

HC upholds RPO clause on party symbols

Parties have to contest polls using own symbols, even if part of alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday upheld the amended provision of the Representation of People Order (RPO) that requires political parties to contest national elections using their own symbols, even when they are part of an electoral alliance.

The court discharged the rule it had issued on December 1, asking the government and the Election Commission to explain within 10 days why the provision should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

The bench of Justice Fatema Najib and Justice Fatema Anwar delivered the verdict after hearing arguments on the rule.

Petitioner's lawyer Ahsanul Karim told The Daily Star that his client plans to appeal the HC judgment before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, Advocate SM Azmal Hossain Bachchhu, convener of the National Lawyers Alliance (NLA), supported by the National Citizen Party, expressed satisfaction at the HC verdict, SEE PAGE 9 COL 7



Children stroll past a pile of burning trash at Kamrangirchar in Dhaka, forced to inhale toxic fumes as they look for a place to play. The smoke from the burning waste poses serious air-pollution and health risks for residents, especially children. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

DEATH OF PEER

Commuters suffer as Tejgaon College students block road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of Tejgaon College blocked the Farmgate intersection for over two hours yesterday, demanding justice for a fellow student who was killed in a factional clash, bringing traffic in the city to a standstill.

Vehicles were stuck on the roads for hours, and many people were forced to walk to their destinations as traffic on several major routes had to be diverted.

The protesting students demanded the immediate arrest of those involved in the killing of Sakibul Hasan Rana, an HSC examinee of the college.

Sakib, who suffered head injuries during a factional clash and subsequent attack in the dormitory, passed away around noon on Wednesday in the ICU of a hospital in Moghbazar.

Students alleged that both of the factions involved were associated with Chhatra Dal leaders, with outsiders also taking part in the clash.

Witnesses said students took to the streets around 10:30am, chanting slogans for justice. They demanded exemplary punishment for those responsible.

Farhan, a student of the college, said, "We want justice for Rana. We took to the street so such incidents don't occur on any campus."

Habibur Rahman, another student, said, "Our parents sent us to college to learn. Not to become victims of killings. We saw how Abrar Fahad was killed during the Awami League regime. Now our brother was killed. We want the highest punishment for his killers." SEE PAGE 9 COL 7



Bhasani's 145th birth anniv today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Today marks the 145th birth anniversary of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, the legendary political leader and visionary who inspired the struggle for an independent Bangladesh.

Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Bhasani Parishad and various social and political organisations will place wreaths at his grave in Santosh, Tangail. A doa and milad mahfil will also be held at the university central mosque after the Zohr prayers.

Born in 1880 in Dhangara village of Sirajganj, Bhasani was the founder and president of the Awami Muslim League, which later evolved into the Awami League.

He also formed the left-leaning National Awami Party.

Bhasani played a key role in the 1969 mass upsurge and led the historic Farakka Long March in 1976, demanding Bangladesh's fair share of Ganges water.

Known as "Mazlum Jananeta" (leader of the oppressed), he spent his life championing the rights of the poor and marginalised. Bhasani passed away on November 17, 1976.

'Silence no longer an option'

Speakers express concern over rising rights violations, urge citizens to speak out against injustice during MJF event



PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a dialogue yesterday strongly condemned the recent wave of derogatory remarks and online harassment directed at Begum Rokeya, calling it a stark reminder of the shrinking space for women and dissenting voices in Bangladesh.

They expressed concern over rising human rights violations, noting that women, children, minorities, and other marginalised groups continue to be disproportionately affected.

Speakers urged citizens to speak out against injustice, saying silence is no longer an option.

The dialogue was organised by Manusher Jonno

Foundation (MJF) as part of this year's International Human Rights Day observance and the closing of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. It was held at the MJF Tower in Rupnagar, Mirpur.

In her welcome remarks, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam expressed sorrow and outrage, saying the growing normalisation of humiliation, hate, and abusive language is a violation of human rights.

She said the recent derogatory and obscene comments on social media about Begum Rokeya — a trailblazer of women's emancipation who can no longer defend herself — are unacceptable in any civilised

society.

She questioned the state's silence even when a Rajshahi university teacher publicly made derogatory comments about Rokeya on the day the Rokeya Padak was awarded. Such silence, she warned, signals a worrying decline in social values.

