

AL's Anupom elected MP in Tangail-8

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Awami League-backed candidate Anupom Shajahan Joy has been declared elected unofficially in Tangail-8 (Sakhipur-Basail) by-polls. The election was held on March 29.

But the results of the by-polls were not declared till yesterday because Returning Officer Syed Khurshid Anwar cancelled results of Ghechua Government Primary School polling centre in Sakhipur over allegations of irregularities.

After re-voting at the cancelled polling centre yesterday, the local election office announced the results.

Joy, son of late AL lawmaker Shawkat Momen Shajahan, has secured 73,907 votes with boat symbol and his nearest independent (rebel AL) candidate Abdul Malek Miah 73,056 votes with deer symbol.

The parliamentary seat fell vacant as Shawkat Momen died of a cardiac arrest on January 20.

TRAFFICKING 12 Bangladeshis return from Iran today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twelve Bangladeshi migrants, who were rescued by Iranian police from the clutches of traffickers, will return home today.

The migrants are Mahafuzur Rahman, Forhad Hossain, Mehedi Hasan, Montaz, Shafiqul Alam, Shafiqul Islam, Sajib Nath, Jakir Hossain, Muslim Uddin, Firoz Miah, Jasim Miah and Aminul Haque.

The Iranian police rescued at least 80 Bangladeshis, including the 12, with the help of Bangladesh Embassy in Tehran and the Criminal Investigation Department between February and March.

Binoy Krishna Mallick, executive director of Rights Jessore, an NGO, took the initiative to bring back the Bangladeshis.

Shah Alam, additional DIG of CID, said, "We took the initiative to rescue the abducted Bangladeshis following information from their relatives and the NGO authorities."

The traffickers, who also happen to be Bangladeshi, abducted their fellow countrymen from the UAE for ransom and took them to Iran, he said.

The gang had promised them lucrative jobs in European countries before mobilising them, the DIG said.

Manzur Anam

FROM PAGE 16 specialising in oil and gas.

He started his career in Pakistan Geological Survey and was the first Chief Executive of Oil Companies Advisory Committee (OCAC) of independent Bangladesh.

He also worked for Meghna Petroleum. He was a director of Air Alliance Limited, a service partner of UPS, a global courier service.

Manzur left behind a son. His relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to attend his namaz-e-janaza.

Bombers kill five in Iraq

AFP, Ramadi

Two suicide bombers blew up vehicles packed with explosives outside a government compound in the Iraqi city of Ramadi yesterday killing five people, police and a doctor said.

The twin attacks come as Iraq's security forces battle to win back control of Anbar province after militants overran parts of Ramadi and all of the city of Fallujah, to its east, in early January.

The bombers each attacked one of the two entrances to the compound, which includes the governor's office, provincial council building and a military headquarters, a police lieutenant colonel and an army captain said.

The blasts killed three soldiers, a policeman and a civilian and wounded 12 other people, a doctor said.

The crisis in the desert province erupted in late December when security forces dismantled Iraq's main Sunni Arab anti-government protest camp just outside Ramadi, the provincial capital.

Militants subsequently seized parts of Ramadi and all of Fallujah, marking the first time anti-government forces have exercised such open control in major cities since the peak of the deadly violence that followed the US-led invasion of 2003.

3 arrested for cheque fraud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion has arrested three people of a gang that robbed people of their money by withdrawing cash from their bank accounts with stolen or forged cheques.

Rab Media Wing Director Habibur Rahman last night during a press briefing at Rab headquarters said they, acting on a tip off, arrested Toslimur Rahman alias Murad Monir, 45, at Mirpur Tuesday night and following his information captured Shafiqul Alam, 55, and Abdul Mannan alias Shamsuzzaman, 32, at Badda.

They also recovered 623 cheques, most of them fake, of 34 banks and seized 15 Bangladeshi passports with five fake Libyan visas, 74 fake Egyptian revenue stamps, and a significant amount of materials for making fake cheques.

Habibur said the gang stole over Tk 1 crore over the last one year.

During primary interrogation, the trio admitted that there were several

others in the gang which have been operating in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet and several other places.

The arrestees told Rab that they with the help of colluding post office employees steal cheques sent via mail from abroad. They later just withdrew the money using the cheques.

Toslimur had been arrested on December 9 last year when he was caught trying to cash such a cheque at a bank in Mirpur. He got bail and was back to his old tricks.

The trio told Rab that they with camera phones take photos of cheques of unassuming account holders at banks when the clients are withdrawing money. The trio then makes a fake cheque of the bank and forges the signature of the account holder according to the photo.

They then cash the fake cheque from a different branch of the bank and they never withdraw more than Tk 1 lakh at one go to avert getting caught.

The gang was also involved in human trafficking, Rab claimed.

Environment culprits linked?

FROM PAGE 1 them as part of her professional duties.

A gang of six to seven, on a blue microbus, were following Siddique's red saloon since he left Hamid Fashion. The microbus knocked the car from behind when it reached Firoz Filling Station, reports our Narayanganj correspondent.

As Siddique and his driver Ripon got down from the car to check the damage, the miscreants hit Ripon in the head with a revolver, sprayed pepper spray over his face and dragged Siddique onto the microbus. It all happened within a few minutes, said Ripon.

The abductors were wearing T-shirts and had their hair close-cropped, he added.

Kalam, a motor mechanic who was coming from Narayanganj at the time, said he saw some people dragging a person onto a new microbus.

"I saw the microbus speed away toward Signboard and then toward Dhaka," he told the police.

Law enforcers were questioning Kalam for more clues.

Several police teams raided different places in Demra, Kanchpur and Dhaka to rescue Siddique and arrest his abductors.

Authorities have formed a 12-member committee headed by an additional superintendent of Narayanganj police to supervise the rescue operation.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister's Office called Rizwana over the phone assuring her that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took the matter seriously and instructed law enforcers to do their best to rescue her husband.

Inspector General of Police and

Director General of Rapid Action Battalion also spoke to her.

Rizwana said she spoke to her husband by phone just about 15 minutes before the abduction. Later, she learnt about it from the driver.

"In my long married life, I never heard that he had any dispute with anyone," she told The Daily Star.

"I want my husband back safe and unhurt," said the lawyer and environmentalist, who won Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2012 for her "uncompromising courage and impassioned leadership in a campaign of judicial activism in Bangladesh that affirms the people's right to a good environment as nothing less than their right to dignity and life."

In a case filed against seven to eight unknown persons aged between 25 and 35, Rizwana said she filed litigations against many influential people who suffered financial losses.

"It [the cases] hurt their interests. They might have links with the abduction of my husband," the case statement reads.

Narayanganj police superintendent also believes the abduction is not an ordinary crime. According to him, it was done in a well-orchestrated manner.

Contacted, State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan said, "We are investigating it. We hope to get a positive result in a short time."

Talking to The Daily Star, Nasrul Hamid said, "We are school friends. He [Siddique] joined the factory 15 years ago as an executive and was running it in his own way."

The factory remained closed for about a year before Siddique reopened it in February, he added.

Saturn is 'expecting'

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directly, but a bulge in Saturn's A Ring – the brightest and outermost ring – suggests that the new arrival could soon join Saturn's already impressive family of 62 moons.

"We have not seen anything like this before," said astronomer Carl Murray, lead author of a study in Icarus which outlined the findings and the discoverer of the moon.

"We may be looking at the act of birth, where this object is leaving the rings and heading off to be a moon in its own right."

Saturn's rings are comprised almost entirely of ice with a trace amount of rocky material and stretch from 7,000km to 80,000km above the surface of Saturn's equator with a thickness varying from 10 metres to 1 kilometre.

Bouteflika eyes fourth term in Algeria

AFP, Algiers

Algerians weighed their options ahead of today's election, with President Abdelaziz Bouteflika urging a large turnout as he eyes a fourth term, his main rival warning of fraud and others demanding a boycott.

More than 260,000 police have deployed across the country to guarantee security in the 50,000 polling booths set up to accommodate the 2.3 million Algerians eligible to vote in the presidential race, which is being contested by six candidates.

The ailing 77-year-old Bouteflika is widely expected to clinch a fourth term, but he faces the damaging possibility of low voter turnout, with protesters calling on Algerians to snub the poll and disrupting rallies during the election campaign.

"The theory holds that Saturn long ago had a much more massive ring system capable of giving birth to larger moons," Murray said. "As the moons formed near the edge, they depleted the rings and evolved, so the ones that formed earliest are the largest and the farthest out."

The largest of Saturn's moons is Titan with a diameter of more than 5,000km and a mass nearly double that of our Moon. If Peggy does eventually grow up enough to leave home it would be tiny in comparison, perhaps only 0.5 miles in diameter.

However, Peggy's diminutive size suggests that Saturn's satellite-bearing days may soon be over, with each successive moon appearing smaller than the last as the supply of potentially moon-forming material is

Still no trace of missing DU student

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The whereabouts of a Dhaka University freshman, who has been missing since Tuesday evening, remains unknown.

Azizul Hayat Khan Kanak, 20, first year student of finance department and an executive member of Bangladesh Chhatra Union, rang up some fellow activists around 7:00pm on Tuesday, asking for help.

As per the direction, the activists rushed to Fuller Road of DU around 7:15pm, but there was no trace of Kanak, said Maruf Billah, president of DU unit of Chhatra Union.

A general diary was filed with Shahbagh Police Station yesterday morning.

By tracking Kanak's cell phone, police last traced him near Bokshibazar, said Sub-inspector Shariful Islam.

BNP's long march

FROM PAGE 2 BNP and its associated bodies at the party's Nayapaltn headquarters.

"To ensure that Bangladesh gets its due share of Teesta waters, an agreement was supposed to be inked during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Bangladesh in 2011. But the government has failed to do so," said Fakhru.

"We will hold a rally at Daliya point of Lalmonirhat on April 23 around 11:00am," he added.

He hoped that the government would extend its all out cooperation to make the programme a success.

Sairul Kabir Khan, a staff of BNP chairperson's media wing, said the long march will start in front of the Nayapaltn central office in the morning. The march will pass through Tongi, Gazipur and Sirajganj on the way to Rangpur, where the party men will stay overnight. The following morning, the march will resume towards Lalmonirhat.

At a meeting chaired by Khaleda Zia, BNP national standing committee on April 9 had decided to hold the long march towards the Teesta Barrage.

Bangladesh Islamic Party formed a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday protesting the government's failure to ensure due share of Teesta waters for Bangladesh. BNP DEMANDS EXPLANATION The BNP yesterday demanded an explanation from the government on the alleged capturing of a Pakistani ISI agent by the Indian external intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) from Shahjalal International Airport in the capital on Tuesday.

Fakhru made the demand at a meeting at the Jatiya Press Club. Jatiyatabadi Swetchhasebak Dal organised the event demanding release of its President Habib-un-Nabi Khan Sohel.

Pointing to a report run by Bangla daily Prothom Alo yesterday, Fakhru said RAW men captured an ISI agent from the airport and took him back to India.

The Prothom Alo, said the BNP leader, published the news quoting Indian daily The Times of India. "We want to know from the government whether the news is true or false. If it is true, we want an explanation from the government," he mentioned.

"How could a foreign intelligence agency capture and take away a person to another country from the soil of Bangladesh?" questioned Fakhru.

Palestinians hurt in Al-Aqsa clashes

AFP, Jerusalem

Dozens of Palestinians were wounded in clashes with Israeli police that erupted yesterday when Jerusalem's flashpoint Al-Aqsa mosque compound was opened to Jewish visitors, an AFP correspondent said.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld told AFP that Palestinians threw "stones and firecrackers" at police when they opened the walled compound's gates.

Police responded with stun grenades, Rosenfeld said, and closed the complex to the Jewish visitors after a small number had toured the site.

An AFP correspondent at the scene said dozens of Palestinians were wounded by rubber-coated bullets and stun grenade canisters, and were staying inside the Al-Aqsa mosque out of fear they would be arrested when leaving.

The compound, in Jerusalem's Old City, is revered as the location of the biblical Jewish temples and is considered Judaism's holiest place.

It also houses the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa mosque, the third holiest site in Islam.

S Sudan army admits loss of key oil town of Bentiu

AFP, Juba

South Sudan's army yesterday said rebels had wrested control of the key oil town of Bentiu, one of the most bitterly contested regions in the four-month-long conflict.

The town, capital of oil-producing Unity state, is the first major settlement to have been retaken in a renewed offensive by forces of rebel leader Riek Machar, a former vice-president.

"We are moving forward to retake the town from the forces of Riek Machar, who entered the town on Tuesday after our forces withdrew," army spokesman Philip Aguer told AFP, accusing the rebels of "committing atrocities including the killing of civilians."

Rebels had previously seized Bentiu in December at the beginning of the conflict, but were chased out of it a month later.

"The rebels were killing innocent people as they entered, there were killings at the hospital, in the market and mosque," Aguer added, although the reports could not be independently confirmed.

He had no reports of clashes on Wednesday due to communication problems, but said it "was highly likely there was fighting."

The conflict in South Sudan has left thousands dead and forced around a million people to flee their homes since fighting broke out on December 15 in the capital Juba before spreading to other states in the oil-rich nation.

The fighting is between soldiers loyal to President Salva Kiir against mutinous troops who sided with Machar, who was dismissed as vice-

president in 2013.

The conflict has also taken on an ethnic dimension, pitting Kiir's Dinka tribe against militia forces from Machar's Nuer people.

But Aguer also accused gunmen from across the border in Sudan -- from the Arab Misseryia tribe, as well as Janjaweed militia from Sudan's war-torn Darfur region -- of backing Machar's forces, although the claims could not be verified.

Sudanese rebels fighting Khartoum's government -- from the Darfuri Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) -- have in turn been previously reported by security sources to have backed Juba's army.

Rebel chief Machar told AFP on Monday his forces would target crucial oilfields, vowing that the war will not end until the country's president is removed from power.

The rebels, who celebrated the capture of Bentiu on Tuesday, issued at the same time an ultimatum to oil companies to shut down production.

Aguer said that the rebels had launched an attack on an oil refinery under construction near Bentiu at Lalop, but that it remained under the army's control.

Before fighting broke out in the young nation, which won independence from Sudan less than three years ago after a decades of civil war, oil provided more than 95 percent of its government budget.

As well as Bentiu, key towns -- including the Upper Nile state capital Malakal and Jonglei state capital Bor -- have swapped hands several times in the conflict.

Red cards to goons!

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vulnerable to threat or intimidation. In all one lakh white cards would be issued before today's polling day, police said.

"It is basically a way to put psychological pressure on anti-socials and their gangs. Normally, there are one or two people in every village who are notorious and likely to cause trouble. If a police team goes to the village and hands over a red card to him and a yellow card to his supporters, it sends a strong message that they and their entire network is under vigil," Tikamgarh SP Amit Singh, who has initiated the move, told TOI.

District police have so far identified around 2,500 such people, who can cause disturbance during elections.

"These people who will receive

our red cards are not only those against whom we are taking action under section 155 of IPC or 107 of IPC, but also musclemen who can threaten voters to cast votes as per their wishes," Singh said adding, "The district's major issues are instances of interstate crime and a feudalist mindset, which have to be dealt with to ensure fair polls".

The white cards are being distributed to all residents of villages where there are considerable number of people who have been issued red cards, Singh told TOI.

"Besides, we have also put up plaques outside every police station, which also contains contact information of all personnel, for those who missed out on receiving white cards," he said.

Empty in his absence

FROM PAGE 1

The air at Sabbir's home at city's Mohammadpur Housing Society was very sombre. Relatives kept going in and out but had very few words to console the family members.

"Despite being an engineering student, photography was his [Sabbir's] passion. He used to tell us that he would continue with photography even after getting a job. His work was exhibited in Dhaka," said Sabbir's father Hasanur Rahman, a retired government official who worked in the Planning Commission.

"Shagoto [Sabbir's nickname] used to say that it was only photography that would bring him fame one day and no other work. He wanted to buy an expensive camera ... for whom should I buy a camera now? Who will take our photos?" said a sobbing Hasanur.

Hasanur said Sabbir loved cars too. Even at his grown-up age, he kept a toy car beside his bed, Hasanur said. "That's why I bought him a car and he learnt to drive in just seven days."

He said the last time he talked to his son was around Monday noon when Sabbir called him after checking into a hotel. "I told him to be careful," he recalled.

His crying mother was saying, "Where has my child gone ... he was only 24 ... please bring him back, please."

Uday Mahmood lived in Bashabo in the capital. Uday's father Mahmudullah Gazi said when he saw the news of the students going missing on TV, his heart started pounding. His fear became true later on.

"My son did not know how to swim and that's why I had told him not to go into the water," he said.

A group of 34 students of CSE department of the university went to St Martin's to celebrate Pahela Baishakh, the first day of the Bangla calendar year.

At least 10 students went to Prince Heaven point around 2:00pm on Monday for a swim. A surge of water swept them away. Locals and the Coast Guard rescued six of them but two of them died afterwards.

looking for Sabbir and Uday.

2 BODIES RECOVERED Yesterday, a group of fishermen found a body around 9:00am when they were fishing at the west end of the island, reported our Cox's Bazar correspondent quoting Sub-Inspector Abdul Haque, in-charge of St Martin police outpost.

They also found the second body around 11:15am yesterday and informed the members of Bangladesh Coast Guard of the matter, said Shahid Al Ahsan, station commander of the local Coast Guard unit.

A gloom descended in the village homes of Shahriar Rahman and SM Golam Rahim when the news of the recovery of their bodies reached. Both of them hailed from Mymensingh, reports our correspondent there.

Shahriar's father Nazrul Islam said his son told him that even though his exams were finished, he would return home after finishing his trip to St Martin's. "But he could not come home," Nazrul said with tears rolling down his cheeks.

The shocked parents of Shahriar were fainting frequently. His mother and younger sister went all silent after getting the news on TV.

The air at Golam Rahim's home at Bhaluka was just as heavy. Family members were waiting for the body to arrive.

"Get my son back," cried out Golam's mother.

His father Shamsuddin Ahmed said his son sent him a text greeting him on Pahela Baishakh. "I could not imagine this would be the last communication with my son," he said.

Meanwhile, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday expressed deep shock at the tragedy in St Martin's.

After meeting the vice-chancellor of Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology, he told reporters that students would have to take permission from their respective institutions before going on excursions or tours and the local deputy commissioner would have to be informed beforehand about their trips there.

He said his ministry would soon issue a directive in this regard.