

AL, BNP high-ups

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different parts of the country also conducted mass contact and electoral campaign seeking vote for M Manjur Alam Manju yesterday.

During the campaign, they sought vote for Manjur to free Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) from corruption and nepotism, rid the city of water-logging and land grabbing and help bring about infrastructure development, which is required to turn the city into a commercial one.

BNP leaders barrister Mahub Uddin Khokon, Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anni, Mostafa Kamal Pasha and former state minister Aman Ullah Aman, among others, joined the campaign.

They also took part in mass contact and campaign along with BNP Standing Committee Member Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, its Vice-Chairman Abdullah Al Noman, BNP chairperson's Adviser Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin and Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, lawmakers Jafur Islam Chowdhury and Mostafa Kamal Pasha.

Manjur carried out mass contact and campaign in different areas of Lalkhan Bazar in the morning and Pahartali in the afternoon.

During the campaign, Manjur alleged that CCC had been under the grip of a vested interest group and could not

function properly to ensure proper service and urban facilities for city dwellers.

All the activities of CCC and fate of its staff were held hostage by a handful of people, Manjur alleged adding that development works of the port city were also hampered.

Manjur sought vote to help take care of the basic needs of the city dwellers and develop the city following a constructive plan.

BNP Vice-Chairman Abdullah Al Noman, its chairperson's Adviser Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin, Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Mufti Izzatul Islam Chowdhury, Jatiya Party leader Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, former Jamaat lawmaker Shahjahan Chowdhury, Monowara Begum Moni and popular singer Asif accompanied Manjur during the campaign.

With only three days left for the polling, the election commission office in Chittagong has almost completed its preparation for the election.

All the ballot papers and ballot boxes already reached in Chittagong.

The ballot papers and boxes were taken to the temporary election office at CJKS Gymnasium yesterday.

Law enforcement officials were also deployed in and around the temporary election office to ensure security.

RMG workers

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to close the factory at 3:00pm.

Managing Director of Envoy Group Abdu Salam Mursheedy, also president of BGMEA, said not only Envoy Group, but other factories also witness demonstrations by workers over implementation of the proposed minimum wage structure. It is an issue to be dealt with by the garment sector.

Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said seven garment factories were shut to avert any untoward incident following attacks on several factories by agitating workers.

Representatives of garment workers submitted a proposal for a minimum wage structure to the government on January 14, said a high-up of the Wage Commission.

They proposed fixing the minimum wage at Tk 5,000, the high official said.

But garment factory owners rejected the proposal calling it irrational.

The government is yet to decide on the issue, the high-up said.

Ruling alliance

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Taking part in the discussion, the agriculture minister said 12 ministries spent more money than parliament allocated for them in the current fiscal. Their excess expenditures are very much justified as they did a lot of tasks, she claimed.

Citing the example of the food and disaster management ministry, she said it had to spend much money in the Aila hit districts. Similarly, the education ministry spent a huge amount for printing 19 crore textbooks for the students, she added.

On absence of opposition lawmakers in parliament, she blasted Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia for placing "shadow budget" outside parliament while remaining absent from the House proceedings.

"I am sure she will return to parliament only to save her membership to ensure getting government financial facilities," Matia added.

Hasanul Haq Inu, chief of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), a component of Awami League-led grand alliance, blamed bureaucratic tangles, law and order slide and lax of ministries' efforts for non-implementation of many projects taken in the current annual development programme.

Hafizuddin Ahmed of Jatiya Party, also a component of the grand alliance, criticised the government officials for slow pace in performing duties. "The administration must be held accountable," he said.

AL lawmakers ABM Golam Mostafa, M Israfil Alam and MA Mannan lauded the government's performance in implementing the current fiscal's budget.

Rejoinder

FROM PAGE 1
Japan Garden City's director Abdullah Al Mamun, said the point taken from the February 2009 meeting of Japan Garden City Service Advisory Committee and used in the report is unknown to them.

OUR REPLY
The Daily Star reports were filed based on the findings of the fire service and civil defence department, public works ministry and Rajuk as well as interviews of the residents, top government officials, leading architects and planners and the company officials.

Fire department's investigation team held the developer responsible for the fire incident and casualties.

The rejoinder does not contradict findings of the investigations carried out by the government agencies.

Though the rejoinder says the reference to the service advisory committee is unknown to them, it later recognises that the point merely discussed fund for maintenance of fire fighting system.

We took the point from the body of a letter on February 2009 meeting and signature of the company's director Asaduzzaman Jamil from its bottom and put together only to show that the developer was already aware of the non-functional fire fighting system at each of the buildings.

