



Electioneering by some candidates in the Dhaka City Corporation polls yesterday: (from left to right) mayoral-hopeful of BNP-led four-party alliance Sadeque Hossain Khoka accompanied by commissioner candidates of ward Nos. 32 and 33 under Motijheel thana; commissioner candidate of ward No. 77 with the election symbol 'aeroplane', commissioner candidate of ward No. 58 with an elephant, also an election symbol, and independent commissioner candidate of ward No. 54 Mokhlesur Rahman at Maghbazar.

# Oust corrupt govt, save nation: Hasina

**UNB, Dhaka**

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday said people within six months of this government were fed up with it already and were now looking for a way to freedom from the ordeals.

Making a scathing remark against the government she said Bangladesh in outside world is now known as a "terrorist and corrupt country" due to the activities of this BNP-Jamaat government.

The leader of the opposition also mentioned the decision of the Danish government to withdraw grants worth Tk 264 crore on allegation of corruption by a minister.

"Their (govt) lust for power and money has tarnished the image of Bangladesh which projected itself as a nation with potentials," she told a group of lawyers, businessmen and other distinguished people of Kishoreganj district who joined her party, Awami League.

The newly elected office bearers of Kishoreganj district bar led by its President Adv MA Rashid also met Sheikh Hasina at the joining function held at the Jatiya Press Club.

She called upon all, including the newcomers, to take preparation for what she said ousting this "corrupt and terrorist government" to save the people from its misrule.

"Awami League had given a good governance and within six months this government presented a misrule," the ex-PM told her audience.

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# 2 BNP men gunned down in Kushtia

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia**

Two BNP activists were gunned down and seven others injured, four of them with bullets, in an armed attack on a house of local BNP leader at village Majdiar under Daulatpur Upazila on Thursday night.

Police and witnesses said a gang of 25 armed men stormed into the house of Daulatpur Upazila BNP vice-president Jahangir Alam Jhulu at midnight on Thursday when a political meeting was in progress in the house.

They sprayed bullets on the BNP men leaving two of them, Pintu Farazi, 36, and Saiful Islam, 23, dead.

Those injured with bullets are Mizu, Shah Alam, Hafiz Chowkider and Saifur. They were admitted to Kushtia General Hospital.

Local BNP blamed Daulatpur upazila Awami League leader Mohiuddin Mohon and his supporters for the attack.

Angered by the attack, local BNP men went on the rampage yesterday morning and torched at least ten houses belonging to AL leaders and activists in the area.

A tense situation is prevailing in Daulatpur upazila following the incident. Riot police have been deployed there to avert further attack.

Police are yet to unearth the motive behind the attack on the meeting of local BNP.

A case was filed with Daulatpur thana. None, however, was arrested till 6 pm yesterday.

Our Staff Correspondent from Khulna quoting police said the attackers belong to the outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

# Prime accused in journalist Harun murder case arrested

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

Moktar Hossain Baby, 30, the prime accused in journalist Sheikh Harun-Rashid murder case, was arrested by police early yesterday morning while he was about to get down from Eagle Paribahan bus near Chitra Cinema hall in Jessore town.

Baby was on way to Khulna from Dhaka. He was absconding since after the killing. Harun, reporter of Purbanchal, was gunned down near a Majgunni Nasaria Madrassah in Khalishpur on March 2 this year.

An armed cadre of Purbo Banglar communist party and accused in four murder cases, Baby himself

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# DOWN TO EARTH

## The 'utopian' idea of circular waterway

**A.S.M. NURUNNABI**

It was recently reported that the Department of Environment and the Department of Forests were considering a proposal for examining the feasibility of building a circular waterway round the Dhaka city to relieve it of traffic congestion and air pollution and to meet increasing transport needs.

In this context, it is explained that facilitating drainage of floodwater, protection of lakes and ponds and wetlands in and around the capital are imperative to maintain the city's healthy environment.

The size of population and the number of vehicles are assuming monstrous proportions. The unchecked growth of slow-moving rickshaws all over, compounded by the similarly proliferating mechanised vehicles, has created such a horrible situation at present that there are hardly any roads in the city whose intersections are free from prolonged spell of waiting to allow movement of traffic in alternative directions.

We have already a surfeit of plans and ideas as viable modus operandi for tackling the ever-growing city congestion. Ambitious plans on this behalf with substantial volume of foreign aid for construction of fly-overs, by-pass road, etc are frequently heard. But there has been scanty evidence so far of implementation. While the interminable debate on possible relief in this sector continues, the size of the city with its population and their infrastructural needs suffering under severe strain has been bloating all the time.

In the context of the present situation as described above, observers note several snags in the concept of construction of circular waterways around the city.

Although emphasis has been laid on government orders for putting a stop to the filling of lakes and other water bodies in and around the city, it has been seen, by and large, that instructions do not go far enough for all practical purposes. The reasons seem to be fairly obvious. We may not lose sight of the fact that the building spree in the city is very much in the ascendant. With the result that it may not be far-fetched to foresee that the building spree would spare very little of the waterways around the city which could be utilised for other purpose except house-building, considering the prevailing building craze.

Against this background, it seems that the projected girdle of waterways would bog down in impracticable situations on account of the grim realities that most of the lakes and water bodies through which the proposed waterway would pass through, would be simply impossible to mobilise for various impediments. In effect, this would be an utopian idea, destined to be lost in limbo.

The project for construction of a girdle of waterways around the city requires to be examined on feasibility aspects with a sense of realism. The landscape of the Dhaka city is fast changing with all water-bodies in the adjoining areas getting extinct. Seminar on the subject was held previously at which speakers seemed to be all confused about the feasibility of such idea. The problem is that is such controversial schemes are allowed to exercise the attention of the planners, the already approved projects which call for facilitating their "take-off" will get delayed with awesome repercussions resulting from a mammoth rise in city population. Such ominous prospects already stare us in the face unless remedial measures are taken with due urgency.

# 3 villagers hacked to death in Pabna

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna**

Three people were hacked to death by rivals in a village here yesterday morning.

According to police, a group of about ten men carrying machetes swooped on the three men who were having tea at a tea-stall in Mangalgram village in Hadal union under Faridpur upazila at around 10 in the morning.

The attackers knocked the victims down on the ground and hacked them with the machetes, killing all three on the spot while injuring three others.

The deceased were identified as Abdus Salam, son of Mozammel Huq, of Ataikul upazila, Shahidul Islam, son of Abdul Kha, of Sathia upazila, and Mujibur Rahman, son of Jangal Kha, of Faridpur upazila.

Three brothers -- Rashid, Dulal and Munnu member -- who were critically injured in the attack were hospitalised and reportedly fighting for life.

Police were deployed in the bazaar area following the incident. The situation in the village was very tense, police was quoted as saying.

Police sources said all three victims were wanted in connection with murder. No one was arrested till writing of this report last night.

# Violation of code of conduct marks RCC polls campaign

**ANWAR ALI, from Rajshahi**

Even with the city corporation elections less than a week away, violation of the code of conduct and violence by the candidates mark electioneering in Rajshahi city.

Interestingly enough, almost all candidates brought allegations of violation of the code of conduct against their rivals in the fray.

And the allegations against Mizanur Rahman Minu, the mayoral candidate of the BNP-led four-party alliance, are even stronger than those against others.

On April 17, Advocate Quamrul Monir, a disgruntled BNP candidate now favouring Fazle Hossain Badsha, also a mayoral candidate, blamed Minu for the use of "black money and muscle flexing" to win the race.

The rivalry between Minu and Monir has intensified following the expulsion of Monir from the BNP on April 1.

Now, the city is abuzz with scaled-up electioneering, with colourful posters and replicas of election symbols galore to match.

It is also alleged that Minu's supporters have harassed the workers of Badsha. On Tuesday, they damaged one of Badsha's election camps at the Aloka Cinema crossing. The same day, two unidentified youths hurled crackers at the private car of Monir in front of Binodpur Gate of Rajshahi University.

The next day, some ward commissioner candidates threatened three local journalists with death for reporting on violence and violation of the code of conduct by them.

Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haque has also been criticised for campaigning in favour of Minu by misusing his power.

Campaigners believe that the election expenditure by Minu has increased 15 times and by Badsha ten times -- higher than the Tk 500,000 mark as fixed by the Election Commission (EC) for mayoral election.

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Artistes Shakila Zafar and Shuvrodeb perform yesterday at the fundraiser jointly organised by the Prothom Alo and Dhaka Sheraton at the hotel for treatment of acid victims.

# 2 fall victim to acid throwing a day

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

At least two persons are falling victims to acid throwing every day in the country now against one such victim in two days three years ago.

Most of the victims are women.

In 1999, at least 136 women suffered this violence. The number rose to 221 in 2000 and to 340 in 2001.

This year, at least 127 women suffered this violence till April 18, 35 of them in the last 18 days.

These were revealed by speakers yesterday at an auction sale programme in the city to raise funds for assistance to victims of acid throwing and for preventing the violence.

The programme, first of its kind in the country, was jointly organised by the daily Prothom Alo and Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, marking the second found

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# AL public meeting in city today

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Main opposition Awami League holds a public meeting in the city today (Saturday) to protest enactment of Law and Order Disruption Crimes (Speedy Trial Act), removal of Bangabandhu's portrait from public offices, repression on opposition workers by the ruling alliance and price hike of essentials.

Opposition Leader and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to chair the rally at Paltan

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# Alleged BNP men beat up independent candidate

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Activists allegedly belonging to the ruling BNP badly beat up an independent ward commissioner candidate of ward no.79 in the early hours of yesterday in presence of law-enforcers.

Sources said BDR personnel accompanied by a large number of BNP activists went to the 30, Debendra Das Lane house of independent ward commissioner candidate Md. Shahid under Sutrapur thana at about 3am.

BDR raided the house and arrested nine people including two brothers, a brother-in-law and a nephew of Shahid, and beat them up. The arrested are Sultan Ali, Rab, Russel, Humayun, Abul Kalam, Sattar, Habibur Rahman, Shafiq Rahman and Riaz Uddin.

Then the BNP men, allegedly protected by BDR, proceeded to the house of Shahid's father-in-law where the commissioner candidate was staying, and beat him up also. Shahid was later admitted to a city clinic with a fractured leg.

Sutrapur Police said that the nine persons were arrested under section 54 of the CrPC and produced before the court.

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# Dredging of three Sylhet-Assam rivers

## JRC team meets today to review jt survey report

**IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet**

The Sylhet-Assam regional body of the Joint River Commission will meet at Karimganj in India today to review the result of a two-year joint survey of Borak river in India and Surma and Kushiya rivers in Bangladesh.

Sources concerned said the Additional Chief Engineer, North-Eastern region (Comilla-Sylhet) of Bangladesh Water Development Board and the Additional Chief Engineer, Flood Control & Irrigation (Cachhar & Hills) of India will head their respective sides.

The review report will be discussed later at a national level meeting of JRC to prepare a working plan for dredging the rivers.

Borak has split into two rivers at Amolshid in India and entered Bangladesh as Surma and Kushiya.

The two-year joint survey was started in April 2000. Copies of the survey report were exchanged two weeks ago.

A national level meeting of JRC held in Dhaka in August 2000 agreed to dredge the Surma to increase its

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