

Fakers take gloss off FBCCI polls

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN

Like in the previous years, voters belonging to fake trade bodies with dubious records and even non-businessmen participated in Monday's elections to the apex trade body.

As many as 30 votes were cancelled in the election of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) this time.

These votes were cancelled on a number of grounds including weird signs and initials of voters on ballot papers, instead of simple cross marks against the names of candidates.

Of the votes cancelled, seven were from the Chamber group and 23 from the Association group.

Every A-class chamber has six votes and B-class four, while an A-class association has five votes and a B-class three.

Business sources said the trade bodies whose votes were cancelled are mostly fake ones having no links with any sort of business and are registered with false identity and addresses.

These votes are usually sold ahead of the election to candidates paying maximum amounts.

Talking to The Daily Star, FBCCI Election Board Chairman Anisuzzaman said this time they tried to make the polls easier for the voters and he did not find any

ground for voters to make mistakes in casting votes.

"This year the ballot papers bore photos of candidates with clear instructions on how to cast a vote," he pointed out.

Anisuzzaman said it was surprising to see the standard of voters. "These voters do not have the minimum qualification to vote in the election of the apex trade body."

Some business leaders found it difficult to understand how the businessmen could make such mistakes while casting votes.

Election sources said the ballot papers bearing weird signs and marking led many to believe that those who cast these votes were not businessmen but drivers or servants who were told to cast vote for a person having a ballot number or name.

"But the poor fellows forgot whether to cross or tick the ballot papers and made a mess by giving their initials," was how a businessman interpreted the strange marks on the ballot papers.

The Election Board chairman said the election body only checks the papers and allows publication of the voter list, which complies with relevant rules. "We really cannot stop a voter, even if we have doubts about its authenticity, as long as he has his papers right," he added.

Held outlaw man

FROM PAGE 1
killing squad had six members who were present at the spot in two groups.

The other arrestees are Ripon Sheikh, Shaheen Molla, Mahmud Rahman Suman, Rezwan Molla, Abdur Razzak and Rajib Sarder. Of them, three were placed on a three-day remand.

Police said three out of the seven arrestees are members of outlawed groups. "We are questioning them," the OC said. He replied in the negative when asked whether the ruling BNP could be involved in the killing.

A sawn-off gun, four live cartridges and ingredients for making bombs and leaflets of the Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Banglar Ujuddha) have also been recovered.

In another development, Joint Secretary of Khulna district Awami League Ashrafuzzaman Babul survived an attempt on his life by outlaws at noon on Monday while he was returning home at Icgati union of Rupsha upazila.

According to eyewitnesses and sources, a group of 10 armed cadres of the PBCP-Tapan hurled a powerful bomb at him. But the bomb missed him by a few inches as he quickly took cover at Jahanabad Salt Industry. Two roadside shops were blown up in the explosion that rocked the entire area. The AL leader filed a general diary with the Rupsha Police Station.

Meanwhile, AL chief Sheikh Hasina went to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) yesterday to see Bijon Bihari who was seriously injured in the bomb blasts while accompanying the slain leader in a rickshaw. Hasina enquired about his condition from the attending doctors. The doctors told her that the injured advocate was still not out of danger.

Abdullah AI Mamun Jami, 28, the youngest son of the slain AL leader,

filed a case at 12:30am on Monday with the Kotwali Police Station, accusing no one.

"I won't allow anyone to politicise the killing of my father, though pressure is there to do so," Jami told journalists.

His elder brother Rumi, 30, attended a condolence meeting at Shahid Hadi Park yesterday morning. Rumi also refused to blame any political party for the murder. Rather, he urged people to pray for the peace of the departed soul. "I appeal to you to offer special prayers seeking the mercy of the Almighty so that the soul of my father may rest in peace," Rumi said.

Meherunnessa Begum, wife of Imam, also requested the AL leaders not to make the murder a political issue.

Khulna district and city units of the Awami League have announced a 20-day programme to protest the murder. The programme includes hoisting of black flags, wearing of black badges, Milad Mehfil, protest rallies in the city and all upazila, and prayers at all mosques, temples and churches. The AL has already called a daylong hartal in the city on August 30 and will also submit a memorandum to the deputy commissioner (DC) and the police commissioner. The 20-day condolence programme ends on September 12.

Lawyers of Sathkira Bar Association skipped courts yesterday to protest the murder. The lawyers also took out a big procession in the town.

Meanwhile, Imam was laid to rest yesterday at his family graveyard at Boyra, Khulna. Thousands of people attended his burial.

Normally was returning to the city a day after life was disrupted by an outbreak of violence following the killing.

Simon, friend freed

FROM PAGE 1
tenant of a mess owned by Simon's family, and Helal had their active role in the abduction.

Police are now trying to track down Joynal, a supplier of electric equipment in Pahartali, who is accused of hiring yesterday's arrestees for keeping watch on Simon and Sanjoy in hostage.

A team from Double Mooring Police Station raided the Biswa Colony area in Khulshi upazila, close to the border of Sitakunda and seven to eight kilometres off Dhaka-Chittagong Highway.

The team rescued Simon and Sanjoy, both 17, unhurt from a thatched house at 5:30am and nabbed the five abductors with a gun and two knives.

The arrestees are Naushad alias Rubel, 24, son of Abdul Mannan of Musapur in Sandwip; Jalaluddin, 22, son of Jamaluddin of Daudkandi in Comilla; Mizanur Rahman, 18, son of late Ali Haider of Sripur in Magura; Nazrul Islam, 23, son of late Nabalak Miah of Khulshi in Chittagong and Kalu, 25, son of late Shukkur Miah of Ulchopara in Brahmanbaria.

Police arrived with Simon and Sanjoy at their residences in the city's Moulivipara area in Agrabad at 6:30am.

Simon's father Rafiq Miah and mother Nasima Begum, and Sanjoy's father Tapan Kumar Dev and mother Laxmi Rani Dev sobbed out their emotions to journalists.

One killed

FROM PAGE 1
Rupan Mohajon, a Bangalee businessman.

They said four armed indigenous youths attacked the rally, leaving four seriously injured. Angry protesters chased the attackers. The incident was followed by torching of 54 houses in nearby areas like Babu Para, Tila Para and Shamli Para.

A mob later attacked Lamuchhari village, two kilometres from the place of the occurrence.

An elderly villager, Binod Bihari Kkisha, who tried to pacify the feuding groups, was beaten up by the mob. He died from injuries on way to hospital. Some 60 houses were set afire during the attack on Lamuchhari village.

Officials said the three suspended policemen are those who lost their weapons to the militants of the outlawed Jama'atul Mujahidin in the pre-dawn gun battle.

Mumbai cops

FROM PAGE 12
December 2001 which left 15 people dead and brought India and Pakistan close to war.

Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani said Monday the banned Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) working with Laskar could be behind the blasts.

The Islamic group is a shadowy network of Muslim youth fanatically opposed to India's official secularism, according to officials.

Cancun meet

FROM PAGE 12
Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury at his secretariat office yesterday.

Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya handed over the letter that underscored the need for a collective stand by all to face challenges and overcome pressures.

Representatives from Oxfam, Consumers International, EU-LDC Network, Switzerland-based SEATINI, SAWTEE and CPD signed the letter.

The WTO ministerial conference is going to be held in the Mexican city of Cancun from September 10 to 14.

The letter referred to the LDC trade ministers' Dhaka declaration and the international civil society forum declaration of six non-government organisations that preceded the trade ministers' meeting here on May 29-30.

Termining the Dhaka declaration 'excellent, powerful and comprehensive', the civil society organisations urged the LDC ministers "to stay on course and not abandon the united position."

They also urged the trade ministers to work with civil society groups in their respective countries in facing the WTO-related challenges.

The letter also called upon the ministers to incorporate the concerns in the Dhaka declaration of the international civil society forum in the LDCs' official position at the Cancun conference.

It referred to the obstacles that the developed countries are creating to frustrate the positive achievements of the earlier Doha declaration and said only a united stand will be able to overcome the obstacles.

Peshawar Test

FROM PAGE 1
show that when they did in Karachi.

Pakistan coach Javed Miandad also brushed aside the weather factor saying that his boys have been brought up in these conditions.

The champion batsman of yesterday said that the Karachi pitch equally helped Bangladesh and Pakistan and that was why the game lasted five days. But he was looking forward to a clinical performance from his charges and a finish inside four days in Peshwar.

"I expect the boys to be more serious than they were in Karachi and wrap up the match in four days," said Miandad.

Bangladesh have made two changes in the team. Middle-order Sanwar Hossain and right arm medium pacer Tapas Baishya have been dropped from the squad that played in Karachi. Mohammad Ashraf, the 19-year old middle order batsman, and 22-year-old pace bowler Alamgir Kabir have been included in the playing eleven in their places.

Pakistan have retained the same squad that played in the first Test.

The home side is looking to improve their record in Peshawar where they lost their previous two Test matches against Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka.

Zimbabwe beat Pakistan by seven wickets in November 1998 while Sri Lanka handed them a 57-run defeat when Test cricket was last played here in March 2000.

The match will be televised live on TEN Sports starting from 11am Bangladesh Standard time.

TEAMS
Bangladesh: Khaled Mahmud (captain), Javed Omar, Hannan Sarkar, Habibur Basha, Mohammad Ashraf, Rajin Saleh, Khaled Mashud, Alok Kapali, Mohammad Rafique, Mashrafebin-Mortuza and Alamgir Kabir.
Pakistan: Rashid Latif (captain), Taufeeq Umar, Mohammad Hafeez, Yasir Hameed, Inzamamul Haque, Yousof Youhana, Misbahul Haque, Danish Kaneria, Shoab Akhter, Shabbir Ahmed and Umar Gul.

Umpires: Steve Bucknor (West Indies) and Russell Tiffin (Zimbabwe).

Joypurhat gunfight

3 cops suspended, 14 showcaused

BSS, Joypurhat

Three policemen were suspended and 14 others served with showcause notices in Joypurhat yesterday for negligence duty during the August 15 gunfight between police and extremists at Uttar Moheshpur village.

Officials said the three suspended policemen are those who lost their weapons to the militants of the outlawed Jama'atul Mujahidin in the pre-dawn gun battle.

The 14 others including a senior police officer were asked to explain in seven days why tough action would not be taken against them for failure to discharge their duties properly.

Robbery bid

FROM PAGE 1
single-barrel breach-loading (SBBL) gun from the guards and confined the 22 officials and 15 clients to a small dining space.

But, as they were herding the officials and clients into the dining space, Branch Manager Anwar Hossain pressed the alarm. The robbers, unaware of the alarm, moved towards the road, chopped guard Abdur Rahim in the left hand and shoulder with sharp weapons and hit Shahabuddin, the other guard, in the head with a hammer.

Hearing the alarm, several businessmen and locals rushed to the bank. But the gang got down fast and left in the microbus parked in front of the bank.

The gang also broke the glass door of the cash counter. "But no money is missing," one bank official said.

"While the robbers were getting in the microbus, I ran into them at the stairs and one of them took away my gold chain," said Mohammad Hossain, a local businessman and bank client.

"The gang took away my mobile phone and disconnected all telephone lines," the bank manager said.

During the 10-minute raid, the gang also took away five mobile phones from the officials and customers.

A mobile police team also rushed to the spot on hearing the alarm. The businessmen who took down the number of the microbus gave it to police.

Police later seized the microbus and arrested its driver, Abdur Rab, from in front of the BTTB office in

NSU student feared drowned in Bay: Search on for body

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police and relatives yesterday were searching for the body of Shawkat, an 18-year-old BBA student of Dhaka's North South University (NSU), feared drowned in the Bay after he was swept away by receding tides while bathing on the beach here on Monday.

Sources said Shawkat had got stuck into a quicksand at around 2:00pm before being pulled into the deep waters by a strong current.

Rescuers from Yasir Lifeguard managed to save Shawkat's two friends, Himel, 22, and Nipun, 20, who were also bathing on the beach.

The only son of Azizul Akbar, general manager (Operations) of Bangladesh Krishi Bank head office, Shawkat came to Cox's Bazar on an excursion along with several of his NSU classmates.

The victim's body could not be found till 6:00pm yesterday.

Terrorist den

FROM PAGE 1
after three indigenous youths were abducted by the Arakan rebels Friday, two of whom were later released.

The troops pinpointed the camp in the thick forest surrounded by hills at Ruangchhari, some 10km off Bandarban town, and cordoned it off Friday.

"It was a very risky operation and any mistake would have alerted the terrorists," said a soldier who took part in the attack. "The foliage was so thick that vision could stretch hardly 20 yards."

"We were there for four days and very slowly moved deeper and deeper, trying to pin down the camp," said a policeman. "Only Monday night at around 10 could we be 100 per cent sure of their location. And suddenly, the terrorists also sensed our presence."

The silence of the tar-black night was all of a sudden shattered as the rebels opened fire on the troops.

"Suddenly all hell broke loose," the army man said of the moment of the attack. "Bullets whistled past us, hitting the trees, shredding down leaves. We also pulled the trigger."

After about 35 minutes of engagement, the rebels gave up and started pulling back into the hills. The troops chased them, but found it difficult because of the darkness and forest.

"When we suddenly came bumped into a group of the terrorists, there was no time or room for gunfight. It was too close an encounter to use weapons and we had to use our fists in a hand-to-hand combat," described the policeman.

IGP goes to Ctg today to buck up rescue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Shahudul Huq is expected to reach Chittagong today in a bid to speed up the ongoing operation to rescue the abducted business magnate Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury.

The IGP is scheduled to visit Fatikhchhari where Jamal is believed to be held hostage, official sources said.

Meanwhile, the augmentation of forces and strengthening of the rescue operation could not free Jamal, also a BNP leader, 33 days into his abduction.

In addition to the huge contingent of police carrying out a non-stop operation with the assistance of the BDR, 28 district policemen were posted at the camp set up on Friday at Kanchan Nagar of Fatikhchhari.

The contingent and district police, led by Miah Md Lutfur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police, have been raiding different parts of Fatikhchhari and adjoining areas.

Jamal was abducted while returning to his city residence at Chandgaon on July 24.

6-yr-old girl raped in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A 6-year-old girl was raped at village Chithlia in Mirpur upazila in the district on Monday night.

The girl is now fighting for life at the Mirpur Health Complex.

Police said, one Mafizul Islam alias Bishu, son of Mihir Uddin of the village called the girl, daughter of a poor peasant to his room to give her guava at about 8:30pm. When she went to his room, Bishu raped the girl pressing a piece a cloth round her mouth.

Family members found the girl seriously bleeding while the culprit managed to flee. They rushed the girl to Mirpur Health Complex.

A case has been filed but police could not arrest Bishu till filing of this report yesterday evening.

Harrowing

FROM PAGE 1
youngest son of businessman Rafiq Miah.

Both were hoodwinked by a gang and did not understand what was going on until they were confined to a thatched house in the outlying area and pressured for ransom.

He accused Kazi Helaluddin, elder brother of Kazi Mostaq, a tenant of a mess owned by his (Simon) family, of trapping them helplessly.

"On Wednesday morning, Helal came to my house with one Joynal whom I met for the first time and assured me of admission to the Government Mohsin College."

"Later in the day, Helal called me and asked me to see him in the Colonel Hat area for important talks about my admission. I took Sanjoy with me and went there only to be abducted by the gang of 12. Helal was among them."

"The gang tied and blindfolded us and shoved us into a microbus. After a few hours of journey we arrived in a place far from the city and were held hostage. We saw the five arrestees today (Tuesday)."

"In daytime, the abductors took us to different places on the hills and allowed us to stay overnight in a house. It continued six days," Simon said.

"The abductors pressured us to give the ransom they demanded and kept contact with their leaders by phone."

Sanjoy came up with the same litany of experience. "They gave us meagre breakfast and lunch – bread, rice and vegetables. We were starving," said Sanjoy, with his parents around.

"If your father doesn't oblige, we will take kidnays out of your body and sell them for money," an abductor was quoted as saying.

HC judge

FROM PAGE 1
judge. Fazole Kabir is the only one who has been appointed from judicial cadre.

Tafazzul Islam superseded Justice Sayed Amirul Islam to become an Appellate Division judge. The Appellate Division post became vacant on August 23 with the retirement of Justice Abu Sayeed Ahmed.

Only on July 12, Amirul Islam was superseded by Justice MM Ruhul Amin in the Appellate Division. That incident touched off widespread resentment among lawyers, who demanded an end to the superseding affair. They also urged the government to ensure that Amirul gets an Appellate Division appointment in the next opportunity. But the government turned a deaf ear to the plea.

The issue became a talk of the town on June 23 when the government had appointed the chief justice by superseding two senior judges in the Appellate Division.

Coming to power in October 2001, the BNP-led four-party alliance did not confirm services of 15 additional judges appointed during the Awami League rule on a two-year term.

The government has so far given appointments to 27 new judges at the High Court level.

Hasina in Khulna

FROM PAGE 12
ants in Khulna city on Monday.

Paying rich tributes to Imam, the AL chief said he was a 'political saint'. His murder will not go unchallenged since he was a dedicated politician and a pious man who had spent his life in austerity.

Hasina recalled his qualities both as a politician and a lawyer.

She warned the government not to frame her party men in false cases to protect the killers of Imam.

The AL chief said 24,000 murders have been committed across the country in the last 22 months and cases against 53,000 workers and leaders of the BNP and criminals withdrawn.

But, the execution of the verdict against the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is being delayed "with an ill motive". Rather, Khaleeda Zia is rewarding the killers by offering lucrative jobs both home and abroad, the AL chief said.

She thought the countrywide Operation Clean Heart and the Operation Spider Web in the south-western region were directed against leaders of the AL and its front organisations, and not against criminals.

"While in power, of course we failed to achieve 100 per cent success in this regard. But there was no lack of sincerity to curb crimes," Hasina said.

Referring to the role of law enforcers, the opposition leader blamed police for giving protection to criminals sheltered by the BNP-Jamaat alliance. "You will have to pay heavily for this crime," she warned.

Presided over by city AL vice-president Yunus Ali, the condolence meeting was also addressed by, among others, former agriculture minister Motia Chowdhury, president member Abdul Mannan, former state minister Talukdar Abdul Khaleque and former lawmaker Mannujun Sufian.

Hasina also urged people to observe the countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal tomorrow and in Khulna on August 30 called by her party mainly to protest the murder of Imam. "I call upon you to dislodge the BNP-Jamaat government by intensifying the movement to realise your legitimate rights and live in peace and security," she added.

She also extended her party's support to the 48-hour hartal in greater Khulna starting today at the call of Greater Khulna Development

25 political murders

FROM PAGE 12
Communist leader Ratan Sen was stabbed to death in front of the district police superintendent's office at 8:30am on July 31, 1992. On September 20, 1993, Chhatra Shibir cadres Munshi Abdul Hamid, Sheikh Rahman Ali and Amanullah were killed in a gunbattle with the activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

Awami League leader and ward commissioner Moslemuddin Khan was gunned down on February 2, 1995. It was followed by the murder of city JCD secretary Abul Kalam Azad on February 26.

BNP leader and former Khulna City Corporation deputy mayor Ikhtiaruddin Bablu and Jatiya Party leader and former president of Khulna Chamber Sheikh Abul Kashem were gunned down on August 22, 1994 and April 25, 1995 respectively. The driver of Abul Kashem was also shot dead on the same day.

Chhatra Shibir leader Abul Kashem Pathan was gunned down by JCD activists on the City College campus on October 23, 1994. Chhatra League leader Anwar Hossain Kamal was shot dead at Khalishpur on August 18, 1998.

Mars encounter

FROM PAGE 12
56 million kilometres (35 million miles) apart – about the closest they can get.

Mars has been visible as a bright orange object in the night sky for many weeks.

It currently outshines any other celestial body except the moon and venus.

The event will be a feast for astronomers who, with a small telescope, will be able to pick out surface details on the planet such as its southern ice cap.

It will be a treat even with the naked eye but could provoke a crop of spurious UFO sightings.

Skywatchers in Bangladesh will also share the world enthusiasm as different organisations have taken preparations to make the best of the spectacular sighting.

The Deshjire Mangal Utsab Committee has organised a discussion on mars at the Buet (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology) auditorium at 4:00pm.

Mars will be shown through three telescopes from the Buet ground from 8:00pm.

The Bangladesh Astronomical Association, and National Science and Technology Museum will camp at the Agargaon area for skywatchers to see mars.

A three-day programme including science quiz competition for school children, seminar, film festival begins at 6:30pm today at the National Science and Technology Museum at Agargaon.

Action Coordination Committee to press home its demands.

Earlier, soon after arriving in Khulna from Tunjipara, Hasina went to the residence of the slain AL leader. She saw his body, consoled his bereaved wife, sons and daughters and prayed for salvation of the departed soul. She also pledged to the family members that Imam's spirit of sacrifice will be upheld in politics.

Hasina was told that rickshawpuller Shaheed, 30, who was also killed in the bomb blasts by the killers of imam, had begged them with his hands folded not to shoot the AL leader. This had enraged the killers and they hurled a bomb at him.

FBCCI dances

FROM PAGE 12
of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association who had earlier announced his candidature for the post of president.

Under the changed electoral system, 24 directors have been elected, 12 each from chamber and association groups.

Mintoo-led panel bagged 11 directors while his key rival panel led by Abdul Matlub Ahmad got only one in the chamber group.

In the association group, Mintoo managed only one director while Matlub bagged nine and A Rouf Chowdhury-led panel got two.

Sources said all the elected candidates of Mintoo-led panel have been kept at a "secured place" to ensure that none from the rival panel steals their support.

Meanwhile, Matlub, who was actively supported by the high-ups of main opposition Awami League, at a press conference yesterday said there is a possibility for him of not being elected FBCCI president despite getting highest votes.

Matlub was elected director with