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Young Buddhist monks in India open up to modern ways

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URBAN FAVOURITE

Frozen snacks become popular for easy cooking

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SHATTERED DREAM

Mashrafe won't be fit for WC selection

BNP favourites take lead in quiet polls

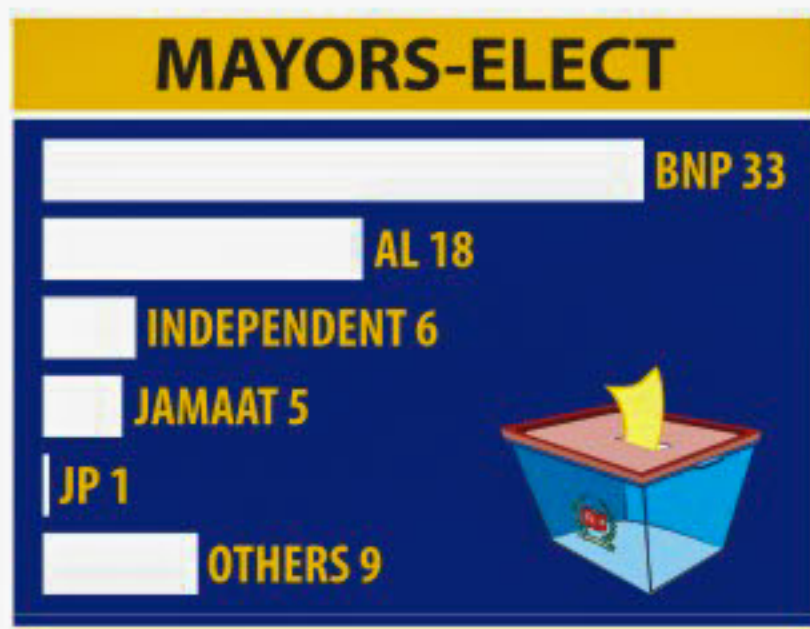
Voting in 72 municipalities of Rajshahi, Rangpur divisions complete

STAR REPORT

BNP backed mayoral candidates dominated the battle of ballots in 72 municipalities of Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions as elections to the local government bodies were held yesterday peacefully with only a few incidents of irregularities.

Out of the 72 mayoral posts, BNP backed candidates won 33 while their archrivals ruling Awami League (AL) backed contenders bagged 18, and Jamaat-e-Islami backed candidates got 5.

Rebel candidates affiliated with AL got 6 mayoral posts while BNP affiliated rebels got 3. Jatiya Party backed candidates won one, while 6 independents were also elected



mayors.

Today voters of 49 municipalities in Khulna and Barisal divisions will elect their mayors and councillors. Grassroots level leaders of both AL and BNP stepped into that ballot battle as well.

Elections to 122 municipalities of

Dhaka, Sylhet, and Chittagong divisions will be held on Monday and Tuesday.

At the beginning of polling hours yesterday the turnout of voters was thin due to winter chill, but the scene changed as soon as the fog began to disappear, reported our correspondents.

Amid a festive mood, voters queued up throughout the day to cast their votes to elect 72 mayors and 971 councillors, who will provide municipal services to their constituents for the next five years.

The elections were held in tight security in 1,095 polling stations where 362 mayoral candidates and

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Threats, outlaws come into play

Voting in Khulna, Barisal today

RASHIDUL HASAN and AZIBOR RAHMAN, from Jhenidah

Independent and opposition-backed mayor and councillor aspirants and locals in three upazilas in Jhenidah and four upazilas in Jessore yesterday alleged they are being threatened and harassed by ruling party-backed mayor candidates in absence of army.

Besides, people in these upazilas alleged local goons and outlaws have taken shelter under the ruling party-backed mayor candidates and lawmakers. Though officially

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ABNORMAL SHARE MARKET Mansur resigns amid suspicion

DSE general index rises by 2.37pc

SARWAR A CHOWDHURY

Mansur Alam has stepped down as member of the Securities and Exchange Commission in the face of allegations of his involvement in stock market manipulation.

Meanwhile, the DSE General Index rose by 178 points or 2.37 percent yesterday.

Alam tendered his resignation to the SEC chairman on Tuesday citing personal reasons for quitting the post.

Finance ministry officials the same day said Alam had been relieved of all professional responsibilities and he might lose his job as well.

The development followed an intelligence agency probe into the allegations of Alam's involvement in market manipulation.

Wishing anonymity, a commission high-up said the SEC forwarded the resignation letter to the establishment ministry that deals with the appointment and



Mansur Alam

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11 Bangladeshi workers killed in Mauritius road crash

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Just two weeks after reaching Mauritius, 11 Bangladeshi garment workers were killed and three others injured in a traffic accident yesterday.

All the workers hailed from Comilla and Brahmanbaria.

According to information received at the foreign ministry sent by Honorary Consul General of Bangladesh Yusuf Abdur Razzak, the

Bangladeshi workers died on their way to work when a lorry collided with their vehicle around 7:00am

local time. SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Voters queue up to exercise their franchise in the shivering morning cold yesterday at the Moheshchandrapur Govt Primary School polling centre of Natore for the Singra municipality election.

It's a review, not probe

Says committee chief on Grameen Bank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is not a probe against any individual but a review on institutional, economical and legal perspectives of Grameen Bank and its sister concerns, said chief of the government's Review Committee on Grameen Bank.

"We will submit an analytical report to the government after pointing out the weaknesses, if there is any, of the organisations judging from different angles," said AK Manow-war Uddin Ahmed, the committee chief.

He said they would

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Country reels from chill

6 die, communications disrupted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chilly wind and dense fog battering the country for the last two days have claimed six lives, disrupted communications and caused public sufferings.

The weather office said the cold wave may ease tomorrow.

At least three people died due to exposure to the biting cold yesterday, raising the cold wave death toll to six in the last two days, according to reports sent in by The Daily Star correspondents.

The latest deaths were reported in Tangail and Kishoreganj. Scores of people, especially children and the old, have fallen sick from cold-related diseases like bronchial asthma, pneumonia, cough and rota viral diarrhoea.

Turnout rate in the polls to municipalities was low due to the cold snap in Rajshahi and Rangpur in the morning yesterday.

One domestic flight was cancelled and many were

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SC invites TIB for tea

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday invited three top officials of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) to a tea party today for talks on the questionnaire and replies of its recent household survey.

The survey report released on December 23 last year said judiciary was the "most corrupt" service sector in the country last year.

Those invited for the talks are TIB Trustee Board Chairman M Hafiz Uddin Khan and Member Prof Mozaffer Ahmed, and Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman.

The tea party will be held at the Judges' Lounge of the apex court at 4:30pm, said Badrul Alam

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Ovation to a Noble Decision...

Grameenphone salutes this decision of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on the extended **Maternity Leave** from **4 to 6 months**, a policy already implemented in Grameenphone inspired by the Government.

Now the bond of staying close to motherly love and affection goes beyond all boundaries for all the new born!

Grameenphone is a company that promotes equal employment opportunities for women and has special day care facilities for the children of the employees of the company.

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