

Focus on election-'91

Govt welcomes poll observers

Presidential Adviser on Foreign Affairs, Fakhruddin Ahmed said Bangladesh would welcome any number of foreign observers to oversee the coming parliamentary polls scheduled for February 27, reports BSS.

"We will welcome anybody from any quarter to oversee the holding of the elections", Mr. Ahmed told the members of Overseas Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (OCA) at a briefing here on Wednesday at the Jatya Press Club.

Referring to the visit of former US President Jimmy Carter as an observer to oversee the country's polls, the Foreign Adviser said, we will certainly welcome if Mr. Jimmy Carter wants to come.

He said so far three teams of observers were likely to come to Bangladesh during the polls and they are a team from SAARC, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Commonwealth observer team.

Mr. Ahmed said the Secretary General of the Commonwealth is in touch with respective countries and a team might be formed by the end of this month or the first week of next month.

The OCA President, Zaglul A. Chowdhury presided over the occasion. Foreign Secretary Abul Ahsan, Bangladesh Ambassador to Iraq M. R. Osman and Bangladesh Ambassador to Kuwait K. M. Shehabuddin were present.

Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed said, besides a team from European Parliament and another team comprising Japanese Parliamentary members have shown interest to come to oversee the elections.

Referring to the Gulf crisis, he said Bangladesh has consistently welcomed all peace efforts aimed at ending the crisis. He expressed the hope that peace could be found and the crisis be solved without confrontation. "There is, however, no deadline for peace,"

he told a questioner.

About the presence of Bangladeshi troops in Saudi Arabia, the Foreign Adviser said our troops are there purely on defensive purposes, so the question of their involvement other than for defence does not arise, he asserted.

Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed said there would be no change in the foreign policy regarding the Gulf situation.

Governments change but the foreign policy usually goes on, he added.

He said there are about 3,000 Bangladeshi nationals leaving in Kuwait and about 300 to 350 in Iraq. They are staying there of their own, he said.

The Foreign Adviser said persons appointed to the posts created in different Missions abroad for personal reasons were being called back. He said the Ambassador in Paris has resigned and the permanent representative to the

United Nations has been called back.

He said the professionals in the foreign office had suffered a lot during the nine years rule of Ershad.

"We are making some recommendations on the basis of principles so that future government can take actions," he told a questioner.

Asked about the bilateral problems between Bangladesh and India, Mr. Ahmed said secretary-level talks on the sharing of the Ganges water was supposed to be held in November last year. Our respective High Commissioners have been asked to maintain contact on the issue.

On the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Mr. Ahmed said the position is much better now. "We have suggested to those who live in the camps in India to come back since this is the best time to settle and contribute their mite to the nation-building activities," he said.

Sidelights

Several hurt in JP attack on AL workers

By DMCH Correspondent

Several persons were injured, one of them seriously, when armed workers of Jatiya Party attacked Awami League workers at Amtal of Mirpur in the city yesterday.

Yusuf Imam of AL was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with severe injuries.

Witnesses said, the JP workers led by the former MP and now an independent candidate in the parliamentary polls, Strajuddin Ahmed, attacked the campaign centre of Awami League in the morning. The Awami League workers then fled away.

Later, the JP workers equipped with firearms and other lethal weapons ransacked the 'Ayesha Paint' shop belonging to Yusuf Imam and hit on his head with a 'ram dao'. The attackers also fired six rounds of gunshots and looted goods worth taka one lakh.

Jamaat against volunteer corp

The Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh in a meeting held yesterday disagreed with the proposal of Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed for constituting all-party volunteer corps during elections, reports BSS.

The central executive committee of Jamaat which met yesterday with the Acting Ameer Mr. Abbas Al Khan in the chair said only proper supervision of the government can ensure impartial elections.

The Jamaat hailed the Acting President's address to the nation Tuesday evening and pledged to continue its co-operation to the caretaker government.

