

CHITTAGONG CITY CORPORATION ELECTIONS

# AL, BNP probables float names for mayorship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Chittagong city is rife with speculation about the probable mayoral candidates as city corporation elections draw nearer. As per the previous election schedule, the election is to be held within 180 days before the tenure of the present Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) mayor and 41 ward councillors expires on June 25 this year.

Preparation is now going on in full swing for holding the election within the scheduled time and updating of voter list is also at the final stage, said the sources in district election commission office.

"With the updating almost completed we expect to publish the draft voter list by the middle of next month. There would be sufficient time as per the election rules for placing objection, if there is any, against the draft list before publishing the final one," said SM Ezzarul Haq, deputy election commissioner.

Later, the election schedule would be announced following the rules and directive of the higher authorities, he added.

Meanwhile, the three-time elected Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, also president of Chittagong city Awami League, is likely to be the candidate of the ruling party for the mayoral polls.

Local AL lawmaker Nurul Islam and AL Chittagong city unit executive committee member AJM Nasiruddin are also the probable contenders for the mayor from the ruling party.

In this regard Chittagong city AL Joint Secretary Advocate Ibrahim Hossain Babul said, "As per the hints our central leaders like Sajeda Chowdhury and others made on different occasions Mohiuddin Chowdhury would be the AL-backed mayor candidate in CCC elections."

The party insiders said if Nurul Islam does not contest the mayoral election risking MP post he may back Nasiruddin -- a comparatively younger candidate.

On the other hand, BNP Vice Chairman Abdullah Al Noman, Chittagong city BNP President Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and General Secretary Dr Shahadat Hossain and BNP Chittagong north district unit President Giasuddin Quader Chowdhury

are the possible BNP backed mayoral candidates.

Of them, Noman is the main possible candidate from BNP to fight against heavyweight candidate like Mohiuddin Chowdhury. Khosru may not be much interested in the mayoral election while Dr Shahadat is considered too young to vie against Mohiuddin.

On the other hand, Giasuddin Quader Chowdhury may file nomination if Noman and Khosru are reluctant to contest the mayoral election, said the sources in BNP.

When contacted, Dr Shahadat said he has been preparing himself for the mayoral election for the last three years and refrained from running the last parliamentary election.

"Party Chairperson Khaleda Zia advised me to start work in the locality when I expressed my intention to vie for the mayoral post before the parliamentary election," he said.

"I took it as a positive indication in this regard. However, if the party nominates Noman bhai or Khosru bhai I will surely abide by the party decision," said Dr Shahadat.



Different development organisations form a human chain in the city yesterday demanding the rich countries pay carbon debt.



Bangladesh Diploma Unemployed Nurses Association takes out a procession in the city yesterday to press home its demand for recruitment of nurses on the basis of diploma course batch.

## Nursing College students demand probe into exam results

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of the first batch of BSc in nursing at Dhaka Nursing College yesterday demanded immediate investigation into their first year exam results, alleging various irregularities in exam process.

Out of 85 students, only 10 passed the first year final exam, which was the result of sheer neglect of teachers and the college authorities, the students said at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

The students alleged that they faced many obstacles from the very beginning of the BSc course that started in March 2008. The new course was introduced without any preparation and proper academic facilities, they added.

They said classes of the first batch started seven months later, which was also not regular. Computer and IT classes were held only one month before the exam.

Shortage of teachers and library books also hampered their studies, they added.

Results were published one year after the exam, as the enrolment sheet got lost, they said, adding that results were eventually published following protests from the students.

The students demanded proper academic facilities, adequate teachers and a complete curriculum.

Among the students, Laily Begum, Nisha Ahmed, Meherunnisa, Popy Akter and Usha Biswas addressed the press conference.

## Repair Aila-hit dams to save 2 lakh homeless people

Demand dev organisations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alliance of development partners yesterday expressed grave concern over the fate of 2 lakh homeless people affected by the cyclone Aila, saying they may remain homeless for an indefinite period unless the damaged embankments in the coastal districts are repaired by March this year.

"We urge all development partners working under Bangladesh Development Forum and the government of Bangladesh to consider this issue of embankment reconstruction and repair as one of the top most priorities," said a statement of the national and international organisations working in the country's coastal region.

There is a serious concern among the communities and professionals and experts concerned that if the broken

embankments are not reconstructed and repaired by March 2010, it would require waiting for another winter to complete the work, read the statement.

"That means, more than 200 thousand people will have to remain homeless for an indefinite time-period, which is inhuman and unacceptable on any grounds and a serious issue of human and fundamental rights violation," it added.

In this backdrop, the organisations demanded a coordinated action on this so that the reconstruction and repair procedures are completed by March 31 this year.

"We are appalled to bear witness that even after eight and half months following cyclone Aila, more than 100 thousand people from Khulna and Satkhira districts are still living in inhuman conditions on the embankments in make-

shift shelters, while an additional 100 thousand people have been displaced," said the statement.

The organisations stressed that the response and rehabilitation works that they have been continuing in the affected regions are gradually appearing as a waste of limited resources, unless embankments are reconstructed and repaired.

Signatories to the statement include Emergency Capacity Building Project, ActionAid, World Concern, Concern Worldwide, Catholic Relief Service, Save the Children, USA, Sweden, Denmark and Australia, Muslim Aid, Oxfam Bangladesh Programme, Christian Aid, CARE, Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust, Dan Church Aid, Research Initiative for Change, Nirapad, Shushilan, Jagrata Juba Sangha, Humanity Watch and Progoti.

## Rich countries urged to pay carbon debt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a human chain yesterday called on the developed countries and donors to pay carbon debt to Bangladesh since the country is the worst sufferer of the impacts of climate change.

As climate change is the result of high carbon emission by the developed countries, they should pay the compensation, they added.

