

KHULNA CITY POLLS

Mayoral candidates get symbols, begin campaigning

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

All mayoral candidates have initiated their election campaigns after receiving symbols from the returning officer's office yesterday morning, signalling the start of the campaign for the upcoming Khulna City Corporation election scheduled for June 12.

The candidates and their symbols are -- Awami League's Talukder Abdul Khaleque (boat), Jatiya Party's Shafiqul Islam Madhu (plough), Islami Andolan Bangladesh's Maulana Abdul Awal (hand fan) and Zaker Party's SM Sabbir Hossain (rose).

Talukder Abdul Khaleque, while starting his campaign, expressed his commitment to respect the will of the people. He cited his past efforts in the development of the region under the Awami League government and highlighted the ongoing development work worth Tk 1,400 crore, emphasising that the city would become a model upon its completion.

"I will actively listen to the opinions and expectations of the city's residents and

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Awami League's mayoral candidate Talukder Abdul Khaleque in an electoral campaign ahead of Khulna City Corporation polls to be held on June 12.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BARISHAL CITY POLLS

All hype, no result

AL meeting may escalate uncle-nephew conflict, fear attendees

MD ABBAS and SUSHANTA GHOSH

No resolution was reached in a highly anticipated meeting aimed at resolving the conflict between Abul Khair Abdullah and his nephew Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah ahead of the Barishal city polls. The meeting, which took place yesterday evening, concluded without the presence of either Khair or Sadiq, leaving AL leaders and activists in Barishal disappointed and uncertain about the future.

Hopes were high that the meeting would bring an end to the bitter dispute within the AL but instead, it seemed to exacerbate the conflict further, with no fruitful outcome achieved, said meeting insiders seeking anonymity.

Sources closely associated

with Khair's campaign cited his absence from the meeting as a result of the majority of attendees being loyal to Sadiq, indicating Khair's lack of influence within the Barishal AL.

Several senior AL central committee leaders, including Jahangir Kabir Nanak, AFM Bahauddin Nasim, Shammi Ahmed, and Afzal Hossain were present at the meeting, along with Abul Hasan Abdullah, who presided over the meeting and is the father of Sadiq and brother of Khair.

Gazi Nayeemul Hossain Litu, a loyalist to Sadiq and joint convener of the metropolitan unit AL, said, "The senior leaders instructed AL members to ensure victory for the party's candidates through any means necessary."

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Man held with 3,565 yaba pills at Dhaka airport

UNB, Dhaka

Armed Police Battalion (APBn) members yesterday detained a man at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital and recovered yaba pills worth over Tk 10 lakh from his possession.

Zahid Hossain, 27, son of Abdul Gafur of Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila, was loitering around the airport's domestic terminal. His behaviour was suspicious, said Mohammad Ziaul Haque, additional superintendent of ABPn.

The detainee admitted to carrying 3,565 yaba pills during primary investigation.

The filing of a case is in process at the airport police station.

A total of three 'yaba smugglers' have been detained from the airport premises in the last couple of weeks.

PRAYER
TIMING

MAY 27

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-45	5-00	6-40	8-00
JAMAAT 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-45	8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Brahmaputra runs dry in Mymensingh

Experts point at encroachment, lack of dredging

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Despite dredging efforts being underway since 2019, the Old Brahmaputra has failed to show any signs of the expected increase in its water levels.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) officials, in a meeting held in May last year, assured that the river would have a 10-metre water depth by June-July, this year. The current scenario, however, tells a different story.

Once flowing with a diametre of 12-14 kilometres, the Old Brahmaputra has now shrunk to a mere canal, a couple of hundred metres, with only knee-length water at various points, including Kalibari area and Kachari Ferry Ghat in Mymensingh Sadar.

Repeated siltation and continuous encroachment have pushed the 283-km-long Old Brahmaputra, the country's longest river stretching from Dewanganj in Jamalpur to Meghna in Kishoreganj's Bhairab, towards extinction.

According to BIWTA sources, Navigability Improvement and Excavation of Old Brahmaputra (2019), a project with an approximate budget of Tk 2,763 crore, was initially scheduled for completion by June 2024.

However, with not much being done under the initiative, Jonouddog, a citizen's forum, were seen staging protests to alert the authorities in this regard.

Upon visiting several dredging spots in the river, the activists were very disappointed to

Repeated siltation and continuous encroachment have pushed the 283-km long Old Brahmaputra, the country's longest river stretching from Dewanganj in Jamalpur to Meghna in Kishoreganj's Bhairab, towards extinction.

see sections of this waterbody being similar to a "pond".

"We were promised a 10-feet deep and 300-feet wide river by this year but no visible improvements came to our notice," said Nazrul Islam Chunnu, a lawyer and the forum's convener.

The authorities must follow the Classification Survey and Khatiyon processes, asserted Professor Anwarul Islam, former vice chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University and an advisor to the forum.

Meanwhile, Mriter Chiktur, a young group of nature conservation activists, staged a demonstration at Kachari Ferry Ghat area to preserve what is left of the river.

According to the Bangladesh Water Development Board, Mymensingh is home to around 47 rivers which depend on the Old Brahmaputra for their smooth and natural flow.

"This river route was used to transport agricultural produce, commute passengers to Narayanganj, Manikganj, and Gazipur,

and for fishing," recalled Ziauddin Ahmed, an 85-year-old journalist and freedom fighter.

Nurul Amin Kalam, secretary of Mymensingh Zila Nagorik Andolon, a local citizens' organisation, claimed that a four-km-long shoal accumulated over three decades has altered the shape of the river.

"If properly dredged, the river would bring benefits to over crore locals. The authorities had ignored our suggestion of river dredging in Dewanganj. The project will not see positive outcomes if the huge shoal in the upper basin remains," he said.

Mohammad Mohsin Miah, executive engineer of BIWTA, however, said the

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dredging efforts are being carried out as per plans.

"The water level is expected to rise in the coming monsoon. We will soon begin dredging the confluence of the Jamuna and Brahmaputra rivers in Dewanganj and Jamalpur," he assured.

Of tragedy, desperation, and a failed rescue attempt

Three men killed by kidnappers

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Three families in Cox's Bazar have been shattered by the brutal murder of three young men from their households. The anguished cries of Moyna Khatun Pakhi, the wife of one of the victims, Imran, echo through the walls of their tiny rented house -- a constant reminder of the pain they endure.

Imran, a devoted husband and father, lived a simple life with his two children, wife, parents, and younger brother. Their humble abode, a two-room tin shed, was a testament to their meagre existence. Little did they know that their world would be turned upside down on that fateful day, April 28th, when Imran, along with his friends Zamir Uddin Rubel and Mohammad Yousof, was forcefully taken from them.

Driven to the edge of despair, Imran's family had no choice but to sell their only refrigerator and precious kitchen utensils to scrape together the demanded ransom of Tk 1 lakh.

"We knocked on every door in their neighbourhood, pleading for help and collecting whatever we could to secure the release of Imran," said Moyna.

Through the mobile payment service Bkash, they managed to send the money in two instalments to the abductors. Their hopes were briefly lifted, clinging to the belief that the safe return of Imran was within their grasp. But destiny can be cruel, and despite their efforts, their beloved Imran only returned to them as a dead body.

As Moyna recounts the horrors they endured,

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Once flowing with the diametre of 12-14 kilometres, the Old Brahmaputra has now shrunk to a mere canal, a couple of hundred metres, with only knee-length water at various points, including Kalibari area and Kachari Ferry Ghat in Mymensingh Sadar. Multiple activists expressed their disappointment, as the once mighty river has now transformed into a 'pond'.

PHOTO: STAR

We Have Handed Over

THREE PROJECTS

BEATING OUR *Own* SCORES

APRIL-MAY '23

AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

Oakland | Uttara

5 MONTHS AHEAD

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