

No AL councils or committees during upazila polls Says Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League will not hold councils and form committees at all levels during the upcoming upazila parishad elections, said party General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday.



He was addressing a press conference at the AL president's political office in Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

Regarding the participation of close relatives of ministers and AL lawmakers in the upazila elections, Quader said they will have to refrain from taking part in the polls.

"They have also been asked to stay away from the polls. Directives have been given to prepare a list of those who are still in polls. A list is being prepared accordingly," he said.

When asked why many of them are still in the election process, Quader said, "Let the date of withdrawal [of nomination papers] be over; how can it be said before that?"



Teens take a dip in the Kirtankhola river to get some respite from the sweltering heat. A severe heatwave is disrupting the lives of people in different parts of the country. The photo was taken in Chadmari area of Barishal city yesterday. PHOTO: TITU DAS

It's responsibility of govt, media to contain disinformation Says Arafat

UNB, Dhaka

The government wants to create an excellent environment for journalists in Bangladesh, said State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat yesterday.

"We want to ensure all necessary things for the media so that they can work freely to facilitate free journalism and freedom of expression," he said.

The state minister was speaking at the "Meet the Reporters" programme organised by Dhaka Reporters' Unity at Segunbagicha in the capital.

Noting that lack of information creates the scope of sprouting misinformation and disinformation, the state minister said the government is working to bring necessary reform to allow journalists to get information from government sources within the shortest possible time.

Arafat sought the cooperation of journalists to prevent any falsehood against the government in the name of so-called criticism, saying the media must criticise the government if any mistake is made.

The state minister said it is the collective responsibility of the government and media to contain disinformation.

Regarding the Media Workers Act, he said instructions have been given to create a cell with two representatives from all journalist organisations to review the law.

CHT PEACE ACCORD 65 out of 72 provisions fully implemented

Bangladesh tells UN

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has told the United Nations that the ethnic communities of Chattogram Hill Tracts region have been engaged in the country's mainstream development through the CHT Peace Accord signed in 1997.

The accord had also ended decades old conflicts in the region, said Md Mashur Rahman NDC, secretary to the CHT Affairs ministry, while addressing the 23rd session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in New York on Friday.

"Implementation of the Peace Accord's provisions is ongoing through an inclusive and participatory process. So far, 65 of the total 72 provisions have been fully implemented, three have been implemented partially and four are under implementation," he said.

Mashur also informed the UNPFII about the government initiatives for development of the region's ethnic communities and preserving their unique traditions and cultures, as well as steps towards ensuring security, environmental balance, digital land management and overall development in the CHT, according to a statement of the Bangladesh's Permanent Mission to the UN.

The UNPFII's 23rd session began on April 15 and will continue till April 26.

Mashur is leading the Bangladesh delegation.

45 'overstaying' Bangladeshis held in Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysia Immigration Department has arrested 49 foreigners including 45 Bangladeshis at a construction site in Perlis on suspicions of overstaying and not having valid travel documents, according to a report in Malaysian media.

Quoting Perlis Immigration Director Khairul Amin Talib, the Bernama report said the foreigners -- 44 Bangladeshi men and one Bangladeshi woman, three Indonesians, and one Indian national, all aged between 19 and 54 -- were arrested during a raid at the construction site of Sekolah Sukan Malaysia Perlis Phase 1, Bukit Chabang around 11:00am on Friday.

They were taken to the Kuala Perlis Immigration detention depot for investigation, according to the official.

"A total of 101 foreigners were checked, with 49 of them arrested for not having valid documents and overstaying," he said in a statement on Friday.

The foreigners will be investigated under Malaysia's immigration act, he added.

Felling of old trees stopped for now

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Environmental activists in Tangail yesterday gathered near Shaheed Smriti Pouro Udyan in the town and stopped loggers from felling six old trees there.

The authorities of Tangail municipality recently took the decision to fell the six trees for widening the town's Club Road.

The activists said there are just a few remaining old trees at Shaheed Smriti Pouro Udyan, the only place in Tangail town where residents can seat in the shade.

They requested the municipality authorities to find

a way to keep the trees while widening the road.

Mayor SM Sirajul Haque Khan Alamgir told reporters that they decided to fell the trees after discussing with all the relevant authorities and with permission of the Forest Department.

He mentioned that they have a plan to plant more trees after the road is developed.

Md Shihab Raihan, deputy director of Tangail LGD, said, "Even if the Forest Department gave permission the municipality authorities will still require permission from the local government ministry. So, tree felling will be halted for now."



Address concerns

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needs attention. And the attention is, you need to check the gaps and make sure that you don't have potential for premature failure."

He detailed his concerns later on April 17 in a hearing in the US Senate, claiming Boeing had used excessive force to help close gaps between fuselage sections before adding shims, or thin strips of metal.

Such force is known to cause fatigue in composite materials such as those

used on the Boeing 787 that cannot be detected visually, he also said.

This week, Boeing claimed the allegations to be inaccurate, adding that they have full confidence in the aircraft based on the work done to ensure its quality and long-term safety.

A Boeing official said the model has been stress-tested for 165,000 flight cycles, beyond its expected lifespan, and that no aircraft has shown evidence of fatigue.

Bus driver arrested

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engineer at the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

Yasir Arafat Khan, officer-in-charge of the Airport Police Station, had said the incident occurred around 10:00am when the Raida Paribahan bus lost control and ramm

Muidul's motorcycle as he was heading to work before crashing through the boundary wall around Dhaka airport's third terminal.

Critically injured, Muidul was rushed to Kurmitola General Hospital, where doctors declared him dead, the OC added.

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Govt agencies can't

FROM PAGE 3

director (road safety), said drivers are mostly not responsible for road crashes. "The country's drivers are skilled. Non-motorised three two wheeled vehicles are mainly responsible for accidents. Authorised drivers are well-trained," he said.

Osman Ali, general secretary of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation, said blaming only drivers will not fix the road accident problem.

"Out of 105 reasons for accidents, only four relate to transport workers -- speeding, risky overtaking, overloading and reckless. Avoiding these will reduce crashes," he said.

"Transport workers provide services to passengers, but today, they are being termed killers. Some people want to portray transport workers negatively by spreading misinformation against us," he added.

He urged the government to arrange training for transport workers across 64 districts and shut down illegal driving schools.

A joyride turns tragic

FROM PAGE 3

They left home for a family outing, said OC Zainal Abedin.

The accident happened when Shakil lost control of the vehicle, said the police officer.

Meanwhile, a milkman was killed when a sand-laden tractor collided with his motorcycle from the opposite direction in Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat on the same

"If accidents occur due to problems with the road, the Roads and Highways Department officials should also be punished," he added.

Osman, also executive president of Dhaka District Bus-Minibus Workers Union, requested people to show "positive behaviour" towards transport workers, as they play a significant role in the country's economy.

Sadiqur Rahman Hiru, vice president of the Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation, called on the BRTA chairman to expand the Mohakhali bus terminal area to stop buses from being parked on the main road.

"Transport workers face mistreatment and insults from BRTA staff when obtaining their driving licences. They deserve respect, so please stop this," he added.

Abul Kalam, president of the Mohakhali Bus Terminal Owners' Association, suggested that regular awareness campaigns and monthly discussion programmes could better educate drivers.

Mahbub Hossain, 35, died on the spot.

Habibur Rahman, inspector (investigation) of Panchbibi Police Station, said Mahbub was en route to a local market to sell milk. Locals apprehended the tractor, but its driver managed to flee.

[Our correspondents from Munshiganj and Dinajpur contributed to this report]

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