



The photo on the left, taken on March 17, shows several large colourful hoardings being used by Dhaka city corporation mayoral candidates. The photo on the right, taken yesterday, shows the billboards after the candidates removed their campaign ads complying with the Election Commission's instruction.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

EARLY CAMPAIGN FOR DCC POLLS Aspirants look for different strategies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite warning by the Election Commission, many mayoral and councillor hopefuls have yet to remove their posters and banners from different parts of the two Dhaka city corporations.

Moreover, some mayoral and councillor aspirants have started distributing leaflets and foods and visiting slum areas to woo voters.

However, most of the billboards that had been grabbed by mayoral and councillor aspirants have been removed.

On Thursday, the EC directed the aspirants to remove all the campaign materials by Saturday morning, or face legal action.

Under the law, candidates cannot start campaign until 21 days from the voting day. Polls to the two Dhaka city corporations and Chittagong City Corporation will be held on April 28.

Yesterday, this correspondent saw no billboard but hundreds of posters in front of Shishu Park at Shahbagh, Bijoy Sarani, Gulistan, Paltan and Mohammadpur areas. Billboard Owners Association alleged that most mayoral hopefuls grabbed their billboards in these areas.

"I have removed all of my billboards from the Dhaka South City Corporation area," said Hazi Mohammad Selim, a mayoral hopeful.

Kamal Ahmed Majumder, mayoral aspirant from Dhaka North City Corporation, said he asked his supporters to remove all the billboards immediately.

Asked about the posters, Selim and Kamal said they would remove them too.

In Dhaka South City Corporation, Selim distributed leaflets among voters who came to different mosques for Friday prayers.

"A few hundred people, including me, have been assigned by Hazi Selim to distribute leaflets among people," said Mohammad Arif in front of a mosque at Bhuter Goli near Green Road.

He added Selim hired at least 17 minibuses for the job.

Asked, Selim said his followers might distribute leaflets as they loved him and wanted to see him as mayor.

Supporters of both Selim and Kamal also distributed food and water among road-side people at different places in their areas.

The EC has asked the two returning officers to take legal action against the aspiring candidates for their failure to remove campaign materials from the two city corporations.

The returning officers said their officials would visit different places today to see it for themselves if the prospective candidates removed their posters and billboards.

They warned of legal action if the mayoral and councillor aspirants failed to abide by the EC directive.

Under the law, candidates can lose their candidacies for violating election codes.

The ruling AL has decided to back Annisul Huq in Dhaka south and Sayeed Khokon in Dhaka north city corporations as mayoral candidates.

Gafargoan BNP leader killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Unidentified assailants shot dead a BNP leader at Baroi village of Gafargoan upazila early yesterday.

The dead, Abdul Mannan Goda, 65, was the secretary of Dutter Bazar union's Baroi ward unit of the BNP.

Criminals sprayed bullets on Mannan through the window of his house when he was sleeping around 3:00am, said Badrul Alam Khan, officer-in-charge of Pagla Police Station, quoting the victim's family.

Hearing the sound of firing, family members and neighbours rushed to the spot, but the attackers fled the scene.

The bullet hit Mannan's chest, killing him on the spot.

The BNP leader might have been murdered over previous enmity, said the police official.

Mannan stood accused in at least four cases, including murder and robbery, lodged with Gafargoan and Bhaluka police stations, according to police.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

A murder case has been filed.

Correction

Our yesterday's report headlined "Jannati freed on bail" quoted Jannati as saying, "I'm deeply sorry for what I've done. I know how it feels when people lose their dear ones..." Jannati in a statement yesterday claimed she had actually said, "I'm deeply sorry for the people who are suffering due to this tragic accident."

142 killed in Yemen

FROM PAGE 1

A third suicide bomber targeted Al-Hashush mosque in northern Sanaa, while a fourth struck outside the mosque, according to the Saba news agency, which is now controlled by the Huthis.

Nashwan al-Atab, a member of the health ministry's operations committee, told AFP that 142 people were killed and at least 351 were wounded.

Huthi TV said hospitals had made urgent appeals for blood donations.

The imam of the Badr mosque was among the dead, a medical source said.

Another suicide bomber blew himself up outside a mosque in the northern Huthi stronghold of Saada, a source close to the militia said.

Only the assailant was killed in that explosion, and tight security at the mosque prevented the bomber from going inside, the source added.

'TIP OF THE ICEBERG'

In an online statement, the Sanaa branch of IS said the attacks were "just the tip of the iceberg".

"Infidel Huthis should know that the soldiers of the Islamic State will not rest until they eradicate them... and cut off the arm of the Safavid (Iranian) plan in Yemen," the statement said.

The Huthis are accused of receiving support from Iran.

IS, a radical Sunni Muslim organisation, considers Shiites to be heretics.

The Huthis overran Sanaa in September and have since tightened their grip on power.

Their attempts to extend their control into other areas have been met by deadly resistance from Sunni tribes and al-Qaeda, which is the target of a long-standing US drone strike campaign.

The United States condemned the mosque bombings but said it could not confirm the veracity of the IS claim of

responsibility. "We deplore the brutality of the terrorists who perpetrated today's unprovoked attack on Yemeni citizens, who were peacefully engaged in Friday prayers," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said.

But there is not, as yet, a "clear operational" link between Yemeni extremists and the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, he added.

Yemen has descended into chaos since the 2012 ouster of longtime strongman Ali Abdullah Saleh, who has been accused of backing the Huthis.

Friday's blasts came a day after clashes between forces loyal to President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi and those allied with the Huthis in the southern city of Aden.

Since fleeing to Aden last month, President Hadi has been struggling to reassert his authority, and violence has erupted there in recent days between forces loyal to him and to the Huthis.

A security official said Friday a top Yemeni officer linked to the Huthis had escaped an assassination bid near Aden overnight.

Four people were killed in an ambush on the Lahj-Taiz road, but General Abdel Hafedh al-Sakkaf, the special forces chief in Aden, escaped unharmed, said the official from Lahj.

The attack came as Hadi loyalists tightened their control over Aden, where the situation was calm early yesterday.

Hadi had to evacuate a presidential palace in Aden on Thursday after a fighter jet opened fire, hitting a nearby hill.

Separately, 11 people were killed Thursday when special forces fighters loyal to the Huthis tried to seize control of Aden's airport from Hadi loyalists, in fighting that forced its closure.

107 foreigners detained in Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysian Immigration Department has detained 107 foreigners, including Bangladeshis, from a construction site at Butterworth of Penang state for working there without any valid documents.

Local English daily The Star yesterday reported that State Immigration Assistant Director Abdul Rahman Hassan said 467 workers from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan were screened during a raid on the 7-storey building at Jalan Chain Ferry on Thursday.

"We checked floor by floor as the workers were living in makeshift quarters on the seventh floor," he said.

Among the 107 detainees, 95 were males and others were females and children.

The detainees were taken to the Seberang Jaya headquarters for documentation. They were later sent to the immigration detention camp in Juru, added the daily.

Sayedul Islam, counsellor (labour wing) at Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, said they couldn't contact the Malaysian Immigration Department immediately to know about the Bangladeshis.

"We don't know how many Bangladeshis have been detained. But we will communicate with the immigration department soon," he told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

Illegal foreigners, who work in Malaysia without any work permit or valid paper, usually face short-term imprisonment after being detained. Later, they are deported from the Asian country.



Victims of a petrol bomb attack are getting treatment at Comilla Medical College Hospital. Five people were burnt when criminals hurled the bomb at a pickup truck in Daganbhuian of Feni yesterday morning.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Greece races against time to get bailout

AFP, Athens

Greece was in a new race against time on Friday to get its EU-IMF bailout on track, with its international creditors pushing for a clear reform pledge.

The two-month-old radical government of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has until April to reach agreement with its creditors, but its cash reserves are running dangerously low.

Late on Thursday, European leaders said they had agreed with Greece to finish work "as fast as possible" to unblock loans helping Athens to avoid bankruptcy and a catastrophic exit from the euro.

"We have put the process back on track," Tsipras said after talks with Chancellor Angela Merkel, President Francois Hollande and the EU's top officials on the sidelines of a summit in

Brussels.

"Greek authorities will have the ownership of the reforms and will present a full list of specific reforms in the next days," said a statement issued after the talks.

France's Hollande urged Greece "to be more precise in its reform proposals and introduce them faster than planned."

Greece's new government, which intends to eliminate austerity, made a pledge in February to present alternative reforms to its creditors by April.

But technical talks in Athens and Brussels largely stalled amid reports that the Greek officials were being uncooperative in handing over budget data.

The Greek finance ministry on Friday said it was expecting a "detailed list" from EU-IMF technical teams on their data requirements.

Obesity rising

FROM PAGE 1

Higher risks of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, osteoarthritis, liver and gall-bladder diseases, and respiratory problems.

In 2010 alone, obesity and overweight were estimated to have caused 3.4 million deaths globally, mostly from cardiovascular causes, according to the IHME study published in the UK-based medical journal The Lancet.

Experts say excessive intake of calorie-rich food and less physical activity are major reasons behind overweight and obesity among urban people.

Prof AK Azad Khan, president of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh, said even children are getting used to fast food and cold drinks rich in sugar and calories, but no cautionary guidelines are there from the authorities.

to take a walk as most footpaths are occupied by street vendors. Even children are deprived of physical exercise since most schools don't have playgrounds.

Dr Aliya suggested introducing healthy lifestyle in schools and a healthy dietary guideline for all.

"Urban planners have a great role to play. There could be a separate lane for bicycles to facilitate physical exercise," she said.

Sounding a note of caution, Dr Aliya said the number of obese people is likely to rise in developing countries, including Bangladesh.

Dr Amirul Hassan, line director of Non-communicable Disease Centre (NCDC) at the Directorate General of Health Services, said the health ministry, with the help of other ministries, is drawing up a national strategy with

guidelines on a healthy lifestyle and prevention of NCDs.

"We can create more awareness and take action based on the strategy," said Dr Amirul.

Many city dwellers have blamed lack of facilities for physical exercise for their obesity.

Seeking anonymity, a 34-year-old banker, who lives in the capital's Banashree area, said she gained weight consistently for the last few years. But there is no park in the area where she can do exercise in the morning.

"It is difficult for me to do exercise after I return from office... I have to take care of my child. My husband often pokes fun at me because I'm fat. It's painful for me," said the mother of a child.

She is worried that she might get diabetes soon if she fails to lose weight.

Australia down Pakistan

FROM PAGE 1

Haris Sohail's 41 was the top score. Three other batsmen settled down to reach 20 but were unable to build on their starts.

If Australia expected an easy chase, Wahab provided a rude shock with a hostile opening spell of two for 24 in six overs.

However, it was right-arm seamer Sohail Khan who gave Pakistan an opening by trapping Aaron Finch leg-before in the third over.

Finch, whose top score in the tournament after making 135 in the opening match against England was 24, asked for a television review which proved umpire Kumar Dharmasena had made the correct decision.

Wahab, brought into the attack in the ninth over as the fourth bowler, struck with his third legal delivery by

having the dangerous Warner caught at third man.

Warner made 24 off 23 balls when he attempted to slash a short ball and Rahat Ali took a well-judged catch running in from the boundary.

Wahab removed Clarke in his next over as the Australian captain fended at a short ball and lobbed an easy catch to Sohaib Maqsood close to the wicket on the on-side.

Watson was greeted to the wicket with a barrage of short-pitched deliveries from the fired-up Wahab, one of which nearly cost him his wicket when he was on four.

The all-rounder hooked a bouncer high to fine-leg where Rahat got under the ball but dropped the catch to loud groans from the Pakistani fielders and supporters in the packed stands.

The pressure eased as a tiring Wahab was taken off after his sixth over, allowing Smith and Watson to build a partnership.

The pair stayed together till the 27th over, taking the total to 148 for three, when seamer Ehsan Adil broke through by having Smith leg-before as the batsman missed an attempted flick.

Wahab, returning to the attack in the 29th over, almost claimed another wicket with his second delivery back as Maxwell top-edged a pull, but Sohail Khan failed to hold the ball at third man.

Maxwell sent Australia cruising to victory with a typically aggressive knock before Watson hit the clinching boundary, with Pakistan left ruing the lack of runs on the board by their batsmen.