





EC'S COMPLIANCE LETTER

No response from AL, 12 other parties

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The ruling Awami League and 12 other political parties have not responded to the Election Commission's letter asking all parties to check if they were complying with the conditions of their registration.

The EC sent the letters to all registered political parties and asked them to respond by November 24.

Only 26 parties responded within the deadline, said ash Kumar Debnath, additional secretary to the EC secretariat.

The BNP, the Bangladesh Muslim League, and the Bangladesh Congress requested more time to respond to the letter.

Some other parties that had not formally responded to the letter might have directly contacted the chief election commissioner, Debnath said.

After Sunday, the EC will decide whether to take action against the non-responsive parties or to allow them more time, he added.

According to the EC officials, the Jatiya Party (Ershad), National People's Party, Tarikat Federation, Bangladesh Jatiya Party, Islami Oikyote, Khelafat Majlis, Bangladesh Kehlafat Majlis, Bangladesh Jatiya Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Islamic Front, Bangladesh NAP, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan, Bangladesh Nationalist Front, Muktijote, Jatiya Party (JP), Liberal Democratic Party were among the parties that responded to the EC letter.

The next national election is likely to be held in late December 2023 or early January 2024.

FARDIN'S MURDER

3 weeks gone, investigators still 'clueless'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly three weeks after Buet student Fardin Noor Parash was murdered, his family is frustrated that investigators have yet to identify the killers and establish the motive behind the murder.



"I have confidence in the investigators, but I am increasingly frustrated as they are yet to arrest the murderers and ascertain the motive behind the killing of my son," Fardin's father Kazi Nooruddin told The Daily Star last night.

He said he was also disappointed with the contradictory information from the investigators about Fardin's last location.

Nooruddin said Rampura is a busy area in the capital from where his son went missing on November 4, but no CCTV footage was found about his movement to other areas from there.

Tracking his mobile phone, investigators found that he was in Rampura at 9:57pm on November 4. Later, his phone was tracked in Jinjira of Keraniganj, Babu Bazar Bridge, Johnson Road of Old Dhaka, Gulistan, Jatrabari and Chonpara of Naryanganj's Rugganj.

However, information revealed so far by the Detective Branch of police, the investigating agency, and the Rab has created confusion about the last location of the victim.

The Rapid Action Battalion, which is carrying out

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Aman paddy being harvested by a combine in Sylhet Sadar upazila's Khadimpara area. Farmers use such machines to save time and money. They spend Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,400 for harvesting crop with the machine on each bigha of land, depending on the condition and location of land. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

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PM allays fear of crisis

Says there won't be any shortage of consumer goods in the country

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday assured the people that there won't be any crisis of consumer goods in the country.

"There will be no problem regarding consumer goods. We've started importing [goods] from Ukraine and Russia as well," she said.

The PM was addressing the 5th National Conference of Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad (Swachip), a pro-Awami League professional body of physicians, at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan.

"Though there is a problem over payment with dollars due to sanctions [on Russia], the government is taking steps for an alternative [payment] system."

Hasina said Bangladesh still has enough reserves to meet the import expenditures for five months. "Still, we've the reserves to meet the import expenditures for five months, not for three months."

Coming down heavily on the critics of the government on the reserves issue, she said now all have become experts on the reserves and economy.

The premier said the reserves

reached \$48 billion during the Covid-19 restrictions. The reserves were only above \$5 billion in 2009.

Hasina said the government had to spend a lot of money from the reserves to procure Covid-19 vaccines, testing kits and other equipment to fight the pandemic. Now the government needs to import edible oil, wheat and other consumer goods at high prices amid the war and economic sanctions, she added.

The PM said the government has been taking proper steps to ensure the availability of consumer goods. "The reserves have declined not only in our country but also in many countries of the world."

Hasina said now a rumour is being spread that there is no money in banks, and the clients would not get back their deposits.

She said many people keep money in houses withdrawing it

from banks due to this rumour. "Keeping money in houses creates scope for thieves, doesn't it? ... Now it's up to the people whether they would keep their money in the banks or give it to thieves."

Hasina reiterated her call to the people not to leave even an



inch of land uncultivated to ensure that Bangladesh won't need to import food items at higher prices amid the global crisis.

She said the AL government handed over power in a very peaceful manner in 2001, which is the only instance of peaceful change in power in the history of Bangladesh.

"We always want political stability and the continuation of democracy."

Focusing on her government's successes and steps taken in the health sector, the PM said her government took programmes for the healthcare development.

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Seoul launches self-driving bus experiment



AFP, Seoul

South Korea's capital launched its first self-driving bus route yesterday, part of an experiment which engineers said aims to make people feel more comfortable with driverless vehicles on the roads.

The new vehicle does not look like a regular bus and has rounded edges along with large windows that make it appear more like a toy than a technological breakthrough.

This design is intentional, said Jeong Seong-gyun, head of autonomous driving at 42dot, the start-up responsible for the self-driving technology that is now owned by auto giant Hyundai.

"This is the future," he told AFP, adding that the bus required "a considerable new type of design".

The bus looks a bit "like Lego" and is made of composite parts to help keep costs down and make it easy to replicate, he said.

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Two siblings poisoned to death by 'father'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Two siblings were poisoned to death allegedly by their father in Dinajpur's Biral upazila on Thursday night.

The victims are seven-year-old Imon Hasan and his three-year-old brother Imran Hasan of Sankarpur village.

Police detained their father Shafiqul Islam in this connection.

Victims' grandfather Rafiqul Islam said Shafiqul had been threatening to kill his sons after he separated from his wife over two months ago. On Thursday afternoon, Shafiqul went to his wife's house in the same village and took his two sons in the name of buying them winter clothes, he said.

Since then, the three did not return home.

Rezaul Hasan Reza, officer-in-charge of Biral Police Station, said locals found a jute bag at

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BNP leaders and activists from Chandpur, Brahmanbaria and different upazilas of Cumilla throng the Town Hall ground in Cumilla city yesterday afternoon. They reached the ground ahead of today's rally as they had a hunch that transport operators might impose a strike like they did ahead of the opposition party's rallies in some divisional districts recently.

PHOTO: KHALID BIN NAZRUL

Half of Kyiv still without power

Says mayor as Russian strikes batter energy grid

AGENCIES

Nearly half of Kyiv residents were still without electricity yesterday as engineers battled to restore services two days after Russian strikes hammered the country's energy grid.

Systematic and targeted Russian attacks for weeks have brought Ukraine's energy infrastructure to its knees as the country careens towards a freezing winter, spurring fears of a health crisis and a further exodus, nine months into war.

Municipal workers yesterday struggled to reconnect essential services such as heat and water as temperatures in Kyiv approached freezing and UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly visited to announce a new aid package.

"Half of consumers are still without electricity," Mayor Vitali Klitschko said. "A third of houses in Kyiv already have heating and specialists continue to restore it."

"During the day, energy companies plan to reconnect electricity for all consumers on an alternating basis," he wrote on Telegram.

Lines of cars queued outside petrol stations in Kyiv yesterday to stock up, AFP journalists said. Mobile networks in some areas were still experiencing disruptions.

Nationwide, repair work was ongoing, said Volodymyr Kudrytskyi, head of national electricity operator Ukrenergo, but insisted that "the most difficult stage" had passed.

Ukrenergo said that producers were providing more than 70 percent of the need across the country.

Millions of Ukrainians have endured the cold without

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