

# MUNICIPAL POLLS AL warns leaders who ignored party decisions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League has decided that the grassroots leaders, who ignored party decision during the municipality elections last December, will be forbidden to participate in the party chairman candidate selection process before union parishad polls.

The decision was made at a meeting of party joint general secretaries and organising secretaries, held at party president's Dhanmondi office in the capital yesterday with party presidium member Obaidul Quader in the chair.

According to the meeting decision, the presidents and general secretaries who participated in the last municipality polls as independent candidates or worked for party rebels, ignoring party decisions cannot take part in the scrutiny process, said AL Joint General Secretary Mahabubul Alam Hanif after the meeting.

Presidents and general secretaries of district, upazila and union units will select chairman candidates and send the list to the central committee for final selection.

Hanif said those who would contest the UP polls defying party decision or get involved in any activity going against the party's discipline would face a harsher punishment.

The party will send directives to the grassroots today asking them to start the selection process and send the list in the shortest possible time.

# Leopard hurts

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dangerous animal on Sunday. The leopard, which strolled into the Vibgyor International school, was eventually tranquilised and released.

A recent wildlife census estimated that India has a leopard population of between 12,000 and 14,000.

The eight-year-old male was spotted strolling inside the school premises in the Kundalahalli area.

Footage on the school's security cameras showed it attacking a man near a swimming pool.

Conservation scientist Sanjay Gubbi and forest department employee Benny Maurius were injured when they tried to corner the animal and tranquilise him, reports say.

"It was a long struggle to capture the leopard. Although it was injected with tranquilisers it could be captured only around 20.15 local time when the medication took full effect," senior police official S Boralingaiah told reporters.

Wildlife official Ravi Ralph told the BBC Hindi's Imran Qureshi that the leopard possibly strayed into the school from a patch of forest not far from the school.

The captured animal has been moved to a national park and the six injured people, including a cameraperson of a TV channel, have been treated for minor injuries.

Leopards and other big cats have been known to stray into populated areas, and conservationists have warned that such confrontations may increase as humans encroach on animal habitats.

Last year a male leopard spent five hours with its head stuck in a metal pot in a village in the northern state of Rajasthan.



A Bangladesh Chhatra League activist addressing a rally in the capital's Shankar area. The speakers demanded the arrest of The Daily Star editor and closure of the daily for running "false news" against Sheikh Hasina during the tenure of the last caretaker government.

PHOTO: STAR

# 15 lakh to get job in 3 years

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services, manufacturing, construction and plantation sectors there, said Shaful.

Once the new deal is signed, the previous labour agreements of 2012 and the protocol of 2014 would cease to exist, he said.

Malaysian employers would pay for workers' security deposits, levies, visa fees, and health and compensation insurance.

Bangladesh and Malaysia are going for the new deal after the failure of the G2G. Only 10,000 Bangladeshi workers have so far been sent to Malaysia under the G2G since it was launched in 2012.

Industry insiders said powerful lobbies with vested interests had a part in the failure of the G2G, which led Malaysia to take an initiative in June last year for recruitment of workers through private sector.

Both the countries went for the G2G, as Bangladesh's labour relations with Malaysia had been stained with corrup-

tion, joblessness, low wage, non-payment and bad living conditions when private recruiting agents were involved in the business in 2007-08.

Involvement of too many middlemen and charging each worker around Tk 2 lakh for recruitment in Malaysia were cited as major reasons behind the problems then, which led to a ban on recruitments from Bangladesh in early 2009.

The recent government move to send workers to Malaysia through the private sector caused controversies with several Malaysian companies allegedly lobbying the two governments to win contracts for management and monitoring of recruitment.

The names of Bestinet, Real Time Networking and Synerflux came up prominently.

Following rights groups' criticism against Bestinet and Real Time Networking, Synerflux was reportedly short-listed by Malaysia.

Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies

(Baira) raised strong objections against Synerflux, saying it would create monopoly.

On December 6 last year, the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur wrote to the expatriates' welfare ministry in Dhaka.

It read, "The Malaysian government will select Bangladesh Recruiting Authorities through online system supervised by a [Malaysian] company. The Bangladesh government will not have any control to ensure whether any recruiting agency will get work or not."

Yesterday, the cabinet secretary said there would be no interference from middlemen, as Malaysia would ensure job security and other facilities for workers, and also verify the capacity of employers in Malaysia.

The workers would be sent from the jobseekers' database of the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training. The Bangladesh mission in Kuala Lumpur would attest the workers' appointment letters, he said.

Shaful said workers would be

recruited for an initial period of three years, and it could be extended. He, however, couldn't say what the minimum wage would be.

The wages of workers would be directly sent to their bank accounts. A Joint Working Group (JWG) would be in place to conduct monitoring and protect the workers' rights and interests.

If there is any allegation, the JWG would try to settle it. If it fails, the matter would be sent to higher authorities, he said.

Baira President Abul Basher told The Daily Star that they find the draft labour deal suitable since any recruiting agent can get involved in the recruitment process.

Wishing anonymity, an official of Bangladesh expatriates' welfare ministry said the recruitment would be made online. But it was not specified whether the Malaysian government or any private firm would operate the online system.

Around 600,000 Bangladeshis are now working in Malaysia.

# Refund extra

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The noted citizens led by rights activist Sultana Kamal protested and condemned collection of extra tuition and admission fees. Hayat Mahmud and Prof MM Akash were also present at the meeting.

Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain O Salish Kendra, read out a statement signed by the country's 28 noted citizens. The statement was first issued on January 17.

She said the institutions which had collected additional fees would have to be held accountable.

A number of renowned private schools in Dhaka and Chittagong suddenly hiked the monthly tuition and admission fees at the beginning of this year citing teachers' demand for a pay hike after the government had approved the new pay scale for the public servants.

The tuition fee hike outraged guard-

ians who staged demonstrations for two weeks. Following this, the education ministry asked the school authorities to stop collecting the increased fees until further notice.

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education in an investigation found that seven renowned non-government schools had collected tuition fees hiked by 11 percent to as high as 100 percent.

The minister yesterday said the schools, which consider tuition fees should be hiked in line with the new pay scale, would have to come up with their rationale to the ministry.

"We can have a discussion to that end," Nahid said.

As some reporters raised the issue that Ideal School and College, Motijheel enrolled around 2,000 more students than its capacity, the minister said action would be taken against the institution.

# 35 accused indicted

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"incomplete" as it was prepared without interrogating Nur and it did not have the names of some of the accused she had mentioned in her case statement.

Yesterday morning, 23 of 35 accused, including Nur and three former Rab officials -- Tareque Sayeed, Arif Hossain and Masud Rana -- were produced before the court amid tight security, court sources said.

Public Prosecutor Wajed Ali Khokon read the charges brought against the accused.

The accused pleaded not guilty.

Wajed later told reporters that of the 23 produced yesterday, Nur and his associate Mizanur Rahman were yet to make confessional statements.

MA Rashid, lawyer of sacked Rab official Arif Hossain, alleged that there were loopholes in probe of the murder cases. He said he argued before the court about the loopholes but the

court indicted Arif rejecting his plea.

"Justice will be ensured once the accused move to the higher court," he added.

Ashrafuzzaman, lawyer of Nur's aide Mizanur, Mohammad Ali, Mortuja Jaman Churchill, Ali Ahmed, and Raham Ali, claimed that his clients were innocent.

He also said the charge sheet was "not acceptable".

Meanwhile, the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate KM Mohiuddin denied Nur bail in three cases for extortion at Shiddhirganj area.

Additional Public Prosecutor KM Fazlur Rahman said Nur was granted bail in three cases filed for possessing illegal narcotics and firearms.

Following the murder of the seven, Nur fled to India and was arrested in Kolkata on June 14, 2015, for trespassing and keeping illegal firearms.

He was brought back to Bangladesh on November 12, 2015.

# Editors

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lapse in his editorial judgement in publishing a few reports that the newspaper could not independently verify at the time.

During the 2007-08 period, almost all the mainstream media outlets -- both print and electronic -- ran reports on corruption by top political figures based on information given by the joint forces.

But some ruling party leaders and lawmakers are making an issue out of it and taking a dig at The Daily Star and its editor. Attempts are also being made to distort and give negative spins to what Mahfuz Anam has actually said during the talk show.

Talking to reporters at the AL president's Dhanmondi office after a party meeting, Hanif said, "We think that by doing such an unethical job [running reports without verification], the editors have proved that they sometimes work as a partner of conspiracy against the country's interest."

Meanwhile, Chhatra League men of Dhaka-10 constituency staged a demonstration in the city's Jigatola, demanding the arrest of Mahfuz Anam and closure of the paper for what they claimed running "false news" against Sheikh Hasina after 1/11.

Responding to a query, Hanif said the authorities concerned might take legal action against those who took part in the "conspiracy".

"The person who was involved with such activities and who has conceded his mistake ... there is no chance of avoiding the responsibility by mere confession," he said, adding that the nation wanted to hear more from the editor.

The AL leader also said a daily newspaper's editor admitted that "they committed a mistake" after eight years, reports BSS.

"But who will take the responsibility, as this mistake caused a huge loss to the countrymen and Sheikh Hasina had to go to jail? Sheikh Hasina was defamed. Who will take this responsibility? There is no scope to skip this responsibility," the BSS quoted him as saying.

# BCL PROTEST

About 200 BCL activists formed a human chain at Jigatola bus stop around 11:30am, marched through Dhanmondi-15 area and burnt two effigies of Mahfuz Anam.

They chanted various slogans against Mahfuz Anam and demanded that he resign immediately. They also urged the government to arrest and try him for "sedition".

The BCL men took to the streets a day after seven lawmakers, including Falze Noor Tapes of Dhaka-10 constituency, lambasted the newspaper and its editor at Jatiya Sangsad.

# 'We too can'

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Islam from the nearby Mulakandi village under the same upazila.

Jahurul says he visits Sujon every Friday and spends time with him. He first talks to Sujon's grandmother about his cleaning and feeding. He then carries Sujon outside in his special sitting chair and takes him to children playing nearby, he says, adding that he also tries to communicate with Sujon.

This correspondent also met Rubia Akter of Daulatpur who was seen taking care of 15-year-old Ashrafal, another physically challenged teenage boy.

Jahurul and Rubia are two of 120 volunteers, all of whom are college students, working under a project called "We too can" in Ghior and Daulatpur. Funded by Niketon, a Netherlands-funded NGO, the project was initiated by Disabled Rehabilitation and Research Association (DRRA), says Dalima Rahman, project co-coordinator.

The volunteers are working for 130 physically challenged children in the two upazilas of Manikganj.

Jahurul is a first-year student of BBS and Rubia a second-year student of BA. They say they are happy to work in an organisation that helps physically challenged children.

DRRA gave training to college students of Ghior and Daulatpur upazila. After training, 120 college students expressed their willingness to work for physically challenged children as volunteers.

The organisation sits with the volunteers every month, says Dalima.

# Libya seeks extra week to form unity govt

AFP, Tripoli

Libya's presidential council said yesterday it needs one more week to form a national unity government, after the country's internationally recognised parliament rejected an initial line-up.

The council, chaired by prime minister-designate Fayed al-Sarraj, had been due to submit the name of a new unity government on Wednesday for approval by the recognised parliament.

# Suspect killed in Rab

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The riders did not stop there and opened fire on them, the press note added.

The on-duty Rab men, led by Deputy Assistant Director Sadrul Alam, retaliated with gunfire "to save their lives and government property", it mentioned.

At one point of the exchange of gunfire, riders of one motorcycle managed to flee, and another bike fell on the ground, about 100 yards from the Rab men's vehicle.

After the Rab members reached the spot, they found a bullet-hit person lying beside the bike. They searched the area and recovered a foreign-made pistol, a magazine, a bullet and 10 empty shells, claimed the press note.

The injured was taken to the capital's Mitford Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

He was identified as Motahar from the national identity card found in his trousers' pocket, it added.

The Daily Star could not independently verify the Rab claims.

Sources at Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue, where an autopsy was performed, said four bullet wounds were found on his body.

plaintiff of the Abdullah murder case, said he was summoned by the Rab to identify the corpse.

"I wanted Motahar to be caught and tried for his gruesome offense," he said.

He demanded arrest and punishment of others involved in the killing.

Police arrested Motahar's son Mehedi and daughter Mitu, who were allegedly involved in the killing.

During primary interrogation, Mehedi confessed that he along with his father was involved in the abduction and murder of the boy, police said, adding that the child's decomposed body was recovered from the house as per Mehedi's information.

Son of Badal Hossain, an expatriate living in Kuwait, and Rina Begum, Abdullah went missing after Juma prayers on January 29.

Around 5:30pm the same day, someone texted the victim's family, saying Abdullah had been kidnapped. They also demanded Tk 5.5 lakh as ransom.

His grandfather Marfat filed a general diary that night and an abduction case two days later with Keraniganj Police Station.

According to the child's family, they paid Tk 2 lakh against the Tk 5.5 lakh demanded by the captors.

# SALE OF UNSAFE BLOOD 4 transfusion centres fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday fined four blood transfusion centres in the capital Tk 6.7 lakh for selling unsafe blood.

During a drive, a mobile court of the elite force found bags of blood preserved without following proper procedures and the necessary screening for germs, said Rab Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam.

The centres are Chankharpul General Hospital and Alchemy Medical Centre in Bongshal, Life Safe Blood Bank and Transfusion Medicine Centre in Shahbagh, and Creative Blood Bank and Transfusion Centre in Labagh.

"We found that the blood bags were kept in domestic refrigerators instead of the specially designed fridges that preserve the quality of blood," said Sarwoer.

He said Chankharpul General Hospital, whose licence was revoked last September, was found to be handing out blood test reports without conducting any tests. Its owners Shafikur Rahman and Tutul Sheikh were fined Tk 4,00,000.

# Bills for two universities placed in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rabindra University Bangladesh Bill was placed in the House last night aimed at preserving the memory of Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore as well as studying, practising and carrying out research on his works and creations.

Another bill titled "The Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Digital University, Bangladesh Bill, 2016" was also placed in the House with a view to expediting the process of building a digital Bangladesh.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid placed the bills which were sent to the parliamentary standing committee on education ministry for scrutiny. The committee was asked to submit its report within 30 days.

The Rabindra University will be located at Shahzadpur in Sirajganj.

In the Rabindra University Bangladesh bill, there are provisions of making the president as the chancellor of the university and giving academic and honorary degree.

posals for formulating university curriculum, admission, education medium, honorary degree, annual report, university fund, gratuity, retirement allowances, general fund and other related matters.

Placing the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Digital University bill, the education minister said it would expand facilities for higher education on science and modern technology and also the science-based subjects for improved education, research and technology innovation.

According to the bill, the university would make significant contribution in creating employment and innovating new entrepreneurs at home and abroad on ICT sector.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday placed a bill titled "Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank Bill, 2016" to pay the amount of capital subscription.

The bill was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on finance ministry for scrutiny. The committee was asked to submit its report within seven days.