

Focus on election- '91

Varsity teachers' opinions on free polls
No party can win absolute majority

By Mostafa Kamal Majumder

Fifty-four per cent of university teachers believe that if a free and fair election is held no single party will be able to form a government by commanding an overall majority.

The poll shows about eight out of every ten university teachers say the present government is impartial while about two others question the government's impartiality.

55 of the teachers said they did not cast votes in the parliamentary elections of 1973, 1979, 1986 and 1988.

A majority of the teachers feel that all political parties are not having access to the mass media to project their opinion.

Union Parishad and Pourashava Ordinance '91 promulgated

The government Saturday promulgated the Union Parishad and Pourashava (Special Responsibility) Ordinance 1991 to ensure peaceful and neutral parliamentary election, reports UNB.

According to the ordinance, all union parishads and pourashavas will be responsible to maintain law and order in their respective areas.

Prisoners

We did not enter the jail today fearing fresh attack by the prisoners, a jail warden told The Daily Star.

He said some 100 prisoners, mostly undertrial prisoners, who took the jail and some wardens hostage on Friday night, were playing the leading role.

The female prisoners did not take part in the revolt till Saturday, he added.

However, the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka said normalcy was prevailing in the jail after a meeting with the leaders of the prisoners in the evening.

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka, IG (Prison) were present at the meeting.

Another source said about 300 jail guards threatened the officials after the meeting with the leaders of prisoners. They demanded punishment of those prisoners who attacked and injured many of their colleagues during the previous revolt and that on Friday night.

This was the second revolt in Dhaka Central Jail in last two months. The first revolt occurred on December 29 last year in which three prisoners were killed and at least 50 injured in police firing.

The government then granted special remission and general amnesty to the prisoners in order to settle the jail unrest. Around 1,000 prisoners have been released so far under the special arrangements, a source said.

German Jazz concert

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel in cooperation with the German Cultural Centre will hold an evening of Gypsy Jazz music on Monday at its Grand Ball Room.

This will be the first ever such concert by the best known Jazz trio 'Hans'che Weiss Ensemble' to be held in Dhaka, says a press release.

Student leaders

crossed one another shouting provocative slogans through the 'Nuton Raster Mor' at Kashipur on Friday night. The BNP processionists damaged nine election camps of AL on their way to Fulbari, where they attended an election meeting.

Later, police were deployed at the village to avert further violence. Police made no arrests.

Meanwhile, at least 60 persons were wounded in pre-election violence in different parts of the country on Friday.

Clashes took place at three places of Khulna and Netrakona districts among the workers of Awami League, BNP and Jatiya Party (JP).

According to reports from our correspondents on Saturday night, 50 persons were injured in clashes between the workers of AL and BNP at Daulatpur Upazila of Khulna district Friday night.

Fifteen of the seriously injured BNP workers were admitted to the Khulna 250-bed Hospital while 18 others were given first aid there.

Police on Friday morning arrested three BNP workers in connection with the clashes.

Witnesses said tension started when two processions of the AL and BNP coming from opposite directions



Injured JCD workers in Dhaka Medical College Hospital. —Star photo

Betrayers

Begum Zia said Ershad's men were now distributing illegally-earned money like anything and resorting to violence in their bid to grab power again.

This party will not be able to protect its leader Ershad from punishment as he had oppressed the people and snatched their democratic right during his nine-year autocratic rule, Begum Zia said.

She called upon the members of the law-enforcing agencies to arrest the accomplices of the autocratic regime to ensure free and fair elections.

She said thousands of certificate cases were filed against the farmers during the rule of Ershad.

Begum Zia said the Carmichael College would be made a university college and women would get priority in getting jobs with hospitals if BNP was voted to power in the coming polls.

Addressing another meeting at Ulipur in Kurigram district, Begum Zia said her government would establish a jute mill there if her party was voted to power.

She warned the people against that party which ruled the country from 1972-75 and said if it went to power, the country would again go back to those dark days when thousands of people died of hunger and democracy was buried to introduce one-party rule.

Two JCD workers stabbed at DU hall

By DU Correspondent

Two activists of Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) were stabbed by a group of youngmen at Mohsin Hall of Dhaka University on Saturday at about 7 a.m. They were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where one of them was admitted.

Several rounds of gunshots were fired. The attackers are reportedly members of the same organization and the incident took place following a dispute over sharing of tolls, they allegedly collected from a contractor installing telephone lines in the Dhaka University campus.

The injured persons, Shameem and Mirza Galibur Rahman, were sleeping at Room, No. 469 of Mohsin Hall. A group of about 15 persons dragged them out of the room,

stabbed them and attempted to cut the veins of their hands and legs.

Galib managed to escape and Shamim jumped from the third floor and fell down on the roof of the adjacent one-storied canteen. Shamim got his legs fractured.

The attackers while leaving the scene fired about five rounds of gunshots and assaulted another member of JCD, Nure Alam, when he came out of his room.

Shameem and Galib are not students of Dhaka University and they were sleeping in the room of the general secretary of Mohsin Hall Students Union.

Provost of the hall informed Ramna police about the incident and police visited the spot at about 10.30 a.m.

Hasina

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Hasina, in the rally, introduced AL candidate from Madaripur-1 constituency Ilyas Ahmed Chowdhury, Madaripur-2 Abdur Razzak, Madaripur-3 Syed Abul Hossain and Shariatpur-1 candidate Hemayetuddin Auranga.

Earlier, she addressed 12 wayside rallies at Duttapara, Pulia, Shalidia, Maligram, Tekerhat and Mostafapur. She also addressed three public meetings, including one at Bhangui in Faridpur district.

Message from Gaurandi adds: Sheikh Hasina today accused BNP of unleashing terror at different places across the country to vitiate the atmosphere of peaceful election. She was addressing a rally at Gaurandi College Maidan.

"The character of this political group," she said, "is known to the people as its leader General Ziaur Rahman seized power by means of state terrorism."



Iraqi civil defence workers near houses destroyed in an Allied bombing raid on a residential area of Baghdad. —AFP photo

Allied ground offensive

From Page 1 Col 6 ground war shifted to Moscow. A Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman said conditions attached to Iraq's offer were likely to make it meaningless unless Aziz showed willingness to modify them.

Soviet Union however, signalled Saturday it hoped Iraq would be ready to modify its terms for a withdrawal.

Underlining the pressures on Moscow's policy of broad support for Allied aims, Soviet government ministers joined scientists and Communist Party officials in condemning the US bombing of Iraq.

Foreign Ministers of Luxembourg, Italy and the Netherlands were due in Moscow later on Saturday to give their assessment of the Iraqi move.

Soviet envoy Yevgeny Primakov, who held talks with Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, said the world must not reject the offer outright.

That view was echoed in Iran, where Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Saadoun Hammadi held talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Ak-

bar Belayati on Belayati's return from Moscow.

Iranian President Rafsanjani is due to send high-level delegation to Baghdad in the next few days with a detailed reply to the last message from Saddam on Iranian peace proposals.

Soldiers satisfied British air crew were on their way to bomb Iraq when they heard on radio of Iraq's offer. They hoped in vain to be called back to base.

"Nothing would have pleased me more than to have called off and come home," said a British navigator Chris Coulls.

Elsewhere throughout the huge multinational force, soldiers, sailors and airmen greeted the announcement with relief — until they realised the war was far from over.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine, joint commander of British forces in the Gulf, described Baghdad's offer as "the same old recipe dished up in a slightly different

sauce." But he also felt it could be the first move in a push to find a way out of the war.

UN Council Iraq's proposal for a conditional withdrawal from Kuwait dominated discussions Friday as the UN Security Council met for a second day of closed-door debate on the Gulf war.

Ambassador Ricardo Alarcon of Cuba called on his colleagues in the 15-member Council to respond to Iraq's overture, and he used the occasion to introduce three draft resolutions to end the war, diplomats present at the session said.

China Xinhua reports: A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed the hope Saturday that Iraq's indication of troop withdrawal from Kuwait 'will be accompanied by specific measures and translated into practice.'

Gaddafi In Cairo, visiting Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi said Saturday that he was joyful at Iraq's conditional offer to leave Kuwait and considered there was no longer any reason for continuing the Gulf war.

Bush's mistake In New Delhi, the Times of India said Saturday US Presi-

Menon

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dential form of government through the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution and the Printing and Publication Acts were the contributions of the Awami League.

Nirmal Sen

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Alliance, while on February 12, they attacked a procession of BNP at his Kotlilpara constituency.

Nirmal Sen urged Awami League president Sheikh Hasina, who is also contesting from the same constituency, not to create any law and order situation so that election could be held peacefully.

Newspaper

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It said and noted that all the political parties had called upon the Government to resolve the crisis and to announce the award immediately.

The meeting pointed out that the Interim Government was nominated by the political parties. But it was mysterious why the Government was not taking necessary steps to end the crisis when all the political parties expressed their opinion in favour of announcing the Wage Board award.

The meeting felt that certain quarters were active for continuation of the crisis in the newspaper industry to frustrate the process of democratic transition.

The meeting called upon all the Newspaper employees to observe the token strike for 24 hours today to press home their demand for immediate announcement of the award.

The leaders will meet again on February 18 to take next course of action.

The meeting was attended by BFUJ Secretary General Amanullah Kabir, DUJ President and General Secretary Zahurul Huq and Ruhul Amin Gazi, President and Secretary General of Bangladesh Newspaper Press Workers Federation Mosharruf Hossain and Bazur Rahman.

Mizan's call to let Ershad live in peace

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party Acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Acting Secretary General A.B.M. Shahjahan in a statement on Saturday warned that none would be spared if something harmful happens to deposed President Ershad in prison, says a Press release.

They said the government should be responsible for the mass agitation that would spread throughout country.

They urged the Government for proper treatment of Ershad and pleaded that he be left at peace till recovery, the release added.

Khaleda greets DUJ President, Gen-Secy

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has felicitated Zahurul Huq and Ruhul Amin Gazi on their re-election as the President and General Secretary respectively of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ).

Begum Zia in a statement has hoped that the newly elected DUJ office bearers will continue their pioneer role in the struggle for establishing democracy, rule of law and basic human rights in the country.

