

Booming business over a battle for power

By Shahiduzzaman Khan

Dhaka city and the country as a whole are gradually wearing a festive look as the countdown for the general election has begun. Most of the political parties are locked in intermittent battle for capturing the vantage points of the city walls and strategic places. Banners and posters depicting the candidature of the parties are on display.

Political activists are organising meetings and rallies every day in support of their candidates. Also emerging every day are new slogans which get reflected in the propaganda scenario of the parties. BNP and Awami League are running neck-to-neck in their hectic electioneering bid while the other components of the 8-party and the 7-party alliance and the 5 party alliance Jamaat-e-Islami, Freedom Party and others are also not lagging behind.

City bazars and footpaths have become ideal places for selling posters and calendars of the political figures. Portraits of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman, and Bangobandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina are in high demand in the makeshift stalls run mainly by teenagers. Souvenirs and coatpins are also on sale.

The printing presses in the city are doing a booming business as demand for posters and calendars with profile of the late and present political leaders is going up.

A conservative estimate says, the ensuing election, which has generated tremendous enthusiasm among the whole people, would involve an amount of Tk 300 crore to be spent by the candidates and political parties. Given the situation that a candidate will have to spend Tk 10 lakh on an average and the number of candidates being around 3000 throughout the country, the unprecedented cash flow will bring about an inflationary trend, said a political analyst.

In a revised announcement, the government said the maximum limit of expenditure for a candidate is Tk 3 lakh in place of Tk one lakh previously. If a candidate is found to spend more, he will have to



A vendor and his makeshift shop of portraits and posters in the city. - Star photo

Some observer teams are already in city to monitor the election which is being viewed as vital to determine the fate of the country's destiny.

Curfew in two Indian cities

JAMMU, Jan 14 : Indian army and paramilitary troops hunted in Kashmir's frontier regions for a group of Muslim militants suspected of involvement in bombings and ambushes, an official spokesman said today, reports AP.

The Jammu and Kashmir state administration also imposed an indefinite curfew in

Handwara and Kupwara, the Indian towns closest to the Pakistan border, as troops began the search, he said.

The official said the goal was to find some "two dozen" Muslim secessionists who conducted bombing raids and ambushes in the region. Leaving several dead including five paramilitary troopers over the weekend.

Elite troopers from the Border Security Force have joined the army in the operation, the spokesman said here in Kashmir's winter capital.

At least eight people died in Kashmir on Sunday in violence linked by authorities to the Muslim militant campaign to secede from India.

Probe body

From Page 1
Dhanmadi Thana has also been suspended, the Press Note issued by the Home Ministry said.

The Enquiry Commission was formed with Mohammad Hamidul Haq, District and Sessions Judge of Comilla.

A PID hand out also said the commission was asked to submit recommendations within ten days on the clashes between the police and the students of the Dhaka City College and the Ideal College (Both near Science Laboratory) that took place on January 13.

The Press Note said "Some unpleasant incidents took place yesterday and today centering an unfortunate incident near the Dhaka City College on January 13. A delegation of the All-Party Students Unity met with the Home Secretary to discuss the matters relating to the overall situation. The delegation included 1. Khairul Kabir Khokan, 2. Asim Kumar Uki, 3. Shafi Ahmed, 4. Jahangir Sattar Tinku, 5. Nasir ul Doza, 6. S. M. Kamal Hossain, 7. Fazul Huq Milan, 8. Abdus Sattar Khan, 9. Susanta Misra, 10. Zaid Iqbal Khan, 11. Moshrefa Mishu, 12. Bazlur Rashid Feroj and 13. Mohsin Sarkar.

Student killed

From Page 1
Bangla Motor and Farmgate. The college was closed indefinitely.

Earlier on the day the students barricaded roads in the college area and exploded bombs. Police chased them into the campus, some students hurled bombs from the top of the college building.

The body of Mithu, son of a retired Bangladesh Rifles officer, Mobarakullah Khan, was taken to the Dhaka University campus and kept there from noon with 3 pm, before being sent to DMCH for autopsy.

Of the estimated 50 injured students Mamun and Mushtaq Ahmed, second and fourth year students respectively, admitted to DMCH with bullet injuries. Eighteen others were released after treatment, and 10 others were given aid, hospital sources said.



Pitched battle between police and students of City College yesterday. - Star photo

The Midnight File

Iraq firm to crush aggression

BAGHDAD, Jan 14 : Iraqi President Saddam Hussein said Monday his army was "determined and capable of crushing aggression" 48 hours before a UN deadline for Iraqi troops to leave Kuwait or face force. The Iraqi News Agency (INA) quoted him as saying that the United States, heading a coalition to get Iraq out of Kuwait, wanted to impose its hegemony on the region and the whole world, reports Reuter.

Palestinian boy shot dead

JERUSALEM, Jan 14 : Israeli soldiers shot dead a Palestinian boy and wounded eight other people Monday on a day of protests in the occupied territories against war in the Gulf. The Palestine Liberation Organisation backed unified leadership of the uprising against Israeli rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has told Arabs to step up clashes with soldiers in the run-up to the UN deadline for Iraq to leave Kuwait, reports reuter.

