

Read CSA before commenting

Says Momen as US, Amnesty Int'l express concern

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United States and Transparency International yesterday voiced concern over the newly passed Cyber Security Bill while Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen suggested reading it first before making any comment on it.

"Read the Act first," Momen told reporters while responding to a question at a media briefing at the foreign ministry, reports UNB.

He stressed that the bill has been passed after addressing the concerns raised by different quarters.

Despite the criticism surrounding the law, the minister said, people do seek the support of the law when needed.

The Jatiya Sangsad passed the Cyber Security Bill 2023 on Wednesday.

Earlier, the US Embassy in Dhaka noted that the bill passed by the Jatiya Sangsad retained many aspects of the Digital Security Act.

"We regret that the government of Bangladesh did not give stakeholders adequate opportunity to review and provide input to the new law to ensure it meets international standards," reads a statement issued by the US Embassy in Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Next polls will be free, fair

Raushan tells JS in concluding speech

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The upcoming parliamentary elections will be held in a free, fair and festive atmosphere, said Raushan Ershad, leader of the opposition in parliament, yesterday.



"And Jatiya Party will participate in that election. It is taking full preparations to contest the polls," she said in the concluding speech of the 24th session of the Jatiya Sangsad.

The opposition leader said JP has never boycotted national elections since its inception because it believes in democracy.

Raushan Ershad said the prices of many things had increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

"But now the price has come down in the world market," she said.

She mentioned that the lower-income class and even the middle-class people are gathering for TCB goods sold at lower prices.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Everything has been burnt down to ashes. I have nothing left but my tears.

SONDHA RANI
a betel leaf shop owner

SAJJAD HOSSAIN
and MD ASADUZ
ZAMAN

Almost 10 years ago, Sondha Rani, 45, started her small betel leaf shop in Mohammadpur Krishi Market, after taking a loan from a relative. She, along with her husband, ran this small shop, which served as the only means of income for their three-member family.

However, in just a few hours, she

of shops which mainly sell vegetables, spices, groceries, and garments.

Around 4:00am, Sondha received a phone call from a friend who informed her that her shop was in flames. She and her husband, Arpon Shah, 50, rushed to the spot and saw the fire raging. They were unable to save anything.

"I had taken a loan of Tk 10 lakh from a relative and have not been able to fully repay them. We don't know what will

from his damaged shop. However, the recovered goods were ruined and cannot be sold to customers.

"The fire destroyed my small business that fed my family," lamented vegetable seller Matin, as he rummaged through the ruins.

"My family members and I used to work hard round the clock here. It was our only source of income. I have lost everything," he said.

While sobbing, another vegetable seller Delwar Hossain, said, "Every morning is



(From left) A victim cries as she talks to a relative over the phone after a fire at Mohammadpur Krishi Market gutted all she had' helpless people watch as the fire burns the market to ashes. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

lost everything, after a devastating fire burned her makeshift shop to the ground, early yesterday.

"Everything has been burnt down to ashes. I have nothing left but my tears," said a weeping Sondha, as she sat next to the burnt remains of her shop.

The fire broke out at the Mohammadpur Krishi Market at 3:43am and quickly engulfed the entire row

happen to us. How will we survive?" asked Sondha, who has a differently abled son Apu Saha, 25.

Similar to Sondha, the fire left numerous other traders stunned, as their livelihoods were reduced to ashes. Some traders were able to save some products, while many could not.

When the fire was brought under control, shopkeeper Matin Khan recovered some ginger, garlic, and onion

a busy time for us as customers come here for their daily shopping. But fate did not give us that opportunity today."

"I rushed here after hearing announcement from the local mosque, but could not enter the market as the fire was too intense. Within minutes, my shop and goods were completely destroyed," said a weeping Munir Hossain, owner of a shoe shop.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Delayed development work on Kazi Alauddin Road in Old Dhaka has been causing inconveniences to locals for months. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

ENSURING WORKERS' RIGHTS IN LABOUR LAW

In-depth reforms a must: experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Labour experts at an event yesterday proposed bringing all EPZs and Specialized Industrial Zones under the general Labour Act to eliminate disparities among workers.

They also called for broadening the definition of "worker" [set under the Labour Law Amendment of 2013 (section 1(65))] for the universal inclusion of all workers, regardless of their employment conditions, to address the glaring gap between workers and officials in terms of the discrimination the workers are currently facing.

These recommendations were put forth at a stakeholders' meeting titled "Recommendations on Amendments of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006," organised by the Solidarity Center. The meeting took place at a Dhaka hotel yesterday.

In addition to these recommendations, the speakers sought a series of suggestions to ensure workers' protection, uphold their rights, enhance benefits, strengthen trade unions, and expedite legal remedies for labour disputes.

Other recommendations include

ensuring dismissed workers' service benefits, an end to unfair labour practices by employers that often lead to the dismissal of workers, quick disposal of cases at labor court, the inclusion of external representatives or advocates nominated by workers' organisations in committees investigating misconduct complaints, and amending the provision regarding workers' compensation.

In place of the current requirement of five years' service, they suggest that workers receive

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

AL, BNP to hold 'counter' programmes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's two major political parties -- Awami League and BNP -- are once again set to take to the streets today with "counter" programmes.

BNP and their allies will hold a rally in front of the party headquarters in Nayapaltn at 3:00pm to realise their one-point demand for election under a non-partisan government and demand the release of their chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir will attend the rally as chief guest.

Meanwhile, the ruling AL will hold a peace rally at the same time in front of their headquarters on the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue.

AL's Dhaka City (South) Unit will organise the rally, protesting terror and anarchy.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, also the road, transport and bridges minister, is set to address the event as chief guest.

PRAYER
TIMING
SEPTEMBER 15



Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:35 12:30 4:30 6:09 7:45
JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 4:45 6:12 8:15
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

EC reinvites application for local observers

66 granted registration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday gave approval to 66 local observers to monitor the next general election.

It also invited again applications from interested organisations as the commission felt the number of local observers were still insufficient.

Ahead of the last December 30, 2018 parliamentary polls, the EC provided registration to 118 local organisations.

"The commission is sincere about free, fair and acceptable elections and for that, monitoring the election by impartial observers is key," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Ahsan Habib Khan told The Daily Star.

EC Director (Public Relations) Shariful Alam said interested organisations will be able to submit application from today (Friday) until September 24.

He said that organisations those sought registration in the previous process but were left out during the scrutiny also can apply.

This year the EC started the selection process in February and a total of 210 organisations applied to the election commission (EC) for registering their names as election observers.

Later, the EC shortlisted 94 organisations and enquired about them. The commission on August 8 primarily selected 68 of them to observe the 12th

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

JS passes Overseas Employment Bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Overseas Employment and Migrants (Amendment) Bill, 2023, was passed in parliament yesterday by voice vote to ensure accountability from agents for migrant workers.

As per the bill placed by Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad, intermediaries in foreign employment recruiting process will get recognition through registration.

Provision has been made for suspension of recruiting license without investigation and hearing, considering the seriousness of the complaint.

Provisions on sub-agent or representative appointment and related liability have been added to bring the intermediaries in the recruitment process of foreign employment under the accountability framework.

Special financial and other welfare programmes may be adopted to ensure respect, dignity, rights, safety and security of women migrant workers in foreign workplaces, according to the bill.

It also the introduction and facilitation of bank loans, tax concessions, savings, investments, financial assistance, and scholarships, among others for the welfare of migrant workers and their family.

To increase accountability, recruiting agencies will be fined a minimum of Tk 50,000 and a maximum of Tk 2 lakh for committing any crime,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

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