The Midnight File

44 parties to contest Nepal polls

KHATHMANDU, Feb 16: Forty-four parties have been registered for Nepal's first party-based elections for three decades. Election Commissioner Surya Prasad Shrestha said today. He said in an interview he had turned down three applications for the May 12 polls in which 10.7 million people will be eligible to vote, reports Reuter.

19 killed in Jammu avalanches

JAMMU, Feb 16: At least 19 people were killed and 17 injured after avalanches and hailstorms struck the northern most Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir in the last few days, an official spokesman said today, reports AFP.

Cargo ship sinks with 23 crew

TOKYO, Feb 16: An Indonesian Freighter with 23 Indonesian crew sank in a storm off Japan's Pacific coast today, a coast guard spokesman said. The spokesman said four crew members of the 4,756-tonne Indobartina 2 were plucked from the sea but died later, reports Reuter.

Seven killed in Pak blast

QUETTA (Pakistan), Feb 16: At least seven people were killed and 12 injured when a bomb exploded near a petrol pump in Chaghi district in the southwestern province of Baluchistan, officials said today, reports AFP.

Soviet troops seek asylum

BERLIN, Feb 16: About 550 Soviet soldiers and their dependents stationed in former East Germany have requested political asylum in newly united Germany, a newspaper said Saturday, reports AP.

Philippine-US meet fails

MANILA, Feb 16: Philippine and US negotiators failed today to forge a draft agreement on US military bases because of a wide gap between their proposals for compensation. They set a further round of discussions in Washington before the end of February to address the money problem, reports AFP.

Court adjourns

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Iraq appearing for the State submitted that he had been informed over telephone by the Home Secretary that the accused (Ershad) was suffering from hypertension, dysentery and asthma and that the attending physician had advised him rest for three days.

He also suggested the formation of a medical board.

At the brief 20-minute sitting, the Special Tribunal chaired by District and Sessions Judge Dhaka, Mohammad Habibullah ordered for the immediate constitution of a three-member Medical Board comprising specialists on Medicine, Cardiology and Chest Diseases to physically examine Ershad and submit its report to the Tribunal by February 18.

He also fixed the next date for hearing on February 20.

At a stage during the sitting Ershad's lawyer Shahadat Hossain submitted that his client had a nervous breakdown after hearing the verdict of the High Court Division last Thursday discharging the stay order on trial by the Tribunal.

Assistant Commissioner, (Prosecution) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Stidha Barua who was to escort the former President to the Tribunal appeared before the Judge at one stage and informed him that the accused was very sick and was unable to come.

Security was stepped up and barbed-wire fences erected around the house and at cross roads where the Tribunal was set up. Paramilitary forces guarded the house. Machine-gun nests were set up on adjacent buildings.

The court room, set up in

the drawing room of former leader of the opposition, had in its dock an armed chair that was to be used by the accused during the trial.

A team of journalists and some personalities from cultural fronts were invited to attend the court proceedings. A large bevy of photographers, waiting in front of the house to snap the former President were not allowed to enter the Tribunal room.

Advocates Mofizur Rahman Majumder and Rezaul Karim were present at the court to assist the Defence Counsel, Kazi Shahadat Hossain.

Deputy Attorney Generals Hasan Arif and Amirul Kabir Chowdhury -- and assistant Public Prosecutor Farid Ahmed were present to assist the Attorney General Aminul Haque.

Defence Counsel Kazi Shahadat Hossain told The Daily Star that he would file another Writ Petition at Appellate Division of Supreme Court against the verdict by the Division Bench vacating the rule against government to start the arms case at a Special Tribunal.

Metropolitan Police (DMP) filed the case with cantonment police on January 5 accusing Ershad of possessing eight unauthorised guns and 174 bullets.

The case was filed under Sections 19-A and 19-F of the Arms Act 1878. The recovered arms included one nine bore pistol with 100 bullets, two 7.6 bore pistol with 74 bullets, four double barrel guns and a point 22 pistol.

According to the Arms Act 1974 the president can keep only pistols which are not powerful than the point 22 or point 32 ones.

The Arms Act 1878 provides for imprisonment for life as maximum punishment for convicted.

So far at least four cases have been filed against the deposed president. Ershad has been under detention under Special Powers Act since he fell from power on December 6.

One Habibur Rahman Bacchu also filed a case on December 14 with the Ramna police accusing Ershad for killing his brother while deputy director of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption Salehuddin Ahmed filed another case on January 8 with the Cantonment police accusing him of abuse of power, accumulation of illegal wealth.

Deputy Director Mohammed Hussain of Bureau of Anti-Corruption filed yet another case on January 26, against Ershad, one former minister and some officials for selling F-27 planes in running condition and for buying three ATP planes by misusing the state power and misappropriating a huge amount of public money.

Earlier on December 13 JSD leader Hasanul Haque Inu also filed a G D with the Motijheel police accusing Ershad of seizing of power illegally by ousting an elected government trampling the Constitution.

Another damage suit of Taka 12 crore is being prepared by Mr AU Ahmed on charges of occupation of two of his houses and harassment.

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