

## BNP blames subtle rigging for poll debacle in Ctg

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

BNP leaders here blamed the subtle election engineering, irregularities and rigging for their crushing defeat in the December 29 election in Chittagong while grassroots leaders and voters see it in different ways.

Chittagong is known as the safe vote bank of Bangladesh Nationalist Party

former lawmakers Sarwar Jamal Nizam and Gazi Mohammad Shahjahan Jewel lost their seats from where they were elected for several times.

Noman who won from Kotwali seat in 1991 and 2001 election, lost to his rival Awami League candidate Dr Afsarul Amin in Double Mooring by 9291 votes.

Dr Afsarul won the seat

would be proved if judicial enquiry could be done.

He said the people allowed a non-elected government that failed to deliver in different sectors and waited with the hope of an acceptable and credible election with the belief of having a correct voter list and national ID cards. But, the EC frustrated them, he added.

polling officers, election observers and members of Ansar on the election day was 'suspicious' since afternoon on December 29. He said he personally drew attention of different officials including the Election Commissioner Brigadier General (Retd) M Sakhawat Hossain, returning officer and presiding officers in this regard but none took any

roots level leaders and activists of the party and its front organisations in these two areas said December 29 election was free and fair one and the result was nothing but reflection of people's opinion.

Former law affairs secretary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Chittagong city unit Mohammad Monwar said apart from some nominal allegations the result was true reflection of public opinion.

Monwar who visited different polling centres, said many voters who faced problems in finding their names in the voter lists could later cast their votes at different centres.

Wahidul Alam who was elected lawmaker in the last three elections and lost to grand alliance candidate Anisul Islam Mahmud at Hathazari constituency, alleged that many of the pro-BNP voters could not exercise their franchise as their names were not in the list of polling officers.

Habibullah, a villager of Madarsha union under Hathazari, said the people wanted a change this time as Wahidul did not do any major development work in the upazila.

Twice elected lawmaker from Patiya, BNP leader Gazi Shahjahan Jewel has been defeated by AL candidate Shamsul Hoque.

Voters of Patiya believe that criminal activities, including extortion and crime, by the JCD activists during the BNP rule put a big stain on Jewel's image.

Mass voters think that result on the December 29 election was the reflection of public opinion.

Nizamuddin, a new voter, said the people would also consider performance of the newly elected lawmakers regarding development of Chittagong in next election.

Meanwhile, several grass-



Animals and birds of different species have now become extinct due to loss of their habitat caused by human activities. Although the number of trees is declining in the port city, a banyan tree still stands on the Jamal Khan Road to protect birds. (Clockwise from top) Choto Bosontobore, Go-shulik and Bene-bo.

ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

## Tk 8.4 CRORE PROJECT IN KHAGRACHHARI Misappropriation of fund alleged

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

Misappropriation of government fund by a contractor with the help of a section of officials at Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTB) put the work of Tk 8.4 crore road construction project into uncertainty.

The indigenous people of Beltali Para, Jurmoron and Khabangpuya under Sadar upazila alleged that contractor Mohammad Selim, also the district Jubo Dal vice president, misappropriated major portion of the fund with the help of a section of CHTDB officials.

CHTDB sources said Tk 8.4 crore project was taken to construct a road, including six bridges, from Khagrachhari Parjatan Motel to Jurmoron Surendra Masterpara in 2005 during the BNP-led four-party alliance government.

If the road is constructed over one lakh people of some 25 remote indigenous villages will be benefited of proper communication facilities, sources said. It is alleged that Selim

got the work using the influence of his political mentor and former CHTDB Chairman Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan. Selim could not complete the work in three years of schedule ending December, 2008 yet he had no problem to withdraw most of the project money. An official, on condition of anonymity, said Selim has withdrawn Tk 2.5 crore of the project money so far.

Selim, however, constructed only one of the six bridges over a small canal at a jungle near Beltalipara where there is no connecting road on both the sides of the bridge.

Arun Tripura, a villager of Beltalipara, told The Daily Star that they didn't know the utility of a bridge at such a remote place.

"The bridge would not benefit the people," he said. An engineer of CHTDB on condition of anonymity said many such projects were designed for some remote CHT areas at their office without any study whether those would be viable or not.

Sub-Assistant Engineer Mohammad Abu Taher at CHTDB Khagrachhari

office, also supervisor of the project, could not confirm about the project cost and actual allocation. He said it might be Tk. 6 or Tk 7 crore project.

Taher, reportedly a close aide to Selim, told this correspondent that the ministry concerned held up the work for fund constraint. He said a major portion of the work has been completed. The remaining work would start after the fund is released by the ministry, he added.

When asked about how the contractor could withdraw most of the project money, Taher said the bills were paid with the permission of the officials but refused to disclose their names.

Contractor Selim said he constructed 3.5 kilometre of the 16 kilometre road with bricks and withdrew only Tk. 1.8 crore.

