

GAZIPUR ELECTION

Zaida vows to complete her son's unfinished work

Mayor-elect also says she'll collab with everyone for the city's development

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mayor-elect of Gazipur City Corporation, Zaida Khatun, yesterday stated that she would collaborate with everyone to complete the unfinished development projects initiated by her son during his tenure as mayor.

Speaking at a briefing held at her residence in Chhoydanga area, three hours after being officially declared the winner of the Gazipur polls, Zaida expressed her willingness to seek advice from Awami League mayoral candidate Azmat Ullah for the city's development. She emphasised that she could not accomplish the work alone and would welcome input from all parties involved.

Zaida conveyed her gratitude to the Prime Minister, saying, "Congratulations to everyone, including Sheikh Hasina. I am thankful to her. The voting process was conducted fairly, and I am particularly grateful for the support I received." She dedicated her victory to the people of Gazipur and expressed her gratitude to the prime minister.

During the press conference, Zaida's

son and former GCC mayor Zahangir Alam, was sitting beside her, just like he guided her throughout the electoral campaign.

Zahangir stated, "With the assistance of the prime minister and the cooperation of everyone, we will strive to complete all the work in the city."

He expressed his appreciation to the Election Commission, the government, and the administration for conducting a free and fair election in Gazipur.

Meanwhile, Azmat Ullah Khan accepted the outcome of the polls. While speaking to reporters, he acknowledged that there were some issues with the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), resulting in many people being unable to cast their votes. However, he stated, "I accept the results and extend my congratulations to the winner."

Azmat called everyone to abandon the culture of rejecting the election results after a defeat.

Zaida, the mother of suspended mayor Zahangir Alam, emerged victorious in Thursday's polls, defeating Azmat Ullah by a margin of 16,197 votes.

1971 GENOCIDE

'Petition for recognition underway'

Dutch activist Harry van Bommel in conversation with *Star*

MD ABBAS

Dutch rights activist Harry van Bommel said a plan is underway to file a petition with the Netherlands parliament regarding the genocide carried out by the Pakistan occupation forces on Bangladeshis during their

Shedding light on the necessity of international recognition of genocide, a former lawmaker of the Netherlands from May 1998 to March 2017, said recognition, especially on an international level, provides support to the families who have lost their loved ones and became victims themselves. It offers them a sense of justice and acknowledgement of the atrocities they endured.



1971 Liberation War and arrange for witnesses to testify before the parliamentarians.

"I believe that such actions can be replicated by the international community in other countries to support the recognition of the Bangladesh genocide," he told The Daily Star during an interview on Monday.

Harry van Bommel, a former lawmaker of the Netherlands, is visiting Bangladesh with a five-member delegation team from Europe, to know the narrative of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

DHAKA, BEIJING
Foreign office consultation today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and China will hold a foreign office consultation in Dhaka today, after a gap of three years, aimed at plugging the gaps in the bilateral relationship amid a changing global geopolitical shift.

Chinese Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Sun Weidong will lead the Chinese side, while Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen will lead the Bangladesh side at the Foreign Office Consultation (FOC).

Weidong may also call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen during his two day visit to Dhaka.

China is a major development partner of Bangladesh, supporting several mega

'We are targeted by Hindu fundamentalists'

Allege female members of Bangladesh Hindu Law Reforms Council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Hindu Law Reforms Council (BHLRC) leaders yesterday alleged that a vested quarter has been attempting to resist the rights of Hindu females at any rate by conducting unreligious activities in the name of religion.

The demand for curtailing anybody's rights can never be democratic and lawful, Prof Mayna Talukdar, chair of Dhaka University's Sanskrit department and president of the organisation, said at a press conference in Dhaka.

BHLRC organised the press conference at Jatiya Press Club in protest against "communalism and spreading rumours through social media".

During her keynote presentation, Prof Talukdar said, "We have become the eyesore from the fundamentalists, reactionists and vested quarters within the Hindu community. They have been making slanderous comments and hatred against the supporters and colleagues of our movement, particularly the general secretary of this organisation and the female members, whom they are also harassing on social media."

"...they are running false campaigns saying that the Hindu women will not remain in the Sanatan religion if they are given their due rights and they will convert out

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Passengers are regularly ferried via boats, both motor-run and small dinghies, on the Turag river. Small boats are more prone to accidents as they can lose their navigability due to the currents created by motor-run boats. Yet, they continue to carry multiple passengers to help them get across the river. The photo was taken yesterday from the Kaondi Ghat in Diabari area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

CHILDREN WITH DOWN SYNDROME

Not enough support for them

TAHIRA SHAMSI UTSA

Right after Samin* was born, his doctor ran tests and confirmed that he had down syndrome. And like many others faced with this situation for the first time, his parents were worried. "We could not deal with it at first. We fought frequently. Eventually, my husband left us," said Samin's mother. "I started to raise Samin all by myself... after some time, his father realised that he was wrong. We reconciled."

Samin is almost 12 now. He is studying at a private school in Dhaka.

An individual with down syndrome has an additional chromosome. A baby is typically delivered with 46 chromosomes. One of these chromosomes, chromosome 21, is duplicated in infants with down syndrome. Although individuals with down syndrome may appear and behave similarly, their abilities vary.

According to the government's Disability Identification Survey (DIS), 6,028 individuals in Bangladesh have been diagnosed with down syndrome so far. However, there are no official statistics on children with down syndrome.

Ruman Mohammad, 27, found out that her child has down syndrome when he was nine. She expressed her regret not diagnosing him earlier, as she now believes that her son would've had an easier time at school if he were.

"Even though Dhaka has some schooling services for children with down syndrome, these services and schooling are not available to every area of the city. The situation is much worse in rural areas, where there are barely any schools for children with down syndrome."

MD NURUL ISLAM
Principal of SWID Special Education Teacher's Training College

"Since the number of children and individuals diagnosed with down syndrome is steadily rising, it is essential that the government ensure they have access to a fully inclusive educational and employment system."

SARDER A RAZZAK
Chairperson of Down Syndrome Society of Bangladesh (DSSB)

Not all parents realise that early detection and education help young children with down syndrome. Some parents feel compelled to hide their children fearing social stigma.

The situation for parents with lower income is even more difficult

when it comes to schooling and raising the child.

Md Nurul Islam, principal of SWID Special Education Teacher's Training College, said, "Even though Dhaka has some schooling services for children with down syndrome, these services and schooling are not available to every area of the city. The situation is much worse in rural areas, where there are barely any schools for children with down syndrome."

"Moreover, we also need more qualified and trained teachers who can help these kids flourish. There are around 600 teachers at SWID, caring for over 40,000 students with disabilities, but this is still an insufficient ratio," he mentioned.

An inclusive education system and a national curriculum are necessary for these students, he added.

Nurul also stressed the need for listing such educational institutions to the education ministry's monthly pay order (MPO) scheme.

The National Disability Development Foundation oversees 74 MPO-listed schools for students with down syndrome. In addition, there are some NGOs working to ensure these kids get proper education and training.

Children with down syndrome have intellectual disabilities and therefore they struggle to integrate with typically developing peers and the educational system. In addition, people treat them poorly as they

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Democracy wins through GCC polls: Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said democracy has won through the Gazipur City Corporation (GCC) polls as it was held in a free, fair and peaceful manner.

"Democracy has won through the Gazipur city election and it has been lauded abroad. Awami League did not interfere in the polls to make its candidate win. BNP's falsehood about polls has been proven," he said.

Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, told a rally arranged in front of AL's Bangabandhu Avenue central office in Dhaka,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Pak diplomat, family escape unhurt after a bus hits car

STAR REPORT

The deputy high commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh and his family members narrowly escaped unhurt after a speeding bus collided head-on with his car in Brahmanbaria on Friday noon, reports UNB.

Akul Chandra Biswas, officer-in-charge (OC) of Sarail Khantia Highway Police, said that DHC Qamar Abbas Khokhar along with his wife Rehena Sarwar Khokhar, son Mohammad Khokhar and daughter Huda Abbas Khokhar were going to Moulvibazar's Srimangal yesterday noon.

At that time, the diplomat was driving the car.

When the vehicle carrying them reached Rampur area of Vijaynagar upazila of Brahmanbaria, a passenger bus of Duranta Paribahan coming from the opposite direction collided with the car.

Fortunately, they did not get hurt though the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



These barricades, mostly used for blocking roads by the police, often remain by the roadside when they are not put to use. Vendors and workers of the plant and flower shops on the adjacent footpath took the opportunity to beautify these elements by putting up colourful plants on them, which they maintain on their own. The photo was taken yesterday from Motijheel's TNT College intersection.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN