

## MUNICIPALITY POLLS

Ershad doubts  
polls being  
credible

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People would forget all the misdeeds of the ruling Awami League if it held a credible municipality polls on December 30, said Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday.

He made the comment at a discussion at his Banani office while talking to his party's nomination seekers for the upcoming polls.

However, Ershad, also special envoy to PM Sheikh Hasina, expressed his doubt over the polls being credible, saying only Allah could say.

Raushan Ershad, opposition leader and also the party's senior presidium member, attended the programme with Ershad. The two JP leaders' sitting together has not happened in a long time.

Party insiders said she went to the programme so that Ershad could not deprive her followers to get the party's nominations.

Criticising the party chief for not inviting her to the programme, Raushan said, "I never get any invitation for any [party] programmes. I come here today [Sunday] with my own interest."

When asked, Ershad said his party would contest the election alone as it got nothing before participating in polls under the alliance banner.

He said they would tell the Election Commission to defer the polls by seven days. But, if the commission did not extend the time, they would complete all polls work within the stipulated time, he added.

## Prayers resume

OF THE TWO INJURED, WHO WERE ADMITTED TO SHAHEED ZIAUR RAHMAN MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL, 60-YEAR-OLD ABDUL TAHER, A DEVOTEE, HAS BEEN RECOVERING WHILE THE CONDITION OF IMAM SHAHINUR ISLAM, 35, HAS NOT CHANGED, SAID REZAUL ALAM JEWEL, VICE-PRINCIPAL OF THE HOSPITAL.

Meanwhile, police formed a five-member body to assist Kamruzzaman Mia, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Shibganj Police Station, in the investigation into the attack.

The development came as the investigation officer failed to make any headway in the probe. Additional Superintendent of Police (East) in Bogra Arifur Rahman Mandol will lead the probe body.

Asked whether he came to learn anything about the attackers and their motives, Kamruzzaman said, "We are trying but yet to have any concrete information."

Arifur Rahman said no progress had been made in the probe.

The Rapid Action Battalion yesterday handed over two youths, who had been detained in connection with the attack, to Shibganj police for interrogation.

They are Shahinur Rahman, 24, a student of Azizul Haque College, and trader Raihan Ali, 28, of Amtoli of Shibganj upazila.

Another man detained by the Rab, Minhaj Uddin, 28, of Gupinathpur, was released.

## 'Killer' cop

FROM PAGE 1  
WITH KOTWALI POLICE STATION AGAINST REZAUL, SAID ABDUL HASAN, OFFICER-IN-CHARGE OF THE STATION.

The OC said they were trying to arrest the suspended SI.

A police investigation into the police negligence was underway, said sources at the prosecution division of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Rezaul fled after he, another suspended SI Mohammad Nuruzzaman and their informer Babu alias Ratan, all accused in the same case, were being taken to jail.

They had surrendered before a court and sought bail. But, it rejected the pleas and sent them to jail.

The judge of Special Judge Court-5 of Dhaka also framed charges against them and fixed January 19, 2016 for starting the trial.

According to the case statement, the accused picked up businessman Faruk Hossain Kamal on February 19, 2012, from his home in the capital's Kaful area and demanded Tk 50,000 as ransom.

As Kamal's family refused to pay the money, the trio tortured him inhumanely while he was in police custody.

Later, the victim was shown arrested in an extortion case and produced before a Dhaka court with a five-day remand plea on February 21 the same year.

But the court rejected the prayer and sent him to jail because his health condition was not so good.

As Kamal's health condition deteriorated, he was admitted to a jail hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died a week later.

Around two months later, his sister Parvin filed a complaint with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

The court later ordered Kaful Police Station to register the complaint with it as a regular case.

On March 1 this year, Criminal Investigation Department Inspector Mazharul Islam, also the investigation officer of the case, submitted a charge sheet to the court, naming the two police officials and the informer as accused.

## Parties divided

FROM PAGE 1

Wrapping up the meetings with the three parties, Rakibuddin told journalists that the EC would sit today to decide on the parties' demands for deferring the polls and lifting restrictions on electioneering by MPs.

He said it would not be possible for the EC to hold the polls in January or February next year, as the EC has to update the electoral roll in January and SCS exams will be held in February.

Earlier, a six-member AL delegation led by party's Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif met the CEC, and requested that changes are brought to the electoral code of conduct to allow MPs to join the electioneering in the upcoming municipal election.

The electoral code of conduct restricts individuals enjoying government facilities from taking part in electoral activities or electioneering for any candidate. The list includes Prime Minister, Speaker, ministers and MPs.

The restriction will not affect the BNP as the party, which boycotted the January 5 national election last year, does not have any representation in parliament. All its office bearers are free to join electioneering for their mayoral candidates.

However, many of the AL central leaders will not be able to take part in electioneering since they are ministers or MPs. The party now wants the EC to change the provision.

Emerging from the meeting with the EC, Hanif told reporters, "We have argued that since the municipal polls will now be held under party banners, lawmakers have the constitutional right to take part in electioneering.

"We have requested the chief election commissioner not to deprive

lawmakers of their rights."

JP Secretary General Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu, who led a five-member team at the meeting with the EC, also spoke in favour of allowing MPs to join electioneering.

"We told the EC that it is the democratic right of party leaders and activists. They [the EC] cannot curtail the rights by imposing restrictions," he told reporters after the meeting.

On the BNP demand for deferring the polls, Hanif said he hoped the EC would settle the issue in accordance with the rules.

Later, a seven-member BNP delegation led by party leader Osman Farroque met the CEC.

"We told the CEC that the commission should remain vigilant so that ministers and MPs cannot join election campaign or influence the polls," Osman, adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, told reporters.

The party's demands include an immediate stop to arrest of opposition men, release of detained BNP men, a level playing field in the polls, improvement of law and order, and dropping of "pro-AL public officials" from the list of election officials.

On the BNP demand for releasing its detained leaders and activists before the polls, the CEC said if anybody felt that he was arrested for wrong reasons or for harassment, he could go to court. And the commission would obey the court order.

According to the election schedule, of the 323 municipalities in the country, 236 will go to polls on December 30.

The deadline for submitting nomination papers is December 3 while the last date for withdrawal of candidature is December 13.

## Nepal blocks

FROM PAGE 16

NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OF NEPAL," THE PTI agency said.

A Kathmandu movie theatre stopped showing Indian movies two days ago, an employee said.

Nepal yesterday briefly detained 13 personnel of India's Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) who had "inadvertently" entered the country while chasing suspected smugglers near Jhapa district, bordering Bihar.

Nepal's Armed Police Force personnel deployed at the Border Account Post at Kechana Village in Jhapa district, bordering Bihar's Kishanganj district, arrested the SSB jawans around 6:30 am, according to Nepal Police sources. Four SSB jawans were carrying modern rifles, they said.

All 13 SSB personnel were later released after being briefly kept at the APF camp in Kechana.

Meanwhile, Nepalese police arrested 38 protesters yesterday for trying to enforce a strike against neighbouring India.

"We have arrested 38 people for trying to block roads and vandalise vehicles," police spokesman Kamal Singh Bam told AFP.

Protests at the border over Nepal's new constitution have led to crippling

fuel shortages in the landlocked Himalayan nation, while medicines are also running short.

On Saturday, Maoist said they set on fire a vehicle belonging to the Indian embassy here. However, both police and embassy officials refuted the claim.

Party members claimed that they burnt the vehicle and smashed its window panes to protest India's blockade of road transport of supplies of food items and other commodities to Nepal.

"We had earlier warned not to ride Indian vehicles in Nepal, otherwise the angry people can do anything. Modi government did not take this issue seriously and that is why the people are angry. This anger will convert into a struggle. This will neither benefit India nor Modi," said Khadga Bahadur Vishwakarma, spokesperson of Nepal Communist Party Maoist.

The vehicle was parked at the Indian embassy premises here and no one was seated in it. The Indian embassy said the vehicle belonged to one of its employees.

Both officials and police refuted the claim of the CPN-Maoist, led by Netra Bikram Chand, and said the vehicle caught fire due to a technical fault.

MORE STORIES ON PAGE 9

## Rallies call for Paris

FROM PAGE 16

ANY ATTEMPTS BY THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES TO USE THE INCIDENTS THIS AFTERNOON TO UNNECESSARILY CLAMP DOWN ON CIVIL LIBERTIES".

Earlier in Paris, a human chain was formed by hundreds linking arms along the 3km (1.9 miles) route of a march that was called off after the 13 November attacks.

A gap in the chain was left in front of the Bataclan concert hall, where 89 people were killed.

Hundreds of pairs of shoes were left on Place de la Republique to remember those left frustrated in their plans to march.

Among them were a pair donated by Pope Francis, who has called for urgent action on climate change.

Elsewhere in Europe, organisers said some 10,000 people turned out in Berlin, with close to double that in Madrid.

An estimated 50,000 people took part in a march in central London, where opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn addressed crowds.

Activists want action to limit the rise in the average global temperature to 2C (3.6F) above pre-industrial levels.

In Sydney, many people carried placards reading "There is no Planet B" and "Solidarity on a global scale".

"In 10 years' time our children are going to say, 'Mum, did you know about this? What was everyone doing?'" said Kate Charlesworth, a doctor and mother, in Sydney.

Mayor Clover Moore tweeted to say that, according to organisers, the true number of demonstrators was "at least 45,000", which would make it the biggest ever such march in Sydney, if confirmed.

"Those who did the least to cause the problem are feeling the impacts first and hardest, like our sisters and brothers in the Pacific," said Oxfam campaigner Judee Adams in a protest of some 5,000 people in Adelaide.

Further demonstrations are being held in Sao Paulo, Mexico City and

New York, among other cities.

About 150 world leaders are due to attend the Paris talks, including US President Barack Obama, China's Xi Jinping, India's Narendra Modi and Russia's Vladimir Putin.

Hollande says he hopes a deal can be achieved, but that it will not be easy.

"Man is the worst enemy of man," he said. "We can see it with terrorism. But we can say the same when it comes to climate. Human beings are destroying nature, damaging the environment."

## Woman found dead in capital

Two 'commit suicide'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police found a woman dead in a Jatrabari house of the capital yesterday.

The body of Mosammam Shahzad, 23, wife of Mofizur Rahman, bore injury marks in the head, said Jatrabari police Officer-in-Charge Aboni Shankar Kar.

She along with one of her brothers-in-law Miran rented the house in West Jatrabari leaving Jessor, where she lived with her husband, the OC quoted locals as saying. Miran was being interrogated, he said.

Meanwhile, two students allegedly committed suicide in separate incidents in the capital's Kalabagan and Tejgaon on Saturday night.

In Kalabagan, Afsana Akter Babli, of Bogra, hanged herself from the ceiling of her room. A second semester student of Software Engineering at Daffodil International University, she had been staying there for over a year, said her cousin.

In another incident, Milon Mia, 18, a student of Tejgaon Polytechnic Institution, also committed suicide by hanging himself from the ceiling in his mess in Paschim Nakhal Para.

## Muscle power

FROM PAGE 1

sitting inside the office of Bangladesh Truck and Covered Van Drivers Union while the clash was raging outside. Some truck owners and drivers were there with him.

"They make a lot of money by illegally grabbing space here ... Some trucks are here for years. Vehicles are being repaired and painted, taking a long time. The terminal space is not meant for this."

Referring to his duty as an elected mayor, Annisul said the prime minister, the Awami League and the people of Dhaka have entrusted him with reducing traffic congestion in the DNCC area in a systematic way.

"But it is not acceptable that somebody will throw brick chips or some 500 people will scream in protest and we will back off. I knew what would happen before I came here. I'm ready for anything," he said, adding local political leaders and truck owners were with him.

"I want one thing only: Don't park vehicles on the roads and don't illegally occupy the terminal space."

"People remain stranded on the road for hours. Even pregnant women suffer in traffic congestion here due to illegal parking of trucks."

Some 500 trucks are illegally parked on the road in Tejgaon terminal area 24-7, the mayor said.

"It's a big road. Let people use it," he appealed, calling upon all to stand beside in his efforts to clear the roads from illegal occupation.

Later, he made an announcement through a megaphone that a proper truck terminal would be built there so that illegal parking of vehicles doesn't disrupt traffic in Shat Rasta, Karwan Bazar, Farmgate and Nakhalpara areas.

"We have been able to clear a significant part of the area and will continue to do it to make the entire area free," he told an unruly mob of several hundred transport workers.

## Violins

FROM PAGE 16

and her family ensemble opened with Raga Bageshri, and then presented a Banarsi thumri in Raga Khamaj, before treating the audience to a violin recital of Nazrul Sangeet "Brojogop Khele Hori". She also explained her playing style with examples.

Dancer-choreographer Warda Rihab opened the day's proceedings with a burst of colour of vibrancy as she and her group presented a beautiful Manipuri dance titled "Leichan". Some 22 dancers and four pung-cholam (mridangam) musicians brought out a piece of Manipur in the 35-minute production.

Another Bangladeshi artiste, Yousuf Khan, presented Raga Kirwan on the sarod next, with Iftekharul Alam Pradhan on table. The dhruvapad vocal performance of Ustad Wasifuddin Dagar followed, who presented the melancholic Raga Behag a composition on Raga Shankara and a short piece on Raga Sohni.

Vidushi Shriti Sadolikar took the stage around midnight, and began her recital with a khayal set on Raga Nand (Anandi Kalyan). Yet to come on the night were the much-anticipated mridangam ensemble led by Guru Karakudi Mani, and Vidushi Shubha Mudgal's khayal presentation.

MORE STORIES ON PAGE 9

## Move on to save

FROM PAGE 16

This committee completed its investigation in only four days and submitted its report to the DIP chief on June 10, the sources said, adding that this probe "found" evidence of forgery in the issuance of only four official passports and claimed that the other three officials were directly involved in the scam, not Muyeed.

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