He said people of the project area don't want to give their land for road construction while cadres of regional political party UPDF used to demand toll from him. For these reasons, he could not complete the construction work, he said.



BNP candidate Abdullah Al Noman shows a ballot paper at a press conference on Saturday.

(BNP) for long.

The BNP heavyweights who won the previous elections, lost in the ninth parliamentary elections.

The leaders including BNP Joint Secretary General and former fisheries minister Abdullah AL Noman, former commerce minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, former whip Syed Wahidul Alam and

bagging 1,37,106 votes while Noman got 1,27,815 votes.

Noman at a press conference at the Chittagong Press Club on Saturday brought allegation of irregularities at Chittagong-9 constituency against the election commission.

While talking to The Daily Star, he blamed the election commission for providing wrong voter list to the candidates. He said the allegation

He said he got the people's verdict but lost to election engineering by the EC.

Noman alleged that around 90 per cent of female voters went to different polling centres with national ID cards whom around 20 per cent could not cast their votes as their names were not in the voter lists of presiding and polling officers.

He said roles of different on duty presiding officers,

step to solve the problem.

Noman, however, did not reject the poll result and expressed his unwillingness to go to the court in this regard, saying he would face it politically.

BNP candidate Shamsul Alam, supporters of whom allegedly involved in purchasing votes with cash money at Kotwali, also echoed the same.

Meanwhile, several grass-



Different roads in the port city are being dug again for expansion of mobile phone network that were renovated a few months ago, causing serious gridlock and sufferings to the pedestrians and locals. The photo was taken from DC Hill area on Sunday.

## theweekthatwas

### Theatre therapy for mentally challenged emphasised

A two-day workshop ended here on Tuesday underlining the need for theatre therapy to safeguard health of mentally challenged people.

Department of Psychology, Chittagong University (CU) and Theatre Therapy Centre for the Disabled jointly organised the workshop titled "Introduction to playback Theatre" at the initiative of Therapeutic Theatre Institute.

CU Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr M Badiul Alam was the chief guest at the workshop held at the seminar room of CU Zoology Faculty with Mohammad Afzal Hossain, head of Psychology Department, in the chair.

Addressing the workshop Prof Badiul emphasised the need for ensuring mental healthcare for mentally imbalanced and challenged children and adolescents using affect of psycho-analytical drama of Theatre Therapy alongside providing medical treatment to them.

Zoology Faculty Dean Prof Dr Md Atiqur Rahman, Prof Dr Mohammad Anisul Islam, psycho-analytical drama scientist and trainer Jenny Crystal and Unity Theatre for Social Action, Chittagong Executive Director Mostafa Kamal Pasha addressed the workshop.

### Seminar on kidney disease held

A scientific seminar on kidney



STAR PHOTO

The newly elected office-bearers of Chittagong Press Club pose for photograph on the club premises on December 31 after the election result was announced.

### Students urged to build up moral character

Speakers urged the students to build up their moral characters side by side acquiring modern science-based education. They were addressing a

### Sandwip people's plea to govt

Speakers at a meeting in Sandwip Island urged the

### Seminar on VLSI design, challenges held

A seminar titled "VLSI design: Challenges and opportunities in ASIC (application specific integrated circuit) design" was held recently at Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB), Chittagong centre. IEB Vice-President M Khorshed Alam chaired the seminar where Jahangir Dewan, president and chief executive officer of Vision Design Systems Inc, presented the keynote paper. Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet) Vice-Chancellor Prof Shyamal Kanti Biswas was present as the chief guest while IEB Chairman M Ali Ashraf, Vice-Chairman Md Nurul Karim and Honorary Secretary Md Abdul Kashem were the special guests.

### Students urged to build up moral character

disease titled 'Nephrotic syndrome' was held at the University of Science and Technology Chittagong (USTC) on Saturday. Vice Chancellor and National Professor Dr Nurul Islam presided over the seminar. Chairman of Nephrology Department of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Prof Dr Harunur Rashid presented the key-note paper at the seminar. Director of Kidney Foundation Tiny Ferdous also spoke among others.

### Seminar on VLSI design, challenges held

government to take necessary steps to start work of Sandwip-Companyganj road communication and resume the activities of No-5 Dirghapar Union Parishad. Dirghapar Probashi Janakalyan Samity, USA and Sandwip Jegey Utha Bhumi Malik Kalyan Samity, Chittagong jointly organised the meeting with social activist and educationist Principal Mohammad Ayub Ali in the chair. US-expatriate social activist Mohammad Maniruzzaman spoke as the chief guest. Advocate Joynal Abedin, Siddiqur Rahman, Khoka Mia, Mahabur Rahman Khan, Kafil Uddin, Maulana Md Yunus and Maulana ASM Halim addressed the meeting. The speakers also demanded steps to ensure healthcare for all, eradication of illiteracy, attain self-sufficiency and stop the attacks of pirates.