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Bring proportional representation system in elections

Former CEC suggests reform commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chief election commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf yesterday proposed introducing proportional representation system in the national election, stressing that it will significantly reduce the nomination business.

He said this while exchanging views at the Election Commission office with the Electoral Reform Commission formed by the interim government.

Justice Rouf also said the political parties should nominate candidates for national polls through the party primary.

"There will be a parliamentary system. There is no need to bring in the American system. Elections must be simplified. So choose a proportional representation system," Rouf told reporters after the meeting.

"The nomination business has virtually turned the election into a trade. In the existing system, one spends Tk 20 crore for getting the nomination, and another Tk 10 crore during electioneering, to make Tk 250 crore [through corruption once elected as MP] during his or her tenure as lawmaker. This is why the MPs have such tainted characters," he added.

Proportional representation is an electoral system in which the distribution of seats corresponds with the proportion of the total votes cast for each party. For example, if a party gained 40 percent of the total votes,

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Sushil Pal arranges clay pots in different piles according to their size. During winter, these pots are used for collecting and storing date juice, which is popular for making pithas. He sells 100 pots for Tk 2,000 at a wholesale rate. The photo was taken in the Kalashkathi village of Bakerganj upazila in Barishal yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Foster creativity to develop entrepreneurs

Says Prof Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the country's education system must foster creativity to create a generation of entrepreneurs.

"Humans are born entrepreneurs. Yet, our education system creates job seekers. It is a flawed education system," he said.

The chief adviser made the remarks during a visit to the office of the education ministry at the Bangladesh Secretariat in Dhaka.

"We should reform the education system in a way that creates a generation of entrepreneurs. We need education which helps students become creative people. Our young people must fulfil their creative potential," said Prof Yunus.

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Armed Forces Day today

UNB, Dhaka

Armed Forces Day will be observed across the country on Thursday with due solemnity and enthusiasm.

On this day in 1971, Bangladesh Armed Forces comprising army, navy and air force came into being and launched an all-out attack on the Pakistani occupation forces.

Since the country's independence, the day has been observed as the Armed Forces Day every year.

The day's programmes will start with the offering of special prayers in mosques of all cantonments, naval outposts and establishments and air force outposts after Fazr prayers seeking divine blessings for the country's welfare and progress and continued development and progress of the Armed Forces.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will place wreaths at "Shikha Anirban" (the Eternal Flame) at Dhaka Cantonment in the morning to pay homage to the members of the Armed Forces who had sacrificed their lives in the War of Liberation. SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Govt to amend Metro Rail Act

Facilitating underground rail main agenda; draft sent to ministry

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government is going to amend the Metro Rail Act 2015 to incorporate several sections, including amendments to facilitate the construction of underground metro rail, which is now ongoing.

Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), the implementing and operating agency of the metro rail, has already prepared a draft and sent it to the Road Transport and Highways Division under the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry, officials said.

An ordinance, in absence of the parliament, will be issued upon completion of the necessary scrutiny and taking opinions from stakeholders, they added.

The move came at a time when DMTCL is implementing three metro rail projects, including the extension of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-6, the country's first metro rail line.

Two other ongoing projects -- MRT Line-1 and MRT Line-5 (northern route) -- have underground sections.

The previous Awami League government in June 2013 formed



The decision to amend the act was taken to make the law time-befitting and address some other issues. There won't be any major changes. An amendment to the act was proposed to make metro rail operations more effective.

Mohammad Abdur Rouf
Managing director, DMTCL

The main issue for amendment of the act is related to the construction of the underground metro rail. The existing law is not clear about how the right of the land would be settled. So, the change is needed.

A DMTCL official

the state-run DMTCL to construct metro rail lines and operate and maintain metro rail services.

The parliament passed the Metro Rail Act 2015 in January 2015 to devise the construction of metro rail lines as well as operate, control and maintain metro rail services.

"The decision to amend the act was taken to make the law time-befitting and address some other issues," Mohammad Abdur Rouf, managing director of DMTCL, told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

"There won't be any major changes. Amendment of the act was proposed to make metro rail operation more effective," he added.

A DMTCL official said the main issue for amendment of the act is related to the construction of the underground metro rail.

The official, wishing to remain anonymous, said although the existing law has mentioned the underground metro rail, it is not enough, so the change is needed.

For example, he said a major portion of MRT Line-1 and MRT Line-5 (northern route) will go underground. However, the

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SEVEN COLLEGES

Committee to design framework

Says edn adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government will form an expert committee to provide the seven colleges with a separate institutional framework and an independent identity, said Education Advisor Wahiduddin Mahmud yesterday.

While addressing the 184th foundation anniversary programme of Dhaka College, the advisor said the unplanned affiliation of seven colleges with Dhaka University had led to various academic and administrative issues and crises for these institutions. To address these challenges, the government has already formed a committee and is nearing the completion of its report, said the adviser.

"Based on their findings, we will form a new expert committee to design a framework that will grant the colleges greater autonomy, improve

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CYBER SECURITY ACT

HC suggests death penalty for 'hurting religious sentiment'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court in the full text of a verdict has suggested an enhancement of punishment under the Cyber Security Act to death penalty or life imprisonment for making offending remarks against the Holy Quran and Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) and for making this charge non-bailable for the offenders.

The maximum punishment for hurting the religious sentiment under this law is now two years' imprisonment or a fine of Tk 5 lakh or both, and such an offence is bailable.

"There should be a provision of punishment like death penalty or life imprisonment for such unnecessary, unconscionable, obstinate and provocative speech and conduct against the Quran and Muhammad (Pbuh), which the parliament may consider," the HC bench of Justice MR Hassan and Justice Fahmida Quader observed in the verdict's full text, which has been released recently.

On March 12 this year, the HC bench delivered the verdict on a bail petition filed by Md Selim Khan from Kushtia's Bheramara upazila in a case filed over hurting religious sentiment by making lewd comments on Facebook about "Hazrat Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam".

In the verdict, the HC bench granted bail to accused Selim Khan on condition that he must deposit Tk 25 lakh to a bank as a guarantee and

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15 injured as students of Dhaka, City colleges clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of Dhaka College and City College clashed for about two hours in the Science Lab and its neighbourhood areas yesterday afternoon, causing injuries to at least 15 people.

Traffic flow in and out of the busy intersection came to a halt as the clash broke out around 2:00pm, causing immense suffering to the commuters.

Eleven of the injured took treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Inspector Md Farouk, in-charge of DMCH police outpost. All 11 were students of Dhaka College.

Witnesses said both groups wielded sticks and iron rods, chased each other, and hurled brick chips,

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While they were unable to catch any hilsa as they wished, these fishermen are overjoyed to have caught a huge pangas fish. The pangas is currently in demand and sells for Tk 600 per kg. The photo was taken at the Bottola Ghat in Daulatkhan of Bhola recently.

PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK

BATTERY-RUN RICKSHAW BAN

Drivers clash with cops during protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Drivers of battery-powered rickshaws blocked roads in the Agargaon and Jatrabari areas of Dhaka for hours yesterday, demanding government intervention in rehabilitating them before banning their vehicles in the capital.

In Jatrabari, rickshaw drivers clashed with law enforcers, resulting in two policemen getting injured and three rickshaw drivers being detained.

They took to the streets a day after the High Court directed government authorities to take necessary steps to stop the plying of battery-run rickshaws and auto-rickshaws on the capital's streets within three days.

With over two lakh battery-powered rickshaws operating on the city streets, drivers claim that banning these vehicles without proper rehabilitation will leave many families destitute.

Around 8:00am, rickshaw drivers gathered in front of the Agargaon Election

Commission office and blocked several major roads in the area, disrupting traffic and causing significant inconvenience to commuters.

They blocked the road from 10:00am to 2:30pm, disrupting traffic movement.



Across town, drivers also blocked the road at the Dayaganj intersection in the city's Jatrabari area.

The protests began at 11:00am and escalated into a clash with the police around 1:00pm. Two police officers were injured during the incident, and three

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