Shaheen Anam said people may disagree with Rokeya's ideology, but that does not give anyone the right to use abusive language. She also expressed concern over the lack of public protest.

She also said rights are not only about protecting one's own freedoms but also about speaking out when others' rights are violated. She stressed the need to recognise SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

'An attack on dignity of women'

ASK, Teachers' Network condemn RU teacher's derogatory remark on Begum Rokeya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) and the University Teachers' Network yesterday strongly condemned Rajshahi University physics teacher Khandaker Mahmudul Hasan for calling women's rights pioneer Begum Rokeya a "murtad" (apostate) and "kafir" (non-believer) in a Facebook post.

In separate statements, both organisations demanded the immediate withdrawal of the remarks, calling them hateful and inflammatory.

ASK said Begum Rokeya — a pioneer of Bangalee and Bangladeshi women's awakening whose work shaped the region's education, social thought, and intellectual progress — had been targeted with hateful and provocative comments.

Such remarks, it said, were not only condemnable but also a direct attack on the dignity of women.

Begum Rokeya's educational and social movements liberated Bangalee women from the chains of subjugation and superstition, regardless of religion, caste, or social identity, the statement said.

For such comments to come from a university teacher — who is expected to embody professional ethics and progressive values — is entirely unacceptable, said ASK.

Hate-driven and misogynistic speech from a higher education teacher constitutes a serious breach of professional integrity, it added. SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Disclose wealth statements of Asif, Mahfuj

Demands students' platform

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Students' Platform has demanded the disclosure of wealth statements of Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain and Mahfuj Alam, both of whom resigned from their posts as advisers to the interim government yesterday.

They also demanded that records of "corruption" happened under the two former advisers' supervision over the last 17 months be made public.

They further said Asif and Mahfuj should not be allowed to contest the upcoming election without a proper corruption investigation.



PHOTO: STAR

The organisation formed a human chain formed yesterday in front of the Anti-Corruption Commission headquarters in Segunbagicha.

Former Chhatra Union president Deepak Shil said, "Asif's office had turned into a hub of corruption. A corruption syndicate grew around him and his APS Moazzem. The APS was later removed... and the ACC investigated it. We want to know the progress of that investigation."

Speakers also alleged that the ACC has remained silent about corruption allegations against the personal assistants (PS) of the two former advisers.

They called on the Election Commission and the interim government to bar them from participating in the election.

2 mild quakes jolt Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Two mild earthquakes were felt in Sylhet early yesterday, occurring just five minutes apart at 2:50am and 2:55am.

According to the Seismic Observatory Centre of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, the first tremor measured 3.5 on the Richter scale, with its epicentre in Beanibazar upazila of Sylhet.

The second quake, recorded at 3.3 magnitude, originated in Barlekha upazila of neighbouring Moulvibazar district.

Shah Md Sajib Hossain, assistant meteorologist at the Sylhet Met Office, confirmed the information, citing the seismic centre. Despite the late-night tremors, no damage or casualties were reported as of yesterday morning. SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

High migration to same destinations may reduce wages

Says BIDS study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Excessive numbers of Bangladeshi workers migrating to the same labour market tend to lower their average wages due to an oversupply of workers, according to a new study by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

The study suggests that this risk can be reduced if Bangladesh diversifies its labour migration by sending more skilled workers across different sectors, rather than relying heavily on low-skilled migration.

These insights were presented in a theoretical paper titled "The Impact of Rising Global Oil Prices on Remittances and Migrant Workers from Small Economies" at a BIDS seminar in Dhaka's Agargaon yesterday.

The research was conducted by AKM Mahbub Morshed, professor of economics at Southern Illinois University in the US. The session was chaired by Mohammad Yunus, research director at BIDS.

The paper outlines the dual impact of rising global oil prices. Higher oil prices boost the income and labour demand of oil-producing countries, leading to increased production and longer working hours. This initially benefits migrant workers, whose earnings and remittance contributions rise as a result.

However, the study notes that this favourable phase is temporary. As news of higher wages spreads, more SEE PAGE 9 COL 7



Farmers harvest ripe Aman paddy in Khulna and then thresh and dry the crop from dawn to dusk, filling the air with the scent of fresh rice. The newly harvested grain is used to make pitha and payesh during the traditional Nabanna festival. The photo was taken at Gangarampur village in Batiaghata upazila recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN