

ARMED FORCES DAY PM pays tribute at Shikha Anirban

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday paid tribute to the martyred members of Bangladesh Armed Forces on the occasion of Armed Forces Day-2023.

The premier paid homage by placing a wreath at the Shikha Anirban (flame eternal) in Dhaka Cantonment in the morning.

After laying the wreath, she stood in solemn silence for some time to show profound respect to the memories of the armed forces martyrs, who made supreme sacrifices during the 1971 Liberation War.

A contingent drawn from army, navy and air force presented a guard of honour at that time, while the bugle played the last post.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina pays tribute to the martyred members of Bangladesh Armed Forces at the Shikha Anirban (flame eternal) in Dhaka Cantonment yesterday morning.

PHOTO: PID

Reassess garment workers' wage: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday urged the government to reassess the declared wage for garment workers, as it was not calculated properly.

In a statement, TIB said although the wage was hiked by 52.56 percent on paper, the actually hike was 25.28.88 percent.

TIB also said if the annual 5 percent increment and current rate of high inflation was taken into account, then the real increment was not 30 percent.

So, taking into consideration the living standard of the garment workers, higher prices of essential commodities in the market and international labour standards, TIB urged those responsible for minimum wage board to reconsider the declared wage.

The wage board originally declared the minimum wage for garment workers on November 7, at Tk 12,500, compared to previous amount of Tk 8,000. This was rejected by workers and union leaders and resulted in protests.

Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of the TIB, said different studies suggest that the declared

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‘One-sided polls will worsen economic crisis’

Speakers tell webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's ongoing economic crisis is a consequence of the last two national elections being one-sided, turning the government into a hostage to local and international players that helped them stay in power, speakers told a webinar yesterday.

The government is likely to arrange another one-sided election, which may plunge the country into further crisis, they said in the webinar titled “Another

government faces pressures both internally and internationally.

Prof Riaz explained that the ongoing economic strains, including banking system problems, foreign debts, and poly-crisis, happened as the government engaged in sycophantic behaviour with those who helped them come to power without people's mandate.


“It happened in Cambodia and Belarus as well,” he said.

Stressing that the crisis will deepen in the upcoming days, Prof Riaz said, “The ultimate result is

polycrisis including three incidents at a time – foreign debt, banking issues and currency devaluation.”

Former election commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hussain said since government curtailed the power of the EC through a law amendment, the EC no longer can cancel the election of an entire constituency in terms of irregularities but rather can cancel specific centres' voting.

He mentioned that the EC had cancelled voting at some centres in Brahmanbaria-2 and Laxmipur-3



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ALI RIAZ

If there is no option to choose, then what is the meaning of spending around Tk 1,600 crore in the name of holding an election?

BADIUL ALAM MAJUMDAR

One-sided Election and Possible Consequences,” organised by Forum for Bangladesh Studies.

A one-sided election creates a legitimacy crisis, said Ali Riaz, distinguished professor at Politics and Government Department of Illinois State University.

“After such an election, the gap between rich and poor increases because some get unfair benefits. A government with no moral ground gives all unfair benefits, including money, power or institutions, to their supporters who demand them,” he said, adding that such a

economic collapse. If that happens, the public will have to pay for such a situation as they [the culprits] have Begumpara in Canada, second homes in Malaysia, investments in the Gulf, or homes in Singapore.”

Beneficiaries want this government to stay in power in the name of stability, but they basically want a “status quo” for looting money, he added.

Stressing that the ongoing economic turmoil is the worst in the last 45 years for Bangladesh, researcher Zia Hassan said, “The country is now going through a

by-polls, but that decision had no impact on the results.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shujan, said, “People should have options to choose from. If there is no option, then what is the meaning of spending around Tk 1,600 crore in the name of holding an election?”

“It's possible to conduct a free and fair election by reshuffling some upper officials. But the first thing needed is the participation of BNP and other oppositions. Most leaders of these parties are in jail now,” said Ali Imam Majumder, former cabinet secretary.

INT'L POLLS OBSERVERS

EC extends application deadline till December 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International observers and media will be able to apply to observe the 12th parliamentary election till December 7 as the Election Commission has extended the deadline by 16 days.

The EC extended the deadline from November 21 as many international observers sought it, EC Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath said yesterday.

The EC earlier said it is committed to holding free, fair, credible and peaceful elections, and wants foreign election observers and media, alongside local observers.

According to the Guidelines for International Election Observers and Foreign Media, applicants, whether individuals or organisations, should possess practical experience in the fields of good governance, elections, democracy, peacebuilding, and human rights.

Additionally, applicants must provide proof of registration with their respective country's relevant authority and adhere to the election laws of Bangladesh.

The commission will not consider any observer accreditation applications from individuals convicted of electoral or any other fraud-related offences.

STATEMENT ON KALPONA AKTER

‘Dhaka to seek clarification from Washington’

Shahriar Alam says RMG exporters don't need to worry

STAR REPORT

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam yesterday said Dhaka will seek clarification from Washington over Secretary of State Antony J Blinken's statement on garment worker Kalpona Akter.

He made the remark while talking to reporters after his meeting with the Commonwealth pre-election assessment team at the ministry.

On November 16, Blinken talked about the labour rights situation in different countries at the rollout of a presidential memorandum on “Advancing Worker Empowerment, Rights, and High Labour Standards Globally.”

“We want to be there for people like Kalpona Akter, a Bangladeshi garment worker and activist, who says that she is alive today because the US embassy advocated on her behalf,” said Blinken.

“The US will work to hold accountable those who threaten, intimidate and attack union leaders, labour rights defenders and labour organisations, including using tools like sanctions, trade penalties and visa restrictions,” he also said.

Regarding the issue, the state minister said Dhaka

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No new project ahead of polls

EC directs all ministries, stakeholders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission has instructed different ministries, departments and organisations to suspend initiating any new projects or programmes, including reliefs and grants for all constituencies, ahead of the upcoming 12th national election.

The EC's direction came in a bid to keep the polls uninfluenced.


If any such programmes are needed on an emergency basis, the ministries concerned will require the EC's prior permission, it said.

Yesterday, the EC issued four different instructions to the local government department, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society in this regard.

“No person will be allowed to announce or release any grant to any person or group of institutions from any government or autonomous organisations's funds since the election schedule announcement till the result publication date,” read the letter sent to the local government department, signed by EC deputy secretary Atiar Rahman.

“Until the election is over, no candidate or party will be allowed to announce, lay the foundation stone or inaugurate any project in any government, semi-government or autonomous institutions,” it also read.

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EC INSTRUCTIONS

- No new relief fund or grants
- No new VGF cards
- No candidate can release funds from govt institutes

DENGUE OUTBREAK 8 more die; 1,084 get hospitalised

UNB, Dhaka

Eight more deaths were reported from dengue in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising the fatalities from the mosquito-borne disease in Bangladesh to 1,562 this year.

During the period, 1,084 more patients were hospitalised with the viral fever, according to the DGHS.

A total of 4,462 dengue patients, including 1,128 in the capital, are now receiving treatment at hospitals across the country.

So far, the DGHS has recorded 3,03,536 dengue cases and 2,97,512 recoveries this year.

**PRAYER
TIMING**
NOVEMBER 22

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:05	12:30	3:45	5:21	7:00
JAMAAAT 5:40	1:15	4:00	5:24	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

‘We want secure environment for our education’

Students, teachers urge at human chains

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students and teachers from several educational institutions staged human chains throughout the capital yesterday, demanding timely examinations and a safe learning environment.

The students took to the streets around 11:00am, holding placards with slogans such as “We want to take exams on time”, “We want to attend classes”, and “We want a secure environment for education”.

A student at Rajdhani High School in Manik Mia Avenue said, “Due to these weekly political programmes, our academic activities are constantly interrupted. Our parents are worried about our safety, so they hesitate to send us to school. But we want to attend classes and take exams peacefully.”

Another student said, “We typically take exams at the end of the year, so we request that such disruptive political activities be avoided during this crucial period.”

Md Tozammel Haque, headteacher of Rajdhani High School, said, “In the wake of blockades, hartals, and incidents of vandalism and arson, students are unable to come to school regularly. So, we are also unable to hold classes and exams on time.”



Holding posters and banners, students from several educational institutions formed human chains yesterday, demanding timely examinations and a safe learning environment. This photo was taken on Manik Mia Avenue.

PHOTO: STAR

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