

Rangpur city to see hard contest among 3 mayoral candidates

MEHEDY HASAN, Rangpur

Hard contest is expected among three of the 12 mayoral candidates in the first-ever Rangpur City Corporation (RCC) polls slated for December 20.

The three heavyweight candidates are Shoruddin Ahmed Jhantu, former lawmaker and member of advisory committee of Rangpur district unit of Awami League, AKM Abdur Rauf Manik, former mayor of Rangpur municipality and former organising secretary of Jatiya Party central committee, and Mostafiz Rahman Mostafa, former chairman of Rangpur Sadar upazila parishad and member secretary of Jatiya Party Rangpur district unit.

Election symbols of the three candidates are motorcycle, spectacle and duck respectively.

Three hundred and twenty-seven candidates will vie for 33 councillor posts and 91 others for 11 women's reserved councilor posts.

As many as 3,57,742 voters, including 1,79,128 male and 1,78,614 female, will choose a mayor and 44

councillors, through the polls.

All the candidates attended a large number of small rallies and meetings in different areas of the city



Shoruddin Ahmed Jhantu

and conducted door to door campaign to woo voters.

The city people want to choose an honest and efficient mayor for better development of the city that is already plagued with various problems like traffic jam, waterlogging, drug peddling, inconsistent development of infrastructure and deterioration of law and order, locals said.

The authorities concerned have already completed their preparations to ensure free, fair and

peaceful elections.

"Selection of 178 polling centres, 1,070 booths, 178 presiding officers, 1,070 assistant presiding officers and 2,140 polling officers

sion will use electronic voting machines in four polling centres of ward No 11 in the RCC polls.

Saleh Mohammad Tanvir, superintendent of

contesting with 'horse' symbol, has lodged complaints of election rule violation against three of his rival candidates with Rangpur Zonal Election Office.

At a press conference yesterday, he alleged that Shoruddin Ahmed Jhantu, AKM Abdur Rauf Manik, and Mostafiz Rahman Mostafa were frequently bringing out motorbike processions and giving donations to different social organisations, violating the polls code.

Shahin said he will go to the court if the returning officer concerned fails to take necessary action against the election code violation.

The returning officer the RCC polls, Md Monirul Islam said, "We have already started investigation about these allegations and fined mayoral candidate Abdul Quddus, councillor candidate Shah Alam of ward No 15, and two campaigners of AKM Abdur Rauf Manik and Shoruddin Ahmed Jhantu on Sunday for violating the election code."

Meanwhile, Md Faruk Aziz Shahin, Nagarik Oikyo backed mayoral candidate

and their necessary trainings have been completed and sending of ballot boxes with inputs will be completed on December 19," said Rangpur Zonal Election Officer Md Monirul Islam, also returning officer of the RCC polls.

Rangpur Zonal Election Office has also identified 104 out of 178 polling centres as "vulnerable" considering the previous records of the candidates of the respective wards, he added.

The Election Commission

PATUAKHALI-DHAKA ROUTE

Passengers' woes mount as launch strike continues

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Passengers' sufferings mounted as staff and owners of double-decker launches on Dhaka-Patuakhali route continued their strike for the fifth day yesterday.

They began an indefinite strike after a group of ruling party men assaulted a launch supervisor on Thursday.

A good number of tourists have already cancelled their hotel bookings at Kuakata due to launch strike. Abdul Matin, a bookstall owner in Patuakhali town, said they couldn't bring books from Dhaka for the students of new academic year.

Tanvir Ahmed, vice president of Patuakhali Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said local businessmen are facing untold sufferings due to the strike.

He urged the authorities concerned to take immediate step to resume launch service on the route.

Launch staff and owners said about 10/12 men led by Gazi Hafizur Rahman Shabir alias Shabir Gazi, secretary of town unit Awami League (AL), swooped on Eunus, supervisor of Sundarbans-6, at around 8:00am

The gang physically assaulted Eunus as he refused to pay toll, they said.

Soon after the incident, the double-decker launches that reached Patuakhali from Dhaka on Thursday morning and schedule to leave Patuakhali for the capital city in the evening moved off the terminal and anchored in Lohalia area, on the other side of the terminal.

"We went on the strike demanding arrest of the attackers and safety of the launch staff," said Abul Kalam Khan, owner of a launch

"We will continue our strike until lawful actions are taken against Shabir Gazi and his accomplices," he added. Shabir Gazi however, refuted the allegation of assaulting supervisor Eunus.

Sources said a section of ruling AL men were engaged in collecting toll from all launches on the route. Protesting the matter, owners stopped plying launches on the route two month ago.

They later withdrew their programme after local administration assured them of taking steps in this regard.

After some days, the gang reappeared and started collecting toll from the double-decker launches as usual.

Wife set on fire by husband for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A mother of a five-year-old boy sustained severe burn injuries as she was set on fire allegedly by her husband for dowry at Tentulia village in Mithapukur upazila on Friday night.

Bokuli Bagum, 22, wife of Mosharraf Hossain, 28, is now undergoing treatment at the burn unit of Rangpur Medical College and Hospital.

Police and Mosharraf, son of Mofijul Islam of Jamalganj village, married Bokuli, daughter of Golam Rabbani of Tentulia eight years ago.

After the marriage, Mosharraf and his family members often tortured her for Tk 50,000.

Mosharraf recently beat his wife up and sent her to her father's house bringing the money following an altercation over the issue.

On the fateful night, Mosharraf went to his father-in-law's residence and locked in an altercation with Bokuli over the same issue.

Later, he set his wife on fire by pouring petrol on fire while she was asleep along with her son Bayojid. Hearing the hue and cry, family members rescued the duo and sent them to the hospital.

Following the incident, Mosharraf surrendered to police, said Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal, officer in-charge at Mithapukur police station

A case was filed accusing four people, including Mosharraf, in this connection, said the OC.

Attack on BNP office, 10 injured

UNB, Barguna

At least 10 people were injured during an attack on BNP office allegedly by the ruling party activists at Kakchira Bazar in Patharghata upazila on Sunday evening.

Of the injured, six were identified as Jubo Dal leaders Ali Ajgar, Alamgir, and Firoz and Chhattri Dal leaders Fuad, Miraz and Polash. Identity of the remaining four could not be known.

Police quoted witnesses as saying that the ruling party men attacked the union BNP office during a discussion on the Victory Day at around 4:30pm, leaving at least 10 people injured.

Three of the injured were admitted to Barguna General Hospital while the rest given first aid. No case was filed with Patharghata Police Station in connection with the incident as of 5:00pm yesterday.

Month of Victory

Pabna was freed 2 days after nation's final victory

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The people of Pabna got the taste of freedom on December 18 in 1971, two days after the nation's final victory against the Pakistani occupation forces.

Even after surrender of the Pakistan army in capital Dhaka on December 16 in 1971, the occupation troops in Pabna continued preventing the freedom fighters from entering the district headquarters, said Md Baby Islam, a commander of local freedom fighters during the Liberation War.

"Later following assurance from the Indian force, the occupation troops in Pabna got inside the compound of the then Wapda on December 18. And they surrendered to Indian army officer Captain Nanda early next day," he said.

On December 18, the freedom fighters entered the district town and hoisted the flag of Bangladesh, he added.

With the help of local collaborators like Rajakars and Albadars, the Pakistan army massacred thousands of freedom-loving people in



DURJOY PABNA, erected in front of the deputy commissioner's office in Pabna town, stands glorifying the Liberation War martyrs in the district.

different areas of the district during the nine months of war.

Sagarkandi, Demra, Gopalnagar, Hadal and Handial saw some of the gruesome massacres by the occupation forces in honour of the martyrs.

A discussion and cultural programme will be held marking 'Pabna liberation day' today.

Woman hurt in robbers' bomb attack dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A housewife was killed as robbers hurled bombs at her in Daulatpur upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Fazilatunnesa, 45, wife of Rupchand Ali of Adabaria village.

Zahir Uddin, officer in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station, said a gang of 8/10 stormed into the house of Rupchand at about 1:30am.

As the neighbours started to gather in front of the house, hearing screams of the family members, the robbers exploded two bombs to make their way clear for fleeing the scene.



This barn owl, caught after its entrance to a sixth-floor room of an insurance company in Super Market area of Munshiganj town yesterday, was taken under the custody of district forest officials. Process was on to send the rare species owl to the National Zoo at Mirpur in Dhaka.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Five shops gutted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least five shops were gutted in a fire at Phulbari village in Khansama upazila on Sunday midnight. Locals said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at Babul Rahman Market in the area at around 1:30am and soon engulfed the shops. On information, firefighters rushed to the spot and doused the flame with the help of local people. The shop owners claimed that the loss caused by the fire could go up to Tk 10 lakh.

Agriculture fair begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narail

A seven-day-long Amol Sen Agriculture Mela (fair) began on Auriya Government Primary School premises in Sadar upazila. Bimal Biswas, polit bureau member of Bangladesh Workers' Party, inaugurated the fair as chief guest. Among others, Sidiq Ahmed, vice president of district AL, and Tobibur Rahman, were present. Over 50 stalls have been set up at the fair.

Jewellery shop looted

UNB, Sylhet

Robbers looted gold, silver ornaments and cash worth Tk 5 lakh from a jewellery shop at a market in Tilagarh area of the city yesterday. Sources said the robbery was committed at 'Barna Swarna Shilpaloy' on the ground floor at Mannan View Market in the area. Shaymol Paul, owner of the shop, said the gang entered the shop after breaking open the lock of the shutter in the wee hours of the morning. They took away Tk 80,000, five tolas of gold ornaments and 300 tolas of silver ornaments, claimed Shaymol.



Students of Chandpur Collectorate School and College take part in a Liberation War-based drama yesterday, marking the Victory Day.

Truck strike called off

UNB, Sylhet

Truck Workers' Union of Sylhet called off their indefinite strike on Sunday night following a 'conclusive' meeting with all stakeholders. The strike was enforced on Sylhet-Companyganj road on Saturday morning in protest against extortion in the name of Truck Owners' Association. District Truck Workers' Union president Abu Sarker said they withdrew the strike following an assurance from the meeting that no toll would be realised from trucks. Companyganj thana AL general secretary Aftab Ali alias Kala Mia, stone crusher mill owners' samity president Dr Abdun Nur, Salutikar Stone Traders' Association president Iqbal Ahmed were among others, present at the meeting.