Lithuania crackdown condemned

BRUSSELS, Jan 14 : The NATO nations on Monday deplored the Soviet military crackdown in Lithuania and warned that any further use of force would have "negative consequences" on the allies' relations with the Kremlin. "Allies strongly condemn the use of violence by the Soviet armed forces," said a statement issued by the 16 nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. They appealed to Moscow "to pursue the process of peaceful reform and democratic change," reports AP.

Aquino scraps cabinet rankings

MANILA, Jan 14 : Philippine President Corazon Aquino Monday abolished cabinet rankings for her senior advisers to streamline her presidential office. On the recommendation of her new Executive Secretary Oscar Orbes, she scrapped a system of three executive coordinators introduced just a year ago to oversee and coordinate the work of government departments, reports Reuter.

Pavlov replaces Ryzkov

MOSCOW, Jan 14 : The Soviet Parliament Monday elected Finance Minister Valentin Pavlov as Prime Minister. His nomination by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was confirmed by 279 votes to 75 with 66 abstentions, journalists at the Supreme Soviet reported, reports AP.

Tribal rebels surrender

CHITTAGONG, Jan 14 : Three armed insurgents surrendered to Khagrachari Regional Commander of Bangladesh Security Force Sunday, an official source said, they also surrendered one pistol and five ammunition, reports BSS.

40 killed in bus accident

DAIPTAN (Philippines), Jan 14 : A passenger bus skidded off a cliff and plunged into a river in the southern Philippines, killing 40 people, officials said Monday. The bus was rounding a sharp mountain bend outside Dapitan city, 700 km (435 miles) southeast of Manila, on Sunday when it skidded off the road, Dapitan Mayor James Adasa told reporters. In another southern town, ten people died when landslides buried a cluster of shanty homes on Sunday evening, police said, reports Reuter.

Consensus on national issues urged

Sammilita Peshajibi Sangram Parishad (Combined Professionals Action Council) yesterday called upon the political alliances to consider the proposal for formation of a national government consisting of the forces that had participated in the mass movement, reports BSS.

Jail amnesty

From Page 1
The prisoners whose prison term is two years or less till December 6 will be released. The prisoners whose age is below 16 years till December 6 last year will be released. The prisoners whose age is 60 or more and are proved as crippled and disabled by the committee comprising of Deputy Commissioner, Civil Surgeon, DIG (Prison) and District Jail Superintendent will be released. This amnesty and special remission will be applicable to those prisoners who appealed to the higher court challenging their conviction. The former army men convicted under army act/regulation will not come under this amnesty and special remission. The official said that the government decided to grant the prisoners to resolve the crisis arising out of the jail reform since December 29 last year. Almost half of the country's nearly 40,000 prisoners will come under the amnesty and special remission. The prisoners of Dhaka, Chittagong and Feni jails during the revolt demanded immediate release of all the inmates. Eight prisoners were killed in Dhaka, Chittagong and Jessore in jail revolt. Meanwhile, the situation in Dhaka Central Jail remained a little tense as the prisoners refused to receive 70 maunds of yogurts and sweetsmeats forming it as substandard. They demanded these yogurts and sweetsmeats to celebrate their victory. Some of the agitated prisoners remained out of their lock-up on Monday as repair work of the damaged wards and cells were continuing.

Shahabuddin

From Page 1
consequences of such a war would be colossal, the Acting President said. He referred to many a fraternal ties that bind Bangladesh and Iraq and said Bangladesh would like to see the war averted at all cost. The appeal of the Acting President was conveyed by Foreign Secretary Abul Ahsan to Iraqi ambassador Mohammad Al-Omar, who visited the Foreign Office yesterday at the former's request. Equally we are of the opinion that the realization of the legitimate national rights of our Palestinian brethren, which has consistently occupied a priority concern of our foreign policy, would be best served through such an approach, he said.

Writ

From Page 1

Barrister Sahadat who was contacted through Home Ministry by Ershad, told The Daily Star that he called on the ex-president last Friday to consult him about the criminal cases brought against him. He said he would defend Ershad against the arms and misuse of power cases.

Kazi Sahadat said he had advised his client not to divulge to any interrogating agency anything relating to his defence. He said the papers and documents of Ershad were now being scrutinized to file a writ petition and defend him.

Meanwhile, the CID personnel also met Ershad Saturday to interrogate him. But Ershad refused to give any statement to the CID personnel as per directives of his lawyer. He asked them to contact his lawyer for any information they required.

The CID interrogators who later met Kazi Sahadat asked him how he got the case and also wanted to know what papers Ershad had given him. Kazi Sahadat did not divulge anything.

The lawyer further said, Ershad had no intention of suing Khaleda Zia, as reported in a section of newspapers. He said another civil suit would be filed by another lawyer soon claiming the property, seized from his Cantonment residence.

