

Won't make spl request for foreign observers

Says Momen

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said yesterday that Bangladesh would not make a special request seeking foreign observers, but it is ready to welcome any country's decision to send observers for the upcoming national polls.

"We have the confidence to hold free and fair elections. We have made a commitment to that end. If anyone wants to come and see, we will welcome them," he said at a press briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



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Momen said almost all countries are now having financial crises, and it is their decision whether they will send observers or not.

The foreign minister also said they want to see the elections free from violence, but it requires sincere efforts from all parties.

The government says the European Union's decision not to send a full-fledged election observation mission will have no impact on the election.

The Election Commission in Bangladesh is making preparations to hold the next election by the first week of January.

Meanwhile, from October 8 to 12, the six-member joint delegation from the International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI) met with a diverse group of election stakeholders, including government officials, political party leaders, election authorities, civil society, and others.

The pre-election assessment mission (PEAM), following the conclusion of its activities, will release a statement of its key findings, an analysis of the pre-election environment, and practical recommendations to enhance the credibility of the process and citizen confidence in the elections.



PHOTO: LS ARCHIVE

AUTUMN IN THE CITY The romance of kashful

RBR

The season of Durga Puja is upon us. Within weeks, the Hindu community of Bangladesh will be celebrating their biggest religious festival. For me, white kash grass or *kash phul* ushers the homecoming of Goddess Durga and her colourful entourage.

Kash phul is synonymous to the beautiful short spell of *sharat* or autumn in Dhaka.

There is a definite romance to this season and you know it because of dazzling white clouds with a shiny golden edge hanging low in the sapphire-blue sky. The air has a mild chill and lets you know that there is a shift in the weather. Yet, the beautiful, rolling fields of kashful make you wistful and dreamy. The sunsets in *sharat* are the most heavenly phenomenon, it is a work of art with splashes of pink, orange and gold and a brush of lavender; one of the perfect places to appreciate these seasonal enchants is Diabari, Uttara.

Diabari, which is in reality the third phase extension of Uttara Model Town. For a few years now, Diabari has gained popularity among Dhaka residents as a quick getaway and with kashful taking over the vacant fields, makes for

a pleasant sight.

Uttara Model Town (2nd phase) is not so much of a model project now because of its cagey, high-rise apartment buildings. I have been witnessing its transformation for the last two decades. Uttara, the once serene, green locale has now become a victim of rapid urbanisation. For us Uttara residents, the yet-to-fall prey to development third phase area of Uttara and Diabari gives us a chance to breathe.

Surrounded by idyllic lakes and bridges, plant nurseries, and a farmer's market, this quaint suburban locality has a lot of touristy offers. The open plots are now turned into fields of the kashful, their gentle swaying in the autumn breeze against the orange marmalade sky makes it the most picture-perfect place in the city now

and Dhakaite are flocking the place to capture the beauty to put up on their social media handles. The place for the next couple of weeks will take a joyful look, as if in preparation for Durga to descend on these dreamy kash fields.



Nature photography has now taken flight as more and more amateurs flock to scenic locations to take photos. The rising popularity of Instagram has only added to that. Thanks to the close proximity of the place to downtown Dhaka, Diabari is now one of the most frequently visited places for Dhakaite.

Now with the full blossoming of kash phul season, the place indeed looks inviting. The only problem is the off-season, incessant rain; might be a damper unless you hurry for that charming shot.

Drug dealer jailed for life over 50 phensedyl bottles

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chuadanga

A Chuadanga court yesterday sentenced a female drug dealer to life in prison in a narcotics case filed over the possession of 50 phensedyl bottles.

Judge Humayun Kabir Sarkar of Chuadanga Additional District and Sessions Court-1 delivered the verdict around 2:00pm, said Assistant Public Prosecutor Iftekhar Hossain Khokon.

The convict Rashida Khatun, 64, is the wife of Rabiul Islam of Akundabaria village of Chuadanga Sadar upazila.

According to the case statement, on the morning of August 1, 2012, a team of the District Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) raided Rashida Khatun's house in Akundabaria village and recovered 50 bottles of Indian phensedyl.

Rashida Khatun was arrested after a case was filed against her at Chuadanga Sadar Police Station under the Narcotics Control Act.

On September 10 of the same year, Sub-Inspector Abdul Hannan at DNC filed a chargesheet in court against Rashida.

Trawler with 17 fishermen remains missing for 22 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A fishing trawler with at least 17 fishermen from Cox's Bazar has been missing at sea for the last 22 days till yesterday.

The trawler owner, Khorshed said the fishermen set sail for deep sea on September 20 morning from Tekpara Majhighat area in Sadar upazila.

"The trawler, along with the fishermen, was supposed to return to the shore within 10 to 11 days. But they did not return till today [Thursday]. Even their phones are switched off," Khorshed told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The sea was rough on September 30 due to inclement weather. Many of the fishing trawlers returned to shore on that day. But, my trawler did not return," he added.

On October 3, Khorshed filed a general diary with Cox's Bazar Sadar Model Police Station informing them of the matter.

Woman gives birth to quintuplets; 1 dies

UNB, Dhaka

A 22-year-old woman gave birth to quintuplets at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Mansura Begum, from Shibpur upazila in Narsingdi, gave birth to four daughters and one son around 10:00am.

Quintuplets usually occur naturally in 1 in 55 million births.

DMCH Medical Officer Sabiha Sultana, however, said that a newborn baby girl died shortly after birth due to being underweight.

The remaining four children have been kept in the neonatal unit.

"The health of the babies is not in good condition, as they were born prematurely in the 26th week of pregnancy. We're trying our best to provide all possible support," she added.

South Africa

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier, de Kock hit his second successive century at the World Cup.

The 30-year-old De Kock reached his 19th ODI hundred off 90 balls with eight fours and five sixes having also made a century in South Africa's opening win over Sri Lanka.

De Kock, who will retire from international cricket at the end of the tournament, was batting in familiar surroundings at the Ekana Stadium where he plays in the IPL for the Lucknow Super Giants.

He was eventually dismissed for 109, bowled by off-spinner Glenn Maxwell while trying to reverse sweep in the 35th over.

"I'm sick of watching him score runs, feels like it happened a lot against us. He's a superstar," said Maxwell at the innings break.

South Africa were on 197-3 when De Kock departed before Aiden Markram then took up the charge.

Having made the fastest World Cup century off just 49 balls in the win over Sri Lanka, Markram raced to 56, making the most of being dropped by Australia skipper Pat Cummins when he had made just a single.

It was a miserable day in the field for Australia as South Africa captain Temba Bavuma was also dropped twice on 19 and 32.

Putin in Kyrgyzstan for first trip abroad since court arrest warrant

AFP, Bishkek

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday called for strengthening military ties with Kyrgyzstan in a trip to the Central Asian country, his first foreign visit since the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for him in March.

President Putin is wanted by the court over the deportation of Ukrainian children. Its ruling requires members of the ICC, which does not include Kyrgyzstan, to make the arrest if he sets foot on their territory.



Protesters lift Palestinian and Tunisian flags and chant slogans during an anti-Israel demonstration in Tunis, Tunisia yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

AL aims to ensure higher turnout

FROM PAGE 1

candidates out of 300 were elected unopposed, and in 2018, AL and its allies got 90 percent of the seats.

The AL has already made a test run of the strategy in the recently-held Rajshahi City Corporation and Cox's Bazar Municipality polls where the turnouts were 56.2 and 62.55 percent.

During the RCC polls on June 21, the polling centre-wise AL committees ensured all-out efforts to get the voters to the polling booths. They arranged rickshaw vans for transport too.

Similar measures were taken in Cox's Bazar on June 12. When contacted about AL's

election preparations and plans, former cabinet secretary Kabir Bin Anwar, now involved in AL election strategy, told The Daily Star that they want a free, fair and peaceful election with better turnout.

"We will go to the voters' doors and ask them to come to the polling stations. Our target is to increase voter turnout. We took Rajshahi City Corporation and Cox's Bazar municipality election as pilot projects to increase turnout and we got success. We will use the experience in the national polls," he said.

According to sources, the AL would be content with a simple majority for

forming a government and the party would not be gunning for a landslide win. It would be more focused on ensuring a peaceful election and a high turnout.

Once the Election Commission declares the election schedule in mid-November, the AL will announce its candidates within 15 days so that the runners get over a month for campaigning.

The sources said the AL will leave the decision on seat sharing with its partners for the eleventh hour. It will see what the BNP and its allies do.

If the BNP and its allies decide to run, AL allies will get fewer seats.

HC jails judge

FROM PAGE 1

Shishir Manir said sentencing a chief judicial magistrate by the HC for contempt of court is unprecedented.

THE CASE

The government filed a case with Cumilla police in March 2017 against Mamun Chowdhury and his wife Ria Aktar over their alleged possession of some Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) equipment.

Following a petition by the couple, the HC stayed the trial proceedings in November 2018.

Still, Sohel Rana framed charges against Mamun and Ria on April 10 this year, and declared Ria a fugitive as she was not present in the court that day. Sohel was a chief judicial

magistrate then.

Their lawyer Pronay Kanti Roy brought this issue before the HC.

As ordered by the HC on August 14, Sohel appeared before the HC bench led by Md Badruzzaman on August 21, and submitted his written explanation on a later date.

On August 28, the HC expressed dissatisfaction at his explanation and issued a contempt of court rule against him.

Replying to the rule, Sohel offered an unconditional apology to the HC but used some "unacceptable and unnecessary" words for which the HC rejected his apology and convicted him, Pronay Kanti said.

Tigers aim to bounce back

FROM PAGE 1

The average first-innings total at this ground is 240.95 in 24 matches.

Familiar pitches would aid the Bangladeshi spinners but there still exists a few concerning areas for Shakib and his troops against a high-flying New Zealand side, who won their first two matches with a lot of authority.

Young Tanzid Hasan failed to make an impact in both games, and the inconsistent Bangladesh top order will once again remain under the scanner. The Tigers cannot afford a misfiring top-order if they want to bounce back following a 137-run defeat to England after starting off their campaign on the right note, with a six-wicket drubbing of Afghanistan.

On the bowling front, it will be interesting to see whether the team management includes an extra spin option alongside Shakib, Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Mahedi Hasan. The pace unit also needs to fire after a rather below-par show with the new ball in the first two games.

New Zealand, on the other hand, will have their regular skipper Kane Williamson return after a knee injury ruled him out for six months.

Williamson comes back at a good time as their top-order batters – the likes of Devon Conway and Rachin Ravindra – enjoy a red-hot form.

New Zealand have ample strength in the spin department. Left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner leads wicket-takers chart in the ongoing tournament. He has good company in Ish Sodhi – who picked up six wickets against Bangladesh last month to register his best ODI bowling figures – while the likes of Glenn Phillips and Williamson can chip in with good effect.

Armenia accuses Azerbaijan of 'ethnic cleansing' at World Court

AFP, The Hague

Armenia yesterday accused its rival Azerbaijan of "ethnic cleansing" in Nagorno-Karabakh at the UN's top court, urging judges to protect the handful of ethnic Armenians still living in the breakaway region.

"Less than nine months ago, I stood at this podium and warned that Azerbaijan was putting in motion a plan to ethnically cleanse Nagorno-Karabakh of all ethnic Armenians," said Armenia's representative at the International Court of Justice.