



Awami League candidate Rezaul Karim Chowdhury campaigns for votes, standing on the back of a pickup truck at Chattogram city's Saltgola Crossing area. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Flanked by supporters and holding BNP's electoral symbol 'sheaf of paddy', the party's mayoral candidate Shahadat Hossain leads a procession in the port city's Nadia'r Haat area yesterday morning.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Rezaul keeps it clean

AL candidate's approach of not speaking ill about competitor welcomed by electorates

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Awami League (AL) mayoral candidate in Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) polls Rezaul Karim Chowdhury steered clear of any badmouthing of his main opponent during electioneering yesterday, and the strategy seemed to be working in his favour. A good number of leaders and activists of AL and its associate organisations were with him during the campaign in three wards of the city yesterday, unperturbed by fears of coronavirus that have been looming over citizens in the last two days.

Scores of local residents were also seen gathering at the campaign spots.

Rezaul started his campaign from Saltgola Crossing in South Halishahar around 2pm. He went there by a mini-truck but later conducted campaigning on foot as well. He addressed gatherings at different spots in the ward, urging the people to vote for him for the sake of continuation of the ongoing development work in the city.

Rezaul did not speak a single ill word against his main rival, BNP candidate Shahadat Hossain, which, according to many locals, was a very positive attitude. He instead chose to make the case that since he is the candidate nominated by the ruling party, it will be easier for him to continue development in the city if he is elected.

Bazal Ahmed, a senior citizen from Soltgola area, appreciated Rezaul's approach. "In past polls, we saw rival candidates remain busy in undermining each other... they used to make ill and derogatory comments against each other but Rezaul remained polite and did not make any derogatory comment about his rival candidate," he told this correspondent.

Another resident Bimal Barua told The Daily Star that he had heard about Rezaul but never met him before.

"I have heard that Rezaul is a politician of clean image... I never got the opportunity to listen to his speech earlier," he said, adding, "Today I heard him speaking for the first time and I am pleased... we need to elect gentlemen as our representatives. I have heard that BNP candidate Shahadat Hossain is also a politician of clean image... so it is going to be a tough contest."

After South Halishahar, Rezaul moved to North Patenga and South Patenga.

The mayoral aspirant told The Daily Star he would campaign in two to three wards every day.



CTG CITY
POLLS 2020

'BNP will win big if polls are free of vote-rigging, intimidation'

Central leaders join Shahadat's campaign trail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

BNP mayoral candidate for the Chattogram City Corporation election Dr Shahadat Hossain yesterday said if authorities ensure an election free of intimidation and vote-rigging, BNP will win by a massive margin in the mayoral election, scheduled to take place on March 29.

On the second day of campaigning, Shahadat was speaking at South Paharholi of the port city.

BNP Vice-President Abdullah Al Noman joined the campaign, along with Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, standing committee member of the party.

Shahadat urged the authorities, including the Election Commission and law enforcement agencies, to play an impartial role in the election.

He said waterlogging is one of the biggest issues of the port city, and ruling

party Awami League did nothing to rid people of the crisis.

"If BNP gets people's mandate in the mayoral election, we will take steps to eradicate the waterlogging problem", he said.

Claiming that a large number of people are joining their campaign, Shahadat said people will be his key resources in battling irregularities at the election.

Shahadat campaigned at South Paharholi, South Kattoli and Jalalabad yesterday, as his supporters and activists joined him in a festive mood.

They handed over leaflets to electorates, urging them to turn up at the polling centre on voting day.

Shahadat said he has been involved in politics for the last 34 years, and knows very well how to organise a planned city for the people.

Abul Hasem Bakkar, general secretary of BNP city unit; Abu Sufian, senior vice president of the city unit; and Mahbubur Rahman Shamim were present, among others, at his campaign.

HUNGER STRIKE AT BSMRSTU Eight students fall sick on 6th day

STAR REPORT

Eight students of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU) in Gopalganj fell sick yesterday, as they were taking part in a hunger strike for the sixth consecutive day, demanding that University Grants Commission (UGC) approve their department.

Eight students -- Rashed, Pinki, Shahin, Fahmida, Jillur, Moon, Jalil and Utshaw -- were sent to Gopalganj 250-bed General Hospital, said protesters.

Among them, Shahin, Jillur, Jalil and Fahmida joined the protest again after being treated at the hospital, they added. Fifteen students were seen continuing their hunger strike till filing of this report.

Besides, administrative activities of the university remained suspended for the second consecutive day as agitating students of history department locked the building's main gate.

Several hundred students continued their sit-in programme in front of the university administrative building yesterday for the 32nd consecutive day.

Aftabuzzaman, a third-year history student, said they do not understand why UGC still does not give approval for their department. "We will stop the movement only after getting approval," he added.

Students started demonstrating on February 6, after UGC in a meeting decided not to approve the department.

On February 18, UGC formed a seven-member committee, headed by its member Prof Dil Afroz Begum, to solve ongoing problems at the university.

Prof Md Shahjahan, acting vice chancellor of BSMRSTU, said they will announce UGC's decision on March 24.

HAJEE DANESH UNIVERSITY Student 'confined, ragged' overnight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A third-year student of computer science and engineering at Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU) was confined to a room and ragged by three students recently.

The victim said he was taken to a room in Zia Hall on Sunday at 11pm. He was rescued by a proctorial team around 8pm on Monday.

After an anonymous 999 call from a student of the dormitory, police informed the proctor, who then sent the team to Zia Hall. Police later visited the spot as well.

The victim said he was physically assaulted, verbally abused and humiliated by Yakub, an MBA student; Gunjan, a second-year student of BBA; and Saurav, a second-year student of statistics.

The victim has filed a written complaint with the university registrar. The authorities then formed a probe body to investigate the incident. The body has been told to submit their report in seven days.

Nat'l debate fest on Mar 27

CITY DESK

National Debate Federation Bangladesh (NDF BD) is organising the "13th NDF BD National Debate Festival 2020" on March 27-28 at North South University in the capital's Bashundhara R/A.

In previous instalments of the festival, more than 2,000 students, moderators and organisers from over 700 institutions across the country participated.

The festival will begin with paying tributes towards Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. As part of the opening ceremony, NDF BD Lifetime Achievement Award will be given to a debate personality.

The main event will start with the "Child Debate" segment, where kids from different regions will participate.

Ispahani, Coca-Cola, the Ittefaq, Channel-i, Sarabangla.net and Radio Aamar 88.4 FM are partners of the event.

FR TOWER FIRE

Dhaka court asks ACC to submit probe report by Apr 22

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to submit by April 22 the probe report of a case against SMHI Faruque and 22 others over design forgery of FR Tower in Dhaka city's Banani.

Faruque is owner of the land on which FR Tower is built. The other accused include Liakat Ali Khan Mukul, chairman of Rupyann Housing Estate Ltd, the housing company that extended the building illegally; and Tasvirul Islam, one of the FR Tower owners.

The accused in the case also include a former Rajuk chairman and several government officials. Some of them were arrested and later they were released on bail.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Md Abubakar Siddique, also investigating officer of the case, failed to submit any report yesterday.

A devastating fire in Banani's FR Tower left at least 25 people dead and 73 injured on March 28 last year.

Later, on June 25, ACC filed two cases against 23 people for their alleged involvement in illegally extending the building.

In an ACC inquiry, it was discovered that the 23-storey FR Tower had no fire alarm, had narrow exit points and staircases, and blocked fire exits.

Besides, the authorities illegally extended the building to 23-storey, although they had permission for a 15-storey building. As a result, the casualties peaked.



Anti-militant joint exercises titled "Thunder Fist" concluded yesterday with participation from Bangladesh Navy's special force SWADS, para-commandos of Bangladesh Army and special forces of the US and UK. This photo was taken during an exercise at Chattogram's Patenga.

PHOTO: ISPR

SCBA election begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day annual election to the 14-member executive committee, including president and secretary, of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) will begin today.

The polling will start at 10am in SCBA building and continue till 5pm with one hour's lunch and prayer break, and the result is likely to be announced on Thursday, said SCBA superintendent Nimesh Chandra Das yesterday.

A total of 7,781 lawyers will cast their votes in the election, he said, adding that a seven-member committee led by Advocate AF Hasan Ariff will conduct the polls.

SCBA sources said the main contest would take place between panels of ruling Awami League-backed Bangabandhu Awami Ainjibi Parishad and pro-BNP Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Oikya Panel.

The pro-AL panel has nominated Advocate AM Aminuddin and Advocate Shah Monjurul Hoque as candidates for the posts of president and secretary respectively.

The BNP-backed panel has finalised Advocate Zainul Abedin and Barrister Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal as president and secretary candidates respectively.

Advocate Md Eunus Ali Akond will contest as an independent candidate for president post.

1 held in capital over sexual harassment of Jagannath univ student

JNU CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested one person in a case filed over sexually harassment of a female student of Jagannath University (JnU) inside a running bus at Taltola Bus Stand area in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar on March 8.

"Police yesterday arrested one Tarek Aziz Naim at Paschim Manipur in Mirpur around 3am," Md Abul Kalam Azad, inspector (investigation) of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, told The Daily Star.

"The accused primarily confessed he had sexually harassed the girl," he said.

Tarek was produced before the court with a five-day remand prayer yesterday. Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Shahidul Islam directed police to interrogate Tarek at the jail gate for one day, within three working days.

The victim filed the case with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station against one unnamed person under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act on March 9.

According to the case statement, the JnU student on March 8 boarded a bus of Mirpur Link Ltd to reach her Shewrapara residence from Nilkhet intersection around 9:20pm.

When the bus reached Taltola Bus Stand in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar around 10pm, a passenger sexually harassed her.

Hearing her scream, other passengers asked the driver to stop the bus. As the vehicle stopped, the passengers tried to catch the man, but he managed to flee, the statement said.

BRIBERY CASE

Ex-ACC director Basir denied bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday rejected a bail petition by suspended director of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Khandaker Enamul Basir in a case filed over a transaction of Tk 40 lakh as bribe.

The HC also directed the lower court concerned to finish trial proceedings of the case against Enamul Basir, who was sent to Dhaka Central Jail on July 23 last year, within a year.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice KM Hafizul Alam delivered the order after hearing the bail petition filed by Basir.

The HC order came considering the magnitude of the offence, ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star.

On July 16 last year, ACC Director Sheikh Md Fanaillah filed the case with ACC's Integrated District Office in Dhaka on charges of taking Tk 40 lakh as bribe from suspended deputy inspector general of police Mizanur Rahman.

Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik represented the state while Advocate Faruk Alamgir Chowdhury appeared for Enamul Basir.

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