

AL conspiring to hold 'controlled' polls: LDA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Left Democratic Alliance (LDA) yesterday alleged that ruling Awami League-led alliance is hatching a conspiracy for holding a "controlled and one-sided election" again like the one of January 5, 2014.

LDA, a coalition of eight left-leaning political parties, also alleged that the AL-led government did not form an election-time government by dissolving the incumbent parliament, and did not reform the Election Commission to ensure a free and fair election.

Candidates of LDA from constituencies in Dhaka made the allegation at a rally, after placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital to kick off their campaign.

Speaking at the rally, Shah Alam, coordinator of LDA, said doubt is rising whether people of the country will be able to vote at the upcoming election.

"People want to get rid of bipartisan politics by AL and BNP, and we will try to fulfill people's demands as an alternative force," said Shah Alam, also general secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB).

Naima Khaled Monika, a candidate of Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) from Dhaka-16, said that holding a free and fair

election depends on elimination of three factors: politics of looting, muscle power and spending of black money during the election.

"We will try to change the whole system if we are voted to power," she added.

Speaking at the rally, Ahsan Habib Lablu, a candidate of CPB for Dhaka-13, vowed to bring reforms in the country in the light of the ideology of the Liberation War, by establishing four basic principles of the constitution properly.

Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganasmahati Andolon and also a candidate for Dhaka-12, urged countrymen to cast vote for the alliance's candidates to build up an effective democracy and to ensure development for all, including marginalised communities of the country.

Among others, eight other candidates from different constituencies under Dhaka, CPB president Mujahidul Islam Selim, BSD General Secretary Khalekuzzaman, Revolutionary Workers' Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Saiful Huq and Ganatantrik Biplobi Party General Secretary Moshrefa Mishu were also present.

Meanwhile, in a press release, LDA said its election manifesto will be announced at a press conference at Mukti Bhavan in the capital's Purana Paltan today.



Campaigners of Left Democratic Alliance distribute leaflets among prospective voters, seeking support for their candidates in the national polls, after placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar, inset, to start their campaign.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



2 'militants' arrested for plotting to kill filmmaker Khijir Hayat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police claims to have arrested two alleged members of banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team on charge of plotting to kill filmmaker Khijir Hayat Khan.

Emdadul Islam alias Mehedi Hasan, 30, and Abu Bakar alias Fahim Abdullah, 30, were arrested around 3:45pm on Monday, said Mohibul Islam Khan, deputy commissioner of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

The duo followed Khijir to his village home in Cumilla recently, to execute their plan, he said.

CTTC officials said the "militants" created a group on Telegram [a messaging app] and communicated with each other to plan the murder as they believed the film "Mr. Bangladesh" -- written jointly by Khijir Hayat Khan and Hasnat Piash, and starring Khijir -- goes against their ideology and "jihad" in Islam.

The film, directed by Abu Akhter Ul Iman, hit movie theatres



Khijir Hayat Khan

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Another 5m euros for Rohingyas

The fund from European Commission to go for food assistance

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The European Commission (EC) has released an additional €5 million to provide food assistance for the around 700,000 Rohingya refugees who are seeking shelter in Bangladesh.

In May, the EC had announced to provide €40 million in humanitarian aid for the Rohingyas.

"...Food assistance is an absolute necessity, and we will continue to support both Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh throughout this crisis," said Christos Stylianides, European commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, in Brussels.

The additional funding will provide urgent food assistance to the refugees, while ensuring access to food throughout the camps, makeshift settlements and the host communities, said an EC press release issued in Brussels yesterday.

Bangladesh saw a mass influx of Rohingya refugees since August 2017, who were fleeing persecution in their homeland in Myanmar.

€115 million for the Rohingyas refugees and the host communities in Bangladesh.

EU PROVIDES US \$690,000 FOR UNICEF BANGLADESH

Meanwhile, the European Union (EU) has pledged to contribute over US \$690,000 to support Unicef's efforts in protecting rights of children affected by migration in Bangladesh.

Over the next three years, the contribution will directly reach an estimated 12,000 children who are migrating or have been forcibly displaced within their own countries or across borders.

Unicef is implementing the programme across multiple regions of

south, southeast and central Asian countries to protect children whose parents or caregivers left them behind and migrated -- often in search of better economic opportunities to support their families.

Ambassador Rensje Teerink, the head of delegation of the EU to Bangladesh, said, "All children, regardless of their migration status, must be protected. We have to ensure their access to education, healthcare and sanitation, social and legal services, and psychological support."

Unicef Bangladesh Representative Edouard Beigbeder said, "Poverty, physical or sexual abuse, and peer influence are the three major factors that push children to migrate from rural to urban areas and to further risk of trafficking. These children are deprived of essential services."

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PM keeps 2 ministries

Distributes portfolio following resignation of 4 technocrat ministers

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has distributed the portfolio of four ministries following resignation of the four technocrat ministers, according to a Cabinet Division announcement yesterday.

The premier will hold the portfolios of Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology in addition to her existing responsibilities.

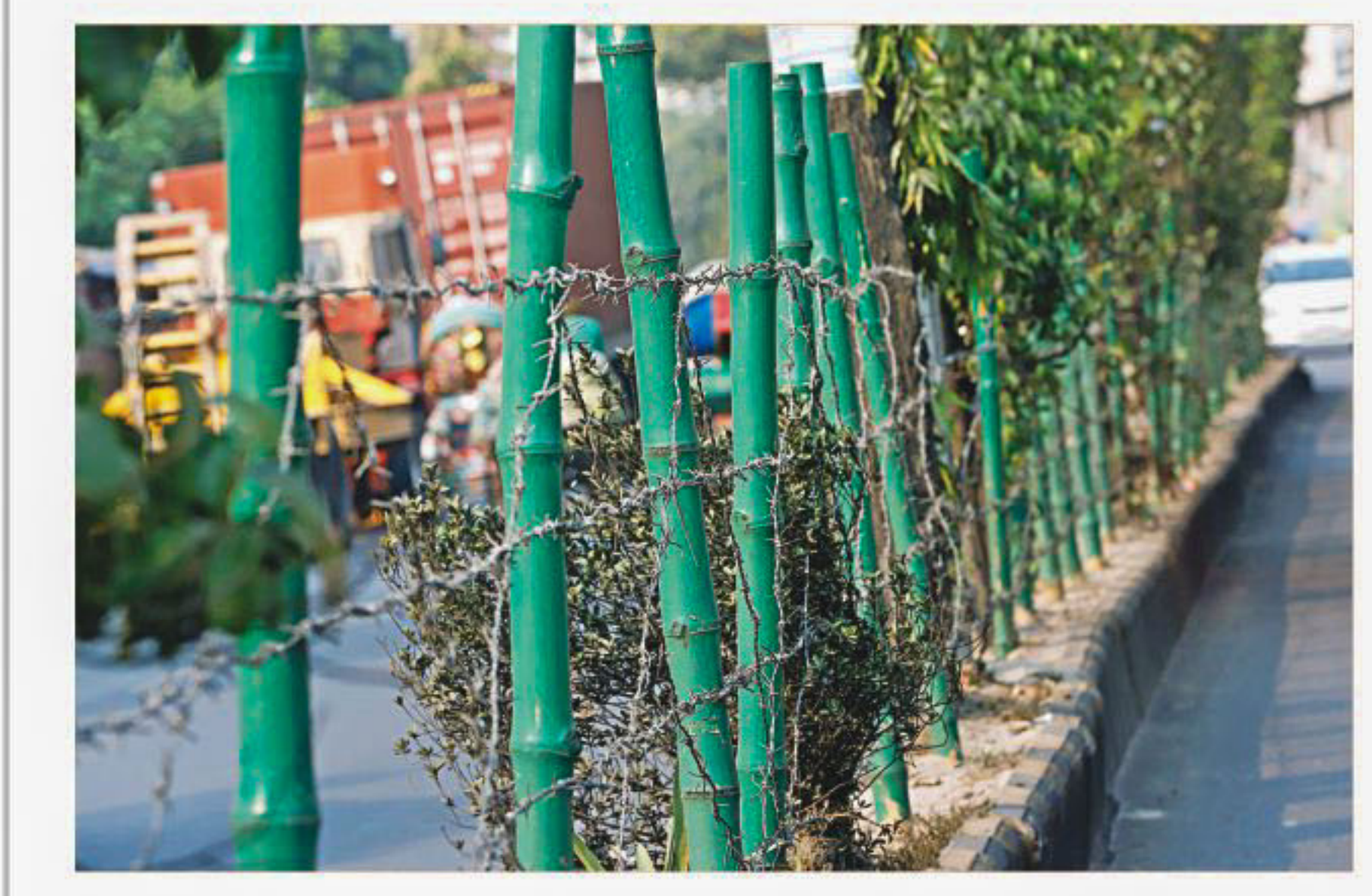
She was currently holding the portfolio of Cabinet Division, Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces Division.

Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives Khandker Mosharraf Hossain was given the additional responsibility of Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment.

Minister of Liberation War Affairs AKM Mozammel Huq was given additional responsibility of Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The four technocrat ministers tendered their resignation on November 6, following a directive of the prime minister.

The resignation of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Nurul Islam, Religious Affairs Minister Principal Matiur Rahman, Science and Technology Minister Yafesh Osman and Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology Minister Mustafa Jabbar was made effective on Monday.



Citizens say the median fencing is not sturdy enough, and will fall apart within months.

PHOTO: STAR

A half-baked solution to traffic indiscipline

DSCC's bamboo and barbed-wire road median fences falling apart

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

An initiative by Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), in an apparent push to reinforce traffic discipline on city streets following protests in August, has raised eyebrows and questions.

In a show of urgency, DSCC recently raised fencing on 28 spots across 17 kilometres of road medians with barbed wires held by bamboo poles, at an estimated cost of Tk 31 lakh.

Within three months of their installation, parts of the fencing are already falling apart.

This correspondent visited several spots including Maniknagar, Tantibazar, Shahjahanpur and Science Lab recently, and found that some bamboo sticks have already been displaced and barbed wires snapped at several places.

Apart from that, iron shafts have been used in some places to close off previously open median crossings, while rectangular hollow iron bars and rods were used on road dividers in some places to prevent pedestrians from crossing.

A MIXED REACTION

"Most of these bamboo sticks will collapse during monsoon," said pedestrian Md Alimuzzaman, a student of

Dhaka University.

On the contrary, Shihab Ahmed, a banker who lives in Shahjahanpur, praised the initiative, saying, "People have now stopped crossing the road here and there."

"It's risky for drivers when people run through the middle of the road. The fencing has stopped this practice," said Hafizur Rahman, a car driver.

However, some city dwellers are not happy with the new initiative, saying that DSCC has installed those "haphazardly".

At Doyaganj intersection, this correspondent found no opening on the median for pedestrians to cross the road. DSCC has blocked off the entire median in one place, which has left pedestrians no choice but to cross the road there amid moving traffic.

"At the time of crossing the road, people who are cautious usually take a pause on the road median to check on traffic. But there's no such scope here," said Azmat Ali, a local shopkeeper.

Skeptical of the initiative's benefit, Rokan Uddin, a resident of Mugda, said, "It's an eyewash and a waste of public money."

"I can guarantee that if you come here a few months later, you'll find no barbed wire or bamboo sticks," he said.

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HC acquits six in Kalidas Boral murder case

Death penalty of two other upheld

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday acquitted six convicts in connection with the murder of Advocate Kalidas Boral in 2000.

The six acquitted are: Md Alamgir Siddiqui, Nasir Siddiqui, Swapan, Shawkat Siddiqui, Babul Mollah and Manik.

Alamgir and Shawkat are now behind bars while the rest are on the run, said Advocate GM Babul Akter, a lawyer for the defendants.

The court also upheld the conviction and death penalty of two others in the case. They are: Saidul Islam and Saidur Rahman.

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JSC, JDC, PEC, Ebtedayee results Dec 24

UNB, Dhaka

The results of Junior School Certificate (JSC), Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) and Primary Education Completion (PEC) and its equivalent Ebtedayee examinations will be published on December 24.

The results will be handed over to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the morning, according to sources at the education ministry. The premier will also inaugurate the distribution of free textbooks of 2019 at the same time.

Later, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid and Primary and Mass Education Minister Mostafizur Rahman will announce the results officially in separate press briefings at their ministry offices.

JSC and JDC examinations were held from November 1 to November 15 with participation of 26,70,333 examinees.



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