The steps taken by the government to recover illegal arms to restore peaceful democratic atmosphere for holding free and fair elections have not been fruitful.

The council called upon the government to take stringent measures for the recovery of illegal arms.

Gorbachev to control media

MOSCOW, Jan 16: President Mikhail S. Gorbachev on Wednesday urged the Soviet legislature to take temporary control of the media, a move that would roll back his six-year-old policy of glasnost. The proposal, apparently prompted by a critical article about the crackdown in Lithuania in the latest edition of the weekly Moscow News, drew howls from some of the 542 members of the Supreme Soviet legislature, reports AP.

Oil prices up after deadline

NEW YORK, Jan 16: Oil prices moved higher around the world Wednesday morning after Iraq ignored the deadline for withdrawing from Kuwait and war appeared likely at any time. Light sweet crude oil for delivery in February opened 1.13 dollars higher at 31.20 dollars per 42-gallon barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange Wednesday morning. By late in the morning, crude was higher at 31.50 dollars, up 1.43 dollars, reports AP.

Soviet referendum March 3

MOSCOW, Jan 16: The Soviet Parliament today voted to hold a referendum on the future of the Soviet federation on Sunday, March 3. The deputies approved the proposal by 306 votes for, 44 against and 36 abstentions, reports AFP.

Drug trafficker surrenders

MEDELLIN, Jan 16: Jorge Luis Ochoa Vasquez, considered Colombia's top drug trafficker in the infamous Medellin drug cartel, turned himself over to authorities on Tuesday. The nationwide radio chain Caracol said that Ochoa turned himself over to criminal judges Tuesday afternoon. His younger brother, Fabio Ochoa Vasquez, surrendered to authorities December 18, and the reports said Tuesday's surrender was under similar conditions, reports AP.

Hassan threatens Emergency

RABAT, Jan 16: King Hassan II of Morocco late Tuesday threatened to impose a State of Emergency on Morocco at the least sign of street demonstrations or popular protests. In a televised speech to the North African nation, he said all those who will be tempted to disturb public order would be tried by military courts, reports AFP.

US jams Iraq's radio

WASHINGTON, Jan 16: A US television network said on Tuesday night that there was evidence the United States was jamming radio frequencies in Iraq as a possible prelude to military action. NBC news said its information came from an Israeli radio monitor, reports Reuter.

Top Sikh militant killed

CHANDIGARH, Jan 16: Top militant and Lt. General of the Khalistan Commando Force, Bhai Kulwant Singh Saika alias Kanti, was among eight people killed in Punjab since last night. Saika, responsible for nearly 50 killings, and his associates were killed in an encounter with security forces near village Bangapur in Majitha district, reports PTI.

90 polls symbols allocated

The Election Commission has allocated 90 election symbols to political parties, fronts and alliances contesting next month's Jatya Sangsad polls, reports BSS.

Sources at the Election Commission yesterday said the number of symbols for elections to the Jatya Sangsad have been raised from 73 to 140 by an amendment made recently of the section 9 (1) of the Conduct of the Election Rules, 1972. The amendment was necessitated in view of the demands from large number of parties intending to contest the elections.

Out of the 140 prescribed symbols, 90 have been kept reserve (allocated) at the request of the parties, fronts and alliances. The remaining 50 symbols will be allocated to independent candidates, the sources said.

The main political parties

like Awami League, BNP, NAP (Muzaffar), CPB and Jammata-Islami, Bangladesh retained their traditional symbols, boat, sheaf of paddy, hut, star and weighing scale respectively.

AL-BNP clash in Kishoreganj: 24 hurt

From A Correspondent

Twenty nine people including three policemen were injured on Wednesday in Bhairop upazila in clashes between the activists of Awami League and BNP.

The clash between the supporters of Awami League nominee Zillur Rahman and BNP nominee Dr. Abdul Latif Bhuiya started near Bhatrab Railway over bridge at 11:50 a.m.

Police opened eight rounds of blank fire and resorted to lathicharge to quell the mob.

Tense situation is prevailing in the upazila, police reinforcements from Kishoreganj have been rushed to the area.

No case has yet been registered and none arrested.

Sirajganj DC office ransacked

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 16: Workers of Sirajganj Textile Mills today staged a demonstration and ransacked the office of Deputy Commissioner to protest closure of the mills, police said, reports UNB.

Bus plunges into river: one killed

By Staff Correspondent

Sultanuddin, driver of a minibus, was killed when the vehicle plunged into a river at Mukhtarpur ferryghat, Narayanganj on Wednesday.

Fire Brigade sources said the driver of the Dhaka-bound minibus lost its control while boarding the ferry.

The bus with the body of the driver was salvaged after an hour.

AL to introduce cooperatives, BNP stress on agriculture

By Staff Correspondent

BNP, Awami League, CPB, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) and BKSAL leaders yesterday gave a broad hint of their party economic policy at a seminar of 'Arthaniti Charcha Kendra' (economic research centre).

All the parties stressed the need for refurbishing the agricultural and the industrial sectors for national development.

Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury of the BNP said the country needs good leadership for economic uplift. He said his party would initiate mass education to check population growth. BNP thinks these two issues are vital for economic growth, he said.

Dr. Badruddoza said the agriculture sector should be given priority to create a hunger-free society.

"An honest government, a united nation and social peace are the basis of the economic policy of BNP", he said.

Awami League has included in its economic policy of election manifesto the village cooperative system introduced by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Shafiqul Azim Mukul, a party spokesman, said other objectives of the policy include agricultural loan to the farmers, writing of previous loans upto Tk 10,000, supplying equipment to the farmers at minimum price, banning import of luxurious items, and encouraging both public and private investment in productive sector.

Ajoy Roy of CPB said the first job of his party would be to recover the wealth accumulated by Ershad and his associates. He said establishment of democratic norms in all institutions is vital for economic policy formulation and implementation.

He said his party would opt for private entrepreneurship.

Abu Syed of BKSAL said the military and civil bureaucracy is an 'unproductive' sector. Spending in this sector should be cut down, he said.

Khaliquzzaman Bhuiyan of BSD said present poverty and hunger is artificially made. His party would try to create job opportunity by improving the food sector. The farmers should be given material incentive for better performance.

He also said the defence sector spending should be cut.

Salimullah's contribution recalled

Bangladesh Muslim League (Ayuuddin) on Wednesday observed the 78th death anniversary of the founder of all India Muslim League, Nawab Sir Salimullah.

In this connection, a discussion was arranged at the party office with Mr. Muhammad Ayenuddin in the chair.

Party leaders including Kamruzzaman Khan, N. A. Salam and Khaliquzzaman Khan took part in it.

The speakers paid rich tributes to Sir Salimullah for his dynamic leadership to save the Muslims of the part of this sub-continent. Terming Sir Salimullah a fore-runner of Muslim Renaissance in the Sub-Continent, they said his dream could be materialised through holding free and fair elections in the country.



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina briefing the members of National Democratic Institute, USA who called on her yesterday at Bangabandhu Bhaban - Star photo

War any time

From Page 1

levels of government that with the crisis over, every effort will be made to address, in a comprehensive manner, the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestinian question.

That links the Gulf crisis with the Palestinian issue, a connection the Iraqi President sought and the United States and Britain opposed.

Bush was described as resolute and at peace with himself. A spokeswoman said he apparently was asleep in the White House when the deadline expired.

The White House issued a brief statement immediately

after the deadline expired, reiterating earlier US pronouncements: "January 15 was a day for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. It was not a deadline for UN action. The choice for peace remains with Saddam Hussein."

Iraqi state TV said Saddam visited the front in occupied Kuwait on Tuesday he also toured military zones around Kuwait and the Iraqi city of Basra, just north of the Emirate.

Saddam repeated that Iraq would not withdraw from Kuwait.

Iraq's US Ambassador, Mohamed Sadiq al-Mashat, left

Washington with several aides Tuesday night on his way to London and then Baghdad. Four other Iraqi diplomats will remain at the embassy.

Besides, France's Lower House of Parliament today overwhelmingly approved French military action if war breaks out in the Gulf.

Reuter reports from Moscow: Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Belonogov told Parliament today that Moscow was pursuing intensive diplomatic contacts with Iraq, urging it to show even "minimum flexibility" to avert war.

Peaceful polls

From Page 1

direction, rather they were misguided. "The interest of the youth will be protected and the youth will have the opportunity to build their future when a democratic government will be installed," said Sheikh Hasina.

She urged the people to exercise their voting right judiciously for establishing a people's government which could ensure democratic atmosphere.

"We will again prove that, ballot, not bullet, is the source of power", she declared.

The gathering was also addressed, among others, by Awami League General Secretary Sajeda Chowdhury, Juba League leader Fulu Sarkar, Chhatra League leader Ahmed Hossain and General Secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin.

tional resources, which resulted in a catastrophe in the economic front. There was farce in the name of election, she said adding the people could not exercise their right of franchise freely.

Five Party for US-Iraqi pullout

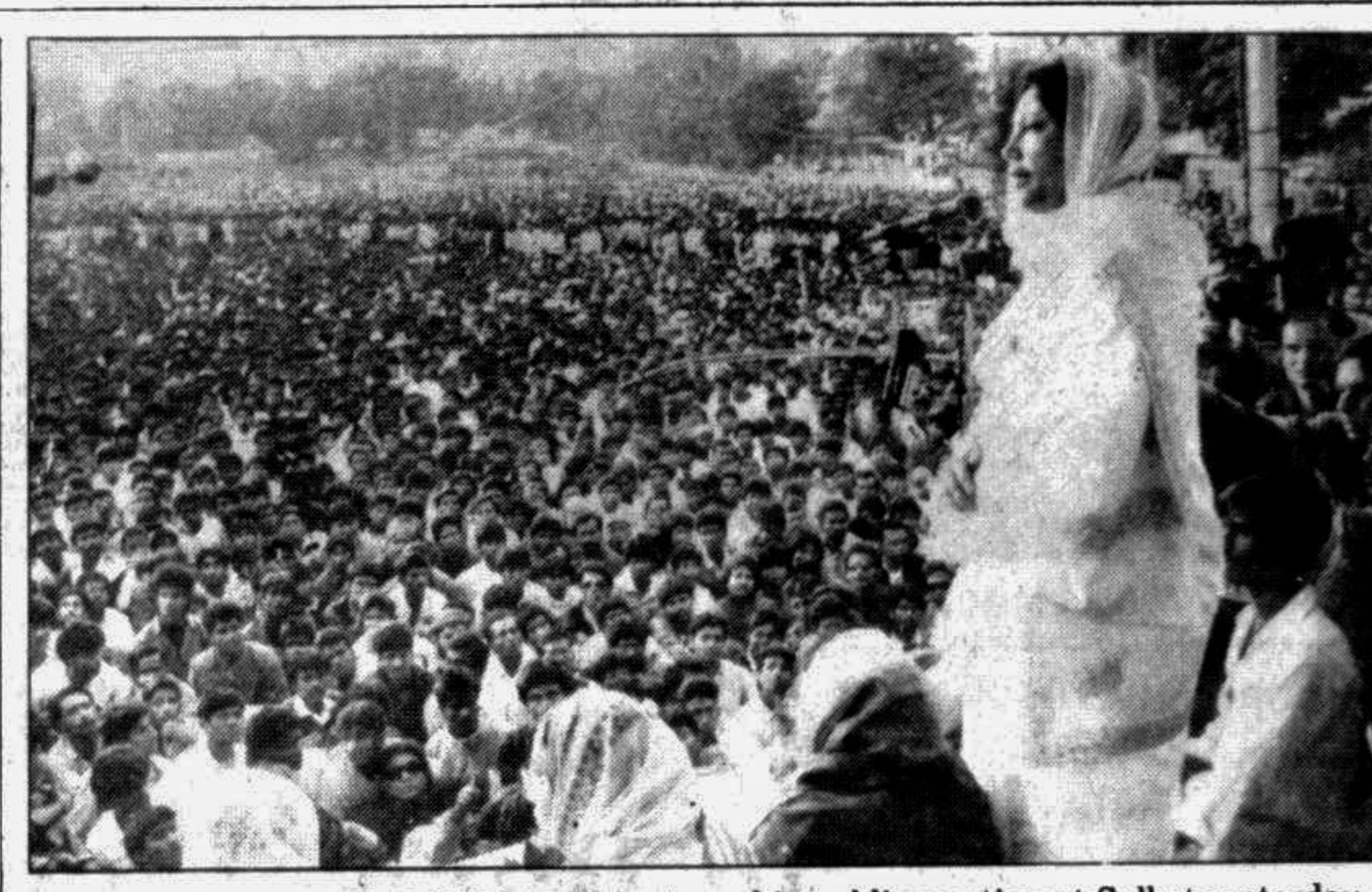
The convenor of the Five-Party Alliance and the chief of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD), Mr. Khaliquzzaman Bhuiyan yesterday asked Iraqi President Saddam Hossain to quit Kuwait and rid the Arab people from the danger of a horrible war, reports BSS.

