

AL favourites

FROM PAGE 1
18 mayoral posts while BNP-backed candidates grabbed 33 posts.

Jamaat-e-Islami that supported its candidates in a number of municipalities, including of Kolaroya in Satkhira, Kotchandpur in Jhenidah and Kumarkhali in Kushtia, lost the elections. Candidates backed by Jatiya Party, a key ally to AL, contested in a number of municipalities in Barisal and Khulna divisions, but failed to win any.

The election day was peaceful, with no report of major violence.

After the polling hour was over yesterday, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret) M Sakawat Hossain said, "We are satisfied."

He, however, admitted some problems in Gaurandi and Mehendiganj of Barisal. Voting at a polling station in Borhanuddin of Bhola and another in Mehendiganj has been cancelled.

The main opposition BNP, which on several occasions expressed doubt about free and fair municipal polls, also termed yesterday's events largely peaceful.

It also demanded re-election for wards 7, 8 and 9 of Swarupkathi municipality in Pirojpur, alleging its polling agents had been beaten and driven out from polling stations.

In the afternoon, BNP Standing Committee Member Nazrul Islam Khan at a media briefing also demanded re-polls for the two municipalities of Barisal.

He feared an election rigging by archrival AL.

At the beginning hours yesterday, the voter turnout was thin due to winter chill. The scene changed as soon as the fog began to disappear, report our correspondents.

Voters cast their ballots to

choose 49 mayors and 568 councillors. Starting at 8:00am, the polling continued till 4:00pm without any break.

The elections were held in 602 polling stations where 311 mayoral candidates contested.

Security was tightened in the areas. In Barisal, Howlader Nurul Islam and Sahabuddin Himu, running in Gaurandi and Mehendiganj respectively with backing from BNP, boycotted the polls.

Nurul Islam in a press briefing at noon at his Gaurandi residence claimed that he, his wife and his chief election agent Abdus Sobhan were forced to leave Torik School vote centre by AL cadres.

Himu told reporters that supporters of AL-backed councillor candidate Saiful Islam vandalised their election camps and drove away some voters.

Both Nurul and Himu demanded a re-poll, reports our Barisal correspondent.

At Gaurandi, the supporters of AL-backed mayoral candidate and Workers' Party-backed contestant started clashing around 11:30am. Police brought the situation under control immediately.

Police also detained two youths for distributing money to voters at a polling centre of Banaripara.

Three Bangladesh Chhatra League members were detained for violating electoral rules while 12 outsiders were held from two houses in Bagerhat Wednesday midnight on suspicion of preparing to create unrest, our Benapole correspondent reports.

A youth was sentenced to one year in jail by a Mobile Court for violating polls code.

Our Patuakhali correspondent reports recovery of 100 ballot papers, which were

sealed beforehand for a ruling party-backed candidate in Borhanuddin municipality, from a Kotoba polling centre.

Another mobile court also sentenced a man for six months in jail for violating electoral rules in Darshana municipality.

Yesterday was announced a public holiday in 49 municipality areas of the two divisions.

Elections in 122 municipalities of Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions will be held on Monday and Tuesday.

Padma bridge

FROM PAGE 1
These were disclosed at a press conference held at the WB country office yesterday.

Additional Secretary to the Economic Relations Division (ERD) Arastoo Khan, WB Country Director Ellen Goldstein and leading water resources specialist Masood Ahmad were present.

Ellen said, "To this end, we've worked with the authorities to agree on a Governance and Accountability Action Plan that aims at integrating good governance in project design, enhancing supervision to guarantee quality, and ensuring oversight and transparency for greater accountability to the people of Bangladesh."

She also opined that the cost of the project has been doubled as the redesigned bridge will be much longer, with long approach road.

As with other credits from the IDA, the financing for the Padma Bridge will have a 40-year maturity, including a 10-year grace period, with a service charge of 0.75 percent.

The project will be submitted to the WB's Board in late January for discussion and final approval on February 24, 2011.

Asked whether the repayment of loan will be a concern for Bangladesh, Ellen replied in the negative, adding that "Bangladesh has never had difficulties in serving debt to the WB. Bangladesh is not a severely indebted country, rather a very moderately indebted country."

The Padma Bridge will bring about three types of advantages - social, economical and connectivity, Arastoo Khan said.

