

Ashraf differs

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Mohiddin and Manjur (Mohammad manjur Alam), and the victory and defeat is limited to the two," he told journalists at a book launch ceremony in the capital yesterday.

BNP-backed Manjur was elected CCC mayor, defeating AL-backed Mohiddin in the polls held on Thursday.

Syed Ashraf, also minister for local government, rural development and cooperatives, said people of only Chittagong city voted in the election, and it did not mean verdict against this government or its popularity.

He urged the BNP chief to read newspapers to know the facts. "No newspaper, Bangla or English, termed it an election between AL and BNP. And none said it is a defeat for AL," he added.

The minister also denied that the government is in an embarrassing situation after the election.

The election rather gave the AL an opportunity to revamp the party in Chittagong, Ashraf said. "We are going to take decisions in this regard in our party's next working committee meeting."

Earlier, speaking at the function for launch of the book - Bangabandhu Murder Case Verdict: Stigma-free Bangalee-, Ashraf said the killers had tried to destroy the history of struggle of the Bangalees by killing

Bangabandhu along with his family members.

The main fault of the Bangalees in the eyes of these killers was to liberate Bangladesh, he said, and blamed late president Ziaur Rahman for destroying the constitution, distorting history and rehabilitating the killers.

The AL leader mentioned that court verdict in the trial of Bangabandhu murder case has already been implemented, probe into the killing of four national leaders has resumed and the process of trying war criminals is on.

"Many have suspicion about trial of war criminals. But trying them is our moral duty, and we will certainly hold the trial," the LGRD minister said.

Ashraf said AL is trying to introduce a new trend in politics to take the nation forward. "It is not easy as we are used to age-old habits, but it is necessary to bring changes."

The function was also addressed by Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam and counsel for Bangabandhu murder case Anisul Haq. Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University AAMS Arefin Siddique presided.

AL Publicity Secretary Nur-e Alam Lenin, who edited the 272page book, said he will publish another edition of the book with details.

Road crashes

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on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway.

Idris died as a Mymensingh-bound bus ran over his bi-cycle in the area around 10:00am.

Police recovered the bodies and sent them to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Separate cases were filed with Kotwali police station.

Our correspondent from Bogra adds: At least two people were dead and five others wounded, in a head-on collision between two trucks in Ghoga bridge area under Sherpur upazila, reports our correspondent from Bogra.

The deceased were Nazrul Islam, 35, a cattle trader, and Mahfuz, 40, a truck driver. The injured were Lal Mia, 25, Monirul, 26, and three others unidentified.

They were rushed to Sherpur health complex.

In another accident, some four people were killed and five others injured as a microbus fell into a roadside ditch in Sadar upazila on Cox's Bazar-Chittagong highway yesterday, reports UNB.

Many consumers, who are mainly tenants, alleged that their house-owners collected the bulbs on their behalf showing the bill-payment copy. But they are yet to receive the bulbs from the house-owners.

Officials of both DPDC and DESCO said they have received similar allegations.

"To address the problem, we've to find out a new mechanism so that the tenants get their bulbs and can use those," a DPDC official told UNB.

Energy saving bulbs

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Board and West Zone Power Distribution Company Ltd distributed the bulbs to their respective consumers in other districts.

DPDC officials said they set up a total of 134 makeshift distribution centres at different schools under 13 divisions in the city to distribute a total of 847,000 units of bulbs.

"We received a very good response and most of our bulbs were smoothly distributed among our customers," a DPDC official said.

Echoing the DPDC official, a DESCO official said they had also tremendous response from the consumers to collect the energy saving bulbs.

DESCO opened a total of 91 makeshift distribution centres in selected areas of the city to distribute about 565,000 units of bulbs.

DPDC distributed the bulbs mainly in old part of the city while DESCO distributed the bulbs in its Mirpur and Cantonment areas.

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"To address the problem, we've to find out a new mechanism so that the tenants get their bulbs and can use those," a DPDC official told UNB.

"The Rural Electrification Board is implementing the project titled 'Efficient Lighting Initiative for Bangladesh' to reduce the consumption of electricity.

State Minister for Power and Energy Mohammad Enamul Haque visited different bulb distribution centres in the city.

Muggers shoot hotelier

Takeaway Tk 72,000
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers shot and injured a hotelier at Tikatuli in the capital early yesterday.

Shafiqul Islam, 28, owner of Orchid Restaurant at Shahjadpur, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullet injuries to his back.

Shafiqul said that when he was on way to his Badda residence in an auto-rickshaw around 3:00am, a gang of around seven armed muggers intercepted the vehicle near Tikatuli Rapid Action Battalion office. Two of them got into the auto-rickshaw and asked the driver to keep running the vehicle.

At Kairali intersection the muggers tried to snatch his bag containing Tk 72,000. One of the muggers shot in his back and took away the bag.