He also called upon the United States and its allies to withdraw their forces from Arab land paving the way for a negotiated settlement of the current conflicts between the Arab nations.

Mr. Bhuiyan was addressing a peace rally in front of the National Press Club jointly organised by the five-party alliance, United Communist League and Oikka Prokria. Leaders of these three political forums messrs Rashed Khan Memon, Nirmal Sen, Kazi Arif Ahmad, Hasanul Haq Inu, A.F.M. Mahbulul Haq, Bimal Biswas, Nayeem Jahangir and Shubranganthu Chakraborty were present.

Mr. Bhuiyan said mobilisation of multi national troops alongwith modern weapon and naval armada was a deep-rooted conspiracy of the imperialist lobbies to grab the oil fields in the Arab land and sell their arms to the governments there.

He urged the Arab government to take up the issues in their own hands and resolve all problems including Palestinian issue and peaceful withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait.



BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a big public meeting at Sylhet yesterday - Star photo

Gorbachev justifies army crackdown in Lithuania

MOSCOW, Jan 16: President Mikhail Gorbachev sought to justify the Soviet army crackdown in Lithuania while denying personal responsibility for the 14 deaths it caused, as rebellion smouldered on in the Baltic republics, reports Reuter.

In a pugnacious speech to the Soviet parliament on Tuesday, Gorbachev said the republics had only their separatist leaders to blame for the crisis they now faced with the Kremlin.

He savaged his chief critic, Boris Yeltsin, president of the powerful Russian federation, for publicly backing the Baltic Presidents. He implied that Yeltsin had lost his reason.

"We will count on his common sense not having totally left him" Gorbachev said of Yeltsin, demanding that Yeltsin withdraw a suggestion that the Russian federation should have an independent army.

Sympathy for the plight of the Baltic republics after Sunday's crackdown in Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, appeared to be widening among others of the 15 republics.

As well as the Russian federation, the leadership of the Ukraine Censured the action, saying the use of military force on the territory of any republic without the permission of its leaders was illegal.

Armenia and Georgia, where dozens of people have been killed in clashes with

Soviet forces sent in to quell unrest, also closed ranks behind the Baltics as did Moldova.

AP from Vilnius adds: More than 100,000 people today joined a funeral procession for victims of last Sunday's army crackdown against nationalist Lithuanian authorities.

Crowds of people lined the streets in silence, some holding candles or waving Lithuanian, Byelorussian or Polish flags as nine coffins draped in the Lithuanian tricolour were carried by nine open mini-buses along a three kilometre route from a sports stadium to the cathedral in the city centre.

