



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

**THE SHY BLOODSUCKERS...** The oriental garden lizard (locally known as rakta chosha), commonly found on trees, shrubs and human settlements, prefer living in solidarity and are territorial. They have a highly variable and admirable colouration, starting from brown to yellowish olive near the limbs slowly warming up to the vibrant orange around its dorsal crest that tappers towards its long tail. Calm and timid, these insectivore reptiles are on the verge of extinction as most humans prefer to drive them away or kill them due to social stigmas surrounding their myths of origin. The photo was taken yesterday at the Khulna Home Economics College campus in the district's Khalishpur.

KHULNA CITY POLLS

# New manifesto, old pledges

## Khaleque wants to implement unfinished dev projects

DIPANKAR ROY and ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Talukder Abdul Khaleque, the ruling party's candidate for the mayoral position in the upcoming Khulna city polls on June 12, has presented electoral pledges similar to those in his 2018 manifesto for the Khulna city polls.

These pledges include addressing the city's waterlogging crisis, improving waste management, and creating a green and environment-friendly city.

During his previous five-year tenure as mayor of the Khulna City Corporation (KCC), the progress made in resolving the waterlogging issue stands at approximately sixty percent, while waste management projects have only achieved a mere 25 percent progress. Furthermore, a project aimed at addressing the impacts of climate change, initiated during Khaleque's tenure, has not yet commenced.

Just before assuming office, the former KCC mayor received a surprising allocation of around Tk 823 crore for tackling the city's waterlogging problem. Approved by Ecneec (Executive Committee of the National Economic Council), the "Drainage System Development (Phase I)" project aimed to eliminate waterlogging in Khulna.

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Awami League candidate Talukder Abdul Khaleque unveiling his manifesto yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

# More effort needed for access to clean water

## Experts tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To enhance progress towards improving access to sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services in Bangladesh and attaining sustainable development goal 6 (SDG 6), United Nations office for Project Services Bangladesh (UNOPS) and WaterAid yesterday jointly hosted SDG Cafe's Third Episode.

The roundtable titled "Bangladesh's Journey in Ensuring Access to Sustainable WASH Services" was hosted at the capital's UNOPS office premises.

Hasin Jahan, country director of WaterAid, said, "Access to clean water is the most basic human requirement. Although Bangladesh has made great progress in water coverage, more efforts are needed to increase clean water accessibility."

# 2,000 CCTV cameras to be set up in 289 centres in Khulna

BSS, Khulna

With only four days left, the Election Commission has started to install around 2,000 CCTV cameras in all the 289 centres aiming to monitor the Khulna City Corporation polls from the EC office in Dhaka.

The EC has decided to use the electronic voting machines in all the centres of KCC election, scheduled for June 12.

Assistant returning officer Faraji Benazir Ahmed said the EVMs have already arrived in Khulna.

A total of 5,485 officers have already been trained in this regard.

The chief election commissioner and other commissioners will monitor the polls from Dhaka, according to EC officials in Khulna Regional Office.

Md Alauddin, returning officer of KCC polls, told the news agency that currently the KCC has 5,35,528 voters. A total of 1,732 polling booths will be set up at 289 polling stations under 31 wards for holding the election.

He also said some 289 presiding officers, 1,732 assistant presiding officers and 3,464 polling officers will be deployed.

One CCTV camera is being set up at each polling station while one is being installed at each of the 1,732 polling booths, he added.

The EC has banned the movement of motorcycles in the Khulna metropolitan area from June 10 midnight to June 13 midnight, he said.

Besides, other vehicles -- including bus, truck and cars -- will be prohibited for the next 24 hours from 12:00pm on June 11.

BARISHAL CITY POLLS

# Is the nephew playing for other side?

## Allegations arise over Hasanat, Sadiq giving rival candidate Tk 3cr; AL denies it



Senior AL leaders campaign for party candidate in Barishal city.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

SUSHANTA GHOSH and MD ABBAS

The ongoing conflict between Abul Khair Abdullah, the Awami League mayoral candidate, and his nephew, incumbent mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah, has reached new heights ahead of the upcoming Barishal City Corporation election on June 12.

Adding fuel to the already blazing fire, a recent allegation has emerged, claiming that Sadiq and his father Abul Hasanat provided Tk 3 crore to the campaign of the Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB) mayoral nominee.

Anisur Rahman Sharif, a member of ward-14 unit AL and a councillor candidate, made the claim during a press conference on Sunday, turning the spotlight further on the family feud.

"Sadiq and Hasanat Abdullah called the IAB candidate to Dhaka and handed him Tk 3 crore, intending to defeat the AL-nominated candidate Abul Khair Abdullah," he said.

"If Khair is defeated, Sadiq will be able to continue his misdeeds in Barishal again without any hindrance," he added.

Furthermore, Sharif accused Abul Hasnat Abdullah of offering Tk 5 crore to central BNP executive member Ebaidul Haque Chan to run against the ruling party candidate.

Sharif, once known as a loyal supporter of Hasanat and Serniabat Sadiq, has now seemingly switched sides and aligned himself with State Minister for Water Resources Zahid Faruque, who has been endorsing Khair, in line with the party's decision.

Adding another twist to the saga, Sharif alleged that Sadiq aided 10 councillor candidates by providing them with Tk 30 lakh to run against the followers of Zahid in various wards.

However, senior leaders of AL in the city have dismissed these allegations, stating that there is no evidence to support them.

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SCC POLLS

# BNP expels 43 leaders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

BNP expelled its 43 present and former leaders for participating in the Sylhet City Corporation polls by violating the party's decision to boycott five city polls.

Of the 43, one is the independent mayoral candidate Salah Uddin Rimon, who is a member of ward-27 unit of BNP in Sylhet city.

BNP's Senior Joint Secretary Ruhul Kabir Rizvi sent 43 separate expulsion letters to the participating Sylhet BNP and unit leaders.

Abdul Quyum Chowdhury, president of Sylhet district BNP, confirmed the development.

"BNP boycotted the polls for mayor and councillor posts in five city corporations as part of its anti-government movement. These leaders have been permanently expelled for violating the party's decision and we hope that no other leader will support them in the election," he said.

Six are incumbent councillors -- Syed Tawfiq Hadi, Farhad Chowdhury Shamim, Nazrul Islam Munim, ABM Zillur Rahman, Ruksana Begum Shahnaz, and Abdur Rakib Tuhin.

# 96 more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 96 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new cases, a total of 2,573 people were hospitalised so far this year, of whom 703 are from outside Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Total number of dengue deaths this year is 17 so far.

Some 413 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment while a total of 2,143 dengue patients were released from hospitals and of them 639 are from outside Dhaka.



With a smile on his face, Shahbuddin, a malai kulfi (ice-cream) seller, sets out to serve the city dwellers with the chilled creamy goodness in Barishal city's Muktijoddha Park every day. He said he makes Tk 700-1,000 in profit daily and also gets to watch his customers' faces light up with joy as soon as he hands them a kulfi from his pot. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS