

CCCI polls to see tough battle

37 candidates running for 24 posts

NURUL ALAM

The coming election of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), the apex trade body of the port city, is likely to witness a tough contest as 37 candidates are running for 24 posts of its directors.

The directors will be elected under four separate categories -- ordinary group, associate group, town association group and trade association group.

About 5000 voters are expected to cast their votes in the election scheduled for December 14.

The 24 newly elected directors will then choose their new president, senior vice president and vice president as per the rules of the CCCI, sources said.

Election fever has already gripped the business community

amid heightened 'chamber politics' while the candidates began their campaign to woo the voters.

The contenders have started making personal contacts, holding group meetings and lobbying to secure support from the business community, sources said.

Among the candidates running for the posts are incumbent CCCI President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury, former president Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Zaved, two former vice presidents of BGMEA Mahubul Ali and SM Nurul Haque, Senior Vice President of CCCI Ershad Ullah and former vice president MA Latif.

Sources said some former leaders of CCCI are reportedly trying to form a group to win the election as a majority with a view to take the helm of leadership in the trade

body by choosing their own presidents while the incumbent president of CCCI is also trying hard to stage his comeback.

A total of 19 candidates are vying for the posts of 12 directors in the ordinary group and 10 candidates for six posts in the associate group. The town association and trade association groups have three posts each and the number of contenders is four from each group.

Candidates for the ordinary group are Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Zaved, Abu Haider Chowdhury Amjad, Aftab Rahim Chowdhury, Nurun Newaj Selim, Ashik Bhuiyan, Ershad Ullah, Hasanuzzaman Chowdhury, Kamal Mostafa Chowdhury, MA Bakkar, Abdul Malek, Anwar Shawkat Afsar, Emdadul Hoque Chowdhury, Imran Ali Bhuiyan, Md

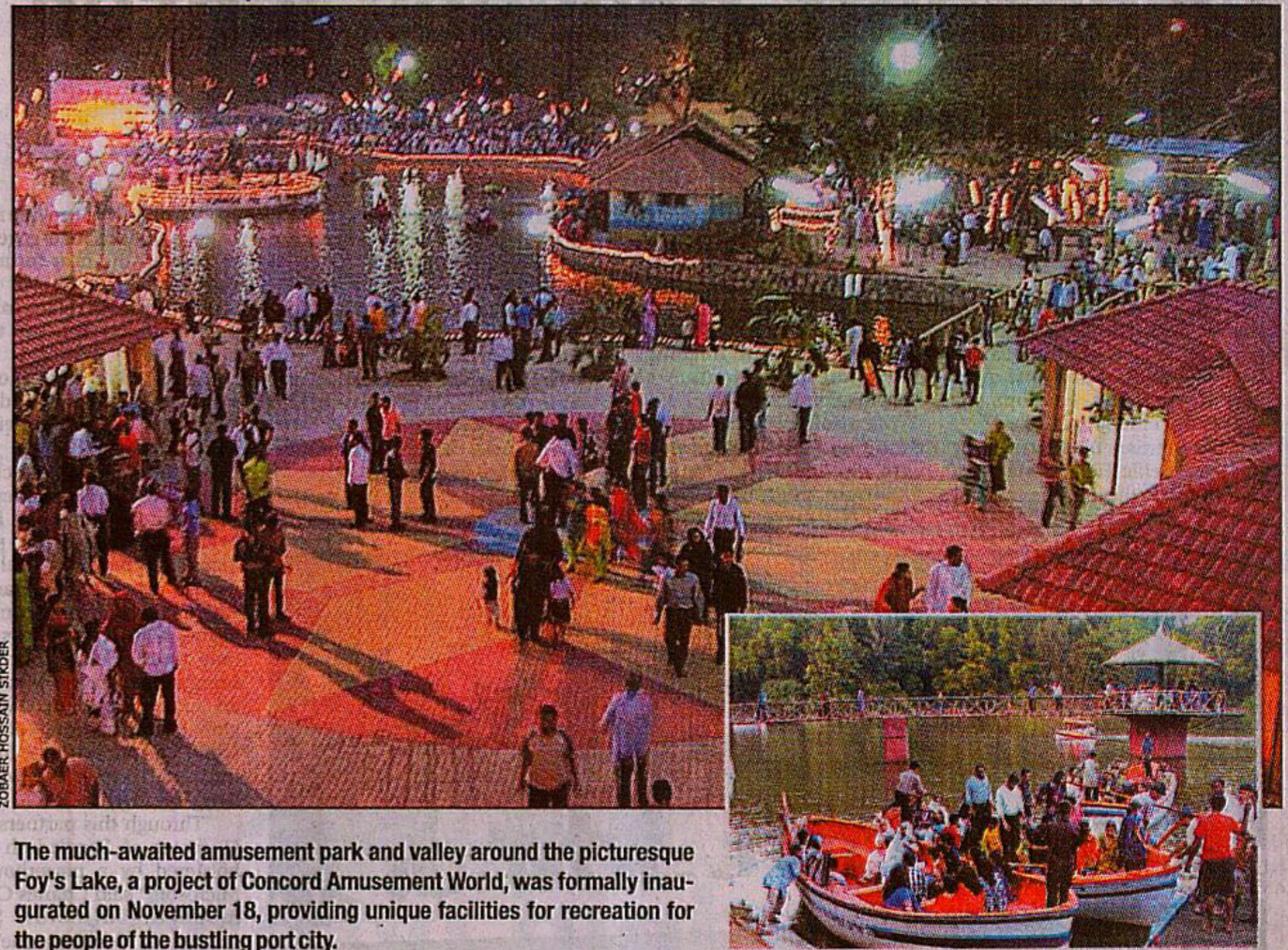
Mohsin, Amirul Hoque, Panaullah Ahmad, SM Nuruddin and Shahabuddin Ahmad.

In the associate group, the contestants are SM Nurul Haque, Monzurul Amin Chowdhury, Mahubul Alam Talukder, Mahfuzul Haq Shah, Zahurul Islam Chowdhury, Alamgir, Shahedul Islam Kaderi, Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, SM Masum, Sarwar Alamgir and Nazrul Islam.

Afsar Ahmad Chowdhury, Mahubul Ali, Syed Ahsanul Haq and Dr Moinul Islam Mahmud are contesting the election from the town association group and Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury, MA Latif, Syed Jamal Ahmad and Rafiqur Rahman from the trade association group.

The CCCI leaders are elected for a term of two years.

FOY'S LAKE - TRULY A FUN PLACE



The much-awaited amusement park and valley around the picturesque Foy's Lake, a project of Concord Amusement World, was formally inaugurated on November 18, providing unique facilities for recreation for the people of the bustling port city.

CMC Sandhani - a life-saving symbol for the poor

AA MAHMUD

Sandhani, a voluntary organisation of medical students, is well known for providing poor and distressed patients with life-saving blood and brining eyesight to the blind in the country.

The organisation that started its journey with 25 young medical students and a professor through donating blood to the Blood Bank of Dhaka Medical College (DMC) on November 2 in 1978 is now carrying out its life-saving activities with the help of its several thousand dedicated members of its 15 units at medical and dental colleges.

Established in 1982, the Sandhani unit at Chittagong Medical College (CMC) made significant contribution in collecting blood and cornea.

Run by a 23-member executive committee, it collected the highest number of 6160 bags of blood in 2002-2003 while DMC Sandhani collected the second highest number of bags, sources said.

Till May 31 this year, the Chittagong unit collected 3515 blood of bags which is also the highest number according to the half-yearly estimate, said its leaders.

Blood are collected only from

the volunteers, including 98 regular donors and over 300 members of the unit, said CMC unit General Secretary Juli Chowdhury.

The annual demand for blood transfusion in the country is 2.50 lakh bags, of which around 65 percent is supplied by professional donors while 15 percent by the relatives and 12 percent by the volunteers, said the Sandhani leaders quoting the report of a survey conducted in 2000.

The annual demand for blood transfusion in Chittagong division was estimated to be 1,00,000 units and the Sandhani supplies over 20 percent of the demand,

they said.

According to an unofficial estimate, the demand for blood transfusion in the country stood at around 3.50 lakh bags in 2003-2004 while the organisation collected 43,580 bags through its units.

However, the figure of total demand would be much higher if the data on blood transfusions, taking place at the district and upazila hospitals, can be collected properly.

But many hospital and clinics, even in the city, show reluctance to provide the data, said CMC Sandhani Organising Secretary Nirmal Kumar Bishwas.

If a proper study is conducted under the Blood Transfusion Act, expected to be introduced by next year, the annual demand could go up to five lakh bags, he added.

Talking to The Daily Star, the members regretted that the bulk of blood supply come from professional donors, who are mostly addicted and involved in various anti-social activities. Their blood also carries deadly germs, they added.

They also called for increasing voluntary blood donation and raising awareness among young people on blood transfused diseases.

They said Sandhani gets all

collected blood screened and it was trying to include Aids test in its screening system.

But the Elisa (Enzyme Link Immuno Solvang Assay) Reader machine needed for AIDS test would cost around Tk 4 lakh, which the CMC Sandhani could not afford at this moment due to lack of financial support.

However, they said, a company has assured them of donating the machine.

The CMC unit leaders regretted that although they provide blood free of cost, the poor patients had to pay the price of the bags (empty) only.

They said that DMC Sandhani

under an arrangement get 100 bags (empty) from the DMC Blood Bank every month. But there is no such arrangement between the CMC Sandhani and CMC Blood Bank for the bags, which the poor patients are expected to be provided with free of cost, they added.

Apart from blood collection, CMC Sandhani also made remarkable achievement in collecting cornea.

Sandhani, with the help of its sister organisation Sandhani National Eye-donation Society (SNES), encouraged 32,894 people to commit to posthumous eye donation.

The former members of Sandhani formed the SNES on November 25, 1984 to collect and help transplantation of cornea in a noble venture to restore eyesight to the blind.

Sources said Sandhani, together with SNES, has so far collected 52 corneas from posthumous donors while 1369 from unidentified bodies and helped bring back the vision of 1,302 people.

Regarding the collection of cornea, the CMC Sandhani had a greater success as it alone collected 39, out of the 52 corneas, Press and Publication Secretary Mashur Rahman said.

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Mayor exchanges views on Bijoy Mela preparation

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury urged all progressive forces to come forward and help make this year's Bijoy Mela (Victory Fair) a success.

He said this while exchanging views at a meeting with the leaders of different political parties at his residence recently, with the Gono Forum Chittagong Chapter President M Kafil Uddin in the chair.

Jatiya Samaitantrik Dal (JSD) leader and freedom fighter Abul Kalam Azad, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Chittagong District Secretary Shah Alam, Islamic Front Bangladesh leader Momtazuddin Chowdhury, National Awami Party (NAP) leader Abdul Momen Bhuiyan, Jatiya Party leader Haider Ali Chowdhury, Workers Party leader Amrita Barua, Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) General Secretary Shahid Ullah Alam, freedom fighter Dr Mahfuzur Rahman and secretary general of Bijoy Mela Parishad Abul Hashem were present at the meeting.

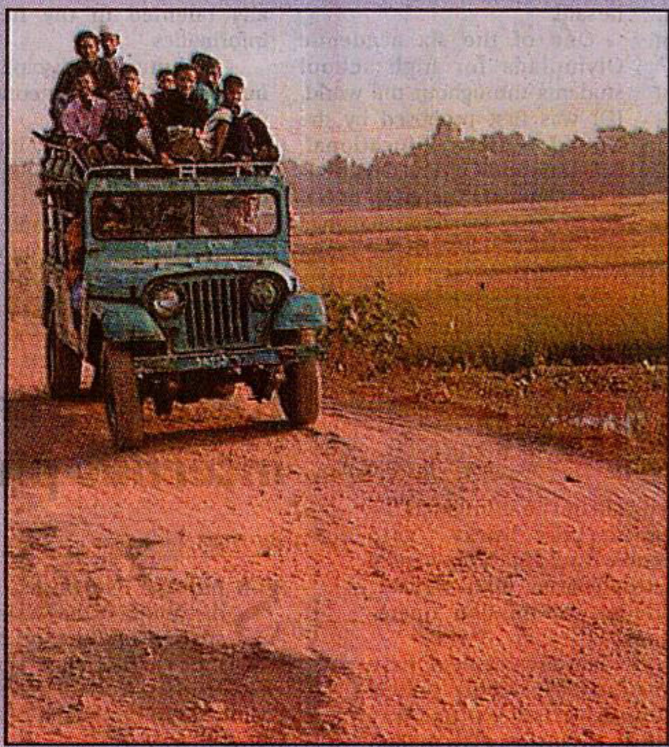
Free medical camp in Patiya

A daylong free medical camp was held at Sujanager Rudrapalli in Chakrashala Union of Patiya Upazila on Friday.

Bangladesh Homeopathic Medical Association (BHMA), Chandgaon Unit, organised the camp from 11.00am to 5.00pm where more than 200 patients with different diseases were provided with homeopathic medical care and medicines free of cost.

Member of Chittagong Divisional Homeopathic Board Principal Dr Abdul Karim was present as chief guest while senior Journalist Samir Bhattacharya inaugurated the camp.

Bijoy Krishna Rudra presided over a discussion organised on the occasion.



Absence of repair work for years left the 40km stretch of Fatikchhari-Bagan Bazar Road completely worn-out, posing great danger for the commuters. Every year, floods also cause damage to the roads, but the authorities turned a blind eye to the plight of the passengers.

Convenor of BHMA, Chittagong District Unit Dr Khodeza Khurshid Aparajita, Dr Debabrata Bhattacharya, Dr Saleh Ahmad Soleman, BHMA Changoan President Dr Sagar Chandra Dey, Dr Chandan Datta, Dr Shafiqun Nahar Bhuiyan, Dr SK Rudra, Dr Kajol Das and Dr Rupam Rudra also spoke on the occasion.

Reception to meritorious students

Patharghata Puja Mandir Committee accorded a reception to meritorious

students of the locality who passed in this year's Secondary School Certificate (SSC) with GPA-5.

A discussion, prize distribution ceremony and a cultural night were held at the programme on Thursday.

Chittagong Press Club (CPC) President Abu Sufian was present as chief guest while Komal Tolapatra presided over the function.

"We badly need to spread the light of proper education to usher in an enlightened society," CPC President told the gathering.

Patharghata Ward Commissioner Jalaluddin Iqbal, acting news editor of the Daily Life, Tamal Chowdhury, Professor Sukanta Bhattacharya of English Department of Chittagong

University, Mandir Committee General Secretary Debashish Guha Bulbul, Uttam Das Gupta, Professor Mininalini Chakrabarty and Sujit Chakrabarty also addressed the ceremony.

The chief guest awarded certificates and prizes to Himadri Raha and Niloy Kritika Chowdhury, who passed SSC from Chittagong Collegiate School and Mymensingh Cadet College respectively in the current year for their brilliant results.

Illegal kitchen market demolished

Bangladesh Railway (BR) Eastern Zone authorities in an eviction drive here on Sunday freed its one acre land worth over five crore taka from illegal occupants.

The land had been illegally occupied for the last 20 years or more by some one hundred kitchen-market traders at city's busy Sholoshahar No-2 Gate area.

After the High Court had declared the occupation in the name of kitchen market illegal on Saturday, the BR authority started the drive.

During the six-hour drive, led by BR Divisional Estate Officer and Magistrate Mobarak Ullah, about 100 stashed and makeshift shops on both sides of Chittagong-Dohazari railway track were demolished.

Over one hundred policemen from Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) and some railway staffs assisted the drive.

Country manager of Cairn Energy meets city mayor

Country Manager of Cairn Energy (Bangladesh) Limited, Ian Halstead, said that another gas rig would be dug out at the Sangu Gas Field site in

Chittagong.

Halstead told this during a meeting with Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury at the latter's office on Sunday and sought his cooperation in this regard.

Ian informed the Mayor that if gas supply could be ensured from the new rig after completion of its digging, it would help solve the gas crisis in the country.

Mayor said he would extend co-operation in the areas of country's interest.

Statement of Patterson protested

Leaders of Chittagong Dock Bandar Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad

strongly protested the statement made by the US Assistant Deputy Secretary of State for South Asia, Torkel Patterson, regarding the development of the port.

In a statement, they alleged that the USA, as part of its long-term plan, was trying to establish its occupancy here in the name of privatisation of the port.

The US minister's advocacy for companies like Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) does not reflect his country's friendly outlook or attitude towards Bangladesh, they said.

Chittagong port could be upgraded as the most modern port in this region by utilising own resources and it would not require any foreign assistance, they observed.

Parishad leaders ASM Nazrul Islam, Sirajul Islam, Abdul Khaleque Chowdhury, Md Mahfuzur Rahman Khan, Abu Zafar Azad, AKM Joinal Abedin, Shariat Ullah, Khorshed Alam,

Syed Habib Ullah and Abu Bakar Siddique signed the statement.

Rally against port privatisation

Chittagong Bandar Rokkha Chhatra Sangram Parishad brought out a procession to protest conspiracies against Chittagong Port and later organised a rally at Port Colony Shaheed Minar premises on Monday.

Parishad Convenor and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader Debashish Pal Debu chaired the rally while Organising Secretary Zaker Ahmad Khokan and leaders Azizur Rahman, Wasim Akram, Salahuddin Babar and Imiaz Ahmad Sumon spoke, among others.

They alleged that the US was hatching a conspiracy to destroy the Chittagong port in the name of its privatisation.

Discussion on drug-free society

Speakers at a discussion emphasised the need for creating awareness among all the families to have a drug-free life as well as society.

Bachchu Nawab Srii Sangsad and Sebadan jointly organised the meeting at Parade Corner in Chawk Bazar on Wednesday with Ashutosh Datta Natu in the chair.

Senior Vice President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Ershad Ullah was present as chief guest while Jatiya Party Chittagong City Unit Convenor Mohammad Solaiman Alam Sheth, director of Maa O Shishu Hospital Jaded Afsar Chowdhury, social workers Jamir Uddin, Azam Khan, Rashedul Karim, and Mithul Karmakar also spoke, among others.

Later, artists of the organisations presented a cultural function.

Human chain to protect environment

Environment conscious people of the city's Sadarghat area formed a human chain on Wednesday at the Lighterage Jetty area with a vow to protect the environment along river Karnaphuli from pollution.

The programme also followed a brief rally.

Speakers at the rally alleged that pollution of environment had increased alarmingly in recent time due to random and open-sky unloading of cement clinkers at the Sadarghat Lighterage Jetty of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

The environment on the banks of the river Karnaphuli was polluted to a great extent in the last one and half year because of rampant unloading of clinker in violation of the existing rule, they alleged.

Agitated people formed a human chain on Saturday to protest rampant loading and unloading of cement clinker that has been causing air pollution in and around Sadarghat area on the bank of the Karnaphuli in the city.