

## Indigenous people

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the CHT Regional Council.

Referring to the UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People, he said the indigenous people cannot be ousted from their lands.

"The rulers over the years remained indifferent to our demands for autonomy and constitutional recognition. They have never paid heed to the demands for ensuring indigenous people's rights, implementing the CHT Treaty and ending eviction of the indigenous people from the name of creating eco parks and social forestation," Santu Larma said.

The land rights of indigenous people are yet to be recognised in Modhupur where the government is implementing social forestation project forcibly while the lands of the indigenous people in north Bengal are still shown as khas lands, he said.

"Land grabbers in connivance with the administration are ousting indigenous people from their lands," the BIPF chief said citing the example of torching the houses of indigenous people at Uttar Kazipara in Naogaon on November 5 last year.

The BIPF leaders also mentioned the death of Chalesh Richhil, an indigenous leader of Modhupur, under law enforcers' custody, filing of cases against at least 50 indigenous people and strengthening "the settler rehabilitation programme in the CHT."

"Seven villages of indigenous people at Sajek in Rangamati were set ablaze on April 20 to rehabilitate

outsiders," they said.

On implementation of the CHT Treaty, Santu Larma said, "The fundamental aspects of the treaty are yet to be implemented due to lack of government initiative. Now the process of its implementation remains stuck."

Commenting on the CHT Land Commission, which settles land disputes between indigenous communities and settlers in the region, he said the indigenous people proposed 19 amendments to the land commission law since its enactment in 2001, but the government is yet to make any move.

Besides, the district council and regional council laws are yet to be implemented, he said, adding that election to the district and regional councils of CHT could not be held as the voter list was not prepared on the basis of the permanent residents.

The BIPF leaders demanded separate ministry and land commission for the indigenous people living on plain lands and also reserved seats for indigenous people in union, upazila, and zilla parishads and the Jatiya Sangsad.

Sanjeeb Drong, Rabindranath Saren, Chaitali Tripura and Prof Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University were also present.

## SC Bar

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magistrates are supposed to work under the Supreme Court. However, they are yet to act independently, he added.

The judicial magistrates are still acting on orders from the executive branch of the state, he alleged while speaking at a press conference at South Hall of SCBA Bhawan yesterday afternoon.

SCBA secretary advocate Nurul Islam Sujan, its former secretaries -- advocate Zainul Abedin, advocate M Enayetur Rahim and advocate AM Amin Uddin, barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah, advocate Yusuf Hossain Humayun, advocate Nahid Sultana Juthi, advocate Fahima Nasreen Munni, advocate SM Rezaul Karim and advocate Azherullah Bhuiyan were also present at the press conference.

The SCBA president cited some incidents when a few politicians securing bail from the High Court were arrested soon after their release from various jails.

Barrister Shafique said Awami League (AL) presidium member Kazi Zafarullah, AL leader Engineer Mostarraf Hossain, former BNP whip Ashraf Hossain, former power and energy secretary Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, RAM Obaidul Muktar Chowdhury and former IS to the premier Sheikh Hasina and Chhatra League general secretary Mahfuzul Haider Chowdhury Roton were arrested near jail gates immediately after they were released on charges of violating the emergency power rules (EPR).

The politicians were then taken to undisclosed locations and later shown arrested under section 16(2) of the EPR, he said adding, "The police in general districts (GD) are falsely accusing the persons of delivering provocative speeches against the government at false places in the city."

The SCBA president asked the authorities to immediately stop such harassment and "illegal activities" as such activities violate orders of the highest court and the fundamental rights of citizens of the country.

He also protested the surveillance of plainclothes intelligence agents inside courtrooms during case proceedings, saying this sort of activity is a "naked interference in the independent functioning of the judiciary".

## AL gets toehold

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the first election to BCC was held after Barisal had been turned into a city, in which Enayet Pir Khan, a candidate of an AL-backed coalition named Nagarik Parishad, lost the mayoral race to BNP's Mujibur Rahman Sarwar, who is currently in jail on charges of corruption. That election was however allegedly marred by wholesale rigging.

