

TANGAIL-3 BY-POLLS

BNP votes might decide results

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

With the opposition BNP boycotting the Tangail-3 by-election, the three candidates desperately tried to draw the BNP vote bank which is believed to decide the results of tomorrow's poll as campaigning closed yesterday.



from Rana's family and a former local BNP lawmaker was Rana's uncle.

Rana, religious affairs secretary of Tangail district AL, was expelled from the AL yesterday for violating the party decision. He is contesting the election with the symbol of pineapple.

The chief campaigner for Lebu called Rana an outsider and said conscious Ghatail people would not vote for any outsider. The people will vote for Lebu, former Ghatail upazila AL general secretary, considering him a local candidate, he said.

Ghatail upazila Jatiya Party said their candidate Syed Abu Yusuf Abdullah Tuhin would get most of the BNP votes, the anti-AL votes alongside his party votes. Tuhin, an industrialist, has got the electoral symbol of plough.

Ghatail BNP however called the election one-sided and said most of the BNP supporters would not go to the polling stations.

The early favourites however are Awami League-nominated candidate Shahidul Islam Lebu and AL rebel Amanur Rahman Khan Rana, who is contesting independently.

A campaigner for Rana said their candidate would bag most of the BNP votes, as the past BNP leaders in Ghatail were all

Dhaka-Chennai-Male direct airlink opens

UNB, Dhaka

The inaugural flight of "Maldivian", the national carrier of the Maldives, touched down at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital on Thursday, establishing the first direct air connectivity among Dhaka, Chennai and Male.

Minister of State for Defense and National Security of the Maldives Sheikh Ilyas Hussain Ibrahim travelled to Dhaka on the first flight, Q2-550, said a press release yesterday.

Acting High Commissioner of the Maldives in Dhaka Ahmed Adil, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab) Chairman Air Vice Marshal Mahmud Hussain and senior officials of Caab and Biman Bangladesh Airlines welcomed the flight.

At a welcome ceremony at the airport's VIP Lounge, dignitaries expressed their strong belief that bilateral trade, commerce and tourism would get a significant boost with the opening of the direct air link.

Robbers loot jewellery shop hurling bombs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang last night robbed a jewellery shop of 10-12 tolas of gold ornaments at Uttar Mugda in the capital exploding homemade bombs to create panic.

Police said four to five robbers exploded three bombs in front of Parul Jewellers around 10:30pm and robbed the shop holding its owner and employees at knife point.

Sub-Inspector Azizur Rahman of Mugda police said no one was hurt and they had recovered a machete from the spot.

Meanwhile, criminals looted Tk 5.5 lakh, and medicine and furniture worth about Tk 73 lakh from a pharmacy at Shyamoli in the capital.

Habibullah Habib, owner of the pharmacy, Tamim Enterprise, told The Daily Star that he closed the store around 11:00pm Thursday and a security guard early yesterday informed him of the matter.

Quoting the security guard, who had been taken hostage by the robbers, Habib said the robbers broke into the store around 3:00am and took away all the goods in a covered van.

Let int'l NGOs help Rohingyas: US official

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A visiting top US official yesterday urged Dhaka to allow international NGOs to provide "humanitarian aid" to Rohingyas taking refuge in Bangladesh.

US Under Secretary of State Maria Otero for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights however thanked Bangladesh for giving shelter to Rohingyas, a persecuted minority from western Myanmar.

She said the "Rohingya issue is complicated" and that collective regional efforts were necessary to find a solution to it. In this connection, the US is ready to help Myanmar, Bangladesh and other countries affected by Rohingya displacement, she told a press briefing at Cox's Bazar Airport.

Otero visited Rohingya refugee facilities at Kutupalong and talked to local public officials and representatives. She arrived in Bangladesh on a three-day visit on Thursday to discuss on the Rohingya situation, among others.

The government banned three international NGOs in Cox's Bazar in August for encouraging Rohingya influx.

Jamaat anarchy threat to war crimes trial: Inu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The recent anarchy by Jamat-Shibir activists is a clear threat to the ongoing war crimes trial and a punishable offence by law but the government showed its highest patience in this regard, said Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday.

He was addressing journalists at Sylhet Circuit House after visiting the shrines of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) and Hazrat Shahporan (RA) in Sylhet.

The communal force revealed its true identity through the planned attacks on law enforcers. Such incidents and the Ramu massacre prove that the country's democracy is not safe and has a weak base, he said.

Inu also reiterated his call to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to drop Jamaat-

e-Islami from the BNP-led alliance to prove her commitment to democratic values.

He said the government would formulate a framework for the government-run media.

The draft national broadcasting policy would be media-friendly and ready in two months. A separate wage board for electronic media would be formed through consultations with journalists, employees and the media owners, he said.

A strong media will help build a strong democracy, he said, calling upon journalists to make use of the Right to Information Act, 2009 and Information Commission to get rid of bureaucratic complexities and corruption.

Jatiya Sangsad Chief Whip Abdus Shahid was also present.

PHULBARI COAL DEPOSIT Open pit mining to affect environment

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday strongly opposed plans for open pit mining at Phulbari coal deposit, saying it would cause serious environmental damage and displace around 10 lakh people.

They demanded withdrawal of a recent home ministry circular directing the local administration to help Asia Energy, which will conduct a survey at the coal deposit.

Shaptahik, a weekly news magazine, organised the roundtable in the capital's Bilia auditorium.

Open pit mining will cause a decrease in groundwater levels within a 15km radius of the deposit, said Prof Badrul Islam.

Prof Nurul Islam said the government must carry out the pilot project, ensure its ownership of the resources and impose a ban on coal export.

BD Rahmatullah said Bangladesh should go for alternative energy sources like the air and the sun to meet the demand.

Criticising the finance minister, columnist Syed Abul Maksud said the minister should have called Asia Energy, not Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Limited, "stupid". Shaptahik Editor Golam Murtaza moderated the event where Fara Kabir and Shubho Kibria also spoke.

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Subhash Chandra Bose's political ideology highlighted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Emeritus Dr Serajul Islam Chowdhury of Dhaka University yesterday highlighted Subhash Chandra Bose's political ideology, important role on Indian nationalism and on what made him different from Mahatma Gandhi.

He was delivering the 5th memorial lecture marking former Awami League lawmaker Misbahuddin Khan's 83rd birth anniversary. Misbahuddin, father of eminent historian Muntassir Mamoon, died in 2006.

Muntassir Mamoon-Fatema Trust organised the event in the capital's BWA auditorium.

Prof Serajul also revealed Subhash Chandra's relationship with Adolf Hitler and Japan in the 1940s and concluded with Subhash Chandra's mysterious death in a plane crash while en route to an unknown location in 1945.

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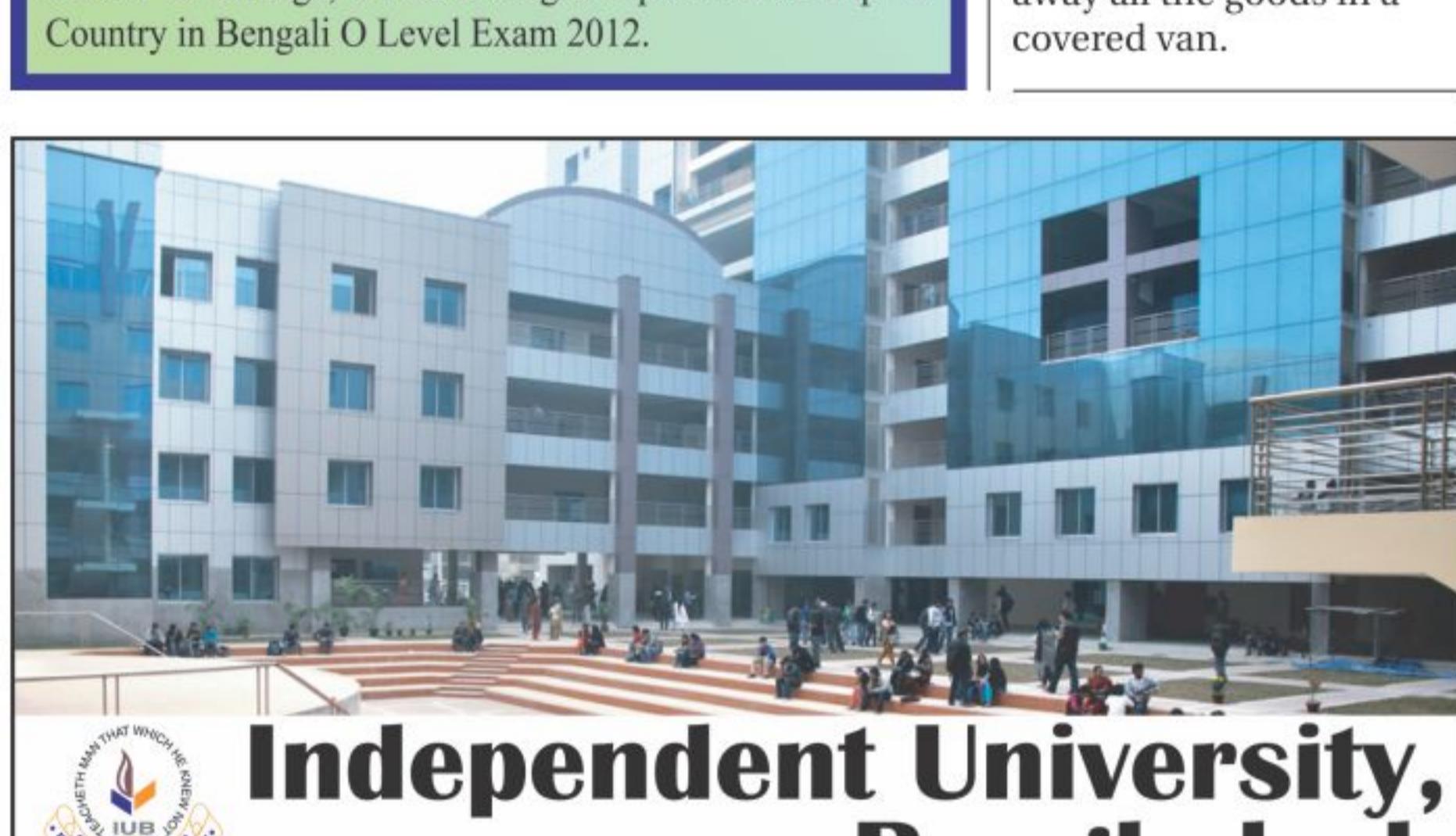
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Garments Sramik Oikya Parishad forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday demanding that the government passes the amended Labour Act 2006 in the ongoing 15th session of parliament.

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