Though the rejoinder claims that the Japan Garden City has all the functional fire equipment in place, a mobile court of the fire service and civil defence department on May 25 penalised the housing authorities with a fine of Tk 1.90 lakh for lack of functional fire fighting equipment.

Regarding penalty by the mobile court, Md Wahiduzzaman, managing director of Japan Garden City Limited, said that the fire department's rules do not corroborate with theirs.

Westand by our reports.

Maternity leave

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On maternity leave, Hasina said her previous government had increased maternity leave to four months.

"Nowadays the mothers usually take one or two babies. So I think if they are given six months leave, it will not hamper anything," she said.

Justifying her stand for increasing the maternity leave, she said after six months, a baby attains the capacity to take hard foods.

The PM also called for setting up Mothers' Corner and Day-care centres at all government and non-government offices, shopping malls, buses, rail stations and all other public places.

"A working mother, having a new born baby, has to attend office keeping her baby at home. That's why mothers cannot be attentive at office while the baby also does not get the best care of mother," she said.

On the Mothers' Corner, the PM said mothers must be given an ideal environment for breast-feeding while she stays in office.

Hasina also suggested the young mothers to live in joint families instead of going for single family.

"Unfortunately, young generation are becoming materialistic. They want to get their own single family. But if the young mothers stay in joint family, their children can get better care," she said.

Drawing attention to gender discrimination in the society, Hasina requested guardians of the families including mother-in-laws, neighbours, husbands and all relatives to be more careful to the expecting women.

Hasina revealed that the

government in a fresh move is going to appoint 13,500 community health providers in a bid to provide mothers and children with more quality services.

Besides, 13,500 skilled birth attendants will be created by 2,015 to ensure safe child delivery at home, Hasina revealed.

Moreover, the government is giving 6 months' training to women field health workers on midwifery activities, she said.

Apart from the field workers, senior family members like grandmothers and aunts can be given training on midwifery, she added.

"If we can train the grandmothers, then pressure on the field workers will be reduced," the premier said.

The premier also said the present government is strongly committed to providing all citizens of the country with modern and quality health services.

She said the government is working with an aim of reducing maternal mortality rate to 1.5 percent from the present rate of 3.8 percent by the year 2021.

Hasina said the last Awami League government had taken steps to set up one community health clinic for each 6,000 persons and 10,723 clinics were established under the project.

But the next BNP-Jamaat government had dropped the project. "However, we again have started giving services at 9,722 community health clinics," she said.

Health Secretary Sheikh Altaf Ali presided over the function while Health Minister A F M Ruhul Haque and State Minister for Health Affairs Captain (retd) Mojibar Rahman Fakir, among others, addressed in the meeting.

Education Day

FROM PAGE 16
the parents of school- and college-going girls.

A meeting was held at the Shaheed Minar. At the meeting, the education minister called upon all to raise their voice and wage a social movement against the nuisance.

Branding stalkers as criminals, he said people from every part of the society must come forward to ensure a congenial atmosphere at institutions and working places for female students and working women.

Cautioning the pestering elements he said, "We will not spare them anymore".

Reiterating his earlier comment on enacting a law, Nahid said it is imperative to launch a social movement besides taking legal measures against the criminals.

Students also have a major role in building a friendly atmosphere at their educational institutions, he added.

He also said moral education has been given due emphasis in the recently approved National Education Policy, which, he believes, would help instil ethical principles in students.

The minister said the issue of ethics will also be incorporated in the teachers training courses, and every educational institution will form a committee to address the threat to girls.

"We will ensure safety of the girls at the academic institutions," he added.

Describing the young generation as the main driving force for building a modern and prosperous country Nahid said, moral education is necessary to make them good people and good citizens of the country.

He urged girls to inform their guardians and the administration about any incident of harassment they face so that the issues can be handled with due attention.

The education minister conducted the oath taking ceremony.

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Pro-VC Prof Harun-Rashid, Education Secretary Syed Ataur Rahman and Campaign for Popular Education Executive Director Rasheda K Choudhury, among others, attended the programme to express their solidarity.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1
The former premier said during the tenure of her government, torture during remand did not occur. "All go bail during our tenure," she said.

The BNP chairperson demanded an enquiry into the incident, and said the persons responsible for the torture of Mahmudur Rahman must be tried.

She also asked the authorities to withdraw all cases filed against him, and to release him immediately.

Khaleda, also the leader of the opposition in parliament, warned the officers and employees of the state about the consequences of doing anything extra legal and extra constitutional, saying, "The consequence will not be good. Don't violate the law. Remember, no government is the final government."

She urged all to forge a movement, saying, "Otherwise what is happening to Mahmudur Rahman now, might happen to anyone."

