

SYLHET-2, 3

## 5 candidates term polls 'rigged'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Four candidates, including an incumbent lawmaker, at a press conference yesterday demanded re-election in Sylhet-2, alleging that the ruling party rigged the January 7 election.

Meanwhile, another candidate from Sylhet-3, in a separate press conference, described how the ruling party supporters staged irregularities in the election.

The Sylhet-2 candidates are incumbent lawmaker and Gono Forum candidate Mokabbir Khan, former lawmaker and Jatiyo Party candidate Yahya Chowdhury, Trinamool BNP candidate Abdur Rab Mallik and independent candidate Muhibur Rahman.

On the day of the election, all four of them boycotted it by 2:00pm.

In a press conference held at a restaurant in the city, the candidates demanded re-election and said that they would be urging the Supreme Court to fight against the election results legally.

Yahya Chowdhury said, "I was barred from entering a centre for two hours, while Awami League men stuffed the ballots. I did not get any support from the election officials and administration. After that, I boycotted the election and did not cast my vote."

Muhibur Rahman said, "The election was rigged and a farce. We were betrayed as we trusted the prime minister and the chief election commissioner. From forcing our agents out of the polling station to ballot stuffing by the ruling party men, everything took place in the polls."

Mokabbir Khan echoed the same. Abdur Rab Mallik said, "All four of us spent a long time in foreign countries, where we practised clean politics. But the reality here was different."

In Sunday's election, AL candidate from Sylhet-2 Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury won the polls with 78,388 votes, while his nearest rival Muhibur Rahman got 16,611 votes. The JP candidate secured 6,874 votes, the Gono Forum candidate 1,922 votes and the Trinamool BNP candidate 944 votes.

Dr Ihteshamul Huq Chowdhury, an AL-backed independent candidate for Sylhet-3, at a separate press conference, said, "My agents were forced to leave from 47 centres, where ruling party men stuffed the ballots. They also beat up an agent at Boaljur School centre and confined the injured agent for hours."

He also alleged that the ruling party lawmaker forcibly delayed vote casting till 9:30am at Kamalabazar Jalalia School centre, to cast his own vote first.



Workers loading scrapped plastic items into a granulator in a grinding mill on Abu Naser bypass link road in Madinabagh of Khulna city yesterday. Once grinded, the plastic pieces are thoroughly washed and sundried before being bought by Dhaka-based traders for Tk 35-40 a kilo. They are then further refined in factories and mostly exported.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## All BNP can do is wait for next five years

Says Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has no other choice but to wait another five years till the next national elections, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

"BNP Jamaat has failed this time too. The people have countered all their conspiracies through ballots. After repeatedly boycotting the elections, BNP has nothing to do except wait for the next five years," said Quader while addressing a post-election press conference at the AL Dhaka district office in the capital's Tejgaon yesterday.

Quader, the road transport and bridges minister, dismissed allegations made by BNP leader Moyeen Khan as "baseless and fabricated".

"All their complaints are devoid of reality. BNP leader Moyeen Khan appeared before the media with a series of lies. Such lies are responsible for their tragic consequences," he said.

Calling the elections a milestone in Bangladesh's democratic journey, Quader said, "Foreign journalists, observers, various institutions, both domestic and international media, have reviewed the election and expressed satisfaction. This election will fortify Bangladesh's global image."

## 62 more get hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 62 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The total number of cases this year rose to 440, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

So far, three persons have died of dengue this year.

A total of 362 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country while 772 dengue patients have already been released.

Last year, the country witnessed 1,705 dengue-related deaths and 321,179 cases.



Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:30 7:00  
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Drug theft a growing concern for CMCH

Syndicate comprising some staffers stealing govt medicines

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

A nexus of staffers at Chittagong Medical College Hospital has long been allegedly involved in stealing government medicine, despite steps taken by the authorities concerned.

The CMCH authorities took legal action against the culprits over the past few years, besides tightening security measures at the hospital, but failed to stop the illegal activities.

CMCH sources said some staffers are directly involved in stealing government medicine from the hospital in connivance with outsiders.

Essential Drugs Company Limited, an estate-owned pharmaceutical company, supplies most medicines to the government-run hospitals.

The medicines bear a seal that reads "government medicine, not



### Nexus comprises CMCH staffers

10 CMCH staffers held in past two years

Stolen medicine worth Tk 6 lakh seized

Syndicate sell those in remote areas

for sale," said the sources.

Medicines that are not produced by the company are procured by hospitals from other sources, often imported from abroad, and these do not bear the seal.

"Those stealing government medicines from the hospital face difficulty selling the drugs

to pharmacies in the city due to the seal, and so they sell those to stores in remote upazilas," said a CMCH staffer.

