to bring the bodies back home as soon as possible.

US to exit

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Gorbachev told Interfax news agency. "Is it really so hard to understand that dropping these agreements... shows a lack of wisdom?"

A Kremlin spokesman said Russian President Vladimir Putin would seek answers about the planned withdrawal when he meets John Bolton, Trump's national security adviser, for scheduled talks in Moscow this week.

US authorities believe Moscow is developing and has deployed a ground-launched system in breach of the INF treaty that could allow it to launch a nuclear strike on Europe at short notice. Russia has consistently denied any such violation.

Trump said the United States will develop the weapons unless Russia and China agree to a halt on development.

China is not a party to the treaty and has invested heavily in conventional missiles, while the INF has banned US possession of ground-launched ballistic missiles or cruise missiles of ranges between 500 and 5,500 km (311 and 3,418 miles).

Ryabkov, in comments reported by state-controlled RIA news agency, said if the United States withdrew, Russia would have no choice but to retaliate, including taking unspecified measures of a "military-technical nature".

"But we would rather things did not get that far," RIA quoted him as saying.

TASS news agency quoted him as saying withdrawal "would be a very dangerous step", and it was Washington and not Moscow that was failing to comply with the treaty.

He said the Trump administration was using the treaty in an attempt to blackmail the Kremlin, putting global security at risk. "...We will, of course, accept no ultimatums or blackmail methods," Interfax quoted him as saying.

British defence minister Gavin Williamson, in comments reported by the Financial Times, said London stood "resolute" behind Washington over the issue, and that the Kremlin was making a mockery of the agreement.

However, another of the United States' Nato allies, Germany, voiced misgivings.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said that for 30 years the treaty had been a pillar of Europe's security architecture. "We now urge the United States to consider the possible consequences," of quitting the pact, Maas said in a statement issued yesterday.

Imrul makes

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Making a comeback to the side after a year, Saifuddin -- whose previous best score with the bat was 16 -- registered his maiden half-century off 69 balls with the help of three fours and a six and along with Imrul's late surge, helped the Tigers add 85 runs in the last 10 overs of the innings.

Imrul, who reached his third ODI hundred off 118 balls, was eventually dismissed for a 140-ball 144, during which he hit 13 fours and six sixes. He departed in the 49th over but had done his job by then.

In reply, Zimbabwe never looked like chasing down the challenging target on a Mirpur pitch that is always more difficult to bat on in the second half and eventually reached 243 for nine. The margin of victory would have been much bigger if not for late heroics from Kyle Jarvis, whose 33-ball 37 reduced the margin after Zimbabwe were at one stage on 169 for eight.

Off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz once again proved his worth in the fifty-over format and bagged three wickets while left-arm spinner Nazmul Islam took two. Zimbabwe's rot was started by left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who uprooted left-handed opener Cephas Zhuwao's off stump to the delight of a near-capacity Mirpur crowd.

But earlier it was the 31-year-old Imrul who despite being in his 10th year of international cricket is yet to become a stalwart like Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim or Mahmudullah Riyad but his joint second-highest individual score for Bangladesh yesterday will certainly take him nearer.

The term 'comeback man' has been tagged to his name as whenever Imrul's back has been to the wall he has come up to deliver his best. He proved it recently upon his surprise return to the Tigers' squad in the UAE during the Asia Cup when he struck a crucial fifty against Afghanistan, but went on to fail in the next two games as pressure started to mount on him.

There was pressure too yesterday since Bangladesh opted to bat and once again failed to provide a good start after the dismissal of Liton Das, who was unable to put a high price tag on his wicket.

After striking his maiden ODI hundred against India in the final of the Asia Cup, which was followed by the country's fastest first-class double hundred, Liton threw away his wicket trying to clear the inner circle off seamer Tendai Chatara on four.

30-year-old debutant Fazle Mahmud can consider himself unlucky as he received a brilliant snorter from Chatara in just his fourth delivery to be caught behind without troubling the score as Bangladesh struggled on 17 for two.

Imrul, who was lucky to be dropped on seven, started the rebuilding process with the experienced Mushfiqur Rahimm and the duo added 49 runs for the third wicket before the latter was dismissed off a short pitched-delivery from leg-spinner Brandon Matuva which kissed his bat before it was grabbed by the wicketkeeper.

Imrul was then joined by Mohammad Mithun, who looked confident as the right-hander struck consecutive sixes off Sikandar Raza to reach the thirties in quick time before also departing on 37 off 40 balls.

Mahmudullah and Mehedi's quick dismissals made things worse for the Tigers before Imrul and Saifuddin took charge.

AL, JP

FROM PAGE 2

At least 20 AL men are in the race for securing nomination in six constituencies of the district.

However, Primary and Mass Education Minister and incumbent lawmaker Mostafizur Rahman is the lone AL candidate at Dinajpur-5.

BNP is in almost similar situation as at least 15 candidates are competing to get nomination there. The party's standing committee member Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman may get priority in Dinajpur-2.

Three JP men, including State Minister for LGRD and Co-operatives, Moshir Rahman Ranga, are campaigning for nomination at Lalmonirhat-1. JP Co-chairman GM Quader, also Ershad's younger brother, may contest at Lalmonirhat-3.

At least eight AL, 10 BNP and seven JP men are in the race for getting party nomination against three constituencies of the district.

1-yr-old dies

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Nabila's mother Nazma Begum told journalists that Nabila, she and her brother Rassel were returning from Newmarket on the rickshaw. When they were in front of Mohammadpur Police Station, a truck hit their rickshaw.

She said she along with Nabila fell to the ground and the rickshaw went over Nabila's body.

Nabila was first taken to a local hospital and then to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead at 11:30pm.

Inspector Abul Kalam Azad, officer-in-charge (Investigation) of Mohammadpur Police Station, said police could not arrest the driver or seized the vehicle.

Hasina seeks support

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centres in six districts, a multi-sport indoor complex at Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan (BKSP) and 73 youth and sport establishments in 38 districts via a videoconference from the Gono Bhaban in the afternoon.

Hasina categorically said there would be no hunger and poverty in the country if the AL was voted to power again in the upcoming general polls.

"If people cast their votes for boat, AL's election symbol, and if we get the chance to serve the country through forming the government, I can tell you, without any hesitation, there'll be no hunger and poverty by 2020."

She mentioned that the government had been able to reduce the poverty to 21 percent and would be able to cut more in the coming days.

The nation will celebrate the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the golden jubilee of our independence as a hunger and poverty-free country, Hasina said.

"We'll take the country forward further towards development, including development of communication system," she said.

Besides, she said the government always gave importance to sports and youth development.

The PM asked the youth to utilise their talents and thoughts for overall development of the country. "We hope they will think afresh for the rapid development of the country."

Noting that sports are closely related with education, the PM said the government was encouraging the youth in sports and games side by side with education so that they grew up with sound health and mind.

"The more students get involved in sports and cultural activities, the more they will be able to gain courage and get healthier ... it'll also help bring more pride for the country and the nation.

"This will also help the youth to refrain from stepping into wrong paths like terrorism, militancy and drugs," she added.

Hasina said her government had undertaken all necessary plans for turning Bangladesh into a developed and prosperous country, particularly keeping in mind the young generation.

"The young generation would get all opportunities for flourishing their talents and thoughts for the beautiful future of the country."

In this regard, the PM said steps had been taken to establish Youth Development Centres in every area of the country from where youth would get training to be self-employed.

"They will also be able to stand on their own feet by taking collateral loans from Karmashangthan Bank established by her government."

She said the government planned to establish BKSPs in all divisions, and the finance minister showed adequate interest in this regard. "We'll provide funds and the students who will come from there will be involved in sports."

Hasina said Bangladesh made remarkable development in all sectors, including sports and games, whenever her party came to power.

She also elaborated the steps of her government for the development of country's sports and games, including arrangement of various sports competitions and construction of many modern and international stadiums in different parts of the country.

As a result, Bangladesh has advanced a lot in cricket, football, hockey and chess, she said.

Wall uniting pupils

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"After returning from the training, I began thinking about starting something similar at my school to help out the students coming from ultra-poor families," said the headmaster, who paints in her free time.