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, former law minister Moudud Ahmed, and Supreme Court Bar Association President Khandaker Mahub Hossain were also present among others.

Tejgoan police arrested Mahmudur in the Amar Desh office in Karwan Bazar of the capital on June 2, after the daily's publisher Hasmat Ali Hashu filed a fraud case against him the day before.

Duty on sugar

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although NBR lost revenue earning of about Tk 300 crore.

With the proposal to impose duty on sugar in FY2010-11, price of the item rose by Tk 3 to 4 kilogram.

NBR officials said the proposed duty hike is half that in the current fiscal year. It was not supposed to affect the market, but businessmen already raised the price.

In the budget for FY2009-2010, Tk 7,000 duty was imposed on per metric ton of finished sugar and the duty on raw sugar was Tk 4,000 per metric ton. As on the eve of last Ramadan the price of sugar hiked up, the whole amount of duty was withdrawn.

In the next FY's budget, the duty proposed for finished sugar is Tk 4,000 per metric ton and Tk 2,000 per metric ton for raw sugar.

An official of the NBR said businessmen drove up the price to force the government to cut the duty.

Last Thursday, the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) records showed, the price of sugar leapt up by Tk 2 to 3 per kg after the national budget was placed in the Jatiya Sangsad.

Yesterday sugar was sold for Tk 42 to Tk 44 per kg. Last week, before the budget speech, the price was Tk 39 to Tk 42.

Germany win big

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Germany four years ago, the Polish-born striker has now been on the scoresheet at each of the last three finals.

He spent last season warming the bench at Bayern Munich, while Podolski had an unremarkable season at mid-table Cologne.

But the pair answered their critics as they led the attack in a youthful Germany side with an average age of just over 25.

As an attacking midfielder, Podolski has played consistently well for Germany since the last World Cup and has made the national side's left-wing berth his own, while Loew's faith in Klose was repaid with interest.

Australia goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer could only get a glove to Podolski's fierce shot on eight minutes which flew into the back of the net to claim his 39th goal on his 74th appearance.

There had been calls in the German press to drop Bayern Munich's Klose, 32, as Germany's lone striker, but the veteran's 26th minute

2 army men injured as train hits car

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two army personnel were injured last night after a car carrying them was hit by a train at Staff Road Level Crossing in Dhaka Cantonment area.

The accident happened when lance corporal Abdul Bari, who was driving the car, tried to pass the level crossing ignoring traffic signal at around 9:30pm, said Shah Alam, sub-inspector of Cantonment Police Station.

Maj Imran Hamid, an official of the Prime Minister's Office, owns the car, he said.

Lance corporals Nur-un-Nobi and Bari were admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Combined Military Hospital.

Iran finalised a \$7 billion "peace pipeline" deal on Sunday to export natural gas to Pakistan by 2015, Iran's state television reported.

"The deal was signed. Export of Iran's gas to Pakistan will be launched by the end of 2015," state TV reported.

"For 25 years Iran will export one million cubic metres of natural gas to Pakistan per day," it said.

The project is crucial for Pakistan to avert a growing energy crisis already causing severe electricity shortages in the country of about 170 million, at the same time as it confronts Islamist militancy.

Iran has the world's second largest gas reserves after Russia but has struggled for years to develop its oil and gas resources. Iranian officials say the country needs \$25 billion to develop its crucial energy industry.

Sanctions by the West, political turmoil and construction delays have slowed Iran's development as an exporter.

Mother, 2 Kids

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building, he added.

Rita's family members said until driver Al Amin, who went into hiding with the private car, and caretaker Anis are arrested, it couldn't be said whether the mother and kids committed suicide.

Toufique said, "Although Rita left a note mentioning driver Al Amin managed her sedatives, we have collected water from a jug found in the house and sent it for chemical test."

Law enforcers are trying to arrest driver Al Amin, caretaker Anis, Rita's husband Rashedul Kabir, his second wife Smriti, parents-in-law Shafiqul Kabir and Noor Banu and other suspects in a case filed by Rita's mother Mazeda Begum.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque said apart from police, detective branch personnel have been assigned to solve the case.

Kazi Mohammad Arif, husband of Rita's elder sister Mita, said, "The dead bodies were found lying on a bed next to one another, while one of their rooms was found ransacked."

"We had talked to Rita on Wednesday around 11:00pm. But there was no expression of suicidal intent in her speech," said Arif.

After the dead bodies of Rita and her son Ishrat Kabir Pabon, 12, and daughter Raisa Rashmi Payel, 10, were recovered, a note was found in the house.

In the note, Rita blamed her husband Rashedul and Smriti for their death while Pabon and Payel left writings on walls blaming their father, grandparents and aunts.

Criminal killed

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Meanwhile, DMCH sources said they recovered a cocktail from the pocket of the pants of injured Swapan when they were conducting X-ray of his head.

Tax on income

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The government has imposed a 10 percent tax on the interest income from deposits into savings bank accounts and post offices.

In the outgoing fiscal year, there was no tax on the interest income of up to Tk 1.5 lakh from such deposits.

Developers flex

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rejected Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam's claim that the government has formulated DAP without any discussion with the land developers.

The minister maintained Rajuk had consulted all stakeholders before firming up the draft DAP, the capital's real estate blueprint of sorts.

Nasrul Hamid Bipu, president of Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) and Awami League lawmaker from Keraniganj, joined Shah Alam in bashing Rajuk.

He said the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha did not take their opinions though there were two meetings between them. "We just cannot accept the plan," he waived.

At one point, Shah Alam told Mannan, "You can't say whatever you will, just because you are a minister. You had insulted me before. Where do you get this courage?"

As Shah Alam, also president of Bangladesh Land Developers Association, raised his finger, Mannan asked him to behave. "I will be very tough if you talk like this," he warned the Bashundhara group chairman.

He also went on a counter-offensive against the developers: "You build heavens under water. Why do you advertise the land you don't even own?"

Shah Alam blamed Mannan for being the minister of Rajuk, not of everyone.

He said Rajuk itself is developing land for housing business and so cannot be given the responsibility to regulate the sector.

He alleged that Prof Jamilur Reza was influenced to formulate DAP.

As REHAB leaders raised a ruckus, Mannan asked them to calm down and requested Jamilur to speak on the allegation.

The professor said there was no question of influencing him and added that he was given the responsibility by Rajuk and the housing ministry.

Jamilur advised lawmaker Bipu to raise the issue in parliament.

"You are an MP. You ask parliament to enact a law in this regard," he headed.

After one and a half hours of noisy encounter, the minister wrapped up the meeting saying they would sit again on June 26.

Earlier, at a meeting in January, Mannan came down hard on the land developers. He asked them how they manage to sleep by grabbing people's land and money.

Rejecting the DAP, realtors accused the government of not giving importance to the sector that involves 269 sub-industries and 2.5 crore people.

Shah Alam said Tk 70,000 crore have been invested in the sector.

to know whether it was his fault that housing projects had not been allowed in flood flow zones.

Bipu, member of the parliamentary standing committee on public works and housing, criticised the government system for acquiring land.

He said if a family owns land in a flood flow zone, it would not be able to do anything with the property. Besides, it might take a lifetime to get compensation from an organisation like Rajuk.

In response to Bipu's remark, Jamilur said one lakh people affected by the Jamuna bridge project have already been rehabilitated.

Moreover, 80,000 people displaced due to the Padma bridge project had also been rehabilitated and compensated, he said.

Mahmudur

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first information report (FIR) of the case.

ACC Deputy Director Nur Ahamad filed the case with Gulshan Police Station last night.

"We have no other choice but to lodge the case against Mahmudur Rahman for non-submission of the wealth statement," ACC Chairman Ghulam Rahman told The Daily Star.

"Mahmudur Rahman tried to use justice system to evade law. If we do not file a case against him now, other people might use his path instead of submitting wealth statement. It might make the anti-graft body dysfunctional," Rahman added.

In accordance with FIR, Mahmudur Rahman, also the acting editor of daily Amar Desh, refused to receive the ACC notice when ACC officials tried to issue it to him in person at his newspaper office on April 13.

Later, ACC sent the notice to his home by post on April 19 when a man named Alam received the notice on his behalf, the FIR added.

Challenging the notice, Mahmudur Rahman filed a petition with the First Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka and sought for a permanent injunction on the notice. But the court rejected the petition.

He later went to High Court challenging the lower court order. On April 27, HC stayed ACC activities against him.

The chamber judge of the Appellate Division stayed HC order on May 5 for ten days after ACC filed an appeal with the Appellate Division. The Appellate Division also asked ACC to file a regular leave petition within the period.

Later, ACC filed a regular leave petition and the matter is now pending with the court.

Earlier on March 10, ACC issued another notice against Mahmudur Rahman asking him to appear before the commission on March 16 for questioning as an enquiry into his wealth statement was going on.

Mahmudur Rahman did not appear before the commission and filed a civil suit with the First Sessions Judge's Court challenging the notice. The suit is still pending with the court.

Police arrested Mahmudur Rahman from his newspaper office on June 2 after the government cancelled the declaration of the newspaper the same day.

There are 34 cases against Mahmudur Rahman besides the case of ACC, which was filed yesterday.