The muggers then left him in Badda and fled in the vehicle. Shafiqul took the auto-rickshaw from Sayadabad Bus Terminal around 2:45am after he came from his village home in Comilla.

'Suicide'
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sedative mixed water and then she took it. The children died immediately after drinking the drug and Farzana groaned for a while before dying. He then wrapped the bodies with quilts and left the house with the microbus which he claimed a reward from Farzana although the vehicle was her husband's.

He then spent the night in the capital and early next day left for one of his friend's in-law's house at Guadana in Gopalganj, from where he was arrested on Thursday.

He also said Farzana, her two children and he had lunch at a Chinese restaurant in Dhanmondi after the children's exams were over on June 9.

Investigation officer (IO) of the case Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman said Al Amin was trying to mislead the investigators giving contradictory information. He said they are verifying the information given by Al Amin and Farzana's domestic help Zinnath Ara.

The minister said an environment friendly tannery industrial area has already been set up on 199.40 acres of land in Savar and Keranganj and one hundred and fifty four plots have been allocated.

Construction of administrative building, roads, drain, pipeline of gas, water and electricity supply, boundary walls and other infrastructure have already been completed, he said.

In June last year, the High Court asked the government either to shift all tanneries from Hazaribagh to a special industrial zone in Savar or close those down by February 28 this year to check widespread environmental pollution.

The court observed that it is suicidal for the city residents to have the tanneries inside the capital.

On the plea of the government and the owners of tannery industries, the court in March extended for six months the deadline for relocation of environmentally hazardous tanneries from the capital's Hazaribagh.

Sangsad TV
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broadcast different programmes on development.

Earlier, the House passed a resolution for setting up a separate television channel dedicated to broadcasting the parliamentary proceedings.

The information minister said the government is considering formulation of a time benefiting policy to make private radios and television channels more neutral and pro-people.

He said all private radios and television channels were advised to ensure the proper use and application of Bangla language as some private radios have been using Bangla and another language, which the government considers a threat to the use of pure Bangla.

The information minister also placed in parliament a list of journalists who were killed, tortured, injured and harassed by filing false cases against them during the last BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

The list shows eight journalists were harassed by filing false cases against them.

The fire could not spread to two private companies' offices on the ground and 1st floors.

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Officer cool

FROM PAGE 1
"None will be spared if anyone from the Election Commission and law enforcement agencies, or a civilian is injured in clashes between your [leaders] followers. Please control them," she asserted, with confidence and determination.

Political leaders, who apparently tried to intimidate her, did not say a word.

"If it [clash] continues, I will not announce any more result. All must behave. Our task and efforts cannot be spoiled at the whim of anyone."

When she spoke, the control room was packed with journalists and leaders loyal to the mayoral candidates.

Asked where she got the courage to make such a bold statement, Tuli smiled and said, "I received all-out support from the Election Commission. Everything was transparent. That is why I did not bother about anything."

Problems arose during the CCC polls due to impatience of political leaders. But the election officials solved them all with dedication, commitment and neutrality, she said at her office in the port city yesterday.

Tuli, who worked for the United Nations in Afghanistan and Kosovo, said it is tougher to hold an election in Bangladesh than in Afghanistan.

She was the first-ever female EC official to have performed the responsibility of a returning officer in a city corporation election.

Referring to the CCC election, Tuli said she wanted to send a message - from the beginning - to all that the law must be obeyed.

"We have proved how independent the Election Commission is."

She said the announcement of the results was delayed a bit as they had to complete all the procedures.

"We had total control over 673 poll centres and monitored all voters. My colleagues were everywhere in the electoral area during voting."

"The agents of the candidates got the results just after the counting. But I had to follow some legal procedures before announcing them. It took some time. But they [candidates backed by major parties] became impatient," she said.

Tuli said she had to be extremely cautious about the result sheet and checked all documents before signing them.

The RO said they did not make any delay whatsoever in counting ballots in any of the 673 poll centres.

She looked slightly frustrated when asked whether the

UN high official
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on poverty alleviation in urban areas.

This will be her first visit to the country since she was elected under secretary-general.

She is the first African (Tanzanian national) woman to hold the position.

During her stay in Dhaka, she will go on a field trip to Korail slums in Mohakhali where UN-HABITAT, a United Nations agency for human settlements, runs a project named Safer Cities.

Funded by UNDP, the project was launched in 2002. It seeks to help the urban poor, especially women, break through the poverty cycle.

The project covers 11 locations across the country.

Tibajjuka is due to meet LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam and other government and UN high officials. She is expected to address a press conference with the LGRD minister tomorrow.

Drivers block

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creating a long tailback.

Angry drivers damaged some passenger buses during the block.

Drivers alleged that the authority is realising extra toll from Friday.

But the authority denied the allegation of the drivers and said that they have collected government fixed toll from the drivers.

