



Wooing voters ... Awami League leader and Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury addressing a polls projection meeting at Shola Shahar in Chittagong (left) and BNP Mayoral candidate hugging voters after offering prayers at Jamtala mosque yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Rape victim fighting for life, culprits at large

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrakona*

A gangraped garments worker is fighting for life at Sherpur Sadar Hospital while the alleged rapists are moving freely. The girl (her name not mentioned) had gone to visit her colleague at Nalitabari town on Wednesday. They went for a walk in the evening when some youths from neighbouring Kandapara village forcibly took her to a nearby paddy field and gangraped her. Marzina's shouting drew people from nearby areas, who rescued the victim and took her to Nalitabari Upazila Health Complex. She was later shifted to Sherpur Sadar Hospital where she

is being treated now. This correspondent also met the victim at the hospital yesterday. The victim filed a case with Nalitabari police station accusing 12 people. The accused include Mohammad Khalek, Tara Mia, Alam, Firuz, Maznu, Chukuruddin, Abdul Khalek and Liton. Of them, Abdul Khalek, Tara Mia, Alam and Chukuruddin have been arrested. When contacted over phone, Sherpur Additional Police Superintendent Abdul Alim Mahamud said police are trying to arrest the rest of the accused. But some people told this correspondent that the rest eight accused persons are seen moving in Nalitabari town.

Campaign for Chittagong mayoral polls heats up

Mohiuddin promises to make Ctg an international city, Mir Nasir vows to free CCC of corruption

ABDULLAH -AL MAHMUD, *Ctg*

With strategies fixed for winning the coveted mayoral post, ruling BNP and opposition Awami League are now busy selecting ward commissioner candidates for the May 9 Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) polls. BNP-backed Mayoral candidate Mir Md Nasir Uddin formally launched campaign yesterday, a day after the two rival factions closed ranks at a meeting, attended by party stalwarts in the city. BNP leaders and activists loyal to Mir Nasir Uddin and Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman at a meeting in on Saturday vowed to launch a strong campaign for Mir Nasir Uddin to snatch the Mayoral post from Awami League. Mir Nasir started mass contact from Chalk Bazar Jamtala Masjid premises after offering Asr prayer there.

He later addressed two rallies in Jamtala and Sholokbahar areas. Addressing the rallies, Mir Nasir said he established dignity of the Mayor when he was in the post till 1994.

If elected this time, he would "restore" dignity of the chair (mayor post) and establish a corruption-free and dynamic administration to bring about a planned development of the city and work for betterment of the city dwellers.

In the prestige fight to retain the post, Awami League wants party chief Sheikh Hasina to address some polls rallies for incumbent Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury. The party leadership in the city

also wants Sheikh Hasina to stay here until the poll result is announced unofficially, AL sources said.

Mohiuddin, claiming himself a candidate of a newly formed Nagorik Parishad (civic committee) already held several rallies in the last few days to retain the post for the third consecutive term.

Chittagong City AL Working Committee held a meeting at Mohiuddin's Chashma Hill residence in the city Saturday evening. With Chittagong city AL President MAMannan in the chair, the meeting focused on campaign strategy and polls monitoring, sources said.

The meeting discussed reshuffling of the Nagorik Committee, poll monitoring by observers from home and abroad," said Khorshed Alam Sujan, secretary for environmental affairs of city Awami League.

The meeting announced a 'hunger procession' on March 23 and human chain on March 24 for realisation of the 40-point demand for development of Chittagong. It also decided that the Nagorik Committee will hold a rally at Lalight Moidan on March 29 as part of the campaign.

Awami League nominated mayoral candidate ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury carried out mass contact and addressed at Uttar (north) Patenga and at No. 37 Ward of Bandar area yesterday.

At the rallies Mohiuddin Chowdhury said that if re-elected he would take steps to upgrade Chittagong to the standard of an 'international city'.

He said he would expand city area with modern civic amenities.

In the BNP camp, leaders and activists of the two rival factions have buried differences and launched a united campaign.

Differences between BNP and its alliance partners have also been narrowed over selection of ward commissioner candidates, party sources said.

At Saturday's city BNP meeting held at Nasiman Bhaban party office, Chittagong (north) district BNP President Golam Akber Khandoker was the chief guest with Chittagong city BNP General Secretary Dostagir Chowdhury in the chair.

Chittagong (north) district BNP General Secretary Shahjahan Siraj and Dr Nurunabi, widely known as a supporter of Noman, also spoke at the meeting, reportedly held at the directive of a central party leader.

Differences over selection of ward commissioner candidates had surfaced between the BNP factions when its alliance partners also demanded seats for their respective parties.

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan (Chittagong - 10), Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman (Chittagong -9) and former commerce minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury (Chittagong - 8) are to play key roles in selecting candidates for 41 wards in their constituencies.

There are 17 wards in the constituency of Noman, 14 in that of Khosru and 10 in the constituency of Morshed Khan.

Ward commissioner aspirants loyal to the three stalwarts are strongly lobbying for party support

while BNP is considering to give priority to those who refrained from vying in the January 3, 2000 CCC election, boycotted by BNP and the alliance partners, party sources said.

According to sources, BNP's alliance partners are demanding nominations of their men in 25 wards.

Of them, Jamaat-e-Islami is pressing for alliance nomination of its men in 15 wards, Jatiya Party (JP) in Seven and Islami Okya Jotte (IOJ) in and 3 wards.

The 4-party alliance will choose the candidates at a crucial meeting to be held soon, party sources said.

However, knowledgeable circles said the three alliance partners (Jamaat, JP and IOJ) might get nominations in eight wards while at least ten "rebel candidates" may also vie in the election.

Meanwhile, ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, also General Secretary of Chittagong city unit of Awami League, addressed two rallies on Saturday.

Nasirabad Ward Awami League and Daxmin Bakolia Ward Awami League organis the rallies on Valica Woollen Mill and Miankhan Nagor Flour Mill premises respectively.

Chittagong city AL President MAMannan was the chief guest at both the rallies.

As per the polls schedule, the last date for submitting nominations paper is April 11. Those will be scrutinised on April 12. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is April 18.

12-yr-old Sathi returns home after 4 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gaibandha*

A girl adopted by a poor family returned to her foster parents yesterday, four years after she was missing from a house in Dhaka where she worked as a domestic help.

Mohammed Aku of Kumedpur village in Palashbai upazila had picked up two year-old orphan Sathi from Bonarpara railway station and took her home. He adopted her as his only daughter Farida had died of diarrhoea some years back. He names her Faida Begum Sathi.

Poor Aku allowed Sathi to work at a house in Motijheel area in Dhaka. But frustrated Sathi left the house after some years.

She was again picked up by Aparajeyo Bangladesh, an NGO, which kept her at its 'drop-in-centre' in Chittagong. She received training on sewing there.

Yesterday, the NGO handed Sathi over to her foster parents at a simple ceremony, held at Gaibandha Press Club. It also gave her a sewing machine.

Japanese team tests shrimp fry virus in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Three shrimp experts from Japan came to Satkhira yesterday to test virus, which has been affecting shrimp cultivation in the district for long.

The visit has been sponsored jointly by Bangladesh Shrimp Development Alliance (BSDA), National Shrimp Cultivators Association, Satkhira District Shrimp Fry Traders Association and Satkhira District Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Kuyati Fukuda, Ajasu Tamakosa and Pasau Tosaoski, all from N Biotech Laboratory in Japan, tested fries produced in different hatcheries in Satkhira and Cox's Bazar.

The tests were done on the office premises of Satkhira District Shrimp Fry Traders Association in the town.

Former minister and President of National Shrimp Cultivators Association, Dr. Aftabuzzaman,

Khulna divisional Chief of Fisheries Department Corporation Anisur Rahaman, Dr. Mahamudul Karim of BSDA and a good number of shrimp traders and hatchery owners were present there.

The experts found virus in shrimp fries produced by some of the hatcheries.

They told hatchery owners that there is no way to remove virus from fries once they are infected. The only way to get rid of the problem is to produce virus free fries.

