

Focus on election-'91

The Midnight File

Time for choosing right leadership

The leaders of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) Mohiuddin on Tuesday expressed apprehension that autocracy would again emerge if the nation failed to elect suitable persons in the coming polls, reports BSS.

The time for choosing right leadership has appeared, they said in the central committee meeting of the party in Dhaka calling upon the people to elect the JSD-nominated candidates in the February 27 polls.

The meeting was presided over by the party President Mahiuddin Ahmad and addressed, among others, by General Secretary Azizul Islam Swapan, Vice-President, Amir-Uddin Sarkar Manju and Joint Secretary Babul Mia.

They said the people would be able to elect the candidates of their choice if the participating political parties follow the code of conduct announced by the government.

The JSD leaders also said that restoration of full democracy in the country would only be possible if a parliamentary system of government could be established based on the 1972 constitution.

They also felt the necessity of the unity of all pro-liberation forces for establishing the parliamentary system of government.

Menon

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The reflection of national consensus was there in the identical framework formulated by the three alliances. But Awami League and BNP leaders have forgotten their commitment to that in view of the coming polls, he said.

People are no more interested in polemics against each other, Menon said making it clear the nation now wanted a guarantee for their food, clothing, medicare and democratic rights.

He said his party and the Five-Party Alliance were pledge-bound to raise the demands of the people of all shades of opinion in parliament and to implement the identical framework of the three alliances.

The Workers Party leader said the facilities for the city people were not increased despite a huge amount of money spent for the city beautification programme. Workers Party will pursue its movement both in parliament and on the streets for the solution of the problems of Dhaka city, he said.

APSU's demand to send Ershad to jail

KHULNA, Jan 29: Leaders of All-party Students Unity Central Committee on Tuesday demanded of the present government to send former President Ershad to jail and arrest of all his associates, reports BSS.

The Student leaders were addressing a public meeting here today at the Shahed Haidar Park held under the auspices of APSU.

They also called upon the different political parties not to give shelter to those persons who were associated with the autocratic government of Ershad.

Two ministers

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Anisul Islam Mahmud, Ziauddin Habbu, Abul Hasnat, Anwar Hussain Manzu, Nazrul Rahman and Sardar Amjad Hussain.

UNB adds: Zafar Imam, surrendered to Dhaka Central Jail authorities last night.

Deputy Jailor Shamsul Huda told the agency over telephone that the former minister had surrendered at the jail gate at about 9 pm.

Government directed these ministers to surrender within seven days to the Central Jail failing which they will be convicted for one-year imprisonment. The warrants from the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court also provide for attachment of their property unless they surrender before the deadline.

The All-Party Students Unity (APSU) has been persistently demanding arrest of the former ministers of Ershad.

Editor: S. M. Ali

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AL committed to four state principles

By Mostafa Kamal Majumder

Bangladesh Awami League will reiterate its commitment to four state principles — democracy, nationalism, secularism and socialism, in the election manifesto which is likely to be announced early next week.

The party may soften its socialist programmes in the light of changes in the Soviet Union and east European countries pursue a mixed economy equally emphasising the role of the public and private sectors to establish a welfare economy. It will give priority to the rural sector and introduce cooperative system.

An AL manifesto committee sources told the Daily Star that the party will renew its pledge to restore parliamentary democracy, check corruption, and establish accountability at all levels.

Awami League will vow to uphold Bangladeshi nationalism, and help flourish the traditional Bangladeshi culture. The source said AL's stand on secularism does not contradict 'Bismillah' in the Constitution.

An 11-member manifesto committee headed by AL president member Abdus Samad Azad has prepared the draft manifesto now awaiting approval by the party's central

working committee.

The manifesto committee source said Awami League will not nationalise any new industry, but stop indiscriminate denationalisation 'in individual and coterie interest'.

He pointed out that planned denationalisation was started during the rule of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. AL will raise efficiency of nationalised industries to make those profitable.

AL will seek to check corruption by establishing accountability at all levels. The government will be responsible to the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) and the Jatiya Sangsad will be responsible to the people. Similar accountability will be there in local government bodies, the source said.

He said that the economic policies of AL will be based on pragmatism and no unattainable promise will be made.