"I bounced the idea off my colleagues and it was greeted with enthusiasm. We began the initiative on August 7."

They set up a shelf on a wall in a corridor of the school and named it the "Wall for Humanity". The teachers have instructed children to bring extra clothes, bags, sports goods and stationary that they no longer use and hang it on the hooks so that the children who actually need them can help themselves to the supplies.

"Some 50 items were deposited initially and the needy children who could not afford those have taken it from the shelf."

The senior students have been given the responsibility of maintaining supplies on the wall and they are doing a wonderful job, said Md Rahmat Ullah, an assistant teacher of the school.

"There are about 170 students in the school and around fifty percent come from poor families, and they need the support. The clothes and school supplies are a big help," said Poresh Chandra Sutradhar, a teacher.

Arin, another teacher at the school, said some poor students used to feel shy in taking the supplies. "But we are educating them on reusing clothes and ensuring that they are not hesitant."

This is a lesson on humanity for

The PM also praised Bangladeshi female players for their success in various international tournaments.

Hasina vowed to establish a prosperous and developed Bangladesh by 2041 and said that the government took the farsighted Delta Plan-2100 for establishing Bangladesh as the most developed country in the world.

Later, the PM exchanged views with a cross-section of people, including public representatives, students, teachers, government officials of Nilphamari, Mohammadpur of Magura, Barhatta of Netrakona and BKSP in Savar via a videoconference.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Biren Sikder joined the video conference from Mohammadpur, Deputy Minister Arin Khan Joy spoke from Barhatta and the BKSP director general from Savar.

Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel were present at the Gono Bhaban.

Making math

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classrooms using the method from January to June of 2019.

"We usually don't think out of the box. This time the government has given importance to a movement which is developed by the youth," Prof Iqbal said, adding, "The number of primary-level students in the country is higher than [the population of] quite a few countries. If we educate our children properly, no one will be able to stop us from progressing."

Nurunnabi said a baseline survey would be conducted after the project concludes, by the project team, to observe the children's abilities and their progress, which, in turn, would help in taking future decisions regarding the project.

So far, Bangladesh has taken part in 14 editions of the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) beginning from 2005, winning one gold medal, six silver medals, and 22 bronze medals.

In July this year, Ahmed Zawad Chowdhury won the first ever gold medal for Bangladesh in the 59th edition of IMO held in Romania. He was accorded for the achievement with a crest at yesterday's programme.

Each year, the Bangladesh Mathematical Olympiad Committee (BMOC) arranges a national-level festival, through which it selects students eligible for the IMO.

Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, president of BMOC, hoped the project would bring positive changes to the country's academic scene.

"It [the project] has to be planned in such a way that children can enjoy while enhancing their math skills," he said at the programme, adding, "Bangladesh is experiencing a demographic dividend. If we cannot educate our youth properly, we will not be able to reap its benefits."

Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal, director general of the Primary Education directorate, said national assessments suggested that the country's children were weak in mathematics and lacked interest in studying science.

However, Primary and Mass Education Minister Mostafizur Rahman said he was hopeful that the implementation of this project would increase enthusiasm in children about learning maths.

these children, said teachers.

The headmaster also managed uniforms for 27 students in class three, tiffin boxes and other educational resources for the poor kids with donations from her university friends, they added.

Sadia, a fifth grader, said, "We, the senior students, have been assigned to support this initiative. It is quite a humbling experience for all of us."

The school established in 1970 is running in a tin-shed house with four rooms, including an office room. The school runs in two-shifts to accommodate all the children.

A new building that will have six rooms is currently under construction; work on the building will be completed by December to accommodate more children.

Since joining as headmaster in October last year, Misty has undertaken several steps to better the quality of education at the school, said Md Tamizuddin, president of the school management committee.

"Twice a week, the teachers now check the children's uniforms for neatness and cleanliness. The good performers are presented with pens as gifts. She also initiated Pahela Boishakh celebrations at the school for the first time this year, which the children enjoyed a lot," added Tamizuddin.

Praising the initiative, Md Emdadul Hoque, upazila education officer of Kishoreganj Sadar, said such a move should be replicated in other schools of the district and the country as well.