

## Khoka DCC mayor

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his nearest rival Fazle Hossain Badsha of 11-Party alliance with a margin of 14,398 votes. Badsha, however, rejected the election result and called a dawn to dusk hartal in the city on Sunday protesting alleged vote rigging.

Out of 30 ward commissioner posts in

Rajshahi, BNP got 21, Jamaat three, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) one and independent candidates got eight.

The mayoral elections were held after eight years, three years behind schedule. The elections were held almost peacefully amid unprecedented security measures. But the turnout was remarkably low, reflecting voters' confidence in candidates and fear of violence.

In the capital, lack of enthusiasm

## Rickshaw passengers mugged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers robbed valuables from passengers of several rickshaws from in front of the Jute Research Institute at Manik Miah Avenue last night.

Witnesses said a gang of seven muggers stopped several rickshaws within a period of over 30 minutes and took away the valuables of passengers at gunpoint. They also beat up some passengers.

During the whole time, no police came forward to help the victims.

The duty officer of Tejgaon Police Station expressed ignorance about the matter when contacted at about 10:15pm yesterday.

The area near the Jute Research Institute is a favorite spot for muggers and other criminals in the area.

Earlier on March 4, masked armed bandits looted money and prize bonds from a Sonali Bank branch in the area.

**Saifur's reception**

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BNP president Syed Matiur Rahman Peyara tried to get up on the dais as the minister was addressing the reception organised by former BNP lawmaker Sheikh Sujan Miah and his supporters at Natun Bazar crossing.

Saifur along with State Minister for Commerce Barkat Ullah Bulu, State Minister for Relief Badur Rahman Chowdhury and IGP Modabbar Hossain Chowdhury left the reception instantly amid a chaotic scene at about 6pm.

Of the injured, Thana BNP general secretary Sarfaraj Chowdhury was admitted to Nabiganj Thana Health Complex.

Earlier, the finance and planning minister inaugurated a newly built thana-cum-barrack complex in the upazila headquarters.

A tense situation was prevailing in the area following the clash. A contingent of police was deployed there to avert further trouble.

## Khoka: Hanif's demand

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cotted the mayoral polls, they entered the fray indirectly for the ward commissioner posts, he said.

"There was no such situation in the country that can force them to boycott the polls. People would not have blown the chance of electing right persons if the Awami League had been in the fray. Their participation would also get the democratic process ahead."

About the low turnout, he said the DCC election was rather peaceful and fair with the exception of some minor untoward incidents. The media predicted violence and conflict.

People thinned out of the city taking the polling day as a holiday in addition to the weekend the following day - all together led to the low

turnout, he reasoned. The comments by the incumbent mayor before the polls also sent chill among the voters. But turnout in the second half of the day was satisfactory, he said.

About the identified terrorists elected ward commissioners, he has said he has nothing to do with this because they have already been elected. All ward commissioners will enjoy equal rights and nobody will be favoured, he assured.

He called upon city dwellers to extend their all-out cooperation in resolving the problems. "It would not be possible for me alone to fight all problems and crises...I need supports of all people, the government, donors and the ministries and agencies concerned."

**Khoka's tasks ahead**

FOR IDEAS AS TO HOW THE SECOND phase of waste disposal at the neighbourhood dumping sites could be managed without exposing the citizens to health hazards or nuisance. Huge metal containers were placed haphazardly, encroaching busy roads, cutting off pedestrian walkways and strewing litter all over due to lack of timely removal.

Khoka needs to involve professionals to find a scientific solution to the city's waste management problem. With around 6,000 men and women, a fleet of nearly 200 vehicles, communication devices and a huge sum of money at the disposal of the conservancy department, the city-dwellers would expect the DCC to fare a lot better in order to create a livable environment.

The Estate Department of the corporation, responsible for city parks, open spaces and other DCC land properties, invariably incurs the blame for engineering most of the land grabbing in the city. For instance, the Estate Department officials recently fathomed an official file to 'lease out on daily basis' a major thoroughfare in Karwan Bazaar, which some local hoodlums had illegally taken over. The file swiftly crept into the highest office of the Nagar Bhaban and got the mayoral nod. When genuine businessmen in Karwan Bazaar strongly protested the move in writing, the 'file' was put on a halt. There are dozen other instances of dubious deals carried out by the same

department over the years. This has

not only shattered DCC's image but also created frustration among tax-paying citizens of the city.

DCC's Engineering Department, responsible for road repairs and various other development works, has not learnt to prioritise its actions, particularly in road repair works.

While the so-called VIP Roads of the city received fresh layers of carpeting almost regularly, hundreds of kilometres of inner-city thoroughfares were totally neglected and left to grow potholes for years. Suffering of the common road users mounted fast with the banning of rickshaws on VIP Roads and failure of the authorities to offer suitable alternatives. Extremely bumpy rickshaw rides through the congested localities added to the miseries of the citizens who can hardly afford other modes of transportation that are allowed to ply the main road.

Ward Commissioners enjoy a yearly budget to maintain cleanliness in their respective wards. They are also expected to oversee various other development works in their localities including keeping the network of surface drains flowing unhindered. Lack of accountability in keeping the drains functional has resulted in a massive waterlogging problem in the city.

Observers believe that with his credentials and acceptance among people from all walks of life, Khoka could go a long way towards helping the city-dwellers lead a decent life.

## PM to inaugurate Pekua upazila in Cox's Bazar today

UNB, Cox's Bazar

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is scheduled to inaugurate Pekua in Cox's Bazar today.

AL has rejected the polls and demanded fresh election to ensure participation of all parties in a congenial atmosphere.

The party's acting chief Abdus Samad Azad said, "In fact, no election was held. Voters did not turn up to polling stations protesting misrule and terrorism by the ruling coalition".

He said city corporation is an important local body and the government should make the election acceptable to all with participation of all political parties.

Outgoing mayor Mohammad Hanif said that Dhaka City Corporation would not have a representative character in the next term as most of the voters refrained from casting vote.

This time, nearly 300 people having criminal records contested for ward commissioner posts in the three cities, many of them wanted in murder, rape, mugging, extortion and land-grab cases.

Police failed to nab any of these candidates and said only 50 and not 300 of them were on their list wanted criminals.

## Post-poll violence

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Police arrested two persons -- Nurul Islam and Abdul Kuddus -- in connection with the attack.

Police have been deployed in front of Azam's house.

Supporters of the ruling party's Matin group in the ward no. 17 attacked the supporters of AL leader Shahadat Hossain Shahi in Boro Bongram Bagapara and Naopara areas yesterday. Shahi was re-elected RCC commissioner yesterday.

They entered the houses of two AL workers, Zillur and Titu, by breaking open the doors and looted valuables. They also set fire to a club.

Nargis Begum, wife of Zillur, Shirin, his daughter and two others - Jostina and Shibli -- were injured during the attack.

## Shooting rampage

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One of the policemen was among those killed.

Ambulances and police cars massed in front of the school, where several hundred children in grades five through 12 were in classes when the shooting began.

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Keeping the spirit of the previous 'Food for Education' programme intact, the government is introducing the monetary assistance for the families of the poor students across the country under the drive for freeing the country from illiteracy.

The cash help will, on the one hand, benefit the families of the poor learners and, on the other, encourage parents to send their children to school and continue their studies.

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## CEC

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Secretariat Thursday night to pick up the election results were told by the acting secretary to the Election Commission SM Zakaria that the CEC might come by any time. He said he had talked to Syed at around 2.30pm.

"There might have been some misunderstanding between the government and the CEC over the latter's remarks on the existing law and order only a day ahead of the election," said an official preferring anonymity. "And this may have annoyed the CEC," he added.

Syed was not available for comment despite repeated attempts for the last two days.

## Sher-e-Bangla

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gave a message on the occasion.

In his message President Badruddoza Chowdhury recalled the contribution of the great leader for socio-economic development of the working class people, including the rural farmers of the country.

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PHOTO: AFP  
Residents of Manak Nagar Colony block the main railway track in Lucknow yesterday protesting water scarcity due to the hot season. India, having 16 per cent of the world's population, is now facing serious water crisis in its 15 states as the ground water levels have been falling almost five per cent a year.

## Tk 750cr to be spent annually for families of poor students

UNB, Dhaka

Some Tk 750 crore will be spent annually starting from the upcoming financial year for providing cash incentives to poor families for sending their wards to schools and checking dropouts under a comprehensive schooling campaign.

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Education, at a press conference in the PID Conference Room yesterday at the fag end of the 'Education for All Week 2002'. The weeklong campaign started on April 22.

Explaining the new move, she said the government's aim is to increase presence of children in primary schools and prevent dropouts.

In place of 'Food for Education', but keeping the spirit of the programme as it is, the government is going to implement the new decision, she told newsmen.

According to the new decision, one family having one school-going child will get Tk 100 per month while with two children Tk 125.

The government is now implementing 26 projects for the development of primary and non-formal education while 4,000 satellite schools were established experimentally in the country that brought

primary education to the doorsteps of rural masses.

To provide training facilities for the teachers, the government has taken various training programmes and established Upazila Resource Centres in 95 upazilas to preserve primary education-related information. Upazila Resource Centre would be established in all the upazilas in phases, Prof Jahanara informed.

"Overall literacy movement is not only a development programme but also a social movement," she said urging all to join the campaign for achieving the goal, irrespective of party affiliation and opinion.

Secretary to the Primary and Mass Education Division Dr Tahmania Hossain, Suryakanto Das, Kazi Farid Ahmed, AKM Delwar Hossain and Habibur Rahman were also present in the conference.

## Welcome World Cup

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of Kolkata at around 10.30am.

State Minister for Youth and Sport Fazlur Rahman, Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president SA Sultan, BFF general secretary Harun-ur Rashid and national football captain Alfaz Ahmed will receive the Cup, which is now on a global tour to selected countries ahead of the World Cup finals that kicks off in Seoul, South Korea on May 31.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has drawn up an extensive programme to commemorate the unique occasion.

In her message, opposition leader Sheikh Hasina said Sher-e-Bangla had established the tenancy rights and removed lending (Mohajoni) system, which ultimately led to the collapse of feudalism.

"He was an excellent orator, eminent politician and a living symbol of communal harmony," she added.

Sheikh Hasina said he was also the initiator of historic Lahore Resolution, framer of 21-point demand and one of the proponents of Bengali nationalism. "His ideology would inspire the nation for building an oppression free society," she added.

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stars of the two traditional local giants Mohammedan Sporting Club and Abahani Krira Chakra. The friendly match will be followed by a pop concert where popular band LRB and another pop favourite Baby Nazrin will perform.

Gillette, one of the major sponsors of the 2002 World Cup, to be hosted jointly by South Korea and Japan, has arranged the trip of Cup in Bangladesh. The world-renowned brand has also painted the city streets with colourful fountains and banners to make the event a