Additional RAB and police were deployed in the area to avert any untoward situation.

Vehicular movement did not resume till 2:00pm.

Karzai sees

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The news on the wealth of Afghanistan's mineral reserves, including copper, iron ore and lithium, came as pessimism grows in the United States of a planned gradual withdrawal of its forces from July 2011.

Some experts say the deposit's figure is untested and warn that it could take years or decades for that money to materialise because of issues such as poor infrastructure and corruption.

Karzai, who noted that these resources must be used in an environment-friendly and accountable way to prevent corruption, also said that patience was needed for development and hinted that he could favour certain investors.

"Morally, Afghanistan should give access as a priority to those countries that have helped

mindset and actions of politicians created any obstacle to holding the election.

"I thought they [political leaders] have changed their mindset. All eyes were on this election and our every step was transparent. But attempts were made to raise meaningless allegations one after another," said Tuli, who started her career as section officer with the EC in 1984.

She said all electoral issues could be settled through discussion with the commission, rather than raising allegations. A change in attitude and mindset is a must for that.

"We however have investigated all the allegations and gave feedback to the complainants."

The RO said the CCC election had set an example that a free and fair election can be held during the tenure of a political government in Bangladesh.

"The Election Commission proved that it is possible."

All major problems can be solved, if all could come out of their narrow 'partisan mindset', she observed.

Commenting on the role of civil administration, the RO said she received all necessary cooperation from the administration.

Referring to the arrest and release of BNP lawmaker Saaluddin Quader Chowdhury before the election day, Tuli said she asked police to release him as the reason behind the arrest was not valid enough.

She stayed the whole night at the control room on Thursday until an official announcement was made at 10:25am the next day.

Now a mother of two sons, Tuli completed her master's from Dhaka University in 1979.

2 bullet-hit

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upazila health complex, police said.

Sources said a gang of 30 Indian Khasia tribesmen intruded into Bangladesh around 10:00am and asked them to stop collecting stone from the quarry. The stone collecting began there yesterday after an interruption of about two weeks.

The miners, however, declined to stop stone collection after which the Indians opened fire at them, added the sources.

FBCCI polls

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found five of its members faring better in the association group, an official of the apex trade body said, asking not to be named.

Details on the candidates from the chamber group were not immediately available.

The biennial election to the apex chamber body was held yesterday in Dhaka in a festive mood. Businessmen cast votes to elect the leaders for the apex trade body for 2010-12.

The voting continued from 9:00am to 5:00pm without a break at the FBCCI building. The vote count started at 8:00pm.

Official results are expected later today.

Eight directors from the chamber group and eight from the association group have already been nominated.

The number of voters was 315 under the chamber group and 1,340 under the association group. This is the eighth direct election, with the first held in 1994.

In the election, four panels contested for the executive committee of the chamber.

Only, Azad, managing director of Ha-Meem Group, came up with a full panel comprising 14 candidates from association and 14 from chambers.

Abu Alam Chowdhury contested under 'Ganotantrik Parishad' (democratic council) with 14 candidates from the association group.

Delwar Hossain, a representative from Bangladesh Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Merchants Association, contested under Ganotantrik Beboosay Oikya Parishad (Democratic Businessmen United Council) with eight candidates from the association group.

Dewan Sultan Ahmed, a former FBCCI vice president and a representative of Laximpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, contested with six candidates from the chamber group.

Voters expressed their satisfaction over the election environment.

Buet closure

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the campus following a clash between two groups of students," Buet Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Habibur Rahman told The Daily Star.

He added classes will remain suspended until further notice.

The decisions came at a meeting attended by deans and provosts of the university held at 4:00pm with the pro-VC in the chair.

Several students said the clash between two groups - one of the most senior and another of the junior students - occurred near Shaheed Minar on the campus over attending classes around 11:00am.

"Some juniors shut the main gate of the university and asked others not to attend the classes. But senior students did not respond to their call and asked the juniors to open the gate," said a resident student who wished not to be named fearing academic action against him.

Two groups of students later locked in a clash at the spot leaving at least five injured. The injured are Momo, Rafi and Firoz of civil engineering department, while identities of two others could not be known immediately.

A group of junior students had earlier requested the authorities to suspend classes from June 19 until the world cup is over. The administration suspended classes from June 26 to the final match, the student added.

But the students who made the request were not satisfied with the decision. They closed the main gate yesterday and called general students not to join the classes, several students

told The Daily Star.

Tension mounted among the students at the dormitories and on campus after the clash in the morning.

"After the clash we held a meeting at noon and tried to calm the students. But the tension was prevailing till afternoon," Prof Habibur Rahman said.

In the afternoon meeting the administration suspended academic activities and directed resident students to leave the dormitories to ward off further untoward incidents.

RMG workers

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Jamgara and Bipale areas. But the decision backfired as workers from some of those factories joined the demonstrators.

Now in their thousands, workers barricaded the Dhaka-Tangail highway by trees and burning tires.

After efforts for hours, police managed to bring the situation under control around noon.

However, an eerie calm was hanging over till filling of this report at 7:00pm. Additional police and members of Rapid Action Battalion were deployed to avert further trouble.

Ismail Hossain, managing director of Sharmin Group, claimed that the outsiders attacked his factories without any reason.

"I pay my workers regularly. None of them can claim they have salaries outstanding with me," he said adding that he will open his factories today.

Aman developed

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Now that the hybrid and submergence-resistant varieties are released, these can bring a shift in rice cultivation pattern in the country, he said.

According to official data, the country's aman output was 4.1 million tonnes and that of boro 1.7 million tonnes in 1971-'72. But, from 1997-'98, aman yield started declining compared to boro although the output of both is much higher now.

Sayed Ali, director general of the Department of Agriculture Extension, told this correspondent, "With the new varieties, we can cut dependency on boro in northern districts, and grow more high value crops like pulses, oilseeds and fruits. This will improve our food situation."

In this connection, sources mentioned that the government policy is to maintain the ground water level that depleted seriously in the major rice-growing northern region due to excessive mining of water during boro season (December-May).

To this end, efforts are being made to increase aman productivity through development of new varieties and training of farmers. And Boro cultivation is being expanded in the southern coastal belt by introducing saline-tolerant variety-- BR-47.

Production and marketing of seeds for farmers on a large scale take at least two years. But farmers in some northern districts already have seeds of BRR1 Dhan-51 and BRR1 Dhan-52 as they cultivated these two varieties on a trial basis in the last few years, he said.

The Dutch came out firing after the break and Robin Van Persie had already wasted two chances before he seized on a loose ball in the penalty area.

With the Japanese defence closing him down, Van Persie slipped the ball to Sneijder on the edge of the box and the playmaker slammed his shot into the net off the keeper.

"What you need is a bit of luck," said Sneijder. "And we ended up at 1-0 and I think, at the end of the match, we should have ended up with 2-0 or 3-0." His goal forced Japan to come even further out of their defensive shell but they lacked composure in front of goal despite some impressive approach play.

Cancelled votes

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"My polling centre was for women and I think elderly women marked the election symbols incorrectly or folded the paper the wrong way, lacking proper knowledge about voting," he said.

Returning Officer Jesmin Tuli said the number of cancelled votes increased due to lack of awareness among voters.

She emphasised awareness programmes for voters before any election.

By contrast, the use of electronic voting machine (EVM), which was introduced to the country in June 17 CCC elections, proved successful.

Assistant Returning Officer Dulal Talukder said there was no problem with the EVM.

However, in the 14 centres, where the e-voting was held, some 127 voters pressed the final button without voting any mayoral candidates, he added.

Regarding the operation of the EVM, Jesmin Tuli said the Election Commission would decide upon using EVM in next elections.

incident sparked angry protests in the capital. Police however freed the guilty bus driver, Hasan, a few minutes into his detention on May 30.

Hamim Sheikh, student of Willes Little Flower School, was crushed under the wheels of a bus in front of the school. Locals caught the driver, Shamsur Rahman, 28, while he was trying to flee.

Besides, two brothers -- Himel, 12, and Siam, 10, were killed in a road accident at Jurain level crossing while Rahat, 12, and his brother Robin, 8, in Tongi and Saiful Islam Shaheen, and his wife Soheli Akhter Shampa at Moghbazar.

Driver Hasan fled to his village home at Singra upazila in Natore right after the Azimpur accident, said Lalbagh police.

Assistant sub-inspector Mohammad Kamal of Singra Police Station arrested Hasan but released him a few minutes later taking a bribe of Tk 11,000.

SI Ataur Rahman of Lalbagh Police Station, investigation officer of a case filed for the accident, said he would

against river-leasing. Meanwhile, Pakdia Matsyajibi Samity has already begun fish cultivation in a portion of the river, though the ministry has not finalised the lease yet.

During a recent visit, these correspondents found the river at several points shrunk to 10 metres from once 50 metres due to earth-filling over the years.

Bamboo-made fences were seen at no less than 20 points, blocking boat-plying and locals' access to the river.

"People cannot even take a dip in the river, let alone fishing or other use," said Hemanta Hrishu of Datta Para village.

The condition of the river is worst on 22.03 acres between Dhakuria and Brahmapur, as that part has been turned into a fish enclosure.

Sadar Fisheries Officer Oliur Rahman, who did a field study on the river, said navigability of the Mukteshwari has largely been reduced since Khata khal, a link canal to Kapathakkha, diverts much of the river water.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, executive director of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela), said, "This is illegal...leasing out a river claiming it dead or saying there is less water flow. The government should rather dredge the river to save it."