A total of 21 development organisations formed the human chain in front of the National Press Club ahead of the meeting of the Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF), which began yesterday, says a press release.

The organisations include Equity and Justice Working Group Bangladesh (EquityBD), AMKS, Bangladesh Krishak Federation, CSRL, MFTD, RCSV, Sirajgonj Flood Forum, Online Knowledge Centre, Solidarity Workshop, VOICE, etc.

Another protest rally was also held in front of the DFID office in London the same day.

## Jamaat resorts to violence to foil trial of war criminals

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami has resorted to violence and cruelty, as it faces existential crisis in the wake of initiatives to hold trial of war criminals and restore the 1972 constitution, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

"Jamaat-e-Islami has become violent and cruel, as it wants to prevent the trial of war criminals and restoration

of the 1972 constitution. Jamaat has now found itself in such a situation it has never faced since independence," said writer and columnist Shahriar Kabir.

The Forum for Secular Bangladesh organised the discussion titled 'We want fifth- and eighth-amendment-free '72 constitution' at WVA auditorium in the city.

The grand alliance has no

option but to hold the trial of war criminals and restore the '72 constitution, as the people have given mandate to them to accomplish these goals, Shahriar Kabir said.

Barrister Amir-Ul Islam, Advocate Mujibur Rahman, women's rights activist Ayesha Khanam and Advocate Rana Dasgupta also spoke at the discussion presided over by Justice Gholam Rabbani.

## Road crashes kill one

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A motorcycle rider was killed and another injured critically in a road accident in Patachhara area under Ramgorh upazila in Khagrachhari yesterday.

The dead was identified as Rampru Marma, 23, son of Monglaiga Marma and the injured Chaitowai Marma, 24, son of Chaila Marma of Guimara area. The injured was shifted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital from Ramgorh upazila health complex as his condition deteriorated.

## DU hall provost resigns

DU CORRESPONDENT

Prof Md Mozammel Hoq, provost of Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall of Dhaka University, resigned yesterday following a movement by the resident students.

Prof Mozammel submitted his resignation letter to vice chancellor's office in the afternoon.

The students had been staging demonstration for the last two days accusing Prof Mozammel of persuading the police to release the arrested leaders and workers of Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said he has received the resignation letter but it has not been accepted officially.

Prof Mozammel told reporters that he had contacted the Shahbagh police for the release of Sakhawat, a student of his department, as police arrested him on suspicion of an activist of Shibir.

Resident students of the hall then launched a movement demanding his resignation and he resigned, Prof Mozammel said, adding that he was not confirmed about the political identity of Sakhawat while he was trying to obtain his release.

The Shahbagh arrested 21 leaders and activists of Shibir, including Sakhawat, a student of microbiology department, from two messes in Paribagh area on suspicion of their involvement in anti-state activities on Friday.

## UNSAFE BLOOD TRANSFUSION

# 1 lakh infected with syphilis, hepatitis-B a year

BSS, Dhaka

An estimated 100,000 people are being infected with hepatitis-B and syphilis every year due to unsafe blood transfusion both at public and private levels, according to findings of Bangladesh Health Watch 2009.

The health watch report, third of its kind first launched in 2006, reveals that among the numerous hospitals and clinics in the country, only four percent implement government's 'safe blood transfusion programmes'.

It said the estimated annual demand for 'whole blood' varies from 250,000 to 350,000 bags of 350 to 450 milliliters per year and hardly half of those are screened as per mandatory government guidelines to test hepatitis B and C, syphilis and malarial parasites before any transfusion.

A recent study shows, the country still highly relies on professional blood donors, who meet 70 percent of blood demands commercially, putting ailing people in a grave danger of infection from transfusion-transmissible

infections (TTIs) that also include HIV/AIDS.

It says the over dependence on professional blood donors was, however, reduced to 60 percent from 90 percent in last decade, but it jumped again to 70 percent in recent time due to lack of strict policy implementations and monitoring from law enforcing agencies.

It says at least one in three professional blood donors suffer from different communicable diseases, which can be easily transmitted to ailing people through such unsafe transfusions.

The government safe blood transfusion programme, which started in 98 public hospitals in 2000 to promote voluntary blood donations instead of professional donors, seemed apparently in jeopardy due to non-compliance with regulations.

The health watch cited many factors for unsafe blood transfusion and these include ignorance, lack of public awareness, manpower shortages, lack of funding, inadequate lab facilities and screening products as well as the greed of dishonest private proprietors.

"Common citizens and even the key staff members of the blood transfusion centres are not aware of the consequences of safe blood transfusion," read the health watch report, conducted over 42 facilities during first half of 2009.

It says four, out of five such centres, do not have any government licence or accreditation for blood transfusion safety (SBT), although many of those are supervised by the government's directorate general of health services (DGHS).

The study, however, said there is no clarity as to whether the government facility requires licence or at least meet the minimum requirement of standards set by the relevant act.

The Bangladesh Health Watch (BHW) is a multi-organisation civil society network formed in 2006 to establish a tradition of holding the state and the non-state actors accountable for their performance in health sector. The network has published two other reports on health sector performance in 2007 and 2008.

## Education for indigenous people in mother tongue stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday underscored the need to provide primary education for indigenous people in their mother language.

They called on the government to address the issue through devising a strategic plan in this regard.

Gono Shakkharata Abhijan organised the two-day seminar at Bangladesh Shishu Academy in the city in association with its co-partners.

Mother language should be preferred while educating children at their very primary level, which would ultimately ensure a successful academic outcome for them, said Manna Mandal, country director of SIL Bangladesh.

Speaking as the chief guest, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Promod Mankin said that if access to education can be made easier for minority-language-speaking communities, downtrodden people can be easily integrated into the mainstream.

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