

Focus on election-'91

A decision that cost the country Tk two cr more

By Staff Correspondent
The government of ousted President Ershad incurred a loss of about two crore just for its changing the site of a proposed power plant in Chittagong.

According to reliable sources the then Energy Minister Ziauddin Ahmed influenced the change to serve his own political interests.

The Ershad government had decided to set up a 210 megawatt power plant in Chittagong and arrangements were almost complete for the installation of the plant at a site on the banks of the River Karnaphuli. But due to the influence exerted by Ziauddin Ahmed the government decided to shift the site of the plant to Rauzan, Zeauddin's home. This hasty change of site cost the Ershad government about two crores.

The source also alleged that the agreement for the installation of the sixth unit of Ghorasal Power Plant with the Soviet Union could not be reached through a memorandum of understanding was signed in 1987 due to the corrupt practices of the Ershad government.

Pak minister

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Allah Yar Khan and Mustafa Kamal Kazi, Director General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Pak Minister will lead his country's side at the formal talks at the Foreign Ministry here and the Bangladesh team will be headed by Fakhruddin Ahmed.

Shibir-BCL clash

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Police on duty remained inactive during the clash.

Sporadic clashes occurred in different places of the city including Kadamtali Station Road and New Market areas following the Agrabad incident.

Police were deployed at different points after the clash. None was arrested.

Shibir alleged that Chhatra League workers attacked its procession brought out in connection with its founding anniversary. Chhatra League and Awami League workers alleged that Shibir processionist burnt AL election camps and symbols without any provocation. Local leaders of both Awami League and Jamaat-e-Islami blamed one another for trying to jeopardise the forthcoming elections.

Chhatra Shibir leaders in a Press conference at Chittagong Press Club blamed Chhatra League for the clash. They demanded arrest of the persons responsible for the incident within 24 hours.

APSU

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Milon and Jatiya Chhatra League (JCL) General Secretary SM Kamal Hossain addressed the rally.

An APSU leader on anonymity told the Daily Star that no lathi (stick) would be carried by the processionists. The APSU workers have been asked not to be violent.

But another APSU leader told that sticks would be carried by the processionists and they would parade the city streets instead of marching towards Gulshan.

Ershad deserves praise: Mizan

Acting Jatiya Party Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury said Saturday ex-President Ershad deserved congratulations for transferring power constitutionally for the first time in the history of post-independence Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Talking to the representatives of Jatiya Bhasa and Sanskritik Parishad at Gulshan, Mr. Chowdhury apprehended that if the former President has to suffer harassment, and sentence and is involved in false cases none will dare to transfer power constitutionally in future.

The JP Acting Chairman further said Ershad was not only the President but also an established statesman. As all the qualities of a successful statesman are present in Ershad he had voluntarily stepped aside from the Government for ending anarchy and indiscipline, he added.

Whose sickle?

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was formed by the 5-party alliance and seven components of 8-party with a decision to use sickle as common symbol.

The short-lived GOJ had even finalised adjustment of 118 seats among its candidates when Bangladesh Awami League in a dramatic move offered 36 seats to the break-away components of 8-party. But by then many candidates had withdrawn in favour of 'GOJ' candidates who got the sickle symbol.

Those candidates who got offer of adjustment from Awami League quickly changed their symbols to 'boat'. The lone exception was Prof. Muzaffar Ahmed of NAP (M) who remained firm to fight with his party symbol 'hat'.

The confusion was such that Communist Party's General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik got the 'boat' while CPB secretariat member Mujahidul Islam Selim retained 'sickle' even though their party symbol is 'star'.

Candidates of some components of 8-party are using three symbols—boat, 'sickle' and their respective party

symbols, and components of the 5-party alliance are using 'sickle' and their respective party symbols.

The Election Commission source said they have sent teleaxes messages to Returning Officers to help determine how many candidates are using 'sickle' and which parties do they actually represent.

Twenty-one out of 90 political parties which had sought symbols have not nominated any candidate for the election. The parties are: Bangladesh Samajik Sangsad, Zehad Party, Bangladesh Islamic Republican Party, Jatiya Islamic Dal, Krishak Sramik Party (Sulaiman), United Peoples Party, Bangladesh Janaganantrik Dal, Naya Ganatantrik Jatiya Party, Bangladesh Republican Party, Jatiya Ganatantri Dal, Bangladesh Jatiya League, Bangladesh Gana Azadi League (Samad), Jatiya Palli Dal, Krishak Sramik party (Aztul Huq Sahajhahan), Oikya Prakriya, Jatiya Biplobi Party, Sat Daliya Sangrami Jote, Bangladesh Khadem Party, Zindabad, Bangladesh Sarbahara Party, Muslim Peoples Party, and Samata Party.

