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VOTER LIST ENROLMENT EC mulls stern punishment for falsifying info

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission is mulling stringent punishment for making false declarations for getting enrolled to the voter list.

It also proposed tougher punishment for registration officers for neglecting duties. In all cases, the commission has doubled the period of jail terms and four to 10 folds more amount of fines.

The commission prepared a proposal for amendment of the voter list law 2009 with tougher provisions. The amendment proposal was placed before an Election Commission meeting yesterday.

EC officials said changes will help smooth voter enlistment works and people of the country will be more careful about making a declaration regarding different information as the punishment was doubled.

Besides, there was an inconsistency between the voter list law 2009 and the National Identification Registration law 2010, regarding false declarations.

"We have in principle decided to bring the amendment of the voter list law. It will be sent to the law ministry," Election Commissioner Anisur Rahman told The Daily Star.

According to existing voter list law, if any person makes any false declaration in connection with the preparation, revision or correction of an electoral roll, or having names in the list or deducting names from it, shall be punishable

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Launch operations on the Barishal-Bhola route were suspended since Wednesday night without any prior notice. With this, operations of three kinds of public transport, including auto-rickshaws and buses, are being halted just ahead of the BNP's November 5 Barishal rally. Story on Page 1.

PHOTO: TITU DAS



Defiant Danes can dream of ultimate glory

REUTERS

Many teams head for the World Cup more in hope than expectation but Denmark can point to previous occasions when they have overcome seemingly insurmountable odds and say that they are genuinely in with a shout of winning the trophy.

This, after all, is the nation that was only admitted to Euro 92 in Sweden at the last minute following the exclusion of the former Yugoslavia. They went on to win it.

In more recent times, it is the team that bounced back from the traumatic loss of talisman Christian Eriksen to a heart attack

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

E-ORANGE Corrupt people plunging country into crisis: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said some corrupt people plunged the country into crisis and they must be brought to book.

"Development has taken place in the country and more is underway. We have seen structural developments, including thermal power plants and sophisticated roads, in the southern region and felt as if we are not in the country. But problems are created due to the corrupt persons," said the bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat Liza.

The bench made the comments while hearing a rule issued on April 7 in response to a writ petition over the allegations of embezzlement and laundering of money deposited by customers of e-commerce platform, E-Orange.

The court expressed dissatisfaction at the compliance report submitted by Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU).

The bench said according to the report, they (Sonia Mehjabin, founder of controversial e-commerce platform E-orange, and her relatives and associates) have withdrawn a huge amount of money, but there are no specific findings in the report about where the money went, who are the beneficiaries and where the money was used.

The court is not also satisfied with the compliance reports submitted by the inspector general of police and the Anti-Corruption Commission on the issue.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

'Unpatriotic' cops sent into retirement

Says home minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five policemen who have recently been sent into forced retirement lacked patriotism and skills, said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday.

The minister came up with the remark while responding to reporters' queries in a dialogue with the Bangladesh Secretariat Reporters' Forum at the Media Centre of the secretariat.

"Among the police officials whose service period in police reaches 25 years, action is taken against them if they are found to lack efficiency and patriotism. The action was taken against them (five police officers) from the department as they had lack of skills and patriotism," he said.

He further said, "If the government thinks that he or she (official) is unable to carry out the duties properly, why

will he or she hold a post unnecessarily? This has been done so that others can provide more service after being in those posts."

In the latest development, the government on Monday sent two additional deputy inspectors general of police on retirement months before their service tenure ends.

The two - Md Mahbob Hakim, additional DIG of Tourist Police, and Md Alamgir Alam, additional DIG of the Criminal Investigation Department - are officers of the 12th Bangladesh Civil Service (police) cadre.

With the two officials, at least five officials who joined the public service in 1991 were sent on early retirement.

On October 18, three other police officers were posted to the police

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



COST OF LIVING People in a tight spot

Tipu Munshi blames
inflation in Europe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday acknowledged the countrymen are in a tight spot due to the rising cost of necessities and argued that, for this, the high inflation in Europe was more to blame than the government's actions.

He said, "It is true that people are in hardship as the prices of daily necessities have increased in the market. But for the suffering, the global economic crisis is more responsible than the government. We cannot change the global scenario overnight. But there is no way to deny the fact that we are passing through a difficult period."

Tipu Munshi made the remarks at the fourth meeting of the task force regarding the review of essentials' prices and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

LNG SPOT PURCHASE Petrobangla adds 8 new suppliers Won't buy energy unless prices come down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Petrobangla yesterday added eight more companies to its existing roster of 15 for purchase of liquefied natural gas.

The companies are Japan's LNG Japan Corporation and Inpex Corporation; Korea's POSCO International Corporation; Socar Trading UK; Qatar Energy Trading; Singapore's Pavillion Energy Trading & Supply; PetroChina International and PTT International.

The approval came in yesterday's purchase committee meeting chaired by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, where a total of 14 proposals worth about Tk 14,620 crore got the nod.

Bangladesh has a long-term contract with Kuwait and Qatar for supplying LNG, which it supplants with purchases from the spot market.

However, purchase from the spot market has been on pause since July due to a steep rise in prices.

Spot purchase is not resuming anytime soon, Nasrul Hamid, the state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The companies applied to us, so we added them to our roster. When we resume spot purchase, we can buy from these eight companies too," he added.

'64 native fish species are extinct' Fisheries minister tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The total number of native fish species that have become extinct is 64, said Fisheries and Livestock Minister SM Rezaul Karim, citing the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in parliament yesterday.

In response to a question from Laxmipur-2 MP Nur Uddin Chowdhary Nayan, the minister said, "Native fish are an important part of our culture and are our main source of animal protein.

"But many native fish species are now extinct due to climate change and overfishing."

Rezaul said the fisheries department has taken significant steps to safeguard the native fish species, some of which are now on the verge of extinction.

The government is undertaking extensive efforts to restore their

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



NESTING IN STYLE ... The Baya Weaver, locally known as Babui pakhi, is a weaverbird found across the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. While the whole species is known as "weavers", the actual weaving is done by the males to attract a suitable mate. The females inspect all the woven nests and select their preferred male partner accordingly. The precious little birds can be found mostly in grasslands and they build the nests with long strips of paddy leaves, rough grasses or long strips torn from palm fronds, near or hanging above water bodies, where predators cannot easily reach. A male bird is known to make up to 500 trips to complete a nest. They then display their "artwork" to passing females by flapping their wings and calling out to them. Once a male and a female are paired, the male goes on to complete the nest, though their female partners may help with the finishing touches!

PHOTO: ARIF AHMED

Magic mushroom drug can treat severe depression: study



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A small dose of the magic mushroom-derived drug psilocybin along with psychotherapy can significantly reduce symptoms of severe depression in patients, according to a new study.

The research, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, assessed data from 233 participants with treatment-resistant depression in a clinical trial spanning 22 international sites across 10 countries in Europe and North America, including the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN) at King's College, London.

"Whilst many patients with mental health problems get better with available treatments, a subgroup of patients do not even though they try many different forms of treatment. This is sometimes called 'treatment resistance,'" explained James Rucker, one of the co-authors of the study.