Before the first election to BCC, a BNP government had appointed Ahsan Habib Kamal, a leader of the party, as the administrator of the city corporation.

This year AL also captured the office of mayor in Khulna City Corporation (KCC) for the first time since formation of the corporation in 1984, ending almost a 19-year rule of BNP leader Sheikh Tayebur Rahman, who is also currently behind bars on charges of corruption.

Late MA Bari had been the only AL leader to win any election in Khulna city since independence until Monday. He had been elected a member of the parliament in 1973.

Sheikh Tayebur Rahman could not contest in the poll this year due to his recent conviction in a criminal case.

AHM Khairuzzaman Liton is also the first AL leader to win an election in Rajshahi city in 35 years. Liton's father AHM Kamruzzan, one of the four national leaders assassinated in jail in November 1975, was the last AL leader to win two seats from there in the parliamentary election of 1973.

Jatiya Party leaders M Abdul Hadi, Durul Huda and Mejbahuddin Ahmed, and detained BNP leader Mizanur Rahman Minu ruled Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) since its formation in 1987 until Liton won the mayoral race there on Monday.

Minu was first appointed as the mayor of RCC in 1991 by the then BNP government, and later he was elected to the post in 1994 and 2002. He was also elected a parliament member in 2001. But this time around he could not take part in the RCC mayoral election as a court had already sentenced him to 13 years of imprisonment in an extortion case.

## Mayors

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He said the August 4 election was free and fair despite a few flaws. He did not comment on the Jamnat's dubious role during the election.

"The matter will be discussed at party forum," he said. Rajshahi mayor-designate AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, meantime, said he will decide what to do with the redundant city corporation staff who were "appointed on political consideration in exchange for bribe in the last 17 years."

"They never came to any use other than making political processions and meetings a success. I'll draw up a list of such staff and take action accordingly," he said at a press conference in Rajshahi yesterday.

He said he will take action against his predecessor for mass recruitment on political consideration.

He promised to fix two weeks to talk development with city residents.

## BNP trying

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elections directly. But now its Secretary General Khandaker Delwar is saying that the elections were of entente. Talking in which way they are trying to violate the environment of the parliamentary polls," he said.

He was briefing journalists after visiting European Union parliament member Nirj Deva called on acting Awami League President Zillur Rahman at his Gulshan residence.

Ashrafur urged their archrivals to change their political attitude and culture, saying that Awami League does not expect such political mudslinging among the parties.

He reiterated party's demand for lifting the state of emergency before the parliamentary elections to create a level playing field.

Ashrafur made a point that parliamentary polls under the state of emergency would not be acceptable to the people of the country as well as to the world community.

Asked why they will not accept parliamentary elections under emergency rules when they already have won an election under the state of emergency, he said parliamentary polls and local elections are not the same thing.

"Local-body elections are non-political while the parliamentary polls are political. People elect government for their country through the parliamentary polls. This type of election cannot be held under emergency rules," he said, explaining the differences to underpin their demand.

However, the AL leader wouldn't say it clearly if they would participate in the parliamentary polls under the state of emergency.

"We have been demanding the lifting of the state of emergency, before the polls. We hope the government will pay heed to our demand," he said.

Earlier talking to the reporters, EU parliament member Nirj Deva said he discussed with the Awami League leaders the current state of emergency in the country, the recently held city and municipal elections and the long-awaited parliamentary polls.

The Sri Lankan-born EU legislator said the EU parliament is keen to send election observers during Bangladesh's national polls, but the state of emergency here remains as a matter of concern for them.

He said according to EU rules, they don't send observers during election of any country where state of emergency is in force.

Deva said he already had talks with the Chief Election Commissioner, the foreign minister and the army chief when they discussed the state of emergency.