Abbas Ali Khan hurt in road mishap

By Staff Correspondent
Acting Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh Abbas Ali Khan was injured in a road accident on Saturday while going to Jaipurhat, according to a press release.

His car collided with an oil tanker on Bogra-Natore Road. Abbas Ali Khan was hurt on his hand. He was released after first aid at Bogra, the release added.

ADB aid

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ADB proposed that the assistance could be made available in two ways: Raising the quantum of ADB participation in the bank-assisted programmes and extending additional import financing support on essential items like fertilizer and fuel.

The four-member ADB delegation, led by a senior official, Mr. DX Vinh, arrived here on Friday to discuss special assistance needs of Bangladesh in the wake of war between Iraq and US-led multinational forces.

Dispute over urea sales to Nepal

Star Economic Report

The inter-ministerial differences over export sales of Urea fertilizer to Nepal will be discussed at a high level meeting on Monday.

The Ministry of Agriculture is unwilling to make any export deliveries until a clearer picture about stocks and sales of the current Boro season is available.

The Ministry of Industries favours exports to Nepal under the terms of an earlier contract. The Foreign Affairs Ministry is also of the opinion that the agreed export deliveries to the South Asian country should be made on time.

About ten thousand metric tons of fertilizer have been exported to Nepal in 1990-91. The contract was for 30,000 tons. The rest of the twenty thousand tons covered by the contract are to be exported by next March.

Kathmandu is reported to have recently requested Dhaka to expedite the deliveries of fertilizer.

Urea stocks at factories of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) stood at 1.50 lakh tons and those with Bangladesh Agric-cultural Development Corporation (BA-DC), at about 36200 tons, giving a total of 1.86 lakh tons as on January 28, 1991.

Domestic sales of urea in the first seven months of fiscal 1990-91 amounted to 7.21 lakh tons. The revised annual target for sales in 1990-91 is 14.50 lakh tons. Total sales of all types of fertilizer for the year are programmed under the revised target at 22.06 lakh tons.

The rehabilitation work of Ghorasal Fertilizer Factory to start on March 1. This will lead to suspension of production at the factory for about one and a half month to two months.

The Ministry of Agriculture is in favour of a cautious approach to any export sales of urea because of this.

Zia, Ershad govts

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schemes, Bangabandhu had undertaken the responsibility for rebuilding the war-torn country within a short period of three and a half years, she added.

She said Awami League never gave false assurances to people and that was why Bangabandhu told them "I shall not be able to give you anything for three years". In spite of that, during this period Awami League had rehabilitated one crore refugees, built houses for two crore shelterless people, established 11,000 primary schools, appointed 44,000 primary school teachers, nationalised the jobs of all primary teachers, set up madrasah board, and realised the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) memberships for Bangladesh.

exercise of franchise in the coming polls.

"I haul up illegal arms and create conditions to enable the electorate to vote for candidates of their own choice," she said while addressing an election meeting of her party at Kautzpora Upazila headquarters.

Hasina hit out at her party's main rival in the ensuing parliament election, saying that during the BNP regime, the country was in the grip of widespread corruption committed by Zia's ministers. "This was evident from Sattar's confession that paved the way for takeover by Ershad," she said, apparently in reply to BNP chief Begum Zia's criticism that Awami League helped in seizure of power in 1982.

Hasina also blamed late President Ziaur Rahman for the killing of four national leaders on Nov 3, 1975 which, she said, brought Zia to power.

Sheikh Hasina said in 1972 the World Bank had apprehended that two crore people would die of famine but Bangabandhu successfully faced and resisted that situation.

A UNB report from Strajganj says: Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina today urged the caretaker government to free the country from illegal arms and take steps ensuring fair

Sheikh Hasina also addressed several public meetings and a series of wayside gatherings at different places of the district, including Bagabati High School in Sadar Upazila and Dhagara High School at Royganj Upazila.

The election meeting at Kautzpora Upazila was presided over by local Awami League leader Abdul Quddus.



Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a campaign rally at New Market on Saturday. —Star photo

Critical Gorbachev

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"The situation in the Gulf is becoming more alarming and dramatic...the number of victims is multiplying and among them are members of the civilian population," Gorbachev said.