They advised hatchery owners to test fried with 'Shrimp Lee Test Kits' made by Japan before releasing those in enclosures.

According to Satkhira District Fisheries Officer Rezaul Karim, shrimp is being cultivated in 15,820 enclosures on 51,638 hectares of land in the district. Of them, virus has been found in about 20 per cent of shrimp enclosures.

Five killed, 49 hurt in road mishaps in B'baria, Jessore

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Five persons were killed and 49 others injured in two road crashes in Brahmanbaria and Jessore in two days.

Our Brahmanbaria Correspondent reports: One person was killed and 40 others were injured in a road accident at North Shuhilpur village in Sadar upazila on the Brahmanbaria-Sylhet road yesterday.

According to eye-witnesses, hospital and police sources, the accident occurred when the driver of a bus heading towards Brahmanbaria from Madhabpur lost control over steering and dashed a roadside tree.

The dead victim is Shahjahan Mia, 58, of Chandura village in Sadar upazila.

In a critical condition, 26 passengers were admitted to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital. They are Roton Mia, 38, Sayed Mia, 40, Helal Mia, 35, Hasan Mia, 40,

Farook Mia, 38, Alamgir Mia, 20, Habib Mia, 35, Kala Mia, 35, Asia Begum, 40, Rana Mia, 22, Haroon Mia, 22, Farook Mia, 35, Md Joyal Mia, 30, Md Kamrul Hasan, Anwara Begum, 25, Noorjahan Begum, 28, Arzor Mia, 40, Akter Mia, 24, Dana Mia, 20, Sukkur Ali, 14, Saleha Begum, 30, Satya Rani Das, 30, Yunus Mia, 40, Eadir Mia, 30, Krishna Deb, 20, and Sukkur Rahman, 45.

Our Jessore Correspondent reports: Four persons were killed and nine others injured in another road accident on Saturday night.

The accident happened when a Nasimon, engine driven indigenous vehicle, collided head-on with a pick-up.

The dead victims are Tumpa, 6, daughter of Sizi Chandra, Shova Rani, 28, wife of Shanti Pada, Archana Rani, 32, wife of Subol Das and Kushum Rani, 50, wife of Satish Kumar. They hailed from Dhuliani village in Chowgachha upazila.



PHOTO: STAR

Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badruddin Ahmed Kamran (second from right) speaking at the day-long workshop on Local Initiative in Ensuring Rule of Law, held in the city on Saturday. It was organised by the Society of Justice.

Politicians poke nose to spoil governance

Workshop in Sylhet told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Non-enforcement of laws is the main obstacle to good governance in the country.

The Constitution has guaranteed all basic human rights, needed for ensuring rule of law.

But corruption in the administration and unwanted influence of political leaders and powerful quarters stand on the way of rule of law, speakers said at a day-long workshop held in the city on Saturday.

Besides, lack of awareness among people about their basic rights is also a major factor. Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran attended the function as chief guest while Sylhet District Bar Association President AKM Shibiy, its former president Abdul Hai Khan, Sylhet Press Club

President Muktabis Un Noor and Nasrin Khan, Legal Advisor to UK Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, were special guests.

The Society of Justice, a newly formed organisation, organised the workshop with its Executive Councilor Dr AKM Saifullah in the chair.

It was participated by representatives from different organisations. Those who took part in the programme included Special Public Prosecutor of Special Tribunal for Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Shah Ashraf Islam, Sylhet City Corporation Ward Commissioner Azizul Haque Manik, BLAST's Sylhet Regional Coordinator Advocate Irfanuzzaman Chowdhury, President of Metropolitan Business Council Faruque Mahmud Chowdhury, Former

President of Sylhet Press Club Iqbal Siddiquee and Secretary General of 'Society of Justice' Advocate Mahbulul Islam.

The Mayor said, local governments are important bodies for ensuring good governance.

Elected representatives should be legally empowered for dispute resolution to enforce rule of law, he added.

The civil society also has a very important role play in this regard, he said.

Other speakers stressed the need for a strong and independent judiciary as well as a free anti-corruption commission in the country.

Keeping the law enforcement agencies free from corruption and political influence can do half of the job, they said.