The EU MP appreciated the government and the political parties for successful completion of the city corporation and municipal elections on August 4.

He said the voters' turnout in the centres even was better than the elections in the European countries.

The Election Commission counted 80 per cent on average. Referring to the government's declaration that the parliamentary polls will be held in the third week of December this year, he forecast the national elections '08 to be a milestone in the history of Bangladesh.

Deva emphasised working together for boosting investment in Bangladesh and ensuring human rights at all levels.

## Biometric

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the cabinet for approval, but the cabinet sent it back to the law ministry, asking it shorten its title, said sources.

According to sources, the draft of the amended law defines "electronic records" as any electronic document or information generated, sent, received, or stored in magnetic, optical, computer memory, microfilm, computer generated microfiche, etc.

The draft law defines "physical evidence" as any material or object that may establish that an offence has been committed or may establish a link or relation between an offence and its victim or an offence and its offender.

Samples of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), blood, semen, vaginal swab, hair, body fluids, organs, body parts, finger impressions, palm impressions, iris impressions, footprints, latent prints, photographs, traced prints, voice recordings, handwriting, reports originated from all automated identification systems, etc. would also be considered as physical evidence.

Hubert Staberhoffer, Programme Manager of the government's Police Reforms Programme (PRP), said it would be a major breakthrough in the field of crime investigation as the new law and the amendments will cause a major shift from the testimony-based trial system to a technology-based one.

Controversy on the dependency on confessional statements can also be eliminated as the DNA test results can help identify rapists and sex offenders with 99 per cent accuracy, he added.

Under the PRP project, crime scene investigators, judges and prosecutors will be trained to make the best use of the new laws, said Hubert.

## Dhaka asks Kuwait

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nations that such incidents should not occur, says a foreign ministry handout.

Meanwhile, Kuwait deported 61 more Bangladeshi workers yesterday, bringing the number of deportees to 818 in more than a week, according to the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training.

The Gulf nation started sending Bangladeshis back following a series of demonstrations over pay hike and other demands.

"Many are being mercilessly deported to Bangladesh empty-handed for the fault of a few. When we are strong in principle to abide by laws, it is expected that our peace-loving workers would not suffer," the adviser said.

He addressed another letter to Kuwaiti Labour Minister Bader Fahad Al Duwaila expressing the hope that the situation would return to normal through his initiatives and that Bangladesh community would continue contributing to the socio-economic development of Kuwait.

Earlier on Tuesday, the adviser addressed another letter to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Kuwait Dr Sheikh Mohammed Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah requesting his personal initiative to resolve the problems.

Speaking to the media, Iftekhar said he welcomes Kuwaiti Cabinet decision to fix the minimum wages of foreign workers at 40 Kuwaiti dinar and hopes that all Kuwaiti employers will abide by it.

"I'm sure the Kuwaitis did not forget that Bangladeshis soldiers joined Kuwait for restoring its freedom and sovereignty when it was under foreign aggression," Iftekhar said.

Bangladeshi Juba Moitree, meanwhile, demanded that Kuwait take back all the deportees, saying these workers were forced to demonstrate to draw attention of the authorities, as it was impossible for them to survive with the minimum wage.

"But Kuwait treated the workers

cruelly by forcible deportation," says a press release of Juba Moitree.

Such treatment of Kuwait goes against the convention of International Labour Organisation, Juba Moitree leaders said at a meeting at its Tophkhana Road office, demanding strengthening the diplomatic efforts immediately.

Blaming recruiting agencies of Bangladesh and the employers of the labour receiving countries for not playing their due roles to protect workers' rights, they said Bangladesh workers play a vital role for the economy of the Middle Eastern countries as well as Bangladesh, but they are not given proper attention.

Bangladeshi Juba Moitree Central General Secretary Sadakat Hossain Khan Babul chaired the meeting attended by other leaders -- Mostafa Alamgir Ratan, Kishore Roy, Saiful Islam Tapan, Salauddin Niloy and Shamima Sultana Shaon.

