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CTG MAYORAL CANDIDATES Pledges are beyond their mandates

RASHIDUL HASAN and ARUN BIKASH DEY from Chattogram

Most pledges made by the mayoral aspirants of the two major parties -- Awami League and BNP -- in their manifestos for the January 27 Chattogram City Corporation election are beyond the legal and financial mandates of a mayor, experts said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, local government and urban experts said the promises made by the AL mayoral aspirant Rezaul Karim Chowdhury and his main rival BNP's Shahadat Hossain on the mass transport system, river and canal reclamation, stopping of hill cutting, land management, resolving housing and water-logging problems are not under their jurisdiction.

"The mayoral candidates just mentioned those in their manifesto to woo and attract voters," said urban researcher Prof Nazrul Islam, also chairman of Centre for Urban Studies.

The eminent urban expert also said, "It seems the mayoral candidates have made such pledges without having an understanding of their mandate and jurisdiction."

Local government experts said that in a bid to materialise those pledges, the government will have to delegate its power to the city corporation or a city government will have to be formed.

"But we have no instance of any political government delegating its power to a local government body like the city corporation," he said.

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People trying to lift a three-wheeler after it turned turtle in a head-on collision with a pickup on the Barishal-Dhaka highway near Barishal Sadar upazila's Rentitola area yesterday. Four people were injured in the accident. Many are defying the ban on three-wheelers plying highways, increasing the risk of road accidents.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Daily infection rate drops to below 4pc

473 new Covid cases detected

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh recorded a daily infection rate of 3.34 percent, with 473 new cases reported until early yesterday.

The country saw a daily infection rate of 5.49 percent on January 18, 4.90 percent on January 14, 8.29 percent on January 10, 7.52 percent on January 4, and 8.18 percent on January 1.

Bangladesh has reported 531,799 cases so far. The country's fatality number rose to 8,023 and the death rate to 1.51 percent, with 20 more Covid-19 deaths in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

On March 18, the country reported its first fatality.

So far, 3,555,558 tests, including 14,169 new ones, have been carried out. The overall infection rate stood at 14.96 percent, the Directorate General of Health Services said.

However, 476,413 patients -- 89.59 percent -- have recovered so far.

Dhaka to seek smooth supply of vaccines

Foreign secy to visit Delhi on Jan 28-30

PORIMOL PALMA

Dhaka would seek smooth supply of vaccine under the tripartite agreement on buying Covishield from Serum Institute of India when Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen visits Delhi from January 28-30.

Officials in Dhaka and Delhi said tackling the coronavirus pandemic and economic recovery are the most important challenges the world faces today. Therefore, cooperation on vaccine will be a very important part of the foreign secretary's visit to Delhi.

Besides, the foreign office consultations between the foreign secretaries of the two countries will also discuss the preparations on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Dhaka in March.

"Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen would thank the Indian government for the gift of two million doses of vaccines given to Bangladesh. At the same time, he would also seek smooth supply of the vaccines that are due in the future," a Bangladesh diplomat from Delhi told this correspondent.

As per the commitment made by India's

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No deaths in Europe tied to Covid jabs

Say experts; tears and fears as India's huge vaccine push falters

AGENCIES

Despite dozens of deaths of people shortly after they were vaccinated against coronavirus, scientists say the evidence available so far does not incriminate the new anti-Covid vaccines.

Health agencies stress however that the vast majority of post-vaccination fatalities were elderly, already vulnerable and often sick.

Norway sparked alarm last week when it reported the deaths of 33 of some 20,000 retirement home residents who had received a first shot of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

At least 13 of the fatalities were not only very elderly but also considered frail with serious ailments, the Norwegian Institute of Public Health said.

While it noted that no analysis had yet been carried out on the causes of the deaths, it suggested that with the aged and vulnerable the normal side effects of vaccination such as fever or nausea could have contributed.

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 2,121,070 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to an AFP tally from official sources at 1100 GMT yesterday. More than 98,689,590 cases of coronavirus have been registered.

On Saturday, 14,364 new deaths and 579,278 new cases were recorded worldwide.

Outside Norway the news raised widespread concern and fed anti-vaccine scepticism, prompting the authorities to stress that no link had been established between the vaccine and post-jab deaths.

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FIR MANIPULATION ACC sues former OC of Puthia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday sued Inspector Shakil Uddin Ahamed for tampering with FIR of labour leader Nurul Islam murder case in Rajshahi's Puthia in 2019.

ACC Assistant Director Al Amin filed the case with its integrated office in Rajshahi under the Penal Code and Prevention of Corruption laws, said Jahangir Alam, ACC deputy director.

In December 2019, the High Court ordered the ACC for necessary legal action as it found Shakil's involvement in tampering with the FIR was a grave and punishable offence.

Shakil Uddin Ahamed, hailed from Chapainawabganj, was suspended and attached to Sylhet range police in March 2020 after The Daily

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'Blue jet' lightning detected from ISS



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A blue jet -- a bolt of lightning that shoots upwards from thunderstorm clouds -- has been spotted from the International Space Station.

The phenomenon was spotted by the European Atmosphere-Space Interactions Monitor (ASIM) near the island of Naru in the Pacific Ocean.

In an article published in the science journal Nature, astronomers describe seeing five intense blue flashes, each lasting about 10 milliseconds.

Four of the flashes were accompanied by a small pulse of ultraviolet light, which appear as rapidly expanding ring. They are formed by the interaction of electrons, radio waves and the atmosphere and are known as elves (Emissions of Light and Very Low Frequency Perturbations due to Electromagnetic Pulse Sources).

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HSC, EQUIVALENT EXAMS Govt can now publish results without exam

3 bills passed in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three separate amendment bills were passed in the parliament yesterday, paving the way for publishing results without holding a public exam during a pandemic, epidemic, and Act of God.

The bills are the Intermediate and Secondary Education (Amendment) Bill, 2021, the Bangladesh Vocational Education Board (Amendment) Bill, 2021, and the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

As per the existing laws, there is no provision to publish the results of HSC and equivalent exams without holding tests.

The amendments were incorporated to Intermediate and Secondary Education Ordinance, 1961, Bangladesh Vocational Education Board Act, 2018,

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Teenage boy arrested on rape charge

STAR REPORT

Police arrested a teenage boy and were looking for a young man on separate charges of rape in two districts yesterday.

A 15-year-old boy was arrested in Sharsha, Jashore, after he was accused of raping a six-year-old girl.

Police said the girl was playing near her home when the boy took her to a nearby secluded place and raped her.

Locals rescued her after hearing her screams and sent her to a hospital.

A court sent the accused to jail after the girl's father filed a case, said Badrul Alam, officer-in-charge of

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Parked vehicles illegally occupying a footpath near Karwan Bazar's railway gate area in the capital. Sometimes cars are repaired here, forcing pedestrians to walk on the road and risk their lives. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Vested property recovered from ex-minister Latif

Dist admin demolishes structures built on the land in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Officials yesterday recovered a property in Tangail worth Tk 50 crore from former minister Abdul Latif Siddique.

The vested property -- 66 decimals of land in Akur Takur Para area of the town -- had been occupied by Latif for a long time, said Executive Magistrate Rozlin Shaheed Chowdhury.

The magistrate and Assistant Commissioner Khairul Islam went to the site with a team of law enforcers in the morning and demolished a half-constructed building before placing a signboard mentioning that the land was listed as vested property.

The magistrate told reporters that a recent High Court verdict came in favour of the government, rejecting Latif's claims of rightful possession of the land.

Locals said the former minister leased the property in 1972. He started building a market there in 2008 but didn't finish the construction.

Deputy Commissioner Ataul Gani told The Daily Star that it was proven in a court that the property was being misappropriated through forgery.

The administration recovered properties worth almost Tk 200 crore in the last few months, he added.

Latif or any of his family members could not be reached for comments.

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 25
 Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
 AZAN 5:35 12:45 4:15 5:46 7:15
 JAMAT 6:10 1:15 4:30 5:50 7:45
 SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION