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Gazipur city a jinx for mayors?

None so far completed their terms

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

None of the Gazipur mayors, whether from the Awami League or the BNP, could serve the city corporation for the entirety of their five-year terms.

Since the city corporation was formed in 2013, it was run for a considerable period by acting mayors.

Civil society members of the city say the absence of an actual mayor was partly to blame for the poor amenities in the city.

Senior BNP leader Abdul Mannan, the first elected mayor of Gazipur, took charge on August 18, 2013. But in less than two years, councillor Asadur Rahman Kiron became the acting mayor on March 8, 2015, and continued to hold the position until June 18, 2017, when Mannan could resume his role as mayor.

During this period, he was either in jail or facing suspension. After his return, he continued to be the mayor until the end of his tenure on September 4, 2018.

When ruling Awami League leader Zahangir Alam



The city corporation run by an acting mayor is not normal. It hampers the overall development activities of the country's fourth-largest city corporation.

AMJAD HOSSAIN, PRESIDENT OF SHUJAN IN GAZIPUR

became the mayor in 2018, the city dwellers expected that he would be able to complete his tenure in office.

But the AL expelled him from the party November 19 last year after he was seen in a viral video footage making controversial comments on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Liberation War.

In less than a week, the local government ministry suspended him from the post of mayor.

Asadur Rahman Kiron, who was a panel mayor at the time, became the acting mayor again.

Jalal Uddin, president of Gazipur Nagorik Forum, said when elected mayors fail to properly discharge their duties, the people of the city suffer a lot.

"It is unfortunate that the city dwellers were deprived of the development they expected from the mayors," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Some 30 lakh people live in Gazipur city, an area of 329.90 square kilometres.

The city dwellers complain that even after almost 10 years of the formation of the city corporation, civic amenities have not improved.

Delwar Hossain, a resident of Joydebpur area, said there is a difference between an actual elected representative and someone who is filling in.

"It is natural that the citizens of that area are deprived of services," he said, adding, "However, if an individual is accused of something, action should be taken."

Amjad Hossain, president of Shujan in Gazipur, said, "The city corporation run by an acting mayor is not normal. It hampers the overall development activities of the country's fourth-largest city corporation."

"This practice should end. We don't want to see any more acting mayor discharging the duty of the mayor," he said.



Without shelter from the elements, vehicles seized by law enforcers fall apart at the Suhrawardy Udyan. As there is no dedicated impound, the vehicles have been left out in the open. The photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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SUDAN CONFLICT

At least 135 Bangladeshis to be flown home today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

At least 135 of the about 700 Bangladeshis, who were evacuated to Port Sudan from conflict-stricken Khartoum on May 3, were flown to Jeddah by three special aircraft of Saudi Airforce yesterday.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia welcomed them at Jeddah Airport.

They will arrive in Dhaka on a flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines today.

Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh said in the initial stage, women, children and sick Bangladeshis were flown in to Jeddah.

"Arrangements have been made for their rest, food and necessary treatment at Bangladesh International School," it said.

The Bangladeshis were supposed to be transported to Jeddah by Saudi ships through the Red Sea. However, in the absence of available ships, Saudi authorities yesterday arranged three aircrafts.

Check hoarding, harassment of farmers

Food minister directs field officers as Boro procurement begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder has directed field officers and local administrations to prevent hoarding and illegal rice businesses as the procurement for Boro began across the country yesterday.

The four-month-long procurement will continue till August 31.

Field officers were also directed not to harass the farmers who want to sell their rice to the government.

At a press briefing, he said the government carries out the procurement process to ensure that farmers get a fair price.

"It is seen that if the government doesn't buy the paddy, some businessmen take control of the market and exploit farmers... Whether we'll be able to fulfill the procurement target doesn't matter. When the

government buys from the farmers, the businessmen can't exploit them."

This year, the government has set a target to procure 4 lakh tonnes of Boro paddy – two lakh lower than last year as the target could not be met at that time.

"If farmers don't get fair prices after that, we'll extend our target to ensure that don't suffer," Sadhan said.

At a Food Planning and Monitoring Committee meeting last month, the government also set the target to procure 12.5 lakh tonnes of parboiled rice and one lakh tonnes of wheat.

However, the procurement prices of all were hiked by Tk 2 per kg

The food minister said that as the price of fertiliser increased, a farmer has to spend an extra Tk 665. "The price of paddy was increased to Tk 30 so that a farmer can get Tk 1,600 extra per 20 maunds of paddy on one-bigha land."

This year, the government has set a target to procure 4 lakh tonnes of Boro paddy – two lakh lower than last year as the target could not be met at that time.

Rare butterflies named after Sauron in Lord of the Rings

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



A new group of butterflies with distinctive orange wings and dark eyespots has been named after Lord of the Rings villain Sauron.

The black rings on the vivid orange wings of the flying insects are reminiscent of the all-seeing eye described in JRR Tolkien's books, and depicted in the movie series.

Scientists, including Dr Blanca Huertas, senior curator of butterflies at the Natural History Museum, have given the new genus the name Saurona.

While there are currently only two members of this new group – Saurona triangula and Saurona aurigera – many more as-yet-undescribed species are thought to exist.

Saurona is one of several new butterfly groups described by an international team of researchers in a new paper, and one of two named by Dr Huertas.

Dr Huertas and a fellow researcher named the second genus Argenteria, which translates into English as silver mine, on account of the silver scales on the wings.

"Naming a genus is not something that happens very often, and it's even more rare to be able to name two at once," she added.

STRIFE-TORN SUDAN UN aid chief in KSA for talks as fighting flares

AFP, Khartoum

The UN's top humanitarian official arrived in Saudi Arabia yesterday for ceasefire talks between Sudan's warring generals, as gun battles and air strikes flared in the Sudanese capital at the start of a fourth week of fighting.

Multiple truce deals have been declared and quickly violated since battles erupted between army and paramilitary forces on April 15 in the poverty-stricken country with a history of political instability.

Fierce combat since then has killed hundreds of people, most of them civilians, wounded thousands and sparked multiple warnings of a potential "catastrophic" humanitarian crisis.

More than 100,000 people have already fled the country. In embattled Khartoum, fighter jets have bombed positions as terrified residents stay barricaded indoors trying to cope with dire shortages of water, food, medicines and other staples.

Across the Red Sea in the Saudi city of Jeddah, talks were underway aiming for a ceasefire that could push efforts to bring humanitarian aid to the besieged population.

The generals leading the warring parties have said little about the talks being held in Jeddah since Saturday.

Army spokesman Brigadier General Nabil Abdalla said the talks were on how a truce "can be correctly implemented to serve the humanitarian side", while Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who heads the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), only said on Twitter that he welcomed the technical discussions.

Heatwave likely to continue for next few days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mild heatwave that is sweeping over many places in the country may continue for few days, said meteorologists.

"The temperature may remain dry and increase slightly for the next few days," said Monowar Hossain, meteorologist of Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).

"Mild heatwave is sweeping over Khulna and Rajshahi divisions and the districts of Dhaka, Madaripur, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Nilphamari, Moulvibazar, Chandpur, Feni and Patuakhali and it may spread," said a weather bulletin of BMD.

There is a chance of rainfall at one or two places of Sylhet division, said the bulletin that was released 6:00pm last evening with 24-hour validity.

Yesterday's maximum temperature was recorded 37.7 degrees Celsius in Dhaka.



Air Conditioner mechanics busy mending and servicing units at a workshop in the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday. Many city dwellers are relying heavily on ACs for comfort as a heatwave sweeps over the country.

PHOTO: STAR