



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia addresses the inaugural ceremony of the three-day conference of the district administrators at the Secretariat yesterday.

N'ganj elections may go down to wire

FAISAL PARAG, Narayanganj

A neck and neck fight is expected in Narayanganj Poursabha elections to be held tomorrow, as BNP supporters have apparently got divided into two groups.

Although top leaders of the ruling party are trying to minimise the impact of the division, 'local politics' may affect the BNP vote bank.

According to sources, people of the town are divided on an 'area basis' ignoring party politics. The main railway track has divided the town into two parts and that may have a bearing on the election. There are about 127,000 voters in the municipal area.

Of them, nearly 55 per cent live in the southern part of the town. And

the BNP activists of this area are reportedly working for the AL candidate, Dr Selina Hayat Ivy. On the other hand, BNP candidate Nurul Islam Sarder is relying on the voters of the northern part of the town.

The minority voters may play a vital role in the election. There are about 46,000 Hindu voters in the town. Dr Ivy might get the support of female voters. People from different walks of life commented that Dr Ivy had a very good chance of winning if the election is free and fair. But Dr Ivy, who was out of the country for a long time, does not have many active workers.

Most of the AL leaders and activists are out of the town since the last general elections. "Dr Ivy's chances would depend on casting

of more votes," sources said.

BNP candidate Nurul Islam Sarder succeeded in winning over other candidates of his party, but could not stop the area-wise division of votes. His poll campaign was also affected by the anti-crime drive, as he was not in the town during the drive. He started campaigning after the withdrawal of the joint forces. Former Chairman Alhaz Murad Mia withdrew his candidature only two days back, which may help Nurul Islam Sarder. His chances will depend on whether he can successfully handle the internal grouping of

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N'ganj polls EC request for army unheeded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With only a day to go before the Narayanganj municipal polls, the government is yet to comply with the Election Commission's (EC) demand of army deployment there.

The commission wrote to the armed forces division last week in line with its earlier decision to deploy army personnel to maintain law and order.

When contacted yesterday, officials at the Election Commission Secretariat said they had no information from the Prime Minister's office in this regard.

Election to the Poursabha takes SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Meters must for three-wheelers from Feb 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four-stroke CNG and petrol-run auto-rickshaws plying city roads must have meters from February 1 and charge BRTA-fixed fare rates.

If any vehicle charges extra fare, its route permit will be cancelled.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) issued a 12-point guideline for drivers of three wheelers yesterday.

If any driver or owner does not follow the guideline, he will be arrested and have to face legal action, the guideline signed by DMP

commissioner Md Abdul Quyum said.

Three wheelers will have to be painted green, otherwise those would be considered illegal on roads.

Drivers of the vehicles will have to wear uniform -- deep navy blue trouser, bush shirt with driver's name embossed on the pocket and the vehicle number on both shoulders, black shoe or kades and belt.

Every driver will have to possess plastic identity card, to be issued by the auto-rickshaw drivers or owners SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Opposition sees no chance of fair UP polls sans army

REAZ AHMAD

Opposition political parties have expressed skepticism about holding of the upcoming Union Parishad polls in a free and fair manner without army deployment.

It is "unfortunate" that the government has refused to comply with Election Commission's (EC's) request for army deployment during the polls, leaders of the parties said.

They raised questions about the "sudden" withdrawal of army from grassroots level only two weeks ahead of the polls, scheduled for January 25-March 16.

The main opposition party Awami League, two factions of Jatiya Party, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) gave their views to The Daily Star yesterday on the much talked about issue.

The views came at a time when grassroots level government officials also echoed the Chief Election Commissioner's demand for army deployment. But the government continued to say that police, BDR, and Ansars would be able to ensure law and order during the polls.

Leaders of the parties said the government should provide all necessary support to the EC, including army deployment, for holding fair polls.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jaiil said, "It is now clear that the ruling alliance wants to establish its control at grassroots level by rigging and capturing polling booths."

It is mysterious that the government started withdrawing army at a time when EC sought their deployment for the UP polls. The polls will not be fair if the government dis

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PHOTO: STAR

Indian Ashim Biswas speeds past Sri Lankan MHM Hamsa during yesterday's crucial match in the third SAFF Championship at the floodlit Bangabandhu National Stadium. The match ended one-all.

India in last four

SPORTS REPORTER

Holdings India moved into the semi-finals of the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship with a hard-fought 1-1 draw against Sri Lanka in their last Group A match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

After a barren first half, youngster Ashim Biswas shot India ahead in the 88th minute, but it took only two minutes for the islanders to level the score through Abeysekera.

Both teams finished with four points yet India moved ahead on better goal difference.

Finished runners-up from Group A, Indians are likely to face hosts Bangladesh, who have already confirmed their berth in the semi-finals.

In the day's first match, Pakistan ended their first round campaign with an all-win record when they beat neighbours Afghanistan 1-0.

Table-toppers Pakistan were first to reach the last four having won their Group A matches against bitter-rivals India and Sri Lanka. Both the semi-finals will be held on January 18.

With the semifinal place at stake, SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Correction

The stories on ship with salt 'missing' from near Mongla Port published in The Daily Star belonged to DPRK, not South Korea.

We deeply regret the inadvertent mistake.

CPD taskforces to reassess post-polls policy guidelines

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) has reconvened the 16 Citizen's Taskforces to reassess the recommendations they made in June 2001 before the general elections.

The initiative will review how many of the recommendations have been implemented by the government.

The CPD taskforces were set up before the October 2001 general elections to provide inputs to the pre-election debate and discussions on critical development issues and also to come up with a set of policy recommendations for the newly elected government.

The CPD organised a meeting yesterday where the chairmen and member secretaries of the original taskforces were present. CPD

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Sari against cholera

REUTERS, Washington

A folded sari -- available to every woman in Bangladesh -- can filter drinking water clean of the particles carrying cholera, cutting in half the number of cases of the disease, researchers reported yesterday.

The study, published in this week's issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, shows that low-tech solutions can save lives, the international team of researchers said.

"The beauty of this method is that it is simple. It is cheap," Anwar Huq of the University of Maryland, who helped lead the study, said in a telephone interview.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 15		5-33 pm
Jan 16	6-44 am	

Prayer Timings		
Jan 15		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-40	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-39	5-45
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation