

## Focus on election- '91

### CU teachers on polls duty demand security

CHITTAGONG, Feb 2: Teachers on election duty roll here today placed a four-point demand to the government with a view to ensuring free, fair and impartial elections on February 27, reports BSS.

The President of Chittagong Unit of Bangladesh College-University Teachers Association, Mr. Shafiqul Alam, announcing this at a press conference here, pointed out that the teachers on election duties will be unable to discharge their responsibilities properly unless adequate security measures were provided at the polling booths.

He listed the four-point demand as arrangements to save the teachers from assault and harassment and compensation for death and injury, if any, punishment to the offenders, constitution of observation teams with representatives from teachers and other officials at upazila levels under the supervision of the Election Commission, signing of a code of conduct by candidates or their representatives, and inclusion of university teachers in the election duties.

Mr. Shafiqul Alam also called upon the teachers entrusted with election duties to be neutral in conducting elections.

### NAP (Bhashani) to solve water sharing issues if elected

National Awami Party (Bhashani) Chairman Prof. Noor Mohammad Kazi said in Dhaka yesterday the fate of the country's people could not be changed unless the problems of floods and the water-sharing problems of the common rivers including the Padma could be solved, reports BSS.

He regretted that no political party nor any individual had mentioned these problems during their election campaigns.

Presiding over an election-eering meeting in front of Mohammadpur Town Hall Mr. Noor Mohammad committed that his party, if elected to power, would raise the problems of flood and water sharing of common rivers at the international levels for their solutions.

The meeting was addressed among others by NAP candidate from Dhaka-9 constituency (Mohammadpur-Dhanmondi) Mujibur Rahman Advocate and party General Secretary Sekandar Ali.

### Rich tributes paid to Qamrul

Adviser for Culture and Food Prof. Iqbaluddin Ahmed paid rich tributes to eminent artist Qamrul Hassan recalling his invaluable contribution to the democratic movement in the country, reports UNB.

He was speaking at the inaugural function of an exhibition of children's paintings organised here on Saturday in observance of anniversary of death of the late artist.

Organised by 'Qamrul Hassan Obituary Parishad' the function was presided over by Poet Sofia Kamal and addressed among others by Aminul Islam, Qayum Chowdhury, Rokunuzzaman Khan, Rafiqunnabi, Sumana Hasan and Muzannur Rahman.

Prof. Iqbaluddin said, the spirit of historic language movement and the war of liberation found true reflections in the art work of Qamrul Hassan for which he will always remain alive in our memory.

About 454 pieces of art work done by members of the 'Kendriya Kanchi Kancher Mela' were put on display in the exhibition held at the gallery of the Institute of Fine Arts.

### Rafsanjani's peace proposal to Saddam

TEHRAN, Feb 2: Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani has sent a message to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein on possible solutions to the Persian Gulf war, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported here today.

But IRNA provided no details of the message, which was handed over to Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Saadoun Hammadi.

Mr. Hammadi left here for Baghdad earlier in the day.

## Largest number of candidates in race since independence

By Nazmul Ashraf

The number of political parties and candidates contesting this year's parliamentary elections is the largest since independence.

Ninety political parties have fielded 2782 candidates to contest the polls this time. Besides, 427 independent candidates are also in the race. The victory in the mass upsurge of 1990 has created a democratic atmosphere where the people's enthusiasm for election is growing steadily.

This is for the first time since independence the elections will be held under a non-partisan neutral government. The Election Commission has been reorganised to work independently.

The parliamentary elections were held in Bangladesh first in 1973. All political parties took part in that elections. In 1979 too all the political parties took part in election.

Ousted President H.M. Ershad seized power from the President Justice Sattar, a BNP man, in March 1982 and the parliamentary election were held under him in 1986. Bangladesh Nationalist Party, and Five-Party Alliance (BKSAL) and some other small parties boycotted that election. The most controversial election was held in 1988 in the backdrop of an abortive mass movement which too was boycotted by mainstream opposition political parties.

The mainstream opposition alliances and parties spearheaded the movement against Ershad in October and the movement turned into mass upsurge in the last week of November. The victory has paved the way for establishing a democratic government through free and fair election. With this objective the political parties have fielded largest number of candidates this year.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has fielded the highest number of candidates (299) followed by Jatiya Party (270) and Awami League (263).