Kuwait has meanwhile decided to pay the arrears of the deportees through the Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait, says a handout of Press Information Department.

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment asked all the deportees to submit their names, copies of passport or travel permits, civil ID of Kuwait, names of the employing company and address, dates of going to Kuwait and returning home, duration and amount of arrears to the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training at 89/2 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 or nearest District Manpower Employment offices.

The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Dhaka in a press release yesterday said some media reports stating that Bangladesh workers are facing problems and thousands of them are being deported by Saudi authorities are baseless.

"In fact, the Bangladeshis brotherly workers are being treated in Saudi Arabia with immense importance as well as Islamic and humanitarian care. So, the matter should be taken with carefulness."

## DIG's 7 kids

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Lawyers Association (BNWLA) and Bangladesh Society for Establishment of Human Rights (BSEHR) to take steps for proper treatment of the children -- four boys and three girls -- under a child specialist.

The children's 'mother' Anwara Rahman is in jail for the last few months in an extortion case, while the 'father' did not appear yesterday.

The children are Mariam, Aimon Rahman Anis, Alas Rahman Akand, Nafis Rahman Nais, Dian Rahman, Jannatul Nafiza Rahman and Jannatul Anisa Rahman.

The HC asked Dhaka Medical College authorities to carry out the tests at its DNA Lab under the supervision of the Supreme Court (SC) authorities upon separate petitions filed by BNWLA and BSEHR in 2006.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Farid Ahmed asked BNWLA and BSEHR to take the children to BNWLA's shelter home 'Proshanti' in Agargaon in the city after the sample collection.

The children were taken to the shelter home at around 5:00pm from the lab where they were taken at 2:15pm.

The court also directed the commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police to ensure the children's security.

It asked a deputy registrar of the Supreme Court to supervise the

DNA tests and ordered BNWLA and BSEHR to bear all expenses.

The court said it would pass further order subject to getting the test reports on August 12.

There were newspaper reports in 2006 triggering controversy about the ex-DIG couple maintaining a household with 14 children, seven of them seemingly of same age of 18 months to 24 months.

Since then, the couple is claiming that the seven were 'septuplets'.

The HC yesterday appointed former attorney general advocate Mahmudul Islam as amicus curiae (friend of court) for legal interpretation. He opined to the court for conducting DNA test.

BSEHR Executive Director advocate Alena Khan filed the complaint case under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act with Badra Police Station in this connection on June 15, 2006. She told reporters yesterday her organisation would bear the expenses for examining the DNA test reports in Singapore if the HC permits.

Earlier, the couple had declined to go for DNA test at Dhaka Medical College despite a magistrate court's order.

Advocate Mohammad Asaduzzaman, advocate Salma Ali and advocate Fowzia Karim Fiore appeared for the human rights organisations, while Kazi Sajwar Hossain stood for the ex-DIG.

## BCL, JCD

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processions separately on the campus at about 8:45pm.

Meanwhile, DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz last night said the government has decided in principle to release both Roton and Helal by Thursday night.

Acting BCL General Secretary Syed Abul Kalam told The Daily Star that although the High Court (HC) has already declared Roton's detention illegal, the government has kept him in prison.

"We shall wait till tomorrow morning as per the assurance of the vice chancellor. If Roton is not released by then, we shall march towards the home ministry," Kalam added.

JCD DU unit General Secretary Saiful Islam Ferroz said, "Although the High Court granted Helal bail, the jail authorities did not release him saying that they are yet to receive the order. It is not acceptable."

Feroz said JCD would lay siege to the home ministry to realise their demands including the release of detained BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and providing Tarique Rahman with proper medical treatment abroad.

Meantime, JCD activists vandalised several vehicles and set a few tyres ablaze at the DU Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) intersection last night.

Agitating activists of both BCL and JCD also staged demonstration in front of the vice chancellor's office.

Later, VC Prof SMA Faiz at a meeting with BCL leaders at his office last night said the government would release the two student leaders by Thursday night.

He earlier held talks with government high-ups at the chief adviser's office. BCL on Tuesday kept DU vice chancellor Prof SMA Faiz confined

for four hours protesting the fresh arrest of Roton soon after his release from the Mymensingh jail in the afternoon the same day.

They also ransacked windowpanes at the VC office and damaged three cars.

They withdrew the siege following assurance from VC Prof Faiz that the government would settle the issue soon.

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around 9:00pm."

Sigma Huda, who was accused in five cases on different charges including corruption, bribery and extortion, surrendered before a Dhaka court on July 5 last year. The court ordered sending her to jail the same day.

## Nasim, Mamun

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and his wife with Dhanmondi Police Station on March 21 last year for amassing wealth worth Tk 1.26 crore illegally.

The Special Judge's Court-1 on October 8 last year sentenced Nasim to 13 years' imprisonment in the graft case. Nasim filed an appeal with the HC in May this year against his conviction. Later, he filed the bail petition on July 28.

The HC on July 30 directed the inspector general (IG) of prisons and LabAdd Hospital authorities to submit Nasim's medical reports to the court by August 5 for examining those.

**EXTORTION CASES AGAINST MAMUN**

The HC bench of Justice Sharif Uddin Chakladar and Justice Md Emdadul Haque Azad granted an interim bail for six months to Mamun in four separate extortion cases.

Following the filing of separate petitions by Mamun, the court also stayed the proceedings of the cases against him for six months and issued separate rules upon the government to explain within four weeks why the proceedings against the petitioner should not be quashed.

Mamun's counsel barrister Fakhrul Islam said Mamun was granted bail in four extortion cases. Of those, three were filed with Gulshan Police Station while the other with Dhanmondi Police Station.

He also said all the four cases were filed during the crackdown on high-profile corruption suspects last year on charges of extorting money from four construction businesses.

## Patal

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amassing assets beyond their known sources of income and concealing information in wealth report submitted to the commission.

According to the first information report, the former minister accumulated wealth worth around Tk 7.38 crore illegally. Besides, in his statement to the ACC, he concealed information about assets worth around Tk 4.42 crore.

His wife Kamrunnahar and son Yasir Arshad Rajan were accused of aiding and abetting him in the acts.

**HUDA CASE**

After the hearing, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Shahjahan Kabir took the murder charges into cognisance and asked the OC to register a regular murder case and submit a report after investigation into the matter.

The other accused are Huda's brother Kamrul Huda, Sub-Inspector of Dohar Police Station Masudur Rahman, and BNP men Mahbubur Rahman Pannu, Habibur Rahman Chunnun, Phoni Madbar, Swapan, Gias, Jalal, Mosharraf, Abu Sayeed, Yunus, and Badal Begum.

On September 25 last year, victim's wife Polly Akhter filed a complaint case with the First Class Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, accusing Huda and others of killing her husband on April 16, 2006.

According to the prosecution, a group of local miscreants, being directed by barrister Huda and his brother, attacked Khalil Kazi at Kartipur Bazar in Dohar at about 5:00pm on April 16, 2006 while he (victim) was going to attend a meeting.

Khalil Kazi, publicity secretary of AL Kusumbhati unit, was seriously injured and later succumbed to his injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

## Brokers exploit

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leave the airport for the Maldives on tourist visa, he said.

"I do not understand how the authorities allow a worker wearing sandal and torn cloths to leave the airport on tourist visa," said the high commission official, seeking anonymity. Those who come through proper ways with full knowledge about their jobs can earn a handsome amount of money, he added.

"There is a nexus between the middlemen in Bangladesh and the Maldives. These people bring workers showing false job assurance," said Kawser, another Bangladeshi worker who also left the Maldives for Dhaka after five months of inhuman life on an island of the Maldives.