According to CID sources, if Ershad gives no information or statement to the law-enforcing agency, he might be taken on police remand under Section 161 of the criminal procedure. But it would require decision of the highest authorities due to political reasons, the sources said.

MM College closed sine die

From A Correspondent
JESSORE, Jan 14 : Govt MM College has been closed for an indefinite period following a clash between two student organisations today. Boarders of hostel have been asked to vacate the hostel within 6 pm. The clash ensued when the supporters of Chitra League (H-A) pulled down Chhatra League welcome dias erected for greeting the newly admitted students.

Editor : S. M. Ali

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Election sidelights

Campaign starts from Sylhet, Tongipara

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina will begin their election campaigning on January 16.

Begum Zia will begin her campaign from Sylhet after offering fatcha at the mazars of Hazrat Shah Jalal(R) and Hazrat Shah Poran (R). Sheikh Hasina will start her campaign from Tongipara where she will offer fatcha at her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's grave.

The late president Ziaur Rahman started his election campaigning from Sylhet after offering fatcha at the mazars.

Dr. Kamal submits for one seat

Awami League presidium member Dr Kamal Hossain left Dhaka for New York Sunday night to attend a meeting of the United Nations Centre for Transnational Cooperation. He is expected to return home January 19.

Before leaving Dhaka, Kamal Hossain filed nomination from Dhaka-11, one of

the two constituencies for which he was nominated by Awami League. He also got party ticket for contesting the election from Bakerganj-5, but he did not submit nominations for the seat.

Humayun 'not a JP nominee'

Mr. Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury, a former foreign minister under the fallen government of ex-President Ershad, on Monday described as "baseless" the publication of his name in a section of the press as a nominee of Jatiya Party for the coming election.

In a statement, he said he did not seek Jatiya Party's nomination to contest the election.

Zaker Party to solve problems

Zaker Party, if voted to power, will make all out efforts to resolve the basic problems of the people, party's Presidium Member Mostafa Amir Faisal said in Dhaka Monday, reports BSS.

Mr Faisal told a gathering of party workers and supporters at Charbhadransad Sadarpur that Zaker Party would make vigorous efforts for national unity through the removal of economic, social and cultural

desparities among regions and those of the backward population, a press release said.

AL-BNP clash: 50 injured

At least 50 persons including three policemen were injured in clashes between the supporters of BNP and Awami League on Monday in Faridpur. The clash spread to Jheelutly, Neetuly, Alipur and other places. Tense situation was prevailing in the town.

Clash in Rajbari

In Rajbari, two rival groups of BNP supporters clashed over the filing of nomination papers. A number of supporters were injured in the clash. Two of them were admitted to the Rajbari hospital.

In Thakurgaon, all the 37 nominations were declared valid.

In Manikganj, 52 nominations were filed from four constituencies. All of them were found valid.

Our Chandpur Correspondent adds: Seventy-two nominations for six constituencies at Chandpur district were submitted.

Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Maj Gen Shamsul Huq (JP), Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan and Abdullah Sarkar (BSD) are the prominent candidates from this district.

Absconding ex-MPs, ministers

The absconding former ministers and the MPs of Jatiya Party, who have filed nominations, must appear before the returning officers if their signatures are challenged by the agents of any political parties during scrutiny.

According to the returning officer of Dhaka district, Mr. M. Nazrul Islam, if the nomination papers of the absconding persons are not challenged, those will be treated valid. If the concerned person fails to appear before the returning officer within the stipulated time his nomination paper may be treated cancelled, said Mr. Islam.

According to JP sources its acting chairman, Mizan Chowdhury had already advised his party colleagues, who are absconding to surrender to the law enforcement agency before submission of nomination papers.

According to the Election Commission source, the nomination papers of any candidates may be challenged within three days.

Gulf crisis

From Page 1
over the weekend by UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

But Mr. Perez de Cuellar, who met with Mr. Hussein and Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, acknowledged Monday in Paris he had been unable to persuade Mr. Hussein to pull out of Kuwait in compliance with Security Council resolutions.

Asked if a new diplomatic initiative were still possible before January 15, after which US-led multinational forces in the Gulf have UN authorisation to attack Iraq, Mr. Perez de Cuellar replied: "I don't think so."

PLO guerillas

PLO chief Yasser Arafat has ordered thousands of his

guerillas in Lebanon to fight with Iraq against the US-led multinational force if war breaks out in the Gulf.

"We have received orders from the leader (Arafat) to be ready to fight on Iraq's side in any possible war in the Gulf," senior Palestinian official told Reuters.

Palestinian sources said the guerillas were ready to go to Iraq if war broke out. They are also on alert to face any Israeli move into Lebanon.

A Palestinian leader said today that American interests around the world would be attacked if US-dominated multinational forces in the Gulf move against Iraq.

In Israel, Saddam's first declared target in any war, the Middle East's strongest army was on its highest state of alert.

US troops nervous

US soldiers said today they were ready for war, but nervous as heavy rains turned potential desert battlefields into a quagmire on the eve of a deadline for Iraq to quit Kuwait.