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# The Daily Star

Congratulations to the people, the interim government, the Election Commission and all the political parties for holding a free and fair election.

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Can we afford 140 million? Bangladesh needs to adopt some drastic measures to stop growth of its burgeoning population. By Nasrin Sobhan. Page 6

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### US expresses happiness

WASHINGTON, Mar 2: The United States has expressed its happiness and great satisfaction at the peaceful and orderly holding of the parliamentary polls on February 27, reports BSS.

### Iran keen on Gulf security

NICOSIA, Mar 3: Iran's President on Sunday expressed Tehran's willingness to cooperate with other Gulf countries to restore security in the region, Tehran radio reported, says AP.

### Independence vote

RIGA (USSR), Mar 3: Latvians and Estonians voted Sunday on independence from the Soviet Union as the residents voted in a non-binding referendum on separatist policies approved last year by their parliaments, report AP.

### Uprising in Basra

BASRA, Mar 3: Muslim fundamentalists have risen against Saddam Hussein in Iraq's second city, Basra, thrown open the gates of the prisons and appealed for help from US-led armies halted a few kilometres away.

### BNP grand rally March 6

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) grand rally in the capital will now be held on March 6 instead of March 5, reports UNB. Party chief Begum Khaleda Zia will address the victory rally at the Manik Mia Avenue at 3 pm.

# Jatiya Sangsad session on April 5: Shahabuddin Council of Ministers in a week

The Acting President, Mr. Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, said here Saturday that the Council of Ministers might be formed within a week but he would summon the parliament for its first meeting on April 5 after election of 30 women members in accordance with the provisions of the constitution, reports BSS.

The Acting President stated this when a delegation of BNP headed by its chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia met him at the President's Secretariat.

Justice Shahabuddin said according to the opinion of the Election Commission, election of 30 women members would not be completed before April 4. Under the circumstances he will summon the Parliament for its first meeting on April 5.

An official handout said: A delegation of the BNP leaders headed by its chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia Saturday met the Acting President, Mr. Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, at his office. The delegation thanked the Acting President for holding the general election on February 27 in a peaceful, orderly and well-organised manner. They also referred to various foreign observer groups' unanimous opinion that this election was

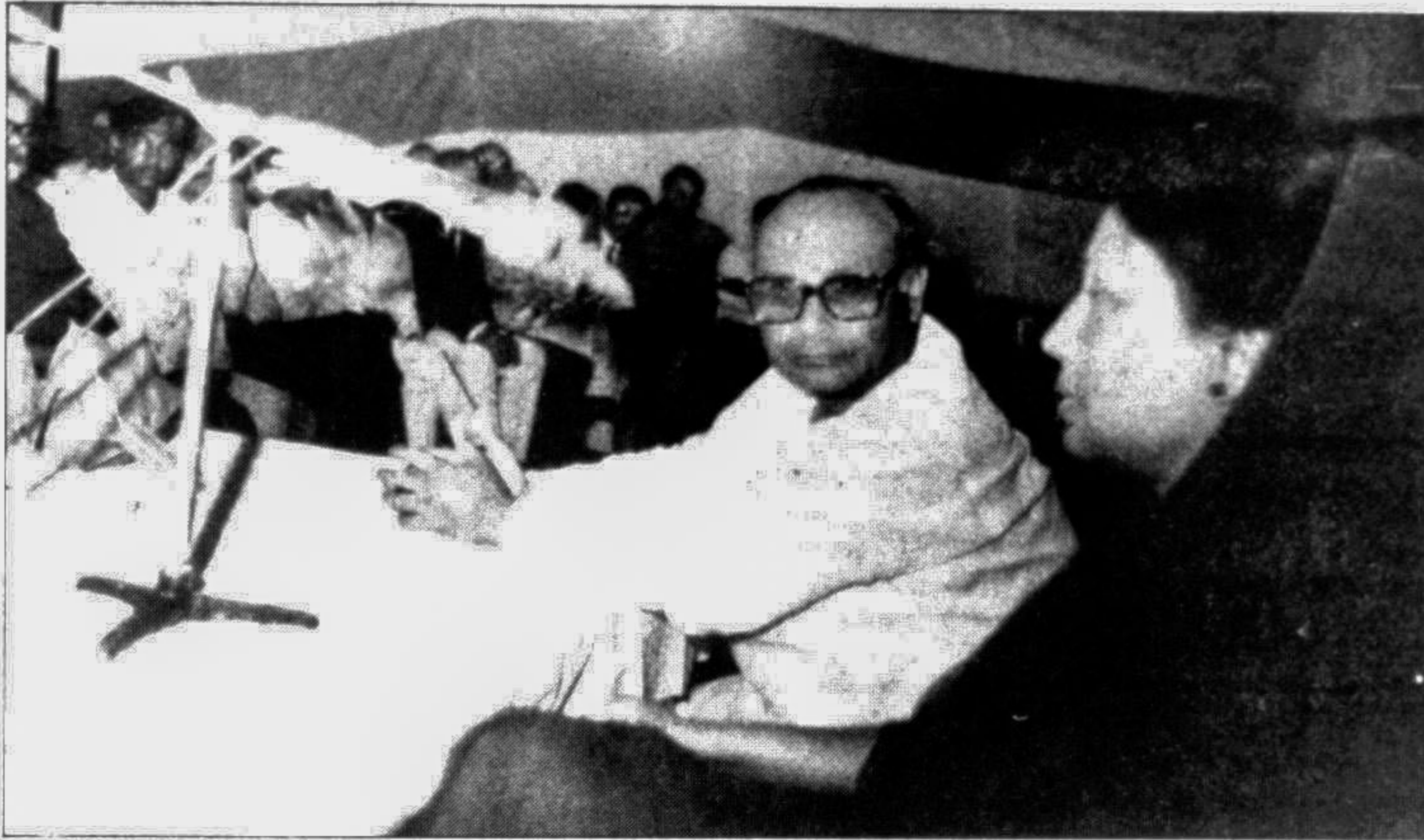
free and fair.

The members of the delegation, however, referred to the Acting President's address to the nation over radio and television on March 1 and said that some misunderstanding was created thereby and they apprehended that the BNP, which already obtained almost near absolute majority seats might not be called to form the government and for this reason they had demanded from the Acting President to immediately summon the Parliament.

The Acting President said there was no ground whatsoever for any such apprehension. He simply stated for information of all concerned the legal and constitutional steps leading to the summoning of the parliament for its first meeting. These steps include election of 30 women members by the Election Commission under the Representation of the People (Women Seats) Order, 1973.

The Acting President advised that the leader of the majority party should be elected first.

The delegation members informed the Acting President that their chairperson was all-



Begum Khaleda Zia talking to party secretary general Abdus Salam Talukder at the parliamentary party meeting at the Banani office of BNP on Sunday. — Star photo

## Begum Zia elected leader of BNP PP

By Staff Correspondent

Begum Khaleda Zia was made the leader of the Parliamentary Party of Bangladesh Nationalist Party at a meeting on Saturday.

Addressing the second meeting of the BNP Parliamentary Party at BNP Gulshan office on Sunday she said her party will work to fulfill all pledges made to the people.

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## Begum Zia PM, Mirza Hafiz Speaker

Star Report

Begum Khaleda Zia, chairperson of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is likely to take over as prime minister within a week. Acting President has agreed to form the cabinet and asked the BNP leaders, who called on him on Saturday, to submit the list of party nominees along with the name of the leader of BNP Parliamentary Party (BNPPP). BNP Parliamentary Party unanimously elected Begum

Khaleda Zia as leader of BNPPP at a meeting on Saturday. The Acting President also agreed to summon the Parliament on April 5 when the new Speaker will be elected.

Mirza Qolam Hafiz, who was Speaker of the second parliament, is likely to be elected Speaker. Dr. Badruddoza Choudhury, Col (Rtd) Mustafizur Rahman, Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar and Maj Gen (Rtd) M. Majedul Huq are

learnt to be the aspirants for deputy premiership.

Dr. Badruddoza Choudhury becomes the deputy leader of the House.

The Acting President is likely to dissolve the council of Advisers and appoint the prime minister and deputy prime ministers and ministers under Article 58 of the Constitution.

Article 58 of the Constitution provide that there

shall be a council of ministers consisting of a prime minister, one or more deputy prime ministers and other ministers to aid and advise the President in the exercise of his functions.

Clause 3 of Article 58 provides that the President shall appoint as prime minister the member of parliament who appears to him to command the support of the majority of the members of the

Parliament.

Acting President's decision to form the cabinet within a week with BNP leaders has removed the confusion created following his speech on Friday. The Acting President said in his televised address that formation of cabinet was not possible as no party commands absolute majority in the Parliament. BNP leader Khaleda Zia called on Acting

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# Allies, Iraq agree on truce terms



Ambassadors of Allied countries to United Nations voted Saturday for a Security Council resolution dictating demands to Iraq for a formal ceasefire in the Gulf war. — AFP photo

- ★ Iraqi tank unit destroyed in a brief post-war battle
- ★ US, allies pledge to pull out of Iraq once they sign a ceasefire
- ★ Saddam meets two of his top advisers to discuss restoration of broadcasting systems
- ★ Iraq bans people firing guns into the air in celebrating ceasefire
- ★ Saddam's whereabouts are not known, Allied Officials say.

NICOSIA, March 3: Iraqi commanders have agreed on all matters raised at ceasefire talks with Allied military chiefs at an air base, an Allied commander said on Sunday, reports agencies.

Allied commanders announced they are "well on our way to a lasting peace" after a meeting Sunday with defeated Iraqi military leaders laid the groundwork for a permanent truce that meets all Allied demands.

The most pressing demands of the multinational coalition included the immediate release of all war prisoners and captured civilians, exchange of information on missing soldiers, information on all minefields and booby traps on land and at sea.

The demands also included

safety measures to ensure that forces from both sides do not accidentally engage in hostile fire. The cease-fire was marked Saturday by an attack on US forces by an isolated Iraqi tank unit that was destroyed in a brief post-war battle.

In a statement after the meeting, US Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf said the Iraqi officials "agreed on all matters".

"I think that we should consider today as a memorable, historic day, and I hope that peace will last in the Middle East and in the whole world," said Saudi Lt. Gen. Khalid bin Sultan, who represented the allies along with Schwarzkopf.

Release of all prisoners on both sides is to be worked out with the International Red

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## Ershad's trial may begin soon

By Staff Correspondent

The trial of deposed President H. M. Ershad is likely to begin soon. Attorney General Aminul Haq told The Daily Star that the government would move the petition for starting the trial of Ershad today before the District and Sessions Judge, who is also the chair-

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## UNO, 34 others hurt in post-poll violence

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 3: Post-election violence in Chittagong left at least 15 persons, including an Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) injured on Saturday.

The UNO, of Anwara Upazila was injured when alleged supporters of BNP attacked his

office saying that he had supported the Awami League (AL) candidate during the elections. The attacker also beat up members of his office staff. A case was filed in this connection but no arrests were made.

Polling at Anwara, Con-

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## Menon, Suranjit call for transfer of power to BNP

By Staff Correspondent

Workers Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon Sunday called upon the Acting President to hand over power to Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which emerged as single largest party in the just-concluded parliament election.

Addressing a post-election

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## AL for consensus on parliamentary system

The Executive Council of Bangladesh Awami League at an emergency meeting here Sunday called upon each member of the fifth Jatiya Sangsad irrespective of party affiliation to arrive at a consensus to bring about a necessary amendment to the Constitution for the establishment of a sovereign parliament, a real representative

government and introduction of parliamentary system, reports BSS.

The meeting presided over by party chief Sheikh Hasina reminded all of the Joint Declaration issued by the 8-party alliance, the 7-party alliance and the 5-party alliance and the pledge incorporated in it for the establishment of a

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## Massive probe launched: Tamil Tigers prime suspects Wijeratne assassinated

COLOMBO, Mar 3: Ranjan Wijeratne, the tough Sri Lankan minister who directed military operations against Tamil separatist guerrillas and Sinhalese Marxist Rebels, was killed in a bomb blast in Colombo Saturday, reports Reuter.

A presidential office spokesman said Wijeratne, Deputy Defence Minister and Plantations Industries Minister, was killed along with his bodyguard and driver when the car they were travelling in was blown to pieces.

"The three bodies were charred almost beyond recognition", said a military officer.

At least 30 other people were killed in the explosion which wrecked a bus, at least eight cars and about a dozen motorcycles in Bambalapiti, about three miles (five km) from the heart of the Sri Lankan capital.

Several houses and shops nearby were badly damaged.

Military sources said among the dead were four commandos of the minister's crack bodyguard unit, the Special

Task Force, who were following Wijeratne's car in two jeeps. Six other commandos were injured.

Police were unable to say immediately who was responsible.

They said Tamil separatist guerrillas, Sinhalese Marxist rebels or even casino owners whose alleged illegal activities he was investigating, might have been responsible.

Later reports from the Colombo General Hospital said at least 30 people were killed

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## Overseas employees may be told to return to Kuwait soon

By Moazzem Hossain

The massive recovery and rehabilitation programme for the war-torn Kuwaiti economy will open up new employment opportunities in labour-surplus Asian countries like Bangladesh.

This was stated on Sunday by Kuwaiti Ambassador in Dhaka Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Najran to The Daily Star.

He said Kuwait would announce at "the earliest opportunity" its decision about the return to the Emirate of the

overseas workers and employees including those from Bangladesh who were forced to leave the country after Iraq's invasion in early August.

For the new political government that comes to office, the end of the war and the new employment and trade opportunities in the Gulf are likely to provide some strong leverages for management of the badly battered economy.

About 70,000 Bangladeshis on jobs in both public and pri-

vate sectors in Kuwait came back home following the occupation of the Emirate by Iraq. Kuwait absorbed about 25 per cent of the Bangladeshis workforce of over three lakh in the Middle-East until early August.

Remittances through official channels by the Bangladeshis in Kuwait totalled 88 million dollars in 1989-90. There have been no remittances from Kuwait since September, 1990. In first two months (July and

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## Hasina's TV speech caused debacle: Razzak

By Staff Correspondent

Bakal General Secretary Abdur Razzak said that half-hearted unity among the leaders of Eight-party alliance and the radio and television speech of Sheikh Hasina were highly counter-productive for the alliance in the just-concluded parliamentary elections.

In an exclusive interview with the Daily Star the Bakal General Secretary who won elections from two constituencies said that after her speech the common people got united to resist the return of the Awami League candidates and those who were contesting the elections with AL symbol boat.

Clarifying the causes that led to the debacle of Awami League and other components of Eight-party alliance Razzak said that the revanchist speech of the alliance leader, alienated the common voters from the Eight-party candidates. In many centres the supporters of Jamaat and other anti-Awami League parties also cast their votes for "paddy sheaf" to resist Awami League.

Mr Razzak said that the polling were free and fair and now the big question in front of the nation was to consolidate the political process which had been initiated with the fall of Ershad on

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## Elections were free: Abbas

By Staff Correspondent

Acting Jamaat Amir Abbas Ali Khan said on Sunday that the people of Bangladesh were able to cast their votes independently in the recent parliamentary elections held under a neutral caretaker government.

In a statement, the Amir said he was the first to raise the demand for holding the polls under a caretaker government and was happy that the elections were held ac-

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## BNP victory as good as ours, says Col Rashid

By Staff Correspondent

Freedom Party candidate the victory of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) as its own as well as the victory of nationalist forces.

Addressing a press conference Sunday at the Sonarghona Hotel Col (Retd) Abdur Rashid, co-chairman of the party, said "We withdrew our candidates from election race to make the nationalist forces victorious".

"We could win at least 11 seats and could give good fights in at least 40 seats but for the sake of BNP and other nationalist forces like Jamaat and Jatiyo Party we gave up the seats," he said.

Col Rashid said the election was equally important for the Freedom Party and for the

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## Paltu alleges rigging, Rahmat Ali says 'no'

By Staff Correspondent

Dhaka city Awami League president Mozaffar Hossain Paltu on Sunday said the February 27 election was held in a peaceful atmosphere but it was not fair.

In a press conference at the National Press Club the city AL leader alleged the accomplices

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## AL to back BNP for parliamentary form, says Tofael

Form Our Correspondent

BHOLA, Mar 3: Tofael Ahmed, Organising Secretary of Awami League today said his party would give about cooperation to BNP if the latter wants to establish parliamentary form of government.

He was addressing a post-election victory meeting at Jatan Bazar after his winning of two seats from Bhola-1 and Bhola-2.

He said AL is pledge-bound to establish democracy in the truest term as it signed the agreement of the three alliances in the wake of the mass uprising.

He urged all parties to sup-

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