

Candidates

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Narayanganj, not any party, that will elect the mayor.

The mayoral candidate said she has the blessings of party president Sheikh Hasina to vie for the mayoral post.

Ivy feared that a vested group may influence voters and the local administration ahead of the election.

Both the Awami League leaders had been lobbying for the party's backing for the last couple of weeks. The party finally decided to back Shamim in the polls. However, party leaders yesterday said there is no scope for supporting any candidate since it is a non-partisan election.

The decision created a major rift between local AL leaders. They have split into two groups casting doubt on the execution of the party's call to work for Shamim in the polls on October 30.

Both Shamim and Ivy have claimed that they have the support of the maximum number of local leaders.

However, party insiders say three of the five lawmakers in Narayanganj have put their weight behind Ivy while the other two are backing Shamim.

Moreover, many popular and honest leaders of the party's associate bodies have also extended their support to Ivy.

"Honest party leaders, who are dedicated to the party, are backing Ivy. In fear of reprisal, some leaders sated that they support Shamim, but actually they are with Ivy," said Narayanganj AL city unit President Anwar Hossain.

Besides, leaders of different cultural organisations, left-leaning parties and minority communities are favouring Ivy, said locals.

BNP-backed mayoral candidate Taimur Alam Khondaker also conducted a door-to-door campaign in the town yesterday.

Locals say Taimur, also president of BNP district unit, could use the rift between local AL leaders to his advantage, as the votes of AL supporters would be divided between Ivy and Shamim.

Meanwhile, Taimur wrote to the local election commission office asking it to clarify whether the use of electronic voting machine (EVM) in the polls will leave any scope for vote rigging.

The election office arranged a demonstration on EVM use at the Zia Auditorium in the town yesterday to make voters familiar with the device.

The candidates for the posts of councillors also conducted election campaigns in the area.

In the meantime, a candidate for ward councillor post in the October 30 polls was released nearly nine hours after he was picked up for violating election rules.

A team from the Election Commission held Omar Faruk and took him to Siddhirganj Police Station for leading a procession at about 1:00pm in the city. Faruk later got released paying a fine of Tk 1,000.

According to polls conduct, candidates are not allowed to hold any rallies or meetings.

AL leaders

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"The Awami League high command has supported Shamim Osman in the polls, and we conveyed him the message," Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, an organising secretary of the party, told The Daily Star on Thursday night.

Selina Hayat Ivy, vice-president of Narayanganj city unit AL, is also a mayoral hopeful in the maiden city polls.

Both Shamim and Ivy were expecting party backing for their candidacies.

WB names

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Abul Hossain however categorically denied the allegation to The Daily Star last night.

WB's Integrity Vice-president Leonard F McCarthy, on September 21, handed over a highly confidential letter and INT's investigation report regarding corruption in the Padma bridge project to Finance Minister AMA Muhith in Washington.

INT interviewed representatives of multiple companies. Because these witnesses feared physical and economic reprisal, they only spoke to INT on the basis of confidentiality, said the report.

"One confidential witness told INT that the company s/he worked for received a visit from an individual claiming to work for SAHCO and who said he was taking instructions directly from Minister Hossain. According to this confidential witness, the SAHCO representative said that, in exchange for a specified percentage of the contract value, Minister Hossain would help the company in the PQ [pre-qualifying] process for the Padma Main Bridge Contract. The confidential witness subsequently identified the person from SAHCO in a photograph, stating that this was the individual who had contacted them," the report read.

Another source told INT that when a company refused to employ SAHCO as a "silent agent", the minister threatened the company with "retaliation".

INT met with a representative of that company who was in a position to have first-hand knowledge of the alleged coercion and threatened retaliation. "This confidential witness expressed reluctance to discuss the matter due to fear of possible adverse employment action and retaliation on the part of Minister Hossain -- who s/he described as very powerful. Ultimately, this confidential witness confirmed what the source had told INT," the report added.

"The statements of those confidential witnesses are consistent with similar, but distinct, allegations made to INT by 11 other confidential witnesses. (Almost all of the witnesses who spoke with INT requested confidentiality out of concern for their personal safety and/or financial well-being)," the report went on.

INT spoke with over a dozen witnesses in four countries over a five-week period.

In the letter to Muhith, INT vice-president said the investigation dealt only with allegations related to the procurement of the main bridge contract, and does not relate to the construction supervision consultant (CSC) contract that is the subject of an investigation being conducted by the Canadian authorities.

About the report the letter said, "The Report should not be used by your government as evidence in any administrative, criminal, or civil proceedings under Bangladesh law. Your investigative authorities should use the Report only for their own reference when conducting their investigations and should not cite or refer to them in any investigation reports. Moreover, this Report should not be cited in any administrative, civil, or criminal proceedings undertaken by your government."

But it added, "It is INT's view that the Ministry of Finance should use this Report as a basis for undertaking its own investigation into the allegations in order to determine whether any laws of the People's Republic of Bangladesh have been violated by the subject of the investigation."

3 injured

**FROM PAGE 20**  
Sunil Roy, 32, and Nazimuddin, 40, injured. They were admitted to Patgram Upazila Health Complex.

Police and Border Guard Bangladesh personnel had been trying to catch the leopard till filing of this report last night.

Police said the bombs went off at the al-Hay market. They said the first bomb exploded in a narrow alley.

16pc mobile

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which inhabit the human intestines.

The largest proportion of contaminated phones was in Birmingham (41 percent) while Londoners were caught with the highest proportion of E coli present on hands (28 percent).

But the sample size in each city was small, so the variations between them could be a statistical anomaly.

However Dr Val Curtis, from the London School of Hygiene says the study showed clear differences between north and south.

"We found the further north we went the more hands and phones were likely to be contaminated. It could be the bugs survive better in colder and wetter conditions or it might be that people wash their hands less."

Most strains of E coli found on the hands and phones are not likely to cause major ill-health. Dr Curtis explained that they were using E coli as a marker for the presence of faecal matter.

"Campylobacter and Salmonella bacteria are much more likely to cause a gastric infection and could easily be passed on through faecal contamination," she said.

Indian cities

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The "exchange" of explosives was planned in Ambala, when the police received information on the car, he said.

Police also said that a box of sweets was found in the car, which showed that it had been purchased from the Jammu region in Indian-administered Kashmir. Two newspapers from the region were also found in the car.

No arrests have been made so far, and it is still unclear who drove the car to the car park at Ambala railway station.

Indian intelligence agencies believe Babbar Khalsa has the backing of Pakistan's spy agency, Inter Services Intelligence (ISI).

Cops stop

**FROM PAGE 1**  
In the letter, Chief Executive Officer of Netrakona Zila Parishad Md Aftab Ali asked the contractors to halt the cutting of trees along the road between Jhanjail Bazar and Durgapur upazila.

The court on Tuesday directed the government to maintain status quo for 10 days on felling trees on both sides of the road.

The directive came following a writ petition filed by Liton Mrong, secretary of Garo Baptist Convention, Bangladesh.

Birishiri Jubo Samaj yesterday formed a human chain protesting the tree felling. Several hundred Garo people joined the human chain.

Sangu reserve

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vice-president (government and public affairs) of Santos Bangladesh, yesterday.

If gas is found, it will take at least a month to determine the total deposit and one and a half years to set up a platform and underwater pipeline to bring gas ashore, he said.

He was talking to a team of journalists visiting the site, around 45 kilometres from the shore.

"The work is going on smoothly and we are getting all sorts of support from the government," said Siraj.

On completion of the South Sangu exploration, the rig called Offshore Resolute would be moved to Sangu 11 well to start a drill towards the end of November.

Santos' Senior Drilling Engineer Hasnain Ibrahim Babu said they had drilled upto 2,235 metres till yesterday.

Aiming at increasing gas supply to industries in Chittagong, Santos took a \$126 million project for drilling South Sangu 4, Sangu 11 and Northeast Sangu wells at Block 16 in the Bay.

On average, 90 persons from different countries work at the rig every day while two officials from Petrobangla and Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company (Bapex) observe.

80pc production

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to pay their workers wages and bonus before Eid-ul-Azha.

"Some 150,000 people work in these 50 industries. They have been sitting idle for the last one month for the ongoing gas crisis. If it continues, payments of their wages and Eid bonus will be uncertain," said Bidhan Sarker, general manager of Uttara Group of Industries.

However, the government decision to divert gas to Jamuna Fertiliser Factory has not yielded desired results. The fertiliser factory is not receiving adequate gas pressure to operate at full capacity.

Achinta Kumar Dev, managing director of Jamuna Fertiliser Company, said if gas pressure doesn't improve, it may cause damage to the factory machinery.

Industries in Gazipur-Mirzapur belt would get enough gas to utilise 70-80 percent of their production capacity before Titas diverted gas to Jamuna last month.

The affected industries now get only 1-1.5 PSI (pounds per square inch) of gas pressure against usual 15-22 PSI. However, these industries are permitted to receive 150 PSI of gas pressure.

The 50 industries have an investment of more than Tk 5,000 crore with an annual turnover of Tk 3,000 crore. They include Square Pharmaceuticals, Naheed Cotton Mills, Meghna Rubber Industries, Youth Spinning Mills, Quasem Dry Cell, Shirin Spinning Mills and Naheed Composite Mills.

Bidhan Sarker, also convenor of the forum, said the 50 industries have been incurring a loss of more than Tk 6 crore a day since Titas diverted gas to the fertiliser factory from the industrial belt. They are now struggling to make repayments of bank loans, he said.

"Sometimes, gas pressure drops to almost zero," said Shahidul Islam, general manager of Naheed Cotton Mills, the country's largest yarn producer with 300,000 spindle-capacities.

The cotton mill's production has fallen below 20 percent for shortfall in gas supply.

"We cannot keep our commitments to buyers, and sometimes we have to pay compensation for failing to deliver yarn to garment exporters on time," said Islam.

Garment exporters generally buy yarn and other inputs from the local market through back-to-back LC against their export orders.

Many garment exporters may fail to deliver goods on time due to this crisis. It may have a knock-on effect on the sector -- from input producers to exporters and financiers, say the industries.

Production of Meghna Bicycle has come to almost a standstill for severe disruption in gas supply. Meghna alone accounts for nearly 80 percent of the country's bicycle exports worth \$100 million in fiscal 2010-11.

Meghna said the peak time for bicycle exports is the period around Christmas between September and October.

Export Promotion Bureau data show bicycle exports

'Corrupt'

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indulge in corruption in different government sectors. She also tries to protect them from graft allegations," he told reporters after placing wreaths at BNP founder late president Ziaur Rahman's grave at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital.

Zainul Abdin Faroque, the opposition chief whip, was also present at the time. Faroque was critically injured in police assault during the July 6 nationwide hartal enforced by BNP. He went to the US for treatment later that month and returned home a few days ago.

"People at home and abroad know that the World Bank has suspended the fund for Padma Bridge as it found corruption in the tender process," Fakhru said.

Asked about BNP's stance in backing any candidate in the Narayanganj City Corporation polls, he said it is a local government election, and there is no scope for any party to support anyone.

On caretaker government, he said people have already taken to the streets demanding restoration of the system. "The government should quit without further delay to ensure a free and fair election under a nonparty caretaker government."

BDF meet

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assistance from the development partners and analyse problems of the assistances.

A high official of the finance ministry said the government does not want to hold the meeting now as the issue of Padma bridge project will come up, which would be embarrassing for it.

However, another high official reasoned two religious festivals -- Eid-ul-Azha and Christmas -- for the deferment.

The last BDF meeting was held in the capital on February 15-16 and it decided that the meeting will be held once every year.

The World Bank (WB), on a temporary basis, held up the fund for the Padma bridge project over the allegation of corruption in finance ministry. The ministry sources said finance ministry and WB are now busy tackling the complexity that rose over the bridge issue.

Ellen Goldstein, WB Country Director, has already talked with the high officials of the government including Mashiur Rahman, economic adviser to the prime minister, and Finance Minister AMA Muhith over the issue.

Ellen, who will lead the BDF meeting on behalf of the development partner of the project, will talk further with government high-ups to devise a solution, said sources.

The finance minister and other high officials related to the BDF meeting are also busy in finding a way out from this complication over the bridge project, the sources added.

BCL factions

**FROM PAGE 20**  
president Jakir Hossain Sagor and general secretary Rakib Islam Masum.

Among the injured, four took treatment at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Officer-in-Charge of Tejgaon Shilpanchal Police Station Omar Faruk told The Daily Star that activists of both the groups fled the scene sensing presence of law enforcers.

Injured Sohel, who works for Jakir, claimed that around 15 students were hurt when about 50-60 students of the other group attacked them at around 1:30pm.

He said that they were ousted from Latif Hostel on September 21 following the death of Rahat, an activist of Masum Group, in a hospital. Rahat came under attack by rivals on September 14.

"We went to the campus as we were not involved in the murder. But all of a sudden, activists of Masum group chased and beat up us," Sohel claimed.

Police are yet to pick anyone and no case was filed till 6:00pm, Omar Faruk said.

A hospital

**FROM PAGE 1**  
problem for two months but I'm too poor to afford a specialised doctor. Now I've an opportunity," said 40-year-old Begum, who came from Nampara in Genda.

"A specialised doctor charges Tk 800-1,000 for a visit," she said, adding that sometimes it takes even three months to get an appointment.

She learnt about the service on television. Before coming to the BSMMU, she saw a local doctor but the medication failed to heal her throat.

At present, patients are served under seven departments -- medicine, paediatrics, ENT, gynaecology, skin and sex diseases, physical medicine and cardiology. The authorities are planning to open more departments including haematology and neuro-medicine.

"We want to make medical service available to the

people who need it the most," said BSMMU Vice-chancellor Prof Pran Gopal Datta.

During a visit on Sunday around 12:00noon, this correspondent saw many patients waiting to see the doctors. They generally hailed the initiative but said the service lacks coordination.

"Please write down for me the departments under which treatment is being provided. I want to bring my mother soon," said Beauty Sultana of Tangail. On Sunday, she brought her 78-year-old father.

Ekhlas Uddin read about the service in newspaper and came all the way from Gazipur.

"It feels great. The idea is at once unique and rewarding for me as a doctor," said Prof Saleha Begum Chowdhury, a gynaecologist at BSMMU.

Hospital Director Brig

Gen Abdul Majid Bhuiyan said people are coming from as far as Nilphamari and Rajshahi.

"We're thinking about institutionalising the service so it never stops," he said.

Sources at the hospital, however, said some doctors are unwilling to continue the service, as it hampers their private practice.

"Many don't like to have their unquestioned independence compromised," said Pran Gopal referring to the doctors who work at the hospital for six hours a day and then go to their private chambers.

BSMMU has about 200 professors and associate professors.

However, the hospital director said there is nothing to worry. "The service is not going to be stopped anyway. And if our initiative encourages other hospitals, many people will be benefited," he told The Daily Star.

Disappointing signal

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clean and competent candidate, and say "no" to Shamim Osman -- a man who is widely known as a godfather in local politics -- is a clear signal as to which type of leaders and candidates it is likely to back in the future.

The Awami League-backed Shamim Osman and BNP-backed candidate Taimur Alam Khondaker stand accused in several cases including murder, corruption and theft. In contrast, Ivy faces no criminal charges nor any charge of abuse of power while in office. This is according to affidavits submitted by the candidates themselves to the returning officer.

Ivy was elected mayor twice to the Narayanganj municipality which was upgraded to a city corporation and served as mayor till the last day of the municipality. She had brought many changes to the municipality during her two terms and nobody till now has raised any allegation of financial irregularities.

Shamim, who used to be considered a godfather of local criminals during the 1996-2001 rule of the Awami League government, is so feared by the locals that none dares to publicly speak against him. Local officials, journalists, businessmen,

and professionals freely talk to the media about him but only on the condition that he or she may not be quoted. Even his own party leaders, high government officials, and other mayoral candidates fear his wrath, because according to them, he wields absolute power in the area.

He fled first to India and then to Canada after Awami League's poll debacle in 2000. He returned home in 2006 but after a brief stay he left the country again before the 1/11 emergency in 2007. He returned to Narayanganj for a second time in April 2009 after around eight years of self-exile.

But Ivy, a vice president of the town unit of Awami League, could not convince the party high command for support with her honest and efficient performance record and clean image. Her party preferred Shamim over her by sending three organising secretaries of central committee on Thursday night to convey the party's decision.

It is now well known through media reports that attempts were made to make one candidate withdraw in favour of the other. At on stage Shamim was reportedly offered district leadership and a berth in the cabinet, both of which he refused.

It is quite unbelievable

had dropped by 16.50 per cent in July-August this year compared to last year.

The gas crisis has hit the bicycle production at a time when the export demand is very high, said Halim Khan, executive director of Meghna Group of Industries.

"It will have long-term impacts...we may lose our buyers. Ultimately, the country will lose the much-needed foreign exchange," said Khan.

An official of Square Pharmaceuticals said the factory production has fallen drastically since September 8.

"We now run the factory by ten rented diesel-run generators that consume 10,000 litres of fuel every day," said Fakhru Hasan, senior manager of Square Pharmaceuticals, the largest medicine producer in Bangladesh.

"We make a loss of Tk 2 crore a day with nearly 5,000 employees sitting idle," said Hasan.

He said Titas had almost stopped gas supply to the factory on September 8 without serving them any notice.

Titas Managing Director M Abdul Aziz Khan has admitted that the gas distributor did not consult with the industrial units before diverting gas to the fertiliser factory.

Titas only complied with the government decision, he said.

Aziz, however, said gas supply to these industries may improve, if the new 30-inch pipeline of Gas Transmission Company Ltd is put into operation by this month.

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