

None were foiled

Says Mosharraf Hossain about Thursday's rallies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Awami League presidium member and Housing and Public Works Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain yesterday said none of the rallies in Chattogram were foiled on Thursday.

"Few activists were disrupting the atmosphere by chanting slogans at a rally. Being angry, I did not deliver a speech there," he said at a press conference at Chattogram Press Club.

The rally was held at Azadibazar in Fatikchhari upazila. The minister visited the upazila to attend five such gatherings, organised by the upazila unit of AL.

According to witnesses, some AL activists at Azadibazar started chanting slogans in the name of Abu Tayab, former general

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An artisan puts final touches to an idol of Goddess Durga. Durga Puja, one of the biggest religious festivals of the Hindu community, will be celebrated countrywide from October 15 to 19. The photo was taken recently in CRB area of Chattogram city.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Barishal getting ready to welcome Durga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Preparations at over two thousand mandaps in Barishal division are in the final stage as Durga Puja, one of the largest festivals of the Hindus, draws nearer.

Artisans are now busy putting the finishing touches to idols at the mandaps -- a platform set up for worshipping. The organisers and law enforcers are equally busy arranging security, traffic management and other facilities during the festival.

This year's Durga Puja starts on October 15. It will end with Bijaya Dashami on October 19.

In Barishal district alone, the puja will be held at 601 temples this year, said Deputy Commissioner Habibur Rahaman.

Rakhal Chandra Dey, president of Puja Udjapan Parishad in the district, said over two thousand mandaps will be set up all over the division this time.

The division's largest mandap is being set up in Kabutarkhali village under Mathbaria upazila of Pirojpur district, said Sudip Halder, its organiser.

At this mandap, there will be at least 156 idols and sculptures including the characters from popular children's educational cartoon Mina, Sudip said, adding that 6 artisans have been working for the last three months at the mandap that drew around 1 lakh visitors last year.

In Barishal city, members of Puja Udjapan Parishad will enforce strict monitoring to ensure a festive atmosphere said the parishad's General Secretary Narayan Chandra Dey.

Barishal Metropolitan Police Commissioner Mosharraf Hossain said they are taking all measures to ensure security, swift movement of traffic and uninterrupted power supply during the occasion. A team of law enforcers will be posted at each of the temples.

Bus kills college student, injures 4 in Siddhirganj

STAR REPORT

A student of Eden Mohila College in Dhaka was killed and four others injured in a road accident in Siddhirganj of Narayanganj yesterday.

The student, Taslima Akter Luva, 25, who recently finished her master's, was killed on the spot when a Laguna, in which she and the other injured were riding, was rear-ended by a Shyamoli Paribahan bus.

The incident took place near PDK CNG Pump in Sanarpar area, near the junction of Dhaka-Chattogram and Dhaka-Sylhet highways, reports our Narayanganj correspondent.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Nasir Uddin of Siddhirganj Police Station said the Dhaka-bound bus hit the Laguna from behind while the latter was stationary at the spot in the afternoon, killing Laguna passengers Taslima and injuring Nigar Sultana, 20, Rabeya Begum, 35, Idris Ali, 44, and Seema Akter, 21.

Locals rescued the injured and sent Rabeya and Idris, both in critical state, to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. They sent

Nigar and Seema to Pro-Active Medical College Hospital in Siddhirganj.

SI Nasir said they are yet to arrest the bus driver and his helper who fled the scene following the incident.

Taslima's body was sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for an autopsy, he said, adding that the process of filing a case in this connection was underway.

Quoting her father, Abdul Latif, the SI said Taslima was one her way to Dhaka to attend a preparatory meeting for a programme at which she would receive her master's certificate today.

Meanwhile, two women were killed and three others injured yesterday afternoon when a truck hit a battery-run autorickshaw on Dhaka-Sirajganj highway in Mulibari area near Bangabandhu Bridge, reports our Pabna correspondent.

The identities of the victims, aged around 35 to 38, could not be ascertained till the filing of this report.

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India won't interfere in Bangladesh's politics

Says Shringla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Harsh Vardhan Shringla yesterday said India will not interfere in any internal affairs of Bangladesh including the next general election.

Shringla made the comment while inaugurating Mahatma Gandhi Auditorium at Forakkabad Degree College in Chandpur.

Bangladesh is going through various changes as a result of development projects. "India will remain beside you as a friendly country," said the high commissioner.

He said India wants safe repatriation of Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh.

"We have provided humanitarian support thrice to the Rohingyas since the beginning of the crisis. We will also distribute warm clothes among them in the upcoming winter," said Shringla.

He said India has taken a bold stand in favour of Bangladesh since the beginning of the crisis.

The event was presided over by Sujit Ray Nondi, relief and social welfare secretary of Awami League. Lawmaker Shamsul Haque Bhuiyan, District Administrator Mazedur Rahman Khan and district Awami League president Nasiruddin Ahmed also spoke at the programme.

Liton takes charge as Rajshahi mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The sky over Rajshahi city lit up in colourful fireworks yesterday evening, in celebration of the reception of the newly-elected mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation AHM Khairuzzaman Liton.

City corporation workers, supported by activists of the ruling Awami League, set off fireworks in different areas of the city simultaneously to mark the occasion.

Liton took over as the mayor in a grand reception ceremony held at the Green Plaza of Nagar Bhaban. The city corporation spent over Tk 1.20 crore for organising the ceremony.

The 40 newly-elected ward councillors also took charge at the function, held with Rajshahi divisional commissioner Nur-ur Rahman in the chair. Over 2,500 people, mostly city dwellers and invited guests, attended the ceremony.

Liton and 40 councillors pledged for working together for development of the city.

In his speech, Mayor Liton said he wants to serve people beyond the city, adding that the mayor's responsibility was not limited to ensuring the civic amenities only.

"I consider myself the prime minister of Rajshahi; 40 councillors are my ministers and the city corporation's chief executive officer is my cabinet secretary. I would oversee and pursue the development activities of Rajshahi region covering all 16 districts," he said.

In a sarcastic remark on voters' trends, Liton said unlike voters of Chittagong and southern districts, voters of Rajshahi do not understand which party to vote for in elections.

"The voters of Chittagong and southern districts always vote for the party that is in power. Our voters hardly understand that, and that is why our region is lagging behind in development," he quipped.

He said as promised before the election, he would build a direct railway service on Rajshahi-Dhaka route within four months.

Liton said he would convince the government to expand the Shah Makhdum Airport to turn it into an international airport, so that air services can be introduced on Rajshahi-Kolkata route.

The mayor also said he would take up an ambitious project for building a new city on 30 square kilometres of Padma river char.



Occupying public place, horses along with carriages are kept on the road under Mayor Hanif flyover, opposite Bangabazar. Coachmen also leave the animals on the central reservation, virtually turning it into a stable and making the place stinky and unhygienic. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

AL wants all to take part in polls: Anisul

BSS, Rangpur

Awami League wants participation of all political parties in the upcoming parliamentary elections, said Law Minister Anisul Huq.

"The elections will be held timely as per constitution," he said while addressing a ceremony after inaugurating the newly-built court building of the Chief Judicial Magistrate in Panchagarh town as chief guest on Thursday.

It was built at a cost of around Tk 50 crore by the Public Works Division (PWD).

With Panchagarh District and Sessions Judge Abu Mansur Ziaul Haque in the chair, Nurul Islam Sujon, MP; Nazmul Haque Prodhan, MP; Selina Jahan Lita, MP; Secretary of the Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry Abu Saleh Md Zahirul Haque; Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Zahirul Islam; Superintendent of Police Giasuddin Ahmed and District Bar Association President Advocate Nazmul Islam also spoke at the event.

The minister also addressed a rally organised by Boda upazila Awami League in the upazila town.

He said, "Political parties will decide on their own whether to take part in the polls. We have no say in this regard. We are requesting all [political parties concerned] to participate [in the polls]."

He alleged that certain quarters are conspiring to sabotage the elections for going to power. He asked people to be aware and thwart such conspiracies. The minister also urged all to vote for "Boat", the electoral symbol of AL.

Big changes

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"They [current government] are confusing people with their statement that an election-time government will be formed before the polls as per the constitution," he said.

FAKHRUL WARNS OF 'POLITICAL CRISIS'
BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday warned the government of a "political crisis" if party Chairperson Khaleda Zia is not freed from jail before the general election.

"Khaleda Zia is the last resort and the sole agent of democracy. Release her; otherwise a political crisis will happen, which the government will not be able to control," Fakhrul said.

He issued the warning at a programme organised at the AKM Siddique Hall in the Supreme Court.

He also criticised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her recent comments that the world leaders want to see her at the helm of Bangladesh and her government in power again.

"Nothing is possible without the support of the people. Get your senses right and ensure people's right to vote freely," Fakhrul said in response to the premier's statement.

Limited use of EVM if RPO amended

CEC says in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) KM Nurul Huda yesterday said Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) will be used in the next general election on a small scale if the Representation of Peoples Order (RPO) is amended by the time.

While visiting the stall of Election Commission (EC) at Unnoyan Mela at Alia Madrasa Field in Sylhet city, he spoke to the journalists.

The EC stall was providing first-hand experience of using EVMs to familiarise people with the technology.

The CEC will be visiting Sunamganj district today to attend a meeting with regional election officers, district administration and police about the upcoming national election.

Govt's development model creating inequality

Speakers tell CBS discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said the government's present development model is creating inequality and violence, and such model should be restructured to ensure democratic rights of people.

Centre for Bangladesh Studies (CBS) arranged the discussion on "Unnayan Model-er Shahingshata, Gonotantrik Nyajyatar Proshno" (Violence in development model, the question of democratic justice) at Bishwo Shahitto Kendro in the capital.

Tanjimuddin Khan, a teacher of International Relations department at Dhaka University, said Bangladesh's present political-economic model has been following a "neo-liberal policy".

Such policy was instrumental in helping a certain group of people becoming rich and advanced, while leaving the others behind, he said.

As a result, violence sparked when

deprived groups tried to establish their rights and advanced groups went for keeping the policy alive, he said.

"Democracy is not possible in such a political-economic system," he added.

The state opted for using its legal structure and also politicised its law enforcement agencies to enforce this so-called development model, said Supreme Court lawyer and rights activist Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua.

Indigenous rights activist Ilira Dewan said a type of development model was followed in the country's hilly region, which resulted in eviction of many families of ethnic communities from their ancestral homes.

Rushad Faridi, a teacher of Economics department at Dhaka University, said to overcome the present situation, the country's constitutional and legal structures need to be re-structured, giving priority to a humanistic approach.



With chains around their necks, a group of people stage a protest in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanding that the government raise the age limit for entering civil service to 35 years from 30. Bangladesh Sadharon Chhatra Parishad and Bangladesh Chhatra Parishad organised the event.

PHOTO: STAR