"I spent about Tk 1.6 lakh and the middleman assured me of a nice job with a salary of Tk 30,000 a month but after waiting for several months I got a construction related job with only Tk 5,000 salary," he said.

"Nothing attracted us in the Maldives--the deep blue sea or anything...Every Friday we would gather in a park and share our sorrows," said another victim named Ilias who along with Kawser and nine others managed to come back home.

There are some Bangalee guest-houses in the Maldives where they were accommodated in small rooms with small amount of food, Murad and Kawser said.

"I used to earn Tk 7-8 thousand per month in the Maldives working at least 16 hours a day with a one-hour lunch break," said Murad.

Sn Lanka and India have set a minimum wage of \$130 for their workers in the Maldives while the minimum wage for a Bangladeshi worker is about \$80-100.

"We could not ensure our workers their rights and interests due to the lack of attention of the government authorities concerned. Dishonest recruiting agencies and middlemen just take this opportunity," he said.

## 7 more

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Of them, Ansar Ali was earlier arrested on September 15, 2003, from Jhainagati in Sherpur for IMB connections and was released from jail after serving 11 months' imprisonment.

He was arrested again two days after the series bomb blasts on August 17, 2005.

Police procured the Islami Samaj activists before the court yesterday showing them arrested under the Emergency Power Rules. The court sent them to jail.

## Rabindranath

**FROM PAGE 16**  
literature and music in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Rabindranath passed away on 22 Shrabon in 1348 after long illness at Jorasanko mansion in Kolkata.

Numerous organisations in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country organised cultural programmes to observe the death anniversary of the great poet who gave both Bangladesh and India their national anthem.

Bangla Academy held a discussion on Tagore's life and works and a cultural programme at its seminar hall.

Syed Abul Moksud presented a paper on Rabindranath's thought on religion and philosophy. Prof Galib Ahsan Khan and Prof Niranjan Adhikari weighed in with their understanding of the poet.

Academy Director General Dr Syed Mohammad Shahed delivered the welcome speech at the discussion chaired by Prof Aminul Islam.

"Rabindranath's religious and philosophical spirits were not aimed at his own peace or salvation of his own soul; his philosophy was for the salvation of the mankind," Abul Moksud said.

Ifat Ara Dewan, Bulbul Islam, Tapan Bhattacharya, Shama Raman and Israt Jahan Pamela later presented Rabindranath's songs.

The Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha organised a two-day

programme to mark the poet's death anniversary at Central Public Library while 'Swarabati' held a session of his songs and poetry recitals.

Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and private television channels broadcast special programmes on this occasion.

Nicknamed 'Rabi', the poet, the youngest of fourteen surviving children of Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi, was born on 25 Baishakh 1268 and grew up in an elevated and culturally enlightened environment, to be a landlord or 'zamindar' governing sprawling estates in Kushtia, Pabna and Rajshahi in the then East Bengal.

Tagore had early success as a writer in his native Bengal. With his translations of some of his poems, he soon became known in the West. For the world he became the voice of India's spiritual heritage; and for India, especially for Bengal, he became a great living institution.

The prolific writer enriched every branch of modern Bangla literature by writing thousands of songs, hundreds of exquisite short stories, great novels, plays and musicals.

His famed anthology of poems 'Geetanjali' won him the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. He founded the world famous seat of learning 'Santiniketan'.

## Winners have to quit

**FROM PAGE 1**  
City Corporation (RCC) mayor elect, is the general secretary of Rajshahi city AL; and Shawkat Hossain Hiron, who won the Barisal City Corporation (BCC) mayoral race, is the convener of Barisal city AL.

AL-backed candidates, who hold posts in different local committees of the party, won eight of the nine municipality mayoral posts.

Most of the 157 councillors elected in the four city corporations and 108 councillors elected in the nine municipalities are grassroots level leaders of different political parties. The AL-backed candidates had a landslide victory in these polls.

According to the