Manifestoes

From Page 1

to attain food autarky and expand the investment base to quicken the industrialisation process. Awami League reiterated its policy of cooperative system envisaged under BKSAL system.

Regarding her talks with World Bank officials recently Sheikh Hasina said she had explained the economic policies of her party to them. She also discussed with them the Jamuna Bridge Project. She favoured the inclusion of railway lines on Jamuna Bridge which World Bank disagreed. World Bank officials assured that there would be provision for railway track on Jamuna ridge and if Bangladesh Railway could make up the huge operational loss, World Bank might consider the project in future.

Awami League, BNP and small parties stated their economic policies at a seminar in the city yesterday. All the parties stressed the need for revamping the agricultural sector

to attain food autarky and expand the investment base to quicken the industrialisation process. Awami League reiterated its policy of cooperative system envisaged under BKSAL system.

Delhi asks West Bengal to vacate Tinbigha

By Staff Correspondent

Foreign Affairs Adviser Mr Fakhruddin Ahmed said that the central Government of India had already asked the West Bengal Government to vacate the Tinbigha corridor for its formal handover to Bangladesh.

Talking with this correspondent about the recent development between India Bangladesh relation, Mr Fakhruddin said that earlier, the caretaker Government requested India to handover the Tinbigha as a good gesture to the democratic transition process of Bangladesh.

Responding to this request the central Government asked the West Bengal Government to take step to vacate the corridor by the Indian nationals as early as possible he added.

Earlier, the Supreme Court of India had given a verdict that no constitutional change would require to handover Tinbigha corridor.

The dispute has been lying between the countries since 1972. The Tinbigha was exchanged with Berubari of Bangladesh during the Awami League regime. Though the Berubari was handed over to India, but the Tinbigha could not be handed over in the wake of protest by residents of West Bengal.

About the Talpatti issue, Mr Fakhruddin said that on this issue, the exchange of data between the countries have not been completed.

However, he said that the caretaker Government was ready to talk on any dispute with any countries including the donors.

Non-essential wings of US, UK remain closed

By Moinuddin Naser

The non-essential wings of the American and other European diplomatic missions in Bangladesh have remained closed for 48 hours from yesterday noon after the expiry of the deadline set by the UN Security Council for Iraq withdrawal.

The deadline expired at 11 a.m. (Bangladesh time) yesterday.

However, the very essential section and the monitoring cell which has been set up in every mission remained open.

The staff of the political and the information sections of the missions of the US, the UK, France, New Zealand and other countries, involved in the Gulf crisis, were asked to leave the offices from 12 o'clock. The missions are closely watching the situation in Bangladesh arising out of the Gulf issue.

USIS, American Cultural Centre, and British Council were also closed from 12 noon yesterday.

Vote to avoid

From Page 1

The public meeting was also addressed among others, by the BNP leaders Saifur Rahman, Brigadier (Retd) Hannan Shah, Abdul Matin Chowdhury and Haris Chowdhury.

Begum Zia launched her election campaign with the offering of Fateha at the Mazar of Hazrat Shahjalal (R) and Hazrat Paran Shah(R).

Earlier, on arrival at Osmani Airport, Khaleda Zia was given a rousing reception by thousands of people.

Begum Zia, first went to Shah Jalal Mazar. Almost all along the side of 22-km route people were standing to have a glimpse of the BNP chief.

At the Mazar, Begum Zia offered 'Nafal' prayers and Fateha. She also presented gifts to the Mazar.

Begum Zia then went to Hazrat Shah Paran's mazar and offered 'Nafal' prayers and Fateha there. She also presented a Ghilaf at the Mazar.

BSS reports: Begum Khaleda Zia will offer Fateha at the mazar of her husband President Ziaur Rahman beside the Crescent Lake today (Thursday) at 10 am.

Today is the birth anniversary of the late President Zia.