"However, the other drugs they steal from the hospital can easily be sold in city pharmacies," he said.

At least 20 people, including 10 CMCH staffers, were caught red-handed with stolen medicines in the past two years and were sued in cases filed with the police, while government medicines worth Tk 6 lakh were seized from them, said Nurul Alam, in charge of CMCH Police Camp.

However, stealing of medicines could not be stopped at the hospital, he said.

On December 5 last year, police at CMCH arrested a hospital staffer with government

medicines worth Tk 14,000 from the hospital pharmacy.

On information gleaned from him, police recovered government medicines worth Tk 8,000 from his house adjacent to the hospital and also arrested two more CMCH staffers in this connection, he said.

The arrestees are Azizur Rahman, 50, an office assistant at CMCH ticket counter; Daud Ishak, 52, assistant pharmacist at CMCH; and Simon Hossain, 46, an electrician at CMCH.

Contacted, Nurul Gani, senior vice president of Bangladesh Chemist and Druggist Association in Chattogram district, said the hospital authorities should take strict action against those staffers.

Contacted, CMCH Director

Brig Gen Shamim Ahsan said they have taken steps in this regard. "When a staff member is detained with stolen medicines, we suspend and file a case against them," he said.

"Our inquiry found that they sell the stolen medicine to remote upazilas and Hazari Goli, the wholesale hub of medicines in the port city, at a cheaper price."

"We have tightened the security in every ward, with Ansar men deployed at the entrances of the wards and the hospital," he added.

Contacted, Protik Dutta, executive magistrate of Chattogram, said they are conducting regular drives against the illegal sale of stolen government medicines.

## 'All we had was each other, now we lost that too'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Jasim Talukder, accompanied by his five-year-old grandson Md Yasin, wife Josna Begum, and three-year-old daughter Hamza Akhter, set out on a CNG-driven auto-rickshaw for a family visit in Manikganj yesterday.

The journey took a devastating turn after a truck rammed their auto-rickshaw in the Autpara area of Beulia Mitra Union on the Hemayetpur-Singair-Manikganj road around 10:00am.

Jasim and Yasin lost their lives in the accident, while Josna and Hamza are currently in a critical condition at Manikganj Colonel Malek Medical College Hospital. Shaheen Mollah, the driver of the auto-rickshaw, also lost his life in the accident, while Fautzia Begum, another passenger, was severely injured.

Meem Akhter, daughter of Jasim, said, "My elder sister Labani Akhter, her husband Mishuk Mia and nephew Yasin [Labani's son] lived with my parents. He [Jasim] was the lone earning member of the family."

"Labani is devastated since learning about the incident, having lost her baby boy and father simultaneously. Meanwhile, our mother and youngest sister are fighting for their lives. We don't have money for their treatment," said Meem. "We did not have much... but we were happy. All we had was each other, now we lost that too."

Manikganj Sadar Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Md Habil Hossain said they are looking for the truck driver and his assistant.



The mangled auto-rickshaw after the accident.

## NAOGAON-2

## Voting to be held on February 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday said the postponed election to the Naogaon-2 constituency following the death of an independent candidate, will be held on February 12.

On December 29, the EC postponed voting after the death of independent candidate Aminul Haq, a former Awami League leader from the seat.

The EC yesterday said that valid candidates for the seat would not need to collect nomination papers.

New aspirants will be able to collect nomination papers till January 17, scrutiny of nomination papers will be held on January 18, and the last date for withdrawal of candidature is January 25.

## Online reg for RU admission begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University authorities yesterday started online registration process for admission to the undergraduate programme in 2023-2024 academic year.

The primary application process started from yesterday noon and will continue till 12:00am on January 17, said Prof Pradip Kumar Panday, administrator of RU public relations office.

Final application process will be held between January 26 to February 11 in four phases, he said.

The admission test will be held in three units on March 5-7 in MCQ format like last year.



Rajshahi University



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Encroachers have built permanent structures filling a portion of the 2-km long Guyatola connecting canal in Mirzapur of Khulna's Dumuria upazila. The canal used to be a lifeline for a significant number of farmers, providing them with irrigation water for their 5,000 acres of arable land in the area. The waterbody is now on the verge of demise due to rampant pollution and encroachment. The photo was taken yesterday.

## Fire breaks out at RDA market in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A fire broke out at Rajshahi Development Authority (RDA) market in the city yesterday evening.

The fire broke out at a grocery shop on the ground floor of the three-storey market around 7:35pm and spread soon, said Rozina Akhter, duty Officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence headquarters control room.

On information, six firefighting units rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control around 8:00pm.

However, the reason behind the fire and extent of the losses could not be known immediately.