

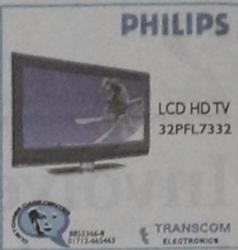


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AL candidates rule city polls

Kamran, Hiron win; Khaleque, Liton leading; AL men clinch victory in 8 out of 9 municipalities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) backed candidates seemed to be striding towards clinching mayoral victory in all four city corporation elections in the early hours of today with Badaruddin Ahmed Kamran already unofficially winning the Sylhet mayoral race, and Shawkat Hossain Hiron winning in Barisal.

Meanwhile, AL candidates already came out as victors in eight out of the nine municipalities where elections were held yesterday, while their archrival BNP backed candidates grabbed only one.

Incumbent Mayor of Sylhet City Corporation Badaruddin Ahmed Kamran won the mayoral election there again according to the final unofficial count, beating his rival BNP candidate AFM Kamal by a large margin. He bagged 1,15,446 votes while his rival got 32,097 votes. Kamran is currently in jail accused in several graft cases.

In Barisal, AL candidate Shawkat Hossain Hiron won the

mayoral race defeating Progressive Democratic Party's Sharfuddin Ahmed Santu, getting 46,795 votes while Santu bagged 46,208 votes. Hiron however earlier accused

some intelligence agencies and Rapid Action Battalion of 'manoeuvring to engineer the election there to elect a certain person of

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From left..Badaruddin Ahmed Kamran, Talukder Abdul Khaleque, Khairuzzaman Liton, Shawkat Hossain Hiron

Last minute drama in Barisal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Although he finally won Barisal mayoral poll, Shawkat Hossain Hiron earlier rejected the preliminary unofficial count, accusing the government of 'poll engineering to elect a person of its own choice'.

The mayoral race in Barisal City Corporation was supposed to be confined

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PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Supporters of detained SCC Mayor Badaruddin Ahmed Kamran cheer on results coming in from different polling centres at Kamran's campaign headquarters in Taltola, Sylhet last night.

City	Total centre	Results out	Leading / Winning candidate	Nearest rival
Rajshahi	129	117	Khairuzzaman Liton	Mosaddek Hossain
Khulna	239	182	Talukder Khaleque	Moniruzzaman Moni
Sylhet	120	120	Badaruddin Kamran	AFM Kamal
Barisal	91	91	Shawkat Hiron	Sharfuddin Santu

Rajshahi Confusion over NID

ANWAR ALI and ABU KALAM, Rajshahi

An enthusiastic Amjad Hossain headed out to cast his vote at the Sabitri Girls' High School polling centre at Ghoramara of Rajshahi city with his shiny new digitised national identity card (NID).

No sooner had he reached the centre at around 11:00am, than his

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Sylhet Voters defy rain

ASHAQ WARES KHAN and IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Voters braved heavy rain, long queues from slow voting and widespread confusion over the new voter lists, to turn out in huge numbers for Sylhet's mayor and local council elections yesterday under tight security and with the state of emergency in full force.

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Khulna Code of conduct violation

HASAN JAHI TUSHER and QAZI AMANULLAH, from Khulna

A few councillor candidates of Khulna City Corporation (KCC) were found violating the electoral code of conduct, even allegedly distributing money among the voters, during yesterday's voting.

Gazi Abul Kalam Biku, candidate of ward-22, was found standing in

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Barisal Slow voting, high turnout

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN and RAIQUL ISLAM, from Barisal

Despite a few sporadic incidents coupled with mismanagement of some sort at polling stations, Barisal City voters witnessed an 'exceptional' election held in a peaceful atmosphere, with 'satisfactory turnout'.

Many voters, however, turned

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City polls lack enthusiasm among voters, says Zillur

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) acting President Zillur Rahman yesterday said elections to four city corporations and nine municipalities lacked public enthusiasm due to the state of emergency.

"The government is claiming that the elections were held in free and fair manner. But it is seen that

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MIG-29 CASE HC rejects Hasina's writ petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday rejected a writ petition filed by Awami League (AL) president Sheikh Hasina, now on parole, challenging the legality of the MiG-29 corruption case.

The HC bench of Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Mashuque Hosain Ahmed delivered the judgement.

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Morshed Khan jailed for 13yrs

Assets worth Tk 82 lakh to be confiscated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday sentenced former foreign minister M Morshed Khan to 13 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information in his wealth statement submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Judge M Sirajul Islam of the Special Court-7 on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises also fined Morshed Tk 10 lakh, in default of which he has to serve jail term for one more year.

The court ordered confiscation of Morshed's ill-gotten wealth worth Tk 82.22 lakh.

The former minister, also a BNP leader, was handed down 10 years' RI for acquiring wealth through dishonest means and three years' RI for hiding information about his wealth. The jail terms will run consecutively, the court said.

Since Morshed is absconding, the sentences will come into effect the day he surrenders or is arrested. His wife Nasrin Khan, who also



is on the run, was accused in the case for aiding and abetting him in the illegal earning. But the High Court quashed corruption proceedings against her.

ACC Assistant Director Talebor Rahman filed the case against Morshed and his wife with Gulshan Police Station on December 10 last year for amassing wealth worth Tk 1.70 crore illegally and concealing information about wealth worth Tk 91.34 lakh.

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Tarique sued for tax dodging

STAR REPORT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday sued detained BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman for dodging Tk 26.86 lakh in income tax from 2002 to 2006.

NBR Deputy Tax Commissioner Samia Akhter filed the case against Tarique, elder son of detained former premier Khaleda Zia, with the Dhaka Senior Special Judge's Court showing 12 people as prosecution witnesses.

After the hearing, Judge

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\$170m ADB grant for food security

UNB, Dhaka

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide Bangladesh \$ 170 million to finance the emergency assistance for food security.

A loan agreement, to this effect, was signed between the ADB and the government of Bangladesh at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) yesterday.

ERD Joint Secretary Monwara Begum and Officer-in-Charge of ADB's Bangladesh Resident

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Wildlife vanishes for wrong management

VANISHING FORESTS-4



INAM AHMED

We roamed the Pablakhal forest for two days, inspecting every swamp, every tall tree, every creek, every hill. We listened for the calls. But in the end, we knew the white winged wood ducks no longer exist here. Bangladesh has lost another species.

We wandered through the Madhupur forest in search of barking deer. We asked the people around if they had seen one in the wild. In the end we came to the conclusion that this is yet another lost case for the forest.

As The Daily Star team travelled with Dr Reza Khan, a

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PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

New settlements, top, are set up devouring wildlife habitat that results in the extinction of species. Elephants, left, are squeezed into small pockets of land in Lama of Bandarban.

They rushed to roof, only to be burnt alive

KAILASH SARKAR and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

"It seemed the flames spiralled up the staircase and chased down eight members of a family burning them alive as they were climbing up the staircase to the roof," said Abdul Khaleq, who witnessed the tragedy from behind the glass door of his flat on the building.

"Only those who tried to go up to the roof died. The fire did not enter any rooms of the building and therefore 18-year-old Shanto is the lone survivor of the family as he was in a room on the first floor," Khaleq said.

Nine people died early yesterday in a fire at a five-storey building on Aga Sadeq Road in Old Dhaka, eight of a family and the family's house help. Twenty others of the building were also injured.

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PHOTO: STAR

Relatives of Shanto and seven others break down in tears at Bangladesh Math before the namaz-e-Janaza of the deceased. A policeman, inset, inspects the charred shoe factory.

DEPORTED WORKERS Kuwait to pay arrears thru' embassy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kuwait will pay the deported Bangladeshi workers their arrears and other benefits through the Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait, said a foreign ministry press release yesterday.

Following discussions with the Bangladesh Embassy, Kuwait's social affairs and labour ministry and finance ministry decided to collect the addresses of the deported Bangladeshi workers from the companies concerned and hand over their due salaries and other benefits to the Bangladesh Embassy.

Meanwhile, with the latest arrival of 90 workers yesterday, the total number of deported Bangladeshi workers stands at 687 in the last six days.

The Bangladesh Embassy is in touch with Kuwait's labour department all the time, said the press

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Tortured, deported as they asked for just pay

Non-agitating Bangladeshi workers not also spared by Kuwaiti cops

PORIMOL PALMA

Mukul Hossain was asleep at the company's barrack that day. Like thousands other aggrieved workers, his monthly salary was only 20 Kuwaiti dinar, but he didn't join demonstrations thinking it might affect his livelihood.

His cautious move didn't work. The Kuwaiti police arrested him on charge of taking part in the demonstrations over pay hike. He was beaten so hard that he suffered a broken skull. Eventually he was deported empty-handed, says Mukul, who hails from Sirajganj.

"The KD 20 was not enough even for my survival in Kuwait. Yet I continued with the job with the hope of making a buck from some

extra work for my family," adds Mukul, who was deported on August 1 along with many others.

Thousands of Asian workers, especially Bangladeshis, went on strike in the Gulf nation last week. The Kuwaiti authorities arrested over 1,000 and decided to deport 850 Bangladeshis for their 'involvement'.

The authorities had assured the Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait City of not arresting or deporting any innocent workers. But statements of Mukul and some other workers suggest most of the deportees kept their nose clean.

Sauful Islam of Narsingdi and Jamal Hossain, Labu Mia and Arjun of Tangail also had similar experience.

Mukul was employed by the company Al Abras and was stationed at Mahbullah. He said, "I was sleeping in the barrack when many workers went on strike outside. Suddenly the police entered our barrack and started beating up us."

The military arrested them and forced them to sit on hot sand for one and a half hours before putting them into detention cell.

"In the cell, the police treated us as if we were animals. They beat up with strong rods whenever anyone tried to speak or stand up in the rooms crowded with six to seven hundred workers."

Mukul added he had not a single penny when he returned home.

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