

Postponed CCC polls on Jan 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Postponed Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) election will be held on January 27, the Election Commission said yesterday.

It also announced the schedule for third phase of election to 64 municipalities, fixing the date for January 30.

EC Senior Secretary Md Alamgir made the announcement. He said no new election schedule will be needed for CCC polls as it was postponed due to the pandemic.

The EC on March 21 postponed the polls, slated for March 29.

According to the EC office, six mayoral candidates including Awami League's Rezaul karim and BNP's Shahadat Hossian, 56 candidates in reserved seats for women and 161 councillor candidates in general wards were vying in the election.

Meanwhile, Alamgir said third phase elections to municipalities will be held on January 30. The last date for submitting nomination papers is December 30, the returning officers will scrutinise those on January 3, and the last date for withdrawal of candidacy is January 10.

Some 61 municipalities will go to vote on January 15, with 25 another municipalities going to polls on December 28.



It's getting colder, and what's winter without a fluffy floral blanket? Customers crowd Baitul Mukarram market yesterday to check out different designs of the quintessential *kombol* and haggle for a good price.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Pakistani war criminals must be tried: speakers

Nirmul Committee calls for holding trial of Pak army, orgs involved in '71 genocide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee yesterday demanded trial of the Pakistan army high command and other organisations involved in the genocide committed during Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971.

Trial of top war criminals have been held at International Crimes Tribunal, but trial of masterminds behind the genocide -- Pakistan army -- and different organisations have not started yet, said Shahriar Kabir, president of the committee, according to a press release.

"Now, time has come to revive the second tribunal and hold the trial soon for the sake of justice and humanity," he added.

The pro-Liberation War platform yesterday held an online discussion on "Genocide of 1971: Trial of Pakistani High Command and Organisations", marking Martyred Intellectuals Day. Its central leader and former prosecutor of ICT Barrister Tureen Afroz read out a keynote paper on the topic.

The event's chief guest, veteran Awami League leader and a key organisers of the Liberation War Tofail Ahmed also said trial of Pakistani war criminals must be held and recognition of the genocide must be secured.

Family members of martyrs -- including lawmaker Aroma Dutta (granddaughter of Dhirendranath Dutta); Shilpi Chowdhury (granddaughter of Nutan Chandra Singha); Meghna Guhathakurta (daughter of Prof Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta); Asif Munier (son of Munier Chowdhury); Nuzhat Chowdhury (daughter of Alim Chowdhury); Shomi Kaiser (daughter of Shahidullah Kaiser); Tanveer Haider Chowdhury (son of Prof Mofazzal Haider Chowdhury); Fahim Reza Noor (son of journalist Sirajuddin Hossain); Shawan Mahmud (daughter of Altaf Mahmud) and Madhurbati Dey (granddaughter of Madhusudan Dey) also spoke.

Papia, husband remanded in graft case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Jubo Mohila League's suspended leader Shamima Nur Papia and her husband Mofizur Rahman Sumon on a three-day remand each in a case filed for amassing about Tk 6.24 crore illegally.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Shahin Ara Momta produced them before the court. In the remand prayer, Momta said the couple amassed money illegally and needed to be remanded to find sources of the wealth.

On August 4, ACC filed the case against the couple.

On October 12, the two were jailed for 20 years in another case filed for possessing illegal firearms.

Shut down illegal brick kilns in Ctg in seven days: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned of the government to shut down illegal brick kilns in Chattogram in a week in order to save the environment.

The HC also asked the authorities to find out those involved in damaging farmland and hills, burning woods and polluting environment by running illegal brick kilns and to submit a list of their names and addresses to this court in 30 days.

The court also issued a rule asking the government to explain in four weeks why its inaction to shut down the illegal brick kilns should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim came up with the order and rule following a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), seeking necessary directives.

Following newspaper reports on running of illegal brick kilns and serious air pollution, the HRPB submitted the petition to the HC on November 29 seeking its order on the authorities to shut down the illegal brick kilns at different upazilas including Lohagara in Chattogram.

While hearing the petition, petitioner's lawyer Manzill Murshid told the HC that hundreds of illegal brick kilns are running in different areas in Chattogram, but officials of the government are not taking necessary action against them.

Worker dies as fire guts tin-shed house in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth was burnt to death in a fire at a tin-shed house in Dhaka's Kadamtoli area early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Delwar Hossain (19), a worker at a steel mill factory.

The fire originated on the first floor of the tin-shed house around 3am.

Twenty-one rooms of the house were gutted before two units of fire fighters brought the blaze under control through a two-hour effort, said Lima Khanam, duty officer of the Fire Service and Civil Defence Control Room.

Later, firefighters recovered the charred body of Delwar from a room on the first floor. Police later sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Deceased's brother Jakir Hossain said Delwar, youngest among two siblings, used to live in the room with five others and was asleep when the fire started spreading.

His roommates escaped unhurt as they were occupied in night-shift duties.

Fashion brands see slow sale ahead of Victory Day

MANNAN MASHHUR ZARIF, LS Desk

Over the last two decades, Victory Day became a festivity of sorts for a lot of urban people. To cater to the growing demand, prominent fashion brands have been bringing out collections themed in red and green, and in the last few years, sales surrounding the day have consistently been high, industry insiders said.

"In terms of sales, Victory Day is one of the biggest events," said Soumik Das, CEO of popular brand Rang Bangladesh.

The same can't be said for 2020, though. While even the most fashionable labels have kept their offerings to a minimum, smaller boutiques have skipped the occasion altogether.

Walking down Bailey Road on the penultimate Friday before Victory Day, this correspondent found stores on the otherwise popular shopping area relatively empty.

Even though special offer flyers were hung across the street and mannequins stood on pavements sporting red and green, all efforts failed to bring in customers.

"The demand for clothes has come down to under 50 percent (of pre-Covid levels). Demand for Victory Day attires is even lower,"

said a staffer of a well-known brand, requesting anonymity.

But lower demand is not the only reason behind fewer new collections in the market. "There's a shortage of labour, which is playing a significant role in downsizing our Bijoy Dibosh collection," Rang's Soumik Das said.

Companies are trying to adapt to this by employing alternative strategies. Bishwo Rang is reintroducing well-liked designs from the past rather than splurging on new designs, Bashar -- manager at a Bishwo Rang outlet at Bailey Road -- told The Daily Star.

As physical stores perform poorly, some are resorting to e-commerce to sell their items.

"Sales have been poor in our stores, but the response is better online," Soumik Das said.

Khalid Mahmood Khan, one of the founders of Kay Kraft, said in previous years, a bulk of Victory Day merchandise were bought by institutions organising programmes to mark the day. Bulk sales have been non-existent this year.

Earlier this month, the government announced of limited scale celebrations of Victory Day, and urged people to strictly maintain health guidelines while marking the occasion.



A group of people, from youngsters to the elderly, were seen trying to leap over a coupler between two train wagons to cross over. After the train got derailed yesterday at Chattogram city's Salt Gola Crossing area, the long queue of containers remained stationary on MA Aziz Road for half an hour, creating tailbacks stretching up to three kilometres.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Another 'war-time' bomb found at airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another 250 kg bomb was found buried at the construction site of the capital's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport's third terminal yesterday.

According to Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), Bangladesh Air Force recovered the bomb from the airport. The bomb disposal unit of Air Force's Bangabandhu Base rushed to the spot and defused the bomb, ISPR said.

It was taken away to be dismantled in a safe place, ISPR said in a press release.

Bomb experts believe it was dropped sometime during the Liberation War in 1971, it said.

The bomb was recovered at 8:30am, Officer-in-Charge of Airport Police Station BM Forman Ali confirmed to The Daily Star.

In fear, they flee ancestral homes

Minorities in Barishal village 'harassed, threatened'

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

People of the minority community in Jambudwip village of Barishal's Banaripara upazila are passing days amid insecurity as they claim that they are being continuously harassed by an influential group.

Recently, they alleged, some law enforcers have joined hands with the group to intimidate them.

The situation worsened so much that male members of the community have fled the area to avoid police harassment and arrest since a case was filed against them on November 27.

Villagers alleged that the "false" case was lodged only to harass them.

Locals said around 1,500 people belonging to Hindu community have been living in the village for centuries.

The "intimidation and harassment" started over a land-related dispute between a group of minority people and one Farjana Mehajabin Mili Ahmed, wife of retired district Judge Md Fakhruddin.

A case was filed over the issue in 2003

and its trial was ongoing.

Mili with the help of some local goons had been harassing the minorities for a long time, alleged locals.

But it intensified after a court in Barishal delivered a verdict in the case on October 22, which went in favour of the minorities.

On November 27, Mili filed a case with Banaripara Police Station alleging that minority community people attacked on one of her residences in the village, vandalised and looted valuables on November 5.

Around 30 to 35 Hindus were made accused in the case.

"Since filing of the case, police have frequently been visiting the area and intimidating the men. Now, almost all the men have left the area and went into hiding to avoid arrest," said Hemangini Mistry, a resident of the village.

"We are panicked. They (Mili's associates) may attack any time. On Sunday morning, some men came to the village and took away our logs," said Saraswati Mistry (75). "Now is the time to harvest. But the men are not

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Expired meds worth Tk 30cr destroyed in 11 months: DGDA

STATES CORRESPONDENT

The Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) yesterday submitted a compliance report to the High Court, stating that the government has removed and destroyed expired medicine worth Tk 30.14 crore across the country from January to November this year.

Besides, Tk 7.26 crore has been fined and collected from the dishonest traders for storing, supplying and selling expired medicine through conducting mobile courts between January and October this year, DGDA said in the report.

A total of 1,437 cases were filed with mobile courts in connection with the incidents, the report added.

Deputy Attorney General Abdullah Al Mahmud Bashar placed the compliance report on behalf of DGDA to the HC bench of Justice Md Khasruzzaman and Justice Md Mahmud Hassan Talukder during hearing a pending writ petition.

After examining the compliance report, the HC bench ordered DGDA to continue drives against storing, supplying and selling of expired medicine and to destroy those, and to submit another compliance report to the court in next three months.

ROHINGYA RELOCATION

Clear example of govt's diplomatic failure: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday expressed reservations about relocation of Rohingyas to Bhashan Char.

"The process of relocating some Rohingya refugees to Bhashan Char, ignoring objections of the United Nations and other international organisations, is a clear example of the boundless diplomatic and political failures of the present government, which has no public mandate," Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party said at a press conference at BNP Chairperson's Gulshan office.

He alleged that the government has taken the Bhashan Char project to indulge in corruption and to cover up its failures to repatriate Rohingyas to their motherland in Myanmar.

The BNP leader said construction of such permanent housing in Bhashan Char may create new obstacles to resolving the main problem. He feared that the permanent infrastructure that has been built and is being built in Bhashan Char for refugees may lead to the perception among Myanmar authorities that Bangladesh is accepting the Rohingyas permanently.

He said it is now necessary to mount multidimensional pressure on Myanmar with the help of the UN and other international organisations to overcome the Rohingya crisis instead of wasting time in the name of relocating refugees.

On another note, Fakhru announced that BNP will stage protest on December 21 across the country, against border killings.

"Black flags will be hoisted at all offices of the party across the country, including its Nayapaltan central office, on December 21 while BNP leaders and activists will wear black badges or black outfits on the day," he said.



Badda's Shafiqul Islam (55) has been suffering from fever for the last one week. He had come to Mugda General Hospital around 7am yesterday to get himself tested. But tickets wouldn't be given out until 9:40am, and the waiting started getting to Shafiqul. Around 8:30am, he fell quite unwell and had to lie down on this rickshaw van, next to the gate of the hospital. He was later discovered and taken to the emergency room by journalists and Ansar personnel. With the recent rise in Covid-19 cases, incidents like this may rise too unless proper measures are taken to make testing more patient-friendly.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN