

Matlub panel makes early gains

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Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) yesterday.
Shadhinota Babosayee Parishad, led by incumbent First Vice-President Monowara Hakim Ali, has bagged the rest four posts of directors from the chamber group.

This victory has put Matlub in a strong position to win the biennial election to the country's apex trade body.

The final results were not available as of 2:00am. The vote counting for 16 directors' post from the association group was still going on, said an official of the FBCCI.

Md Aminul Hoque Shamim, representing Mymensingh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, bagged the highest 335 votes contesting the election under the umbrella of Unnayan Parishad.

Other elected directors from the Unnayan Parishad panel were: Dilip Kumar Agarwala (318 votes) of Chuadanga Chamber, Gazi Golam Ashria (312) of Kishoreganj Chamber, Sheikh Fazle Fahim (296) of Gopalganj Chamber, Md Nizam Uddin (295) of Barisal Metropolitan Chamber, Prabir Kumar Saha (285) of Narsingdi Chamber, Nurul Huda Mukut (264) of Sunamganj Chamber, Hasina Newaz (255) of Bangladesh Women Chamber, Nazibul Islam Dipu (249) of Meherpur Chamber, Bazlur Rahman (240) of Narayanganj Chamber, Mohammad Anwar Sadat Sarker (239) of Gazipur Chamber, and Md Rezaul Karim Rezn (213) of Jamalpur Chamber.

The elected directors from Shadhinota Babosayee Parishad were:

Monowara (293 votes) of Chittagong Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Masud Parvez Khan (246) of Comilla Chamber and Tobarakul Tosaddek Hossain Khan Tito (236) of Manikganj Chamber.

Md Kohinor Islam of Munshiganj Chamber and Md Masud, both contesting the elections from Shadhinota Babosayee Parishad, tied with 205 votes. Their votes would be counted again to decide the final winner, according to the FBCCI election commission.

The election started at 10:00am at the FBCCI building in the capital and continued until 5:00pm without a break. The voter turnout was 88.47 percent. The counting started at 7:00pm.

This year, 63 candidates contested the election. Of them, 30 vied from the chamber group and the rest from the association group.

As per rules, each voter can cast 32 votes to elect 16 directors from each group.

However, 10 directors from leading chambers and another 10 directors from leading associations have already been nominated as directors of the FBCCI as per rules.

The number of valid voters from the chamber group was 436. Of them, 418 exercised their rights.

Of the 1,768 voters from the association group, 1,532 turned up and voted.

The elected directors and the nominated ones will choose president, first vice-president and vice-president for forming the 52-member executive committee of the FBCCI tomorrow.

As per rules, the president and vice-

president would be picked from the chamber group, and the first vice president from the association group.

Three panels contested in the election.

Only, Matlub Ahmad, a presidential candidate, announced a full panel comprising 16 candidates from associations and 16 from chambers.

Syed Moazzam Hossain, Kazi Ertaza Hassan and Shafquat Haider jointly announced a panel from the association group.

Lawmaker M Ali Ashraf conducted the poll for 2015-16 and 2016-17 as election commissioner.

UN accuses S Sudan of targeting base

AFP, Juba

South Sudanese government tanks backed by helicopter gunships have pushed back rebels from a key oil town, state television showed on Friday, as the UN accused both sides of targeting one of its bases sheltering civilians.

The TV footage showed tanks firing as a helicopter gunship -- believed to belong to the Ugandan army which is fighting alongside government troops -- swooped over the burning town of Melut in the key northern oil state of Upper Nile.

Senior UN peacekeeping official Edmond Mulet told reporters that 22 shells had hit the UN base in Melut over the past two days, killing eight civilians, in what could amount to a war crime.

2013 JAMAAT MAYHEM Jamaat leader held in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday arrested a Jamaat leader for his alleged involvement in instigating the 2013 Bhujpur mayhem that left three Awami League men dead and 200 injured in Chittagong.

The arrestee was identified as Moulavi Abul Bashar, 50, a muezzin of a mosque of Bhujpur area in Fatikchhari, said Jahedul Kabir, officer-in-charge of Bhujpur Police Station.

The muezzin was arrested at the mosque as his name came up in the confessional statements made by other arrestees in the cases filed in connection with the violence.

Police said the muezzin, a local Jamaat leader, had announced from the mosque that a local madrasa principal (Bara Hujur) was killed by marchers.

On April 11, 2013, violence erupted in Kazirhat area of Bhujpur as Jamaat-Shibir men attacked an AL motor procession following a rumour that the marchers had killed the "Bara Hujur". The attackers also set fire to around 150 vehicles.

Following the violence, five cases were filed against more than 16,471 people, including 471 named.

Rally for climate

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received awards in two age groups -- junior (Class VI-VIII) and senior (Class IX-X).

Stressing the importance of acquiring knowledge against memorising information and reproducing those in examinations to get good grades, Noor said: "Don't limit yourself to this competition; rather spread your knowledge to those who could not take part [in this contest]."

Francois de Maricourt, chief executive officer of HSBC Bangladesh, said the Junior Champions project was designed to help students express their concerns about the environment and to test their knowledge on keeping the planet clean and reducing carbon footprint.

"You need to understand that saving the environment is saving yourself," said Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, adding that the only way to deal with the climate change fallouts is to educate oneself through science-based knowledge.

He urged participants to hold on to their spirits of saving the environment and never let it get away.

"Raising awareness is given the highest priority in facing the climate change risks," said Manoj Kumar Biswas, general manager, Green Banking and CSR department of Bangladesh Bank.

Among the participants, students of Anandaniketan from Sylhet division received the highest number of prizes.

Sakib Ahmed, a class-IX student of the school, received the first prize in quiz and speech categories in the senior age group.

"I want to be an engineer when I grow up," said Sakib, who also got the third prize in the project category with his Green Irrigation by Wind Power scheme.

The first prize in this category was grabbed by Aaimam Haque, Md Rezaun Rahman and Md Ismail Hossain, all ninth graders of Heed International School in Dhaka, for their joint project that showcased air purifier, eco-friendly home and organic fertiliser.

Boy graduates

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with three degrees in math, science and foreign languages.

He graduated alongside 1,800 students, presumably making him the youngest student to graduate from the American university.

"I like to learn," he told KXTV following the graduation ceremony. "So I just followed my passion of learning, and that's how I ended up here."

Tanishq also told that it "[It] feels good to graduate with three Associate's degrees." However, he also added that the accomplishment wasn't "much of a big thing" for him.

Last year, the youngster also made headlines when he graduated high school at the age of 10 years old.

Tanishq was home-schooled by his mother Tajji, a veterinarian who reportedly took a break from her own PhD studies to teach him.

"We did it as a family, as teamwork," said Tajji Abraham. "And I was just cheering, I was just crying there when I saw Tanishq walk down the stage."

Intellect apparently runs in the family. His father, Bijou Abraham, had a perfect math score on his SAT. He is a Cornell University graduate and software engineer. Tanishq's younger sister Tiara, 9, is also a prodigy; both children joined Mensa International at the age of four.

"Even in kindergarten," Tajji Abraham said, Tanishq "was a few years ahead. It just went from there."

"The assumption is that he's the all-time youngest," Scott Crow, a spokesman for the American River College told NBC Bay Area. "But we don't have all the archives to completely confirm. He was definitely the youngest this year."

The youngster also plans to enroll in a Calculus II course this summer.

US Senate approves fast-track trade authority for Obama

AFP, Washington

The US Senate overcame bitter divisions on trade policy Friday and passed legislation that gives President Barack Obama authority to swiftly forge international trade pacts, including a landmark Pacific Rim accord under negotiation.

The measure now heads to the House of Representatives where its fate is uncertain.

While Senate passage is a dramatic victory for Obama, the bill clearly faces a fierce debate in the lower chamber, where lawmakers signalled there is intense opposition from within Obama's own Democratic Party.

Passage of the so-called trade promotion authority bill allows the administration to finalize negotiations with 11 other Asian and Pacific nations and bring the trade deal to Congress for an up-or-down vote, with lawmakers not permitted to make changes.

The bill, which pushes Obama's top legislative priority in his second term, passed on a 62-37 vote, with all but a handful of Republicans backing their rival in the White House.

TPA is "likely the most important bill we'll pass this year," said Senate Finance Committee chairman Orrin Hatch, who co-wrote the legislation that lays out 150 ambitious US trade priorities including human rights, environment and labor protections.

"It shows that when the president is right we will support him."

But most Democrats voted no, highlighting some of their fiercest opposition to Obama in his six-plus years in office.

Senate Democrat Jeff Merkley crystallized the sentiments of many free-trade critics, who say the accord will promote a hemorrhaging of American jobs, much like the North American Free Trade Agreement is blamed for doing a generation earlier.

"We have lost five million jobs and 50,000 factories," Merkley told his colleagues. "This is simply the wrong direction to go."

Supporters said the Pacific trade accord -- the largest in history -- will eliminate trade tariffs and level the playing field for US exports.

And TPA will ensure the most progressive framework of any global trade deal, they said.

Obama offered swift praise for the result of the closely watched vote.

He stressed that this TPA, previous versions of which were used by several presidents before him to conclude trade deals, includes "strong standards that will advance workers' rights, protect the environment, promote a free and open Internet, and it supports new robust measures to address unfair currency practices."

Obama encouraged timely action in the House, but Republican leadership there essentially warned that passage would be up to Obama's own party.

"The House will take up this measure, and Republicans will do our part, but ultimately success will require Democrats putting politics aside and doing what's best for the country," House Speaker John Boehner said after the Senate vote.

And some conservative Republicans, too, could revolt, unwilling to cede ever more power to the executive branch.

Amid a tense series of Senate votes, lawmakers rejected several amendments to the trade bill, including a controversial provision requiring enforceable measures to punish nations which manipulate their currency in order to gain price advantages for their exports to the United States.

10 killed

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passengers on the buses were undergoing treatment in Sirajganj General Hospital and other local hospitals.

Later, two more victims died at the general hospital, police said.

Bangabandhu Bridge West Zone Police Station Officer-in-Charge Helal Uddin said the driver of the truck lost control of the vehicle after its front tyre exploded, leading to the head-on collision.

Police and firefighters rushed to the spot and rescued the victims, said the OC.

Following the accident, vehicular movement came to a halt on the highway for about one and a half hours. Vehicular movement returned to normal after 5:00pm, he said.

Sirajganj SP Emran said most of the victims hailed from Kurigram and Gaibandha districts.

Cops looking for CCTV

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the rapists, posing as a customer at her workplace, struck up a conversation with her a few days before the incident. The man had enquired about when she usually left work.

Meanwhile, terming the incident planned, victim's relatives yesterday told The Daily Star that the culprits had told the victim in the microbus they had been following her for the last few days.

In the vehicle, they even asked her where she lived and offered to drop her off near her house. She, however, told them to drop her off on Jasimuddin Road in Uttara, they said.

Quoting the victim, they further said the perpetrators were well-dressed and spoke proper Bangla.

A relative of the victim said one of the rapists along with two foreigners went to the shop either on Sunday or Monday last week and stayed there for a while. The man was tall, dark-skinned and well-built.

The victim was confident that she would recognise him once she saw his photo again.

Khandker Lutful Kabir, deputy commissioner (Gulshan division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said police were also trying to find out whether any CCTV camera was installed along or near the roads down which the microbus was driven for about two hours since 9:30pm on Thursday night.

"If we are fortunate enough, we may identify the persons. We may at least identify the microbus once we get footage from any roadside camera," he told a private television channel.

The microbus in which the woman was raped went over the Kuril flyover and then cruised around a few roads towards Uttara. It is likely that the vehicle would be caught in any of the CCTV cameras installed in front of the markets along the roads and streets, police sources said.

The Garo woman was forced into

the microbus while she was waiting for a bus to get back home. The rapists dropped her on Jasimuddin Road in Uttara.

The victim's family filed a case with Bhatara police on Friday accusing five unnamed persons.

DC Lutful Kabir added that the girl also mentioned a name that she heard when one of the rapists called another inside the microbus on Thursday night.

"At one point a phone call came. While handing the phone, one of them uttered the name," said the DC quoting the victim, adding that they were hopeful about arresting the culprits soon.

Meanwhile, the victim's sister yesterday said they had to go to four police stations for filing the case.

After the victim reached home around 11:00pm Thursday night, her family rushed to Uttara Police Station for help. On-duty policemen there told them to contact Khilkhet Police Station, claimed the sister, adding that they have been living in Uttara for three years.

She added when they went to Khilkhet police, they were told to seek Gulshan police's help.

Gulshan police, however, visited the spot and told them that the crime scene was under Bhatara Police Station.

They finally could file a case with Bhatara police around Friday noon, some 12 hours after the incident.

SIGNS OF RAPE FOUND IN VICTIM'S BODY

Meanwhile, forensic medicine experts at Dhaka Medical College (DMC) yesterday said that they have found signs of rape on the girl's body.

"We primarily found signs of recent forceful sexual intercourse' in the victim's body after examining her," Prof Habibuzzaman Chowdhury, head of the forensic medicine department at DMC, told The Daily Star.

Bhatara police took her to the hospital in the morning for medical test.

Forensic expert Mamataj Ara performed her examination, Chowdhury said, adding that the report will be given in seven days.

"Since it is a very sensitive matter, we will provide the report within the shortest time possible," he added.

The One-stop Crisis Centre (OCC) at the DMCH yesterday collected samples from the victim's body for DNA test. The samples would be sent to the DNA lab today, Bilkis Begum, coordinator of the OCC, told The Daily Star yesterday.

PROTESTS

Meanwhile, several rights and socio-political organisations yesterday demanded that the perpetrators of the gang rape be arrested soon.

Condemning the heinous incident, they blamed that impunity is the reason behind the increase of sexual assault on women.

Hill Women's Federation, an organisation for the women of Chittagong Hill Tracts, in a statement said women are not safe anywhere at present.

"Although the government talks about women's security and empowerment, it has failed to protect women," reads the statement.

Jonno Nipiron Birodhi Nirdolio Chhatra Jote and Garo Student Union formed a human chain and lit candles yesterday evening near Raju Sculpture of Dhaka University, demanding maximum punishment for the rapists.

Biplob Chiran, general secretary of Garo Student Union, alleged that the administration has always "mocked" indigenous people whenever incidents of sexual assault and rape take place.

In separate statements, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Nari Sanghati, Sammilita Samajik Andolon, Bangladesh Adibashi Union, Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and Udichi Shilpi Goshthi, among others, also condemned the incident in separate statements.

Clean Dhaka top priority

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mostly kept open. They pollute the environment, as the waste stench of the rotting waste spreads around and stinky liquid seeps through the containers.

The waste is transported from collection sites to designated landfill grounds for dumping.

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sayeed Khokon said, "Waste management is also one of my top priority goals. We are soon going to distribute waste collection bags among 10,000 households. Later, bags would be supplied to the rest of the 1.43 lakh households [in DSCC]."

He told the discussion that after assuming office, he took part in cleanliness campaigns in different areas, including Kaptan bazar and Shyambazar.

The DSCC chief elaborated on some of the goals he has set to achieve in a year's time and said he has instructed the officials concerned to free the Dhupkhola and Golapbagh playgrounds from illegal occupancy and fix all the street lights before the holy Shab-e-Barat (June 2).

"Most of the parks and playgrounds in the city are now illegally occupied. Only 20 percent of the street lights are working," mentioned Khokon.

illegal occupation, he said a hidden nexus of beneficiaries has been behind it. He sought support from all quarters to free the pavements from illegal occupation.

Annisul said capturing footpaths in the city is a million dollar business. It requires a political decision and combined efforts of the city corporations, police and vendors to free the walkways from occupiers, he noted.

He outlined his immediate targets that include regaining control of grabbed parks and playgrounds, ensuring public security and removing illegal and hazardous billboards.

Only 976 billboards out of about 4,000 have approval from the DNCC, he added.

Salma A Shafi, a researcher at Centre for Urban Studies, said the mayors should use the ward councillors as their deputies to deliver services to city residents.

Ishrat Islam, professor of urban planning at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), echoed Salma's views.

Taqsem A Khan, managing director of Dhaka Wasa, blamed filling up of conservable floodplains and wetlands, and obstructing of flows in 65 canals for waterlogging in the capital. The canals are linked with four rivers around the city.

storm water drain, 10kms of box culvert and 65kms of canals for the city's drainage system, he added.

A huge volume of solid waste, mostly from slums, remains out of the waste collection process. Besides, human waste is directly disposed of into the surface and storm drains in absence of septic tanks, said Md Ansar Ali Khan, chief executive officer of the DSCC.

Md Ashraf Islam, deputy town planner of Rajuk, said private land in flood flow zones, water retention areas and wetlands should be acquired by the government for conservation to help resolve waterlogging.

On illegal commercialisation of residential areas in the capital, Rajuk board member Md Abdur Rahman said eviction drives would be conducted against commercial establishments at residential houses if the city corporations stopped issuing trade licences to them and their utility connections were snapped.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said, "We want to be by your [mayors'] side to support you and work together for the benefit of Dhaka city."

Prof Nizamuddin Ahmed, former dean of Architecture, Urban and Regional Planning at Buet; and BM Enamul Haque, CEO of Dhaka North City Corporation, also spoke.