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Zilla parishads go to the polls

Results all but certain

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Zilla parishads are to go to the polls today but the results are almost certain that the ruling Awami League candidates are to win most of the chairman posts.

Twenty-six AL men have already been elected chairmen unopposed in as many district councils (zilla parishads). AL-backed chairman contenders for 31 districts will have to face party dissidents, as BNP leaders are not taking part in the elections.

Some leaders of the Jatiya Party, the main opposition in parliament, and other small parties are contesting for chairman and member posts. But they are unlikely to be winners as most of the voters belong to the ruling party.

About 60,866 elected representatives of other local government bodies – upazila parishad, union parishad, municipality and city corporation – are the electorate of the Zilla Parishad polls.

A voter is entitled to cast their ballots to elect a chairman, one member from each upazila and women members equivalent to one third of the number of total members, including the chairman.

The Election Commission said they have completed all preparations to hold the polls with electronic voting machines in a free and fair manner. It has installed CCTV cameras in all 462 polling stations in upazila towns to monitor the polls.

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal said they would monitor from a monitoring room set up in the EC office.

"I don't want to say anything in advance. This is a different kind of election where an electoral college will cast vote. We [commissioners] all will sit together," CEC

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Workers collecting stones from the Mahananda river in Panchagarh's Tentulia upazila. One earns Tk 500-1,000 a day by selling these. The photo was taken in Dak Bungalow area yesterday.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

FREQUENT POWER CUTS Have patience

PM's energy adviser asks people, says things to improve if global situation gets better

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prime minister's energy affairs adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury yesterday urged people to have patience over power cuts.

"If the global situation gets better, there will be no problem. Otherwise, we will have to suffer due to the fuel shortage," he told reporters at a hotel in the capital.

"If we could purchase fuel, there would be electricity for 24 hours. We have the capacity [to generate enough power], but we can't because of the fuel shortage.

"We don't know what danger lies ahead, that's why we are conserving foreign exchange," he said.

When asked about his comment in July that the electricity crisis would be over by October, Elahi said, "I thought the Ukraine war would not continue this long... I thought winter and power supply from coal-fired plants in Jharkhand and Rampal would solve the problem. But [supply from] both [the plants] were postponed."

Rampal's supply to the national grid will begin by the end of this year and Jharkhand's from the beginning of next year, he said.

"Coal will now emerge as the solution to this crisis. We will also bring 1,000 Megawatts of solar power within a year. Give us some time..."



Although aspirations drive people towards development, sometimes it can lead to rent-seeking, hooliganism and creating scope for taking illegal advantage, eminent economist Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud said yesterday.

"So, aspiration should be associated with values. If the two things can be coordinated, the momentum of the development accelerates," he said while speaking at a seminar organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) at a hotel in the capital.

One of the things that Bangladesh has progressed faster than other countries in reducing the child mortality rate. It was possible for the use of oral saline for diarrhoea and vaccines, he added.

He said there has been a big change in investment

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Xi Jinping hails China's rise

Demands unity as Communist Party Congress opens, defends his Hong Kong, Taiwan policies

AFP, Beijing

President Xi Jinping hailed China's rise as a global power and demanded unity around his leadership yesterday, launching a Communist Party Congress that is set to rubber stamp his bid to rule for a historic third term.

In an opening address to 2,300 delegates gathered at the Great Hall of the People, Xi promoted and defended a range of signature policies – including zero-Covid and his anti-corruption drive that has taken down rivals in the party.

"Unity is strength, and victory requires unity," Xi said after walking onstage to a thunderous reception from the hand-picked attendees who will vote during the week-long Congress on the party leadership for the next five years.

The president – whose 10-year rule has seen the country become a global superpower – said "China's international influence, appeal and power to shape the world has significantly increased".

During his 100-minute "work report" on the past five years, Xi also focused on two of China's most

sensitive security and sovereignty issues in relation to Hong Kong, after democracy protests were crushed there, and on the self-ruled island of Taiwan.

He lauded Hong Kong's transition from "chaos to governance", while his vow to "never commit to abandoning the use of force" on the self-ruled island of Taiwan drew rapturous applause.

"Unity is strength, and victory requires unity."

– Xi Jinping

Xi celebrated the party's continued efforts to eradicate Covid – which are placing heavy curbs on people's lives and is hammering the nation's economy – as a major achievement.

He insisted the approach had "protected people's safety and health to the highest degree".

He also highlighted as a success his graft crackdown, which has seen thousands of people jailed and critics have said has been used to crush dissent and opposition to his rule.

Xi said the anti-corruption campaign had eliminated "serious latent dangers" within the Communist Party, the military and the state.

"The fight against corruption has

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19th-century Levi's sells for \$87,000

CNN ONLINE

A pair of Levi's jeans from the 1880s has sold at an auction in a small town in New Mexico for more than \$87,000.

The jeans – found in an abandoned mine by a "denim archaeologist" – were bought by 23-year-old Kyle Hautner and Zip Stevenson, a veteran of the vintage denim market.

"We didn't have any plans to buy the jeans together until the auction started, which is kind of insane looking back on it," Stevenson told CNN.

The jeans were sold for \$87,400 – one of the highest prices ever paid for a pair of denims – including a 15 percent buyer's premium. Hautner paid 90 percent, while Stevenson contributed the remaining 10 percent.

Stevenson has run a denim repair shop in Los Angeles for nearly three decades – but he had never found a pair quite like this.

"These jeans are extremely rare – especially in this fantastic worn condition and size," he told CNN.

Stevenson first heard about the jeans "about five years ago when they were first discovered" in the American West by Michael Harris, who "has looked in at least 50 abandoned mines for five years and has not found a pair of equal quality," according to Stevenson.

Only a couple of similar pairs exist – but they are kept in museums and too delicate to wear.

This pair, however, "are surprisingly durable, so

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14-day remand sought for each of 24 Chhatra Odhikar men

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Police sought 14-day remand for each of the 24 Bangladesh Chhatra Odhikar Parishad members, including its DU unit president Akhter Hossain, to interrogate them in two attempted murder cases filed by BCL men.

Two sub-inspectors of Shahbagh Police Station, also the IOs of the cases, submitted two separate remand applications on Saturday.

The hearing on those was supposed to be held yesterday, but the court could not conduct it as the investigators were not present.

The magistrate then fixed October 20 for the hearing, in presence of the SIs, and asked the jail

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Even though there is an escalator for the footbridge near the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, people have to climb the stairs as it is broken. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

UTTARA BRT GIRDER ACCIDENT

No more work for Chinese firm responsible

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chinese company found responsible for the accident at the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Line-3 project would not be allowed to work in Bangladesh after completion of the project.

Obaidul Quader, minister for road transport and bridges, said this at a press conference at the secretariat yesterday.

He was briefing the media after a meeting with the chiefs of different agencies under his ministry and top officials of Road Transport and Highways Division.

Quader said that when accident, which claimed five lives, occurred on August 15, around 79 percent of the project's work was already done.

Given the situation, it was decided that the contractor will complete the rest of the project, he added.

"The decision was taken considering the country's resources and money, because it would take several more years [for the project to be completed] if a new contractor is appointed.

"They [the Chinese contractor] will complete the remaining 20 percent of the work. After that, this contractor will not be allowed to work in Bangladesh anymore."

Five people, including two children, were crushed to death when a crane toppled over, making a box girder segment fall on a private car on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in the capital's Uttara.

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