The upazila system will be further demoralised allocations to upazilas will be adjusted keeping in view the availability of resources both internal and external. It will solve the Chittagong Hill Tracts problem politically.

The source said Awami

League considers education as people's right and not a privilege. It will give more emphasis on spread of technical and vocational education. AL will seek to implement the recommendations of the Kudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission with slight changes in the light of the needs of the time.

Awami League will pursue a non-aligned foreign policy. It will seek friendship with all and oppose guardianship from any quarter, he said.

The AL manifesto committee source said the manifesto will not be a radical departure from the party constitution. AL will still call for establishment of a socialistic society with the aim of reaching the greatest good to the greatest number of people.

Other members of AL's election manifesto committee are: Presidium members Dr. Kamal Hossain, Abdul Mannan and Syeda Zohra Tajuddin, General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Economic Planning Secretary Aatur Rahman Kaiser and central leaders Abdul Momen, Fazul Huq B. Sc., Matia Chowdhury, Shaiful Azia Mukul and Nurul Islam Anu.

Islamic rule

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—Meeting of basic needs of people.

—Modernisation of the defence in order to protect independence and sovereignty.

—Introduction of interest-free banking and insurance system.

The manifesto, however, proposes introduction of Islamic labour laws for the well-being of workers. It says the party would introduce interest-free banking and insurance system as embodied in the code of Islam. The manifesto advocates for uninterrupted growth of both public and private sectors.

The Jamaat leader said the corruption had become rampant during all the past governments. So the party has decided to eliminate corruption through establishing rule of Allah, he said.

In reply to a question the Acting Ameer said his party is contesting 220 seats. Jamaat would support honest, patriotic and like minded people in the remaining seats, he said.

Urging people to vote for his party candidates the Acting Ameer said honest persons should be elected to protect national interests.

When asked on the form of government, the Jamaat leader did not make it clear but said the party would work wholeheartedly for establishment of democracy.

When asked whether Jamaat would accept a female as the head of state for the sake of democracy the Acting Ameer replied that they would do so although Islam never allowed a female to be the head of state.

City Ameer Abdul Kader Mollah and Jamaat leader Prof. Yusuf Ali were also present.

The latest official figures showed new aid commitments by the development partners in July-November at 405 million dollars.

Foreign aid in the pipeline on November 30 was 5728 million dollars including 142 million dollars in food, 462 million in commodity and 5123 million in project assistance.

According to an official handout, Hossain took over as Industry Secretary on contract basis on April 13, 1988.

He drew Tk 5,31,600.56 as salaries, allowances and advance money for foreign trip from the Industries Ministry from April 13, 1988 to February 28, 1990. Mr. Hossain had also drawn Tk 5,64,449.61 from BCIC as salaries, allowances and advance money for foreign tour during the same period.

Despite repeated reminders, Hossain neither refunded the money taken from BCIC nor adjusted it, the handout added.



AL chief Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting at Belabo in Narshingdi yesterday. —Star Photo

Riyadh calls for world aid to combat spill

RIYADH, Jan 29: Saudi Arabia has set off an international ecological alarm as it moves to prevent the wholesale death of sea cows, turtles, birds and coral reefs from history's biggest oil spill, a leading environmental official said Tuesday, reports AP.

With the slick already polluting some areas of the Saudi Arabian coastline, teams have been dispatched to rescue wildlife and survey the general impact, Abdulaziz H Abuzinada told reporters.

The secretary-general of the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development said booms had been placed around Jena, Keram, Keren and Jerted islands in the Gulf to protect vital nesting grounds for thousands of birds and sea turtles.

The official said his agency was establishing links with wildlife experts around the world, hoping to create a task force to add the animals in distress or destroy those beyond help.

US and Saudi military officials say the slick was deliberately caused by Iraq, when it opened the tap at Kuwait's Al-Ahmadi oil tanker station. They describe the action as "ecological terrorism."

American warplanes on Saturday bombed two onshore oil facilities connected to an offshore terminal from which millions of gallons (liters) of oil gushed into the Gulf.

On Monday, the US military said it believed the spill, estimated to be 35 miles long and 10 miles wide (56 klome-

ters long and 16 kilometers wide) had been largely stopped at the source.

"The problem is so large that no assurance can be given that the available resources and expertise will be able to prevent severe ecological damage," Abdulaziz told a news briefing.

A team of American experts has arrived and other countries and private citizens have offered help. But Abdulaziz stressed there was still "much scope for further contribution to the international effort."

He said it would be difficult

to protect all ecologically important areas along the slick's southward path, and indicated priority was being given to warding off the slick from water desalination and electricity generation plants along Saudi Arabia's Gulf coast.

Abdulaziz said he foresaw long-term effects of the spill, describing the Gulf as "basically a closed environment" with a very slow turnover. He estimated it would take three to five years to replace the Gulf's waters under present weather conditions.

they were responsible for large-scale corruption, anarchy and looting she said. Later Ershad ousted Zia following conflict between them over sharing of public wealth, alleged Sheikh Hasina.

On the participation in the ensuing polls by BNP and Jatiya Party (JP), the AL chief remarked that the parties having common interests are now active in the election race.

"Both the parties want to grab power to exploit people while our party is committed to end exploitation", she said.

In her speeches at four public meetings and seven wayside gatherings, Sheikh Hasina sought people's cooperation to consolidate the victory achieved in the recent anti-autocracy movement and institutionalise democracy.

Four big public meetings were held at Belabo Modern Pilot High School ground, Raptura Serajnagar Mansur Ali Pilot High School ground, Tarabo and Narshingdi town. Awami League and 8-party candidates from the five constituencies of the district and local leaders also addressed the meetings and gatherings.

Plunderers

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materials for their own well-being.

She said they took up the reins of the government after assuring the people of making rice available to them at 50 poisha per seer and wheat at 25 poisha. But rice was sold at that time at Taka 15 per seer, she pointed out.

Begum Zia said, "They now describe their rule as the golden age," but, she said in a firm voice that the golden age was not for the people, it was rather for the rulers of that time.

Presenting a painful picture of the then regime, the BNP leader said although the people could not manage two square meals a day, the marriage of the son of the then Prime Minister was solemnised with putting a crown on the groom's head. She said human beings and dogs shared food from dustbins then.

She said they grabbed the property of the Hindus in the name of enemy property. The exponents of secularism lifted ornaments from the bodies of goddesses in the temples, she added.

Begum Zia warned the people that if this party was voted to power again they would sell out the sovereignty of the country to others and take away the rights of the people.

She said the party which now pretends to be the advocates of democracy strangled it to death by introducing one party rule in the country after passing a bill in the parliament in just four minutes' time.

Form of government

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gatherings here today Sheikh Hasina called upon people to vote for her party to ensure people's rule which would replace autocracy once for all.

Advocating for parliamentary democracy she said it is the only system to protect people's rights and bring an end to autocracy, exploitation, and repression.

The AL chief termed last 15 years' rule as the history of autocracy, exploitation and repression. After the killing of Bangabandhu she added, two dictators — Ziaur Rahman and H.M. Ershad ruled the country in the same manner. She said there was no difference between the two 'army men' whom she accused of snatching people's fundamental rights.

The AL chief also accused the two former presidents of adopting various measures to allow the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. "Late president Zia reimposed different taxes, waived by Bangabandhu, and his successor Ershad increased the amount further," she observed.

When Zia was president, Ershad was his army chief and

Foreign aid

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year were: 118 million dollars in food, 115 million in commodity and 332 million in project aid.

The latest official figures showed new aid commitments by the development partners in July-November at 405 million dollars.

Foreign aid in the pipeline on November 30 was 5728 million dollars including 142 million dollars in food, 462 million in commodity and 5123 million in project assistance.

Misappropriation case against Mosharraf

The Anti-Corruption Bureau Tuesday filed a case with Motijheel thana against former Secretary A. K. M. Mosharraf Hossain on charge of misappropriating nearly Tk 10 lakh by drawing salaries, allowances and advance money for foreign trips, reports BSS.

According to an official handout, Hossain took over as Industry Secretary on contract basis on April 13, 1988.

He drew Tk 5,31,600.56 as salaries, allowances and advance money for foreign trip from the Industries Ministry from April 13, 1988 to February 28, 1990. Mr. Hossain had also drawn Tk 5,64,449.61 from BCIC as salaries, allowances and advance money for foreign tour during the same period.

Despite repeated reminders, Hossain neither refunded the money taken from BCIC nor adjusted it, the handout added.

9 newscasters sever links with association

By Staff Correspondent

Nine members of the Sangbad Pathak Samity (Newscaster Association) have withdrawn their membership from the association on the ground that 'objectives of the samity would not be fulfilled under the present organisational set-up.'

In a joint statement, the member said the association was formed in 1987 with a view to bringing back confidence in TV and Radio news. Seminars, and symposia were organised, memorandum and statements were issued but the objectives could not be fulfilled.

The signatories to the statement said the association failed to play a positive role in the movement for democracy in 1990. They said members of the association were now prepared to read news at any circumstances. In the general meeting of January 25, many members even questioned the role of many 'powers' in the mass movement including the 'Sammilito Sangkritik Jote.'

Severing all links with the association, the signatories pledged to continue to play a clear role in broadcasting objective news over radio and television through different organisations and other means.

The signatories to the statement are: Serajul Mazid Mannan, Ramendu Masumder, Sadia Chowdhury, Shamim Ahmed, Nafis Intiauddin, Babul Akhtar, Ishrat Azim and Syed Anwarul Huq.

Treatment of Shah Moazzem urged

The Acting Secretary-General of the Jatiya Party, ABM Shahjahan, on Tuesday urged upon the government to arrange immediately proper treatment of ailing former Deputy Prime Minister Shah Moazzem Hossain, who is now under detention "without any trial", reports BSS.

Foreign aid

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against us by our enemy," he was quoted as saying.

When asked whether this meant he would not use chemical or other non-conventional weaponry unless these arms were first used against Iraq, he replied, "I don't mean that, I said Iraq will use weapons that will equate those used against us."

Saddam also claimed that 12 days of bomb attacks and the air superiority established over Iraq by the U.S.-led forces has failed.

However, Saddam said he prayed that the blood which began on January 17.

Summit delay a warning

MOSCOW, Jan 29: The US-Soviet summit delay will warn Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev that his new hard line threatens to restore the cold war and jeopardises his accomplishments, a leading Soviet reformer said Tuesday. "I think this can be a very strong signal for our President and for our rulers in general that the result of their turn back can be a restoration of the Cold war," Moscow Deputy Mayor Sergei B. Stankevich said in an interview, reports AP.

13 killed in El Salvador

SAN SALVADOR, Jan 29: Heavy fighting between guerilla forces and government troops in northern El Salvador over the past two days have left 13 dead and 26 wounded, the military announced today. The most serious of the conflicts around the region occurred Sunday near Tecolouca, 73 kilometers (45 miles) from the capital, were five guerillas and four army personnel, including one officer were killed, an army spokesman said, reports AFP.

Shelling on Iraqi depot

According to an AFP report: Two US Marine Corps artillery batteries crept up to the Saudi-Kuwait border just before midnight on Sunday and fired a barrage of 72 rounds at an Iraqi supply depot.

The shelling was the heaviest on the ground so far by US or Allied forces and the first by the 2nd Marine Division.

The hit-and-run attack was carried out by 155 mm(eight-inch) Howitzers and 203mm M 110A2 self-propelled Howitzers. They fired 36 rounds each, the first shell whistling into the night at 11:59 p.m.

The Iraqi supply point some six miles (10 kilometers) inside Kuwait could not be seen from the marine positions, but orange flashes from secondary explosions were heard, indicating the Howitzers struck their target.

The eight-man Howitzer crew fired in unison in an attack that lasted less than 15 minutes. They then scrambled away to avoid Iraqi ground radar.

2,600 sorties

Reuter reports from Riyadh: Allied aircraft have flown more than 2,600 sorties during the past 24 hours, a US officer told a news briefing in Saudi Arabia Tuesday.

6 planes downed

The Iraqi military command on Tuesday claimed to have downed six warplanes and missiles since Monday afternoon.

The enemy continued its air raids against our defensive positions, civilian and residential areas with 65 sorties," said the command's communique, broadcast on Baghdad radio.