



"We can't let trees be destroyed for using paper. We want to introduce EVM for saving the trees."

ELECTION COMMISSIONER RAFIQUL ISLAM SUPPORTING THE USE OF ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES IN THE POLLS



"Chhayanaut has played a vital role in promoting Gurudev Tagore's works in Bangladesh and globally. Chhayanaut was part of Bangladesh's freedom movement, even when Rabindra Sangeet was banned in East Pakistan!"

NARENDRA MODI TWEETS AFTER CHHAYANAUT WON THE TAGORE AWARD



"Failure of any nation to adhere to international norms and the rule of law undermines regional stability at a time when it is needed most."

US DEFENCE SECRETARY JIM MATTIS ON THE CRISIS TRIGGERED BY THE MURDER OF JAMAL KHASHOGGI. (PAGE 8)

AL 'plans to field dummy candidates'

Party insiders say this is to skirt criticism over uncontested polls if BNP, other parties boycott

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Keeping in mind the last parliamentary election that saw 154 candidates elected uncontested, the ruling Awami League now considers fielding dummy contenders alongside the party nominees in all the 300 constituencies.

If the BNP and other political parties boycott the upcoming national election at the last moment, the dummy candidates will run against those formally nominated by the AL, insiders say.

The BNP and some other opposition parties are yet to make it clear whether they would participate in the election, and the ruling party doesn't want its elected lawmakers to be labelled as uncontested like in the 2014 polls.

Apart from this, if the dummy candidates contest the election, it would ensure the presence of more polling agents of the party at the election centres, they added.

The fresh strategy was discussed at the joint meeting of the AL Central Working Committee, Advisory Council and the Parliamentary Party at the Gono Bhaban on Friday with party chief Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Meeting sources said Hasina, raising the issue, asked her party colleagues to prepare a list of dummy candidates

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Jatiya Oikyafront leader Dr Kamal Hossain addresses a rally of the newly floated alliance in Chattogram city's Kazir Dewri area yesterday.

COURTESY: BNP

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For dignity of vote
CEC on EVM use
STAR REPORT

The Election Commission yesterday exhibited the Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) in eight districts amid ongoing criticism and protests by opposition parties regarding its use in the upcoming national polls.

In almost all eight districts -- Chattogram, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Faridpur, Mymensingh, Rangpur and Cumilla -- people's participation in the exhibitions was low.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) KM Nurul Huda, in the Khulna exhibition, said the EVM system was being introduced as a permanent solution to casting vote and protecting the voters' interest by maintaining the

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PHOTO ON PAGE 16

Drug crimes now carry up to death

New narcotics bill passed in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Parliament last night passed the Narcotics Control Bill 2018, keeping the provision for the death sentence or life-term imprisonment for anyone found carrying more than 200 grams of yaba or more than 25 grams of heroin or cocaine.

The bill, placed by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, was passed by a voice vote despite objections from several lawmakers of the main opposition Jatiya Party.

The opposition MPs termed the bill "cruel" and said it could not be accepted as people would be given a death sentence or life term just for carrying such small amounts of narcotics.

They said that there were instances of law enforcers planting drugs on people and of innocent people being tricked into carrying the drugs but there was nothing in the bill for those.

"Even we see that police in many cases are also involved in victimising people in this regard," JP lawmaker Shamim Haider Patwari said while opposing the bill.

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Road transport workers go on strike today

Demand changes to new law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road transport workers will observe a 48-hour work abstention from 6:00am today to press home their eight-point demand mainly related to bringing amendments to the recently passed Road Transport Act 2018.

The brunt of the strike will be borne by people across the country, as the availability of public transport will be scarce from today.

Leaders of the Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation announced the strike yesterday at a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital, attended by several thousand workers, including many from outside Dhaka. The area was blocked for around three hours from 3:00pm, resulting in long tailbacks on the roads.

At the rally, some leaders, including Sadikur Rahman Hiru, vice-president of the federation, threatened an indefinite

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AnonTex riding on BB favours

Central bank accepts the loan defaulter's proposal for taking loans from other state banks, rescheduling Janata loans

JEBUN NESA ALO

Bangladesh Bank has given AnonTex, which took more than Tk 5,500 crore from Janata Bank through serious irregularities, a controversial permission to take more loans from other state-owned banks as well, reschedule its loans and value its assets afresh to make it look like a healthy company.

The garment exporter has Tk 557 crore defaulted loans with Janata Bank.

AnonTex's business style came under question when a BB investigation in January this year revealed that it was given loans worth Tk 5,500 crore, 13 times the ceiling set by the central bank, with approval from Janata's board.

Now the central bank itself seems to be ignoring its own investigation, allowing the company more loans without ensuring that

the additional money slopped on the company would not also get stuck like the previous loans.

Interestingly, the latest green signal from the BB came even though Janata Bank's board did not consent to the company's proposal for rescheduling its loans and revitalisation of its assets.

Such an approval from the BB without the consent of the client's bank is against banking norms.

Bangladesh Bank's actions are even more paradoxical as two of its officials sent two separate letters with completely opposite directives.

On October 3, its Deputy General Manager Mizanur Rahman Akon sent a letter, asking Janata to accept AnonTex's proposal.

He sent the letter without approval from

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AGE LIMIT 35 DEMO
People suffer as Shahbagh blocked for several hours

DU CORRESPONDENT

Commuters suffered delays as a group of jobseekers blocked the capital's busy Shahbagh intersection for hours yesterday demanding extension of age limit to 35 from 30 for entering government jobs.

Some 500 students from different colleges and universities, under the banner of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Parishad, joined the protest and formed a large circle to block the roundabout around 12:30pm.

A number of demonstrators sat in the middle of the road and chanted slogans in support of the demand. They were continuing the agitation as of filing this report at 8:00pm.

Sanjoy Das, convenor of the Chhatra Parishad, said they would continue their demonstration all night long.

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A crowd gathers on the premises of Taltoli Upazila Government High School ground in Barguna as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses a rally there yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Vote in AL again for development

Urge PM at Barguna rally

UNB, Barguna

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought reelection of Awami League to uphold the global recognition of Bangladesh as a role model of development.

"Today, we've earned global respect for Bangladesh as a role model of development. We'll have to keep it up. So, I want you all to cast votes for Awami League for another term," she said.

The PM was addressing a public rally at Taltoli Upazila Government High School ground here.

Hasina, also the AL president, said the living standard of people improved whenever her party came to power.

"Whenever I came to power, I wanted the people of the country to get an improved and decent life as desired by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

She said the "boat" electoral symbol of AL means development and the whole Bangladesh now sees a massive development as people cast votes for "boat".

Criticising the two top BNP leaders, Hasina said Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman had tried to kill her by carrying out the August-21 grenade attack.

"What did BNP do? They had made Bangladesh a country of militancy and terrorism. They had made Bangladesh world champions in the corruption perception index for five times.... they had pushed the country towards destruction."

The PM said her government recognised Quami madrasa education and was constructing 560 model mosques across the country.

She urged all, including guardians, teachers, imams of mosques, religious clerics, to keep a watch on the children so that they don't get involved in militancy and drug.

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