

NEWS IN brief

Shahid, Reaz CUJ president, general secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Shahid Ul Alam and Reaz Hyder were elected president and general secretary of Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) respectively yesterday.



Of the total 283 voters, 266 exercised their franchise to elect a 10-member leadership for the two-year term in the CUJ election.

Other office bearers include Ratan Kanti Debashis, vice-president, Shamsul Islam, joint secretary, Faruk Taher, organising secretary, Pranab Barua Arnab, press and publication secretary, Afsar Mahfuz, treasurer, and Swarup Bhattacharjee, Mujahedul Islam and Shisir Barua, executive members.

Shahid Ul Alam bagged 158 votes while his opponent Nazim Uddin Shyamal got 104 votes.

Swarup bagged highest 173 votes in the poll. Senior journalist Moazzemul Hoque was the election commissioner for election held from 9:00am to 4:00pm.

'Save Bhola from river erosion'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

People of Bhola residing in the port city yesterday demanded that the government takes steps to save Bhola from river erosion.

They made the demand at a human chain programme organised by Bhola Development Forum before Chittagong Press Club.

Members of Bhola Zila Samity, Bhola Zila Samamana Samity, Bhola Zila Chhatra Forum, Bhola Zila Shramik Forum and Bhola Zila Banalata Samabai Samity took part in the programme.

The speakers said many rivers of the country were about to die, affecting the lives of people who depended on rivers for their livelihood.

They also demanded that the respective authorities save the rivers of the country from extinction.

President leaves for Singapore

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman leaves for Singapore by a regular flight of Singapore Airlines tonight for medical check-up.

His medical check-up will be conducted at Mount Elizabeth Hospital there, Bangabhaban officials said yesterday.

He is expected to return home on April 8.

Secretaries of his office are accompanying the president during the tour.

Maulana held for derogatory remarks on PM

UNB, Satkhira

Police yesterday arrested a maulana at Debhata upazila in the district for making derogatory remarks about Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina.

The arrestee was identified as Ruhul Belali, son of late Fakir Ahmed of the upazila's Nangla Ghonapara village.

Police said Ruhul made derogatory comments about the PM while delivering his sermons at a waz mahfil at Ghonapara Madrasa on Friday.

Abu Raihan, organising secretary of the district unit of Swachhchhabak League, filed a case with Debhata Police Station in this regard.

PM meets Sirajganj leaders tomorrow

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will exchange views with the grassroots leaders and workers of Sirajganj at Gono Bhavan at 12:00noon tomorrow.

This is part of a series of view exchange meetings with the grassroots-level leaders and workers initiated by the Awami League at the end of last year.

Office-bearers and members of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC), executive committee of Sirajganj district unit, advisory council, national committee members, lawmakers of the party, administrator of Sirajganj District Council, presidents and general secretaries of upazila, thana, union and municipal units, upazila chairmen and vice-chairmen of the party, mayors and councillors of municipalities, chairmen of the union councils and presidents and general secretaries of the associate and like-minded bodies of the Awami League district unit will attend the meeting.



PHOTO: STAR

Supporters and party men flood the city's Naya Paltan area during a rally in front of the BNP central office yesterday. Four-party alliance called the rally to protest the obstruction in the movements of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia during her visit to the National Memorial in Savar on March 26 and the price hike of fuel and electricity. (Story on Page -1)

BNP against healthy democracy

Hasina tells N'ganj AL leaders

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that the main opposition BNP was against the continuation of democracy in the country as it wanted to create pressure by flexing its muscles.

"They (BNP) don't want continuation of a healthy democratic process in the country," she said at a view exchange meeting with the grassroots leaders of the Awami League (AL) from Narayanganj at her official residence Gono Bhavan.

She said the BNP always wanted to create pressure through flexing its muscles which was against the norms of democracy.

Referring to the recent indecent remarks of some opposition MPs, she said behaving like this in the House is just a shame for all. "A gentle lady can't utter such words... I can't imagine that," she said.

Pointing to some recent "un-parliamentary" moves by the opposition MPs in the House, she said they (BNP) always wanted to do things by using force.

She also criticised the "hectic efforts of the opposition" to stop the trial of war criminals. "The trial process has started and it'll be completed."

Hasina further alleged that the BNP never

worked for the welfare of the country and it was now crystal clear why the BNP wanted to protect the war criminals. "Khaleej Times has made it clear," she said.

The premier said the AL always worked for the country. "We work for the country and its people, it's in our nature."

Hasina said the country had to be saved from all odd things and it was the sacred duty of the present government to ensure that the job was done.

About the development programmes taken up by her government, she said the government wanted to develop the country by 2021.

She mentioned that the masses were the main strength of the government and the politics of the AL was just for people. "We want to make people self-dependent," she said.

Hasina said the government was working with utmost sincerity to strengthen democratic institutions as the desired development of a nation was not possible without true democracy.

In the absence of uninterrupted democratic rule after 1975, she said, the fruits of independence could not be taken to the common people even after 40 years of independence.

Hasina said the country had attained self-sufficiency in food due to some practical steps by

her government. "It has added some 3,300 megawatt of electricity to the national grid and expanded various social safety net programmes during the last three years."

As a result, she said, poverty has got reduced by 10 per cent.

Hasina said the government in line with its election pledges ensured food for all by selling foodgrains through Fair Price Card and OMS programmes. Besides, ultra poor people were provided with free foodgrains during the month of Ramadan.

Termining education as the main prerequisite to development, the premier said her government was distributing free textbooks up to secondary level and introduced locally-managed school feeding programmes to check dropout.

Referring to the triumph at the maritime boundary demarcation case against Myanmar, she said her government had settled the land boundary disputes with India and she expressed the hope that Bangladesh would also win the sea boundary demarcation case with India.

Hasina asked the leaders and workers of Narayanganj district Awami League (AL) to strengthen the party at the grassroots level and work together to foil any conspiracy of the vested groups.

People want alternative force in power, says Ershad

BSS, Dhaka

Former president and the Jatiya Party (JP) chairman HM Ershad yesterday said the countrymen wanted to see emergence of an alternative force in power under his party's leadership.

"From today, we are beginning a struggle for change. There will be no emancipation without changes," he said addressing a public rally at Suritola School ground in the city.

Presided over by Bangshal thana the JP President M Faruque, the rally was also addressed by the party Presidium Member Kazi Zafar Ahmed, and Secretary General ABM Ruhul Amin Hawladar.



Save teacher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anowara Begum, an assistant professor at the Biology department of Hatibandha Women's Degree College, has been suffering from blood cancer for a long time.

She is now undergoing treatment at the Hematology department of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. Doctors have advised Anowara to go abroad for better treatment which needs a huge amount of money. But it is very difficult to afford the money for her family, said a press release.

Md Shamsul Haque, principal of the college, has urged the well-off people to extend help to save Anowara's life.

Contributions can be sent to Hatibandha Women's Degree College, Savings Account No 4330, Sonali Bank, Hatibandha Branch, Lalmonirhat.



PHOTO: STAR

Poribesh Bachao Andolon forms a human chain before the Fine Arts Institute of Dhaka University yesterday demanding steps to ensure food free from toxicity.

33RD BCS TEST Challenged candidates need separate forms

BSS, Dhaka

Challenged candidates will need to submit separate applications to the controller of examinations of the Public Service Commission (PSC) to take part in the 33rd BCS preliminary test and written examinations.

The PSC would provide all cooperation to the challenged candidates as per the rules of the organisation, an official release said adding that the government has taken decision to preserve one per cent quota for the challenged.

It said the challenged candidates can submit their applications through online to take part in the BCS examinations and after passing the preliminary test they have to submit attested copies of "disability" certificates and other certificates, in the BPSC form-2 following the section 13 of the advertisement.

No information about quota (freedom fighters, women, tribal and district) was given in the advertisement of BCS exam, it said and added that the PSC will distribute the posts as per the government quota only after the interview.

Work for Dhaka-Tongi speed bus service to start in Dec

UNB, Gazipur

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said the work on a Tk 2,000 crore high-speed bus service between Dhaka and Tongi would start in December.

The bus service would have the capacity to carry some 40,000 passengers per hour.

The minister said this while speaking as the chief guest at a reception to 679 students who have passed SSC, Dakhil and Alim examinations with A+ from Tongi, Pubail and Gachha areas.

Shaheed Ahsanullah Master Foundation organised the reception at the playground of Shafiuddin Sarker Academy and College, Tongi.

About politics, the minister said children are losing their interest in politics seeing the aggressive faces of politicians on TVs every day. "Politics will suffer if the meritorious students don't join it."

Referring to winning the maritime boundary case against Myanmar, he said, "We've won the sea.... now our agenda is to win the hearts of people."

Chaired by by Zahid Ahsan Russell, MP, the function was also addressed by Tongi mayor Ajmat Ullah Khan and freedom fighter Kazi Mozammel Haque.

Marginalised children's art exhibition ends in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A four-day art exhibition to link marginalised children with the national level platform ended at the Zainul Gallery of fine arts faculty, Dhaka University yesterday.

Action Aid organised the exhibition with the drawings of children collected from a competition held on March 23.

A total of 70 children from 26 districts attended the drawing competition from the working areas of Action Aid.

A total of 50 paintings were exhibited on different development issues at the exhibition.

Tazeen Hossain, manager of child sponsorship of Action Aid, said the purpose of the exhibition was to link marginalised children with the national level platform, which would help their talent and creativity to flourish.

Bangladesh urges Myanmar to shut yaba factories

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Bangladesh has urged Myanmar to immediately close yaba factories in its border areas to prevent smuggling of drugs into Bangladesh.

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) officials raised the demand at a flag meeting with their Myanmar counterparts at a hotel in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Col Md Bashirul Islam, Chittagong sector commander of BGB, headed a 15-member delegation at the meeting while Col U Aung Gyi, director of Border Immigration Headquarters, led the 17-member team of Myanmar.

Col Bashirul said there are three yaba factories in Myanmar that are very close to the Bangladesh border and yaba tablets are being smuggled from them into Bangladesh. "We are placing our demand for shutting the factories to prevent smuggling of yaba

and alcohol," he said.

The BGB delegation also presented the Nasaka officials with a statistics on the yaba and other drugs seized during the last five months and a list of yaba factories set up in the Myanmar territory near the Bangladesh border.

In response, Nasaka officials assured that they would investigate the matter and would inform the BGB about their further action very soon.

They also said Nasaka would immediately take steps to stop the smuggling of drugs.

Col Bashirul, while speaking at a press briefing later on, said they had a successful discussion with Nasaka on different issues, including closing yaba factories along Myanmar border, preventing drug smuggling, preventing intrusion of Rohingya and exchange of people detained in jails of both the countries.

WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur over Rangpur and Rajshahi divisions and the regions of Jessore and Kushtia in 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Mild heat wave is sweeping over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and it may continue.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:14pm today and rises at 5:50am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 36.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 20.6 degrees Celsius at Syedpur.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 5 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.