



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



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"I don't regret the decision to put Australia's national interest first."
AUSSIE PM SCOTT MORRISON DEFENDS HANDLING OF FRENCH SUBMARINE DEAL



"After reopening schools, students are following health guidelines but in most places guardians are flouting the guidelines."
EDUCATION MINISTER DIPU MONI



"The proposed personal data protection bill is nothing but a conspiracy to snatch the rights of citizens' freedom of expression."
BNP SECRETARY GENERAL MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR

Apathy eats away vote

Culture of being elected unopposed rampant in by-polls, local body elections

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

In an ominous sign for democracy, the practice of a candidate being elected unopposed has gripped the parliamentary by-polls as well as local body polls.

Even a few years ago, these elections would be held amid much enthusiasm and fanfare irrespective of how the national polls had gone.

But lately, the perception runs deep that someone participating in an election on the ruling party ticket would win no matter what. This has led to widespread apathy among both voters and prospective candidates, keeping them away from participating in the democratic process.

Experts opined that the election culture of the country has already been destroyed and so many being elected uncontested further underlines the flaws in the electoral system.

They also blamed the Election Commission's failure to ensure free and impartial elections, which has led to people and many political parties being disinterested in participating.

Talking to the Daily Star, Election

Commissioner Mahub Talukdar said, "It is an ominous sign that all political parties are not participating in elections. We need to know why a candidate would be elected unopposed."

"We want elections to be competitive with all political parties joining in. But we cannot interfere on the internal activities of political parties, including their decision of whether or not to participate in the elections."

Today's elections of 160 union parishads (UPs) could be a good example of the prevalent system of being elected unopposed.

The polls are part of the first phase of UP elections that were postponed due to the pandemic.

Election Commission data shows that in 160 union parishads, 45 chairman candidates were elected uncontested, which means around 29 percent chairmen were elected without a single vote.

Out of the 45, 38 were in Bagherhat. Of them, all but one was from the ruling Awami League, reports out Bagherhat correspondent.

Sixty-five UPs of the district are going to

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Moments after a serious tragedy was averted in front of Suhrawardy hospital: The traffic sergeant taking apparently his daughter to school on the motorcycle was riding on the wrong side of the road when the car, making a legal U-turn, managed to stop inches away from the bike. Nevertheless, traffic cops present in the vicinity penalised the car driver. The traffic sergeant's bike is not even registered. It just says "DMP E.N: 364311" on the number plate.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SPECIAL INOCULATION CAMPAIGN

Twice a week at unions, upazilas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will soon run a "Special Inoculation Campaign" during which people even at the unions would be able to get Covid shots twice a week.

The move is apparently being made so that the government can achieve its target of administering two crore Covid shots every month.

The health assistants will run the special campaign on days of the week they do not have any regular vaccination work, decided a meeting held at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) yesterday evening.

People aged 60 and above will be able to get registered on the spot on one of the two days.

"We have ensured continuous supply of vaccines in the coming days. In continuation of this, we have planned to administer around two crore shots of Covid-19 vaccines each month, including one crore through special campaign," Prof

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EVALY SCAM AFTERMATH

Customers, sellers seek legal recourse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aggrieved customers and sellers are now out to file cases against the controversial e-commerce platform Evaly, hoping to get back their hard-earned money.

Saad Rahman, a customer of Evaly and a resident of the capital's Nawabganj, yesterday came to Gulshan Police Station to file a case against Evaly CEO Mohammad Rassel, Chairman Shamima Nasrin, its officials and goodwill ambassadors.

He claimed he paid Tk 3.15 lakh for a motorbike in April but is yet to get the product or the refund.

Gulshan police suggested that he go to Dhanmondi Police Station as the Evaly office is not under its jurisdiction.

Another customer in Jashore, Jahangir Alam Chanchal, went to Kotwali Police Station on Saturday to file a case against Evaly owners over similar allegations. He had paid Tk 1.30 lakh in May but yet to get the product.

Kotwali police, however, didn't register his complaint as a case. "The complaint - he wants to recover his money - was incomplete and could not be registered as a case. We suggested he talk to other Evaly customers in the area, who are facing similar troubles, to file a complaint together. Then we will decide whether to file a case," Tajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Amid this situation, customers and sellers, whom Evaly owes crores of

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KHALEDA'S JAIL TERM

Suspended for another 6 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has extended for six months the suspension of the jail term of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said this while briefing reporters at his secretariat office yesterday.

Khaleda will receive treatment at home and she would not be able to go abroad, he said.

The former prime minister was released from prison on March 25 last year after she was in jail for 776 days.

The decision was made as per section 401

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Govt mulls new citizens' database

BBS to collect data from all; each citizen will have a unique 16-digit identification number

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics is going to develop what officials said would be an extensive and comprehensive identity database containing demographic and biometric particulars of every resident of the country.

The BBS will collect the data to develop the National Population Register (NPR) where demographic and biometric data will be stored permanently.

The citizens will be provided with a unique 16-digit identification number, BBS officials said.

The new initiative was discussed at a workshop organised by BBS at the planning

ministry.

Planning Minister MA Mannan said the issue of privacy should be dealt with caution while developing the NPR.

Shamsul Alam, state minister for planning, said implementation of such projects tends to get delayed and a deadline should be set.

Shahadat Hossain, director of Census Wing and team leader of the NPR, said the NPR will create a comprehensive demographic, biometric and administrative database for every resident of the country, irrespective of citizenship.

It will guide the government, non-government organisations and other

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Cox's Bazar Forestland JS body's no to civil service academy plan

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary body yesterday strongly opposed the public administration ministry's plan to build a civil service academy in Cox's Bazar on 700 acres of land that has been declared as protected forest and ecologically critical area (ECA).

"We are recovering the forest land that has been grabbed by different individuals and organisations. Therefore, it cannot be acceptable that a government department will take the reserved forest land," Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of the parliamentary watchdog, told The Daily Star after the meeting.

In 2018, the Cox's Bazar district administration sought clearance from the Department of Environment (DoE) for construction of Bangabandhu Academy of Public Administration on 700 acres of land adjacent to the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Marine Drive.

The area was declared as a reserved forest in 1935. Then in 1980, it was declared a national park, and finally, in 1999, the area was declared as ECA.

The list of forest lands of the country compiled in 2001 also includes Jhilongja Mouja as forest land, according to Chowdhury.

According to the Environmental

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A jam-packed hall in front of a room marked post-Covid followup in Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College hospital yesterday. Doctors said the number of Covid-19 patients have fallen significantly, but about 300-400 people recovering from the disease through the hospital for post-Covid issues every day.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

59 unlicensed IPTV channels shut down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission closed down 59 internet protocol television (IPTV) channels yesterday for not possessing valid licences to operate.

The telecommunications regulatory body announced this in a statement circulated yesterday.

"BTRC only allows licensed internet service providers (ISP) to operate internet protocol-based data services, like streaming services, IPTV and video-on-demand," said the statement.

BTRC said only those ISP operators licensed to provide IPTV services can be allowed to broadcast television channels, which are themselves licensed by the information ministry.

However, each of the channels, programmes or content must also have obtained the necessary licence, authorisation or clearance from the authorities concerned, said the statement.

"It has been observed that in recent times certain unscrupulous businesses have been operating IPTVs illegally by buying domains or through Facebook and YouTube," BTRC claimed.

"It is absolutely illegal to operate any IPTV without a licence," it said, "and so BTRC is closing 59 such channels."

Sources in BTRC circulated a list of the IPTVs which include certain television

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