

Bangladeshi expatriates make stronger position in UK politics

London mayoral, assembly polls today

UNB, London

Bangladeshi-origin British nationals are getting stronger in the UK politics as they are participating in and being elected steadily in local government and general elections.

London, known as a 'dynamic city', is fully prepared for its mayoral and assembly elections being held today.

A total of 155 candidates are contesting 25 posts for Member of London Assembly under different political party tickets.

Journalist Mushfiqul Fazal Ansarie, who is now in London, told the news agency that four Bangladeshi candidates are participating in the election for Member of London Assembly for member-

ship of Greater London Authority (GLA). They are Murad Qureshi from Labour Party, Rajon Uddin Jalal from Liberal Democrats and Hanif Abdul Muhit from Respect Party.

A total of 10 candidates have stood for the prestigious mayoral post. But main contestants are incumbent Mayor Ken Livingstone from the Labour Party, being in the race for a 3rd time, and Boris Johnson from the Conservative Party.

Within the ethnic minority group, expatriate Bangladeshis' votes are very reliable. So, every candidate is trying to win their support in the mayoral election.

Mayor Ken Livingstone campaigned within the Bangladeshi community by visiting mosques,

different community organisations and pledging lots for wooing the voters for the last few days. Other candidates are also doing the same.

Meanwhile, Mumin Khan is in the race of councillor post for Liverpool City Council as a first-time Bangladeshi candidate.

For the general election 2009, Labour Party has already announced names of their candidates. For the first time a Bangladeshi woman, Rushanara Ali, an Oxford graduate, has been nominated for MP election.

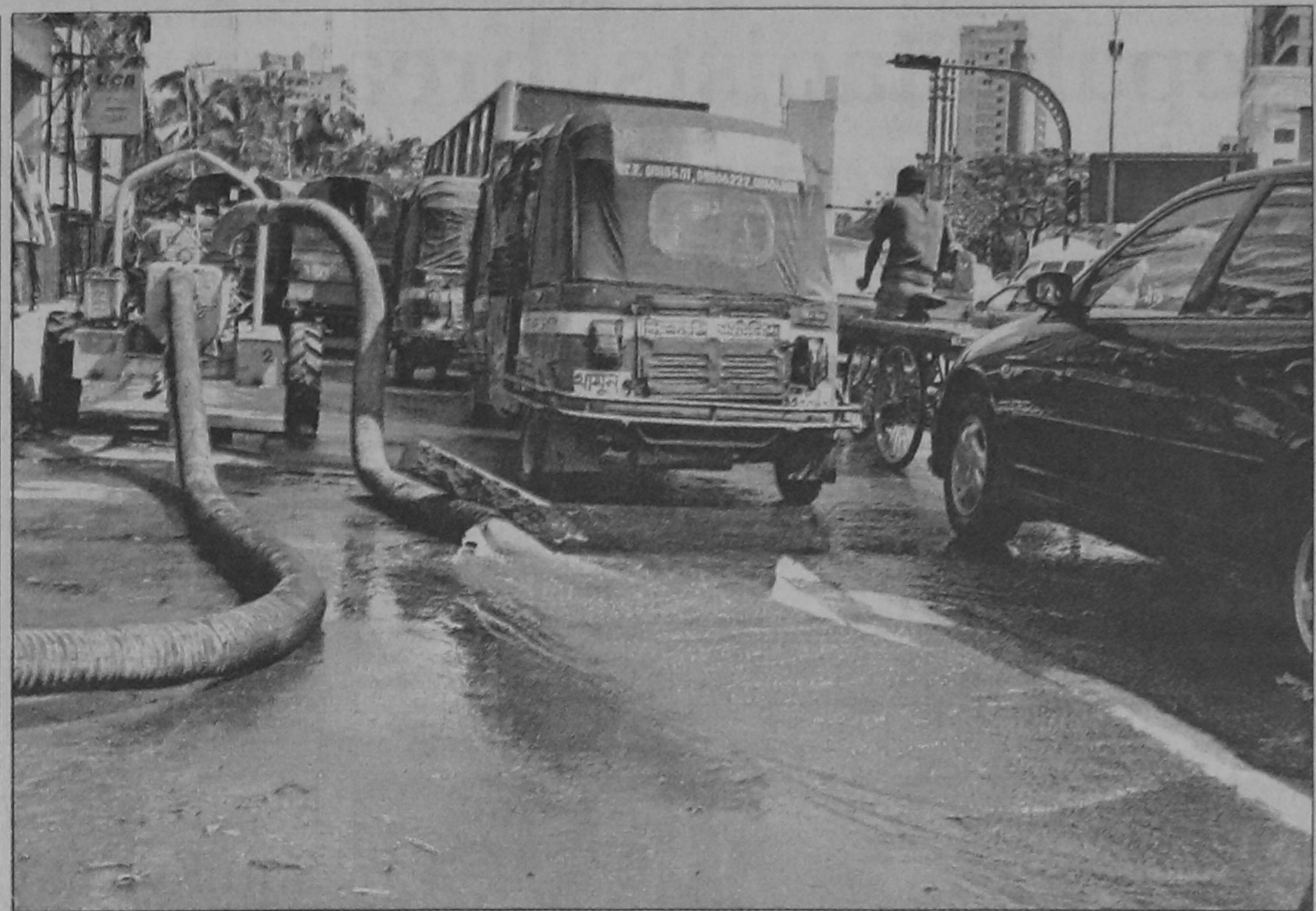
She is the replacement for Una King MP at Bangladeshi-populated constituency Bethnal Green and Bow.

The Conservative Party will announce their candidates soon.

Bangladeshi-origin Zakir Khan's nomination for MP is almost settled.

Bangladeshi-origin people are now dominating Tower Hamlets in London, where once the head office of East India Company was situated. In Tower Hamlet council, 90 percent councillors are Bangladeshis. They are becoming important in the mainstream British politics day by day.

About 40 local government councillors from Bangladeshi nationals have been elected from various parts of the UK. They belong to Labour Party, Conservative Party and some other parties. But their objective is common -- 'develop society as a unique one'.



Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) discharges stinking water on the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the city yesterday to clean up its sewerage line, much to the disgust of the commuters and passers-by.

BSF kills cattle trader in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Border Security Force (BSF) of India gunned down a Bangladeshi cattle trader and wounded two others at Chapshar border under Haripur upazila in Thakurgaon at midnight on Tuesday.

The dead man was identified as Md Abdul Jalil, 40, son of late Pobad Ali from Routhnagar village in Ranishankoil upazila in Thakurgaon.

BDR officials said BSF of 142 Moheshgaon Battalion of India, opposite Chapshar outpost of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) under 14 Battalion of Dinajpur, fired on several Bangladeshi cattle traders who appeared in the no-man's land between the two borders at around 22:40, killing Abdul Jalil on the spot.

After the shooting, BSF personnel dragged the dead body into their territory.

The two others injured, Md Shajahan Ali 25, Md Nasim Uddin, 20, are in critical condition at the Dinajpur Medical College Hospital.

BDR officials has strongly protested the firing incident to their Indian counterparts and urged them to return the dead body.

Meanwhile BSF of Narayanjhothpur camp of India has beaten up a Bangladeshi farmer on Saturday afternoon while he was working at a paddy field near the no-man's land.

Later locals rescued the farmer and rushed him to Tetulia Health Complex. BDR of Panchagarh has protested the incident in writing to BSF.

UPL exhibition begins in Ctg today

The annual exhibition and grand sale of the books of University Press Limited (UPL) begins at the Mini Hall, Muslim Institute in the port city today, says a press release.

The 10-day exhibition will remain open to public from 10:00am to 7:00pm everyday. All UPL books will be sold on attractive discounts at the exhibition. An added attraction for the avid readers is that some very good books will be sold at Tk 20 only on first come first serve basis.

A small number of foreign books on subjects like sociology, history, development, economics and literature is yet another attraction for the libraries and researchers.

UPL's annual sales are intended to serve the scholars and to develop readership of books leading to an informed and knowledge-based society in the country.

Pallabi OC receives threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The officer-in-charge (OC) of Pallabi Police Station yesterday received threat from top-listed criminal Shahadat Hossain six hours after he arrested Shahadat's close associate with two revolvers and six bullets during a raid at Pallabi in the city.

Police said arrested Safi Uddin Mohammad Tareq, 30, was leading cadres of Shahadat gangs in Mirpur, Kafur and Pallabi areas in absence of his boss who is now hiding in India.

"A caller identifying him Shahadat told me that dire consequences are waiting for you as you have arrested my man," Pallabi OC Abdul Momin told The Daily Star. He said the call was made from India.

He said minutes later he received another call and the caller identified him as Shahadat's second-in-command Moktar. The

caller also made the same threat.

Momin said Tareq is accused in numerous criminal cases, but they have detected his involvement in four cases including the murder of jhut trader Monsur.

Police sources also said Shahadat gang is involved in killings, extortions and land grabbing at Mirpur and other parts of the city.

Tipped off, a team led by the OC raided the premises of Mirpur Pre-Cadet School at Mirpur-6 at around 8:00am and arrested Tareq with a Germany-made revolver and five bullets. Following his information, police also seized another firearms from his rented house with another bullet and a knife.

Police said the two already arrested, accused in Monsur murder case, gave confessional statements before magistrates mentioning that Tareq was involved in the murder.

Turkish envoy meets president

BSS, Dhaka

The outgoing ambassador of Turkey to Bangladesh Ferit Ergin yesterday paid a farewell call on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban.

During the meeting, the president also expressed his happiness at the friendly bilateral relations existing between Dhaka and Ankara.

He also commended the ambassador for his outstanding performance in strengthening ties between Bangladesh and Turkey during his six-year tenure in Dhaka.

The president, however, said that there is still scope for further consolidating the relation between the two countries. He said that Bangladesh attaches great importance to its relations with Turkey.

Mentioning the cultural, religious and historical ties between the peoples of Bangladesh and Turkey, the president said the ties provided an unshakable foundation for the relations of the two countries.

Admin helps landlords grab khas lands in Noakhali, Sirajganj

Allege landless people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Landless people, who were rehabilitated in khas lands in Noakhali and Sirajganj, yesterday alleged that local landlords with the help of the local administration are trying to grab the lands in the name of shrimp cultivation.

They added that they were attacked and evacuated from their lands by the hired criminals of the landlords and were also attacked on the Noakhali court premises when they tried to take legal actions in this regard. The lands were mainly used for paddy cultivation.

They said this at a press conference jointly organised by Nijera Kori, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association (BELA) and Bangladesh Jatiya Mahila Ainjibi

Samity at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Coordinator of Nijera Kori Khushi Kabir said, "There is a high court verdict that the landless people in Noakhali cannot be evacuated. Yet, they have evacuated and attacked the landless people both in their home and on the court premises on April 16."

"Development workers were also attacked on April 16 on the court compound and were threatened of death," she added.

At the same press conference

landless people of Sirajganj also alleged landlords did not allow them to collect the paddy they cultivated in the khas lands. They added that the landlords harassed them by lodging cases against them and threatening them of death.

Human rights activist Dr Hamida Hossain, Executive Director of BLAST Taslimur Rahman, Advocate Salah Uddin and landless people of Noakhali Shafiqullah, Shilpi Begum and Sakhina Khatun were present at the press conference.

Deptt on computer science at BSMRAU

A separate department namely Department of Computer Science and Information Technology has been created at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University (BSMRAU), says a press release.

The department has been created splitting the existing Department of Statistics and Computer Science into two -- Department of Statistics and Department of Computer Science and Information Technology.

The decision was taken on April 12 at the 43rd syndicate meeting of the university.

The academic activities of the newly created department will begin soon.



President and Supreme Commander of Armed Forces Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday attended his Armed Forces Division (AFD) office in Dhaka Cantonment.

President attends AFD office

UNB, Dhaka

President and Supreme Commander of Armed Forces Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday attended his Armed Forces Division (AFD) office in Dhaka Cantonment.

The president was received by Principal Staff Officer of AFD Lt General Masud Uddin Chowdhury.

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed, Naval Chief Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam, Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman, Military Secretary to President Maj General M Aminul Karim and Director General of DGF Maj General Gulam Mohammad were present on the occasion.

Call for dredging rivers to save waterways

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shipbuilders', Launch Owners' and Cargo Vessel Owners' Association yesterday urged the government to take immediate steps for dredging rivers to save the waterway transportation.

The three water sector organisations that represent about 2,000 inland and coasting ships also demanded the government for zero tax facility in importing heavy capital machinery to let the ship making industry flourish.

They warned that plying of

water vehicles would be stopped if the government does not take urgent steps to dredge riverbeds.

"There was 28,000-kilometre waterways in our country but at present it has shrunk into only 6,000km and if immediate measures are not taken, the waterways will also die," said KM Mahmood ur Rahman, president of the association.

Association leaders blamed that the previous governments were not aware of improving waterways, as there was not much to gain in these activities.

3 die, 4 fall sick of a family in food poisoning

UNB, Sirajganj

Three members of a family died from food poisoning and four others fell sick after taking food at Soyadabad under Sadar upazila in Sirajganj yesterday.

Local sources said seven members of Abdul Karim's family fell sick shortly after having dinner on Tuesday night.

They were rushed to Sadar Hospital where Karim's mother Pariman Bawa, 60, son Kaiser, 12, and cousin Monirul, 35, died at about 1:00am.

Karim, 45, his wife Selina, 35, son Shaheen, 15, and daughter Koli, 6, were under treatment at Sadar Hospital.

Neighbours said the curry they took with rice might have been cooked with nitric acid mistaking it for salt, thus resulting in the family tragedy.

People of the village are mostly weavers and they mix nitric acid with colours for dyeing cloth.

\$2m USDA support for Sidr-hit pry children

UNB, Dhaka

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the largest donor of United Nations World Food Programs (WFP) for its food for education programme, provided 2 million US dollar to assist over 100,000 primary school children in the Sidr-affected areas.

"The USDA support to WFP's food for education is aimed at creating incentives for children to attend classes regularly and increase their attention span by reliving short term hunger," said Oliver Flake, Agricultural Attache, FAS/USDA of US Embassy in New Delhi, who recently visited school feeding programme in Kishoreganj.

He expressed his hope that the poor school children in food insecure areas in Bangladesh would continue to benefit from the USDA assistance through WFP.

Flake, while observing the school feeding programme, appreciated the role of WFP and the government of Bangladesh in addressing the nutritional needs of the school children.

"Consistent generosity from the USDA enables WFP to reach the most vulnerable school children and encourage them to attend classes regularly," said Edward Fallon, WFP representative (acting) in Bangladesh while welcoming the contribution on Tuesday, said a WFP press release yesterday.

"With the help of USDA, we are keeping several thousands of poor school children in the world's most difficult circumstances in schools and helping them to learn," he added.

This latest donation brought a total USDA contribution to over 20 million US dollar for primary school feeding programme in Bangladesh.

The USDA has been supporting 350,000 primary school children under its emergency/regular operation in poverty prone areas with funding available from US\$45 million since 2001.

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