Some conservatives have criticised Moscow's Gulf policy for being too similar to that of the United States and say the Soviet leadership should not have supported an attack on a former ally.

This week the communist party's central committee urged the Soviet leadership to do all it could to help end the war.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein sent a reply to a peace initiative by neutral Iran today as President George Bush's two top military advisers visited the Gulf war zone to discuss the timing of a ground offensive.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Saadoun Hammadi, who visited Iran a week ago and took home a message from President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on ways of ending the Gulf war, returned with the Saddam's answer today. He crossed overland from Iraq at the Khosravi border crossing.

Iran, which fought Iraq

from 1980-1988, has given no details of its suggestions but Washington has reacted coolly to a possible Iranian peace bid.

Hammadi said on arrival Saddam had carefully studied Iran's proposals and "I am carrying a written answer".

As he travelled to Tehran, Iraq's Defence Ministry newspaper Al-Qadisiya said the massive air bombardment maintained by the United States and its Allies since the war began on January 17 had not shaken Iraq's confidence in victory.

"The fact that they try to ignore is that the air raids they launched on Iraq during the past days have not weakened the capability of the Iraqis to confront and inflict destruction on enemy forces," it said in an editorial.

The United Nations Security Council decided on Friday to hold a formal meeting on the Gulf war with the United States and Britain advocating the session be held behind closed doors, a procedure not used for 15 years.

Pak Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif says the presence of 11,000 Pakistani troops in the Gulf doesn't detract from his mission to find a diplomatic end to a war

Khaleda

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she declared assuring that her party will discuss different problems of the minority groups for their solution.

The BNP believed in harmony of all faiths and freedom of free practise of all religions, Khaleda said.

She said, if elected, her party will ensure five basic needs of the people, set up new industries in private sector, encourage foreign investment and revive all its development programmes.

Begum Zia said a wave has been created in favour of sheaf of paddy, her party's election symbol, throughout the country and urged the people to elect BNP nominees for strengthening the hands of nationalist forces.

Mishap at N-plant in Japan

TOKYO, Feb 9: An emergency cooling system shut down a nuclear reactor after abnormal levels of radioactivity were detected at Mihama Nuclear Power Plant in Fukui in western Japan Saturday, officials said. No damage to the environment from the accident was immediately apparent at Kansai Electric Power Company's Mihama plant, 220 miles (350 kilometers) west of Tokyo, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry said, reports AP.

AL protests BNP remarks

By Staff Correspondent
Bangladesh Awami League has protested the statement of Ahmed Nazir, Press Secretary to BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia.

Awami League Publicity Secretary Mohammed Nasim in the protest said the allegations made by Nazir against Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina were baseless. He said it was a vile attempt to mislead the people.

Nasim said BNP was violating the code of conduct framed by the Election Commission.

He said Ziaur Rahman rehabilitated the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib by providing them services abroad.

Awami League Publicity Secretary said it was late President Zia who rehabilitated the anti-liberation elements including Golam Azam, Shah Aziz and Moulana Mannan.

He said Begum Zia spent the whole period of liberation war in the Cantonment of Pakistan Army. He hoped that the people would not be misled by the malicious propaganda.

Ground war timing

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take revenge for Palestinian and Iraqi "martyrs."

"Our launchers returned safely to base after launching a destructive strike," he added.

Allied aircraft carried out 250 air raids against Iraqi civilian and other targets on Friday night and Saturday morning, the spokesman said.

He gave no details on damage or casualties, but said some of the raids, "violated our eastern border," an apparent reference to Iran.

Tehran, has denied previous Iraqi charges that its airspace was used by the Allied planes.

Call to Saudis

Iraq's state-run radio has urged Saudi Arabia's Muslim population to revolt, strike at US interests and "kill those who betrayed you."

A commentary, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, said that King Fahd had betrayed Muslim shrines in Saudi Arabia and that the time had come for revolution and Jihad (holy war).

8 Iraqis surrender

Reuters reports: Two Iraqi

officers drove into Saudi Arabia Saturday with their Japanese-made all-terrain vehicle flying a pair of white underpants as a flag of surrender.

One-eleventh destroyed

Senior US military sources said about 600 Iraqi tanks and more than 400 artillery pieces had been knocked out in the air war, representing about 11 per cent of Iraq's estimated strength in each category.

One of the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, also contended that air attacks on supply lines had cut by 90 percent the flow of material to the more than 500,000 Iraqi troops in the Kuwait-southern Iraq theatre.

Another 14 Iraqi air force jets made the cross-border dash to Iran, bringing the total believed seeking sanctuary there to 147, the US command reported. That would mean that about 40 per cent of Iraq's prewar air force has either been destroyed or is sitting in Iran.

But M Javid Zarif, Iran's Deputy UN Ambassador said on the US-based Cable News Network on Friday that Iran had only about 20 Iraqi military planes. He said Iran had

The Midnight File

79 per cent Americans for war

NEW YORK, Feb 9: A solid majority of Americans support the Gulf war even though most expect a high number of US casualties if a ground war takes place, a poll released today showed. The poll commissioned by Time magazine and Cable News Network said 79 per cent of Americans expect US casualties in a land war to be in the thousands or tens of thousands, reports Reuter.

US Senator attacks CNN

WASHINGTON, Feb 9: A Republican Senator attacked Cable News Network (CNN) for keeping correspondent Peter Arnett in Baghdad, labelling him a "sympathiser" to Iraq, newspapers reported on Friday. "Peter Arnett is what we used to call in my day a sympathiser," the Chicago Tribune and other dailies quoted Alan Simpson, of the western state of Wyoming, as saying, reports Reuter.

14 killed in Pak violence

KARACHI, Feb 9: At least 14 people have been killed in ethnic violence in Pakistan's southern province of Sindh, police said today. The violence on Friday night followed altercations between native Sindhis and non-Sindhis at Sukkur town, 320 km (200 miles) northeast of the provincial capital Karachi, they said, reports Reuter.

Myanmar's complaint

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 9: Myanmar complained to the United Nations on Friday that members of the European community persisted in calling it by its former name, Burma, instead of the Union of Myanmar, officially adopted in June 1989, reports Reuter.

Cholera epidemic in Peru

LIMA, Feb 9: A cholera epidemic that has killed 30 people this week in Peru could become a national catastrophe and kill 10,000 people in the next two months, diplomats said on Friday, quoting the Health Minister. Spread by poor sanitation, cholera could strike about 200,000 Peruvians after erupting in the northern port city of Chimbote last weekend, reports Reuter.

Truck kills 13 in a Thai cafe

BANGKOK, Feb 9: Thirteen people were killed, most of them youth gathered round a jukebox, when a lorry ploughed into a cafe near Kalasin in northeast Thailand, police said today. The lorry had swerved off the highway on Thursday night to avoid a public Minibus, reports Reuter.

Rally for the missing

COLOMBO, Feb 9: Sri Lankan women are planning a mass rally in Colombo later this month to press for an official inquiry into the fate of thousands of sons and husbands who disappeared when the government crushed a left-wing rebellion, reports Reuter.

Ex-ministers

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and Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu. However, no action has so far been taken against Sardar Amjad Hossain and Abdul Gaffar. The four former ministers who have surrendered or have been arrested are Sheikh Shahtul Islam, Kazi Firoz Rashid, Ruhul Amin Hawladar and Zafar Imam.

The order of the govern-

ment is self explanatory about the punishment of the ministers who have not yet surrendered. But according to Home Ministry sources, implementation of the punishment needs fresh proceedings against the ex-ministers.

The former ministers will not be disqualified as member of parliament if elected. The Constitutional Clause 66-2(D) related to the disqualification of a person to be elected parliament member is only applicable for those who are convicted for not less than two years or unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release.

Among the absconding ex-ministers, Naztur Rahman Manju is contesting the election from three constituencies, and Anwar Hussain Manju and Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu are contesting from one constituency each.

Rulers of '72-'75 period created famine: Aman

By Staff Correspondent
Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) Vice-President Amanullah Aman has urged the government to recover illegal arms for free and fair elections.

Aman, who is contesting the parliamentary elections from Keraniganj constituency with BNP ticket was addressing a meeting at Ruhitpur, Keraniganj on Saturday.

AL chief lying, says BNP

By Staff Correspondent
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) on Saturday said Sheikh Hasina in her speech wrongly attributed the Bangladesh Japanese aid contract undertaken during the Awami League regime to reconstruct war-damaged bridges as the Jamuna bridge contract.

A statement issued by the Press Secretary of BNP Chairman said AL chief intentionally lied about it.

The statement also said Khondkar Moshtaque Ahmed, in his address to the nation after the change of government in 1975, said country's foreign currency reserve was nil. So it was a lie that Zia government looted money.

The statement also questioned AL chiefs support to Ershad stay in Gulshan even though there was definite cases against the deposed President.

The statement also challenged Hasina's claim that there was no famine during the rule of Awami League.

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