He said that after final approval at the WB's Board Meeting on February 24, it will come back home, and after some vetting by the Law Ministry, the agreement will be signed.

North shows

FROM PAGE 1
addressing a rally at the city's Muktangan yesterday afternoon, organised by Dhaka city Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal south unit to protest the killing of Shahidullah Mollah, President Jubo Dal ward no 32 of the city.

Addressing the rally as chief guest, BNP standing committee member Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia said people of north Bengal have sent a message to the prime minister and the AL government through the ballot in the pourashava polls.

If the government does not understand the message, people will remove the government, he said.

Demanding arrest of the killers of Shahidullah, Rafiqul Islam Mia said as long as the killers are not arrested, demonstrations and movement will continue.

BNP Finance Affairs Secretary Abdus Salam said people of North Bengal have shown a "yellow card" to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government, and the people of Dhaka City will show them the red card this year.

Shechhasebok Dal President Habib-un-Nabi Khan Soheli said the PM is shivering, but it is not due to the cold wave sweeping the country at the moment, rather following Wednesday's municipality polls results.

Jubo Dal President Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal asked the premier to declare emergency in the North Bengal for heavy cold, to provide warm clothes and food and other necessary materials to the people affected by the cold.

Sakibul Hasan, son of slain Shahidullah, demanded a trial for the killing of his father. A minor daughter of Shahidullah also demanded trial of her father's killing at the rally.

Jubo Dal Dhaka city (south) unit General Secretary Rafiqul Alam Majnu presided over the rally while Abdus Salam Azad, Abdul Khaleq, Sultan Salahuddin Tuku and Saiful Alam Nirob, among others, addressed it.

Food stocks

FROM PAGE 1
an additional 2.50 lakh tonnes of wheat from its previous target of 7.50 lakh tonnes for the current fiscal year.

Such quick move is necessary because the prices of basic commodities have soared recently and Bangladesh wants to build her stock to tackle any foreseeable crisis, observed ministers.

It will import two lakh tonnes of sugar through the state-owned Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), Commerce Minister Faruk Khan told the journalists at a press briefing at his secretariat office after a coordination meeting.

The commerce minister held the emergency coordination meeting on 'purchasing food grains and basic commodities from the international market' with Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque.

Two lakh tonnes of crude soybean and palm oil and 20,000 tonnes of grams (chick peas) will also be procured from the international market, added Faruk.

"Commerce ministry has asked for Tk 1000 crore from the government to strengthen the TCB, so that it can import the essentials to tackle the situation," stated the minister.

The TCB will also import 10,000 tonnes of lentil to add to a stock of 25,000 tonnes, said Faruk adding, these are the government's efforts beside the private sector's continued imports.

"We are very worried with the prices and stocks of food items in the international market. This is why we are importing the food items to boost the stock and bring price stability in the local market," mentioned the minister.

Abdur Razzaque said prices of rice in the local market have gone higher even in the full season of harvest because the mill owners stockpiled it for selling at higher prices in near future.

"I think the prices of rice and wheat are comparatively higher. We are making efforts considering the purchasing capacity of poor people," said the minister.

"We are not purchasing from the internal market because it is unable to supply such a huge quantity of food grains."

At present there is a stock of 8.22 lakh tonnes of rice and wheat in the government's warehouses, he added.

Six lakh tonnes of rice and five lakh tonnes of wheat will arrive by next April because the letters of credit (LCs) have already been opened to this end, mentioned Razzaque.

"On Sunday, we have signed agreement with the Vietnamese government to import 2.50 lakh tonnes of rice. I hope the entire quantity will arrive at the end of February."

The country will require 11,36,000 tonnes in rice and wheat by next April, he said adding, since the boro paddy will come by May,

7,86,000 tonnes of food grains will remain surplus in the government warehouses.

Replying to queries, Razzaque said a total of 3,80,000 tonnes of rice has already been imported and LCs for six lakh tonnes more have been opened up.

"We will import the remaining 2.50 lakh tonnes of rice mainly from Thailand and Pakistan."

"We are in talks for importing three lakh tonnes of rice from India. If India does not agree we will not face problem as we have options to import the quantity from Thailand and Pakistan," he said.

TIB over tea

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The judges said that they including the chief justice has taken the survey report with much emphasis and it will help them to take necessary measure to go forward for curbing corruption, if any, in the judiciary," he said.

Iftekharuzzaman said this after a meeting with a committee formed to evaluate the TIB survey report released on December 23 that said judiciary was the "most corrupt" service sector in the country last year.

Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque on December 30 last year formed the committee of five senior High Court judges - Justice MA Wahhab Miah, Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana, Justice Md Imman Ali, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Sheikh Rezwana Ali.

The judges asked the TIB officials whether they have got full information of cases or courts in the survey. "As per our jurisdiction, we do not collect full information of cases or courts. We preserve only the names and information of persons who responded to the survey questions," replied Iftekharuzzaman.

"They judges asked us about the survey method. We said TIB followed sampling method of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and all sorts of internationally recognised survey methods. So there should be no question about the credibility of the survey method," he said.

"In response to a question of judges as quoted 'Judiciary is a large sector. What do you mean by judiciary? We said we mean persons and institutions, which the people face during a legal battle,'" said Iftekharuzzaman.

TIB trustee board Chairman M Hafizuddin Khan and five judges were present at the hour-long meeting that started at 4:30pm.

Supreme Court Registrar M Ashraf Islam told The Daily Star his office is yet to get any directive from the committee.

A highly placed source in the SC said the committee would place the report on the meeting before Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque within three or four days for taking the next course of action.

The SC on Wednesday invited three top officials of TIB to a tea party for talks on the questionnaire and replies of its recent household survey.

2 cops

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standing in the dock for over five hours on charges of assaulting a housewife.

The bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Sheikh Zakir Hossain made SP Sardar Tamizuddin and OC Moshir Rahman wait in the courtroom from 10:30am to 4:30pm, including one-hour lunch break, in connection with a writ petition filed by the housewife Sheela Mollick.

Sheela, of Aruakandi village of Rajoir upazila, filed the writ petition on January 2, saying that the SP had assaulted her on October 5 last year when she went to his office to seek justice for a complaint.

Earlier, Sheela lodged a case with the police station after some local goons beat her husband.

The OC did not properly investigate the case, she said in the petition.

The court also directed the SP to appear before it on February 13 and asked the government to place the report of judicial inquiry into the incident by this time.

On January 4, the court had directed the law secretary to form a judicial inquiry committee within seven days to investigate the incident.

The HC yesterday said the inquiry commission has to be formed with an additional district judge from any district other than Madaripur.

Moshir, however, exempted OC Moshir from personal appearance in court.

Advocate Abdul Matin Khasru and advocate A M Amin Uddin appeared for the SP and the OC.

Advocate Ziaul Haque appeared for the petitioner, while Deputy Attorney General ABM Altaf Hossain stood for the government.

Man dies

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The body of the deceased, Al-Amin, 32, was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy while police arrested younger brother Alamgir Hossain, 30, and their father Khorshed Alam, 55, for the murder.

Khorshed was living with his two sons at North Begunbari in Tejgaon. They run a small shop in the area and sell betel leaf and cigarettes.

Sub-Inspector Abdul Kuddus, of Tejgaon Industrial Area Police Station, told The Daily Star that Al-Amin died when he fell on the ground during the scuffle and got hurt in the head.

The dispute was over sharing of the income from the business, he said.

Police said Khorshed confessed that he and Alamgir had beaten Al-Amin at one stage of the argument.

'Dakat' Shahid's

FROM PAGE 20
Police Station.

Apu was involved in extortion, robbery and other criminal activities, the OC added.

Rab-10 officials said a team of plainclothes Rab officials on patrol duty challenged a group of five young men near the cinema hall around 4:30am for their suspicious movement.

At this, the criminals fired shots at the law enforcers, prompting them to retaliate, said a Rab official.

At one stage of the gunfight, Apu was hit by a bullet and fell dead on the spot while his accomplices fled, he said.

A pistol and four bullets were recovered from the spot.

Police sent Apu's body to Mitford Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Afia Naznin Islam, niece of Apu, told The Daily Star it was a pre-planned murder. Instead of killing Apu, law enforcers could have brought him under trial, she added.

Earlier on Tuesday, an eleventh-grade student who had no previous criminal record was shot dead in 'crossfire' in Mirpur. Another man was also killed in a 'gunfight' with law enforcers in Motijheel on Wednesday.

According to rights group Odhakar, some 127 people fell victims to extra-judicial killings in recent months, 101 of them died in 'crossfire'.

Star twinkles

FROM PAGE 1
celebrations, a month-long street theatre festival across the country begins today. The Daily Star along with Bangladesh Patho Natok Parishad, a platform for street theatre activities, have organised it.

The festival begins in Dinajpur today. It will be held in 50 districts before ending in Jessore on February 14. More than 110 troupes from all over the country will stage plays highlighting various social issues. In terms of participating troupes, plays, shows, venues and the number of days on which it will be held, the festival is going to be one of the biggest theatre events in recent times.

The plays to be staged at the festival will uphold themes such as the Liberation War, journey towards democracy and secularism as well as appeal to hold the trials of war criminals.

On January 15, The Daily Star will be holding

Classical Night at the National Theatre Hall of Shilpakala Academy. The soiree will highlight light and semi-classical vocal performances by accomplished singers as well as classical dances. Around 60 dancers - leading and emerging - from Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong will present Kathak, Manipuri, Odissi and Bharatanatyam.

Aranyak Natyada, Dhaka Padatik, Prangane Mor, Natyakendra, Theatre (Arabagh), Mahakal, Natyachakra, Shubchan, Nagarik, Dhaka Theatre and other troupes will stage their productions at the festival.

The festival, which will run till January 31, will also mark 30th anniversary of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation.

Tri-nation talk

FROM PAGE 1
premier said there is tremendous goodwill between the two countries to promote mutual trade not only for economic benefit but also for other benefits. He said present trade volume could be increased to \$100 million from \$30 million in the next few years.

Asked about the agreement on cooperation in the health sector, he said they would expect at least 20-30 doctors a year -- some highly specialised doctors and some general physicians with five years' experience -- to be recruited on deputation.

He sought for specialised doctors from government hospitals to support the health delivery system in Bhutan since his country has acute shortage of doctors.

Under the cultural agreement, Thinley said he likes to see access of more Bhutanese students to study in Bangladesh, particularly medical science. Under the deal he said tourism industry can be expanded.

The Bhutanese premier, who arrived here on January 10 and held talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, said his visit is "very satisfying and wonderful".

Bhutanese Health Minister Lyonpo Zangley Dulpa, Cabinet Secretary Dasho Tashi Phuntshog and Foreign Secretary Dasho Daw Penjo were present at the press conference.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh

Cop crimes

FROM PAGE 20
intervene almost every time.

Some other business leaders urged ministers and lawmakers to stop interfering in police department for the sake of growth of trade and commerce and attracting foreign investment.

If congenial atmosphere for trade and commerce is not ensured, local investors will feel discouraged to do business, let alone the foreigners, they said.

They also urged the government to increase the number of industrial police from 1500 to at least 4,000.

DMP Commissioner Benazir Ahmed in his speech said they will set up a women division to provide service to female victims and complainants.

Among others, State Minister for Home Shamsul Huq Tuku as chief guest and Inspector General of Police Hassan Mahmood Khandaker as special guest took part in the discussion.

pieces. On January 28, Folk Festival will be held under the 'Bokul' tree at Charukala (Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University). The event, kicking off with a pulsating Bangla Dhak performance by Nazrul and his troupe, will feature solo and group performances by renowned folk artistes from all corners of the country.

On February 11, golden oldies aficionados are in for a treat. Popular artistes of the country will render songs on request from the audience at the National Theatre Hall of Shilpakala Academy.

The Daily Star, along with Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, has also arranged a week-long theatre festival in Dhaka. Starting on January 25, the festival will feature 21 plays, by as many troupes, at the National Theatre Hall, Experimental Theatre Hall and Studio Theatre Hall of Shilpakala Academy.

Aranyak Natyada, Dhaka Padatik, Prangane Mor, Natyakendra, Theatre (Arabagh), Mahakal, Natyachakra, Shubchan, Nagarik, Dhaka Theatre and other troupes will stage their productions at the festival.

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and Bhutan have agreed to further intensify their mutually beneficial cooperation, trade and commerce, investment, connectivity and transit.

This was stated in a 13-point joint press statement issued on the concluding day of the Bhutanese premier's visit.

Both sides agreed to expand cooperation in climate change, tourism, people-to-people contacts, cultural cooperation, education, agriculture, health, hydropower, water resources management and employment of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshis in Bhutan.

The prime minister of Bhutan lauded the leadership of his Bangladeshi counterpart in forging dynamism into relations among the countries of the region, particularly in the context of sub-regional cooperation for the socio-economic uplift of the people of the region.

The two sides also exchanged views on cooperation in other regional and international forums and noted the commonality of their views and positions on all major issues and agreed to continue to work together in the future for mutual benefits.

Expressway

FROM PAGE 1
railwayland.

He designed the expressway following the same route of the currently planned expressway, on the same land and along the same rail track. However his simple engineering solution creates scope for a far greater traffic movement along with provisions for apartment buildings that helps to address the housing crisis in the city.

Although we know that the government is at the final stage of awarding the expressway construction job, we still thought that it is worthwhile to bring Dr Bosunia's ideas to the public domain, because land is an extremely precious commodity in Dhaka city and once we use this land under the present plan, opportunity for a more efficient use of this extremely scarce resource will be lost forever. Dr Basunia's idea is based on optimum utilisation of Dhaka city's land.

Therefore, we have decided to give a full page (Page-12) display today to Dr Bosunia's ideas in the hope that policy makers will look at it and make a judicious decision which will impact on Dhaka city's future in a fundamental way.

MUNICIPALITY	WINNER	AFFILIATION
Khulna Dist		
Paikgachha	Selim Jahangir	AL
Chalna	Dr Achinta Kumar Mandal	Independent
Kushtia Dist		
Kumarkhali	Shamsuzzaman Arun	AL
Bheramara	Shamimul Islam Chhana	AL's rebel
Mirpur	Hazi Enamul Haque	AL
Khoksha	Anwar Ahmed Khan Tatari	BNP's rebel
Jessore	Maruful Islam	BNP
Bagharpara	Abdul Hai Mona	BNP
Noapara	Rabiul Hossain	BNP
Benapole	Ashrafal Alam Liton	AL
Chougachha	Selim Reza Auliati	BNP
Monirampur	Shahid Iqbal	BNP
Keshabpur	Abdur Samad Biswas	BNP
Shailkupa	Kazi Ashrafal Azam	AL's rebel
Harinakundu	Shahinur Rahman Rintu	AL
Kotchandpur	Salaudin Bulbul Sidol	BNP
Kaliganj	Mostafizur Rahman Bizu	AL
Maheshpur	Amrur Islam Khan	BNP's rebel
Alamdanga	Mir Mohiuddin	BNP
Jibnaganj	Nawab Ali	BNP
Dorshona	Mohidul Islam	BNP
Bagerhat	Khan Habibur Rahman	AL
Mungla Part	Mohammed Jafkar AH	BNP
Morolganj	Advocate Monirul Haque	AL's rebel
Moherpur	Motazzim Billah Motu	Independent
Gangni	Ahmed Ali	AL
Satkhira	Abdul Jali	BNP
Kolaroa	Kazi Aktar ul Islam	BNP's rebel

MUNICIPALITY	WINNER	AFFILIATION
Barisal Dist		
Muladi	Shafiquzzaman Rubel	AL
Banaripara	Golam Saleh	AL
Bakerganj	Lokman Hossain Dakua	AL
Gourandi	Harisur Rahman Haris	AL
Mehendiganj	Kamal Uddin Khan	AL
Barguna Dist		
Barguna	Shahadat Hossain Babul	AL
Patharghata	Mallik Muhammad Ayub	Independent
Betagi	Anwar Hossain	AL
Antoli	Mattar Rahman	AL's rebel
Patuakhali	Mohammad Shafiqul Islam	AL
Kalapara	SK Sakibul Hasan	AL
Pirojpur	Md Habibur Rahman Malek	AL uncontested
Mathbaria	Rafiquddin Ahmed Ferdous	AL
Swarupkathi	Delwar Hossain Faruk	AL
Bhola	Moniruzzaman Monir	AL's rebel
Lalmohon	Emdadul Haque Tuhin	AL
Daulatkhana	Ali Azam Mukul	AL's rebel
Borhanuddin	Rafiqul Islam	AL