AL earlier nominated 299 candidates which came down to 263 as it gave 36 seats to the components of the 8-party

### Poets' row

The Jatiya Kabita Parishad Saturday failed to elect its new Executive Committee for the next term for bitter disputes among member poets on the last day of the two-day 5th National Poetry Festival in Dhaka, reports UNB.

Incumbent President of the Parishad poet Shamsur Rahman and General Secretary Nirmalendu Gun left the Council session at about 9 pm amid a furore created by rival lobbyists.

The meeting in TSC seminar room lasted more than seven hours since 2-30 pm, but even after prolonged debate, the councillors failed to agree on formation of a new committee.

Before leaving, Shamsur Rahman apologised that he was "unable to run the office of Parishad President due to ill health".

The Kabita Parishad leaders were tight-lipped after the futile meeting and refused to talk to reporters.

Some councillors opined for granting another term for the incumbent committee, while others demanded a new committee, charging the present committee with inefficiency.

Another proposal for forming an ad hoc committee also failed to gain support.

Meanwhile, the regular programmes of the second day of the festival continued at the intersection in front of TSC.

### AL worker stabbed to death in Barisal

By Staff Correspondent

An Awami League worker was stabbed to death in Barisal Thursday night while returning home after campaigning for his party candidate.

According to information received in Dhaka, the victim Harun and his brother were attacked by some miscreants at Shaitabud under Sadar upazila. The miscreants demanded money from them and at one stage stabbed both the brothers and fled away. Harun succumbed to his injuries at the Barisal Hospital while his brother is under treatment there.

alliance.

Of the 1089 candidates in 1989 by 14 parties in the 1973 polls, AL fielded 299 candidates and 293 were elected.

In the 1979 polls, BNP nominated 298 candidates of whom 207 won. AL (Malik) fielded 300 candidates and 39 were elected in the polls.

Twenty-eight political parties fielded 1074 candidates while 453 more contested independently in the 1986 polls. Of the candidates, 300 belonged to the JP and 256 to AL. The JP candidates cap-

tured 153 seats followed by the AL (76).

All the opposition political parties including BNP, AL and Jamaat-e-Islami boycotted the elections of 1988.

The then ruling Jatiya Party fielded 299 candidates of whom 251 won. The Combined Opposition Party (COP) led by ASM Abdur Rab of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) nominated 209 candidates and only 19 of them won the race.

The total number of candidates including 764 of eight other parties was 978 in 1988 polls.



Supporters of ousted President Ershad demanding his release at a rally at Farmgate on Saturday. This was the first open procession in support of the Jatiya Party Chairman since his ouster and in the face of mounting demand to shift Ershad to Central Jail - Star photo

## 2 ex-PMs barred from leaving Nepal

KATIMANDU, Feb 2: The interim government Friday restricted the movements outside Nepal of two former prime ministers and other officials of the partyless Panchayat government ousted in April last year, reports AFP.

The two former prime ministers are Lokendra Bahadur Chand, who is also the President of the Pro-monarchy National Democratic Party (NDP), and Marich Man Singh Shrestha who succeeded Mr. Chand in 1985.

Both have had their passports either confiscated or cancelled.

The Panchayat system was ousted following several weeks of violent pro-democracy demonstrations leading to the setting up of an interim government pending elections due in April.

The restrictions were also imposed on the Chairman of the Panchayat Policy and Evaluation Committee Nawa Raj Subedi and several other

committee members, a highly placed source said.

The cabinet also dismissed Chief Cabinet Secretary Lok Bahadur Shrestha and four others including the Secretary for Home Bhaktia Bahadur Koirala, Secretary for Local Development Dharma Bahadur Thapa, Secretary for Commerce Nidhendra Raj Sharma and Commerce Department Director General Shiva Prasad Sharma.

Two others, Secretary for Public Health Basudev Pradhan and Secretary for Local Supplies Hiti Singh Shrestha were transferred to a Reserve Pool under the Ministry of General Administration.

### Netrakona rocked

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, Feb 2: Netrakona district town and its adjoining areas experienced a moderate earthquake at about 5.05 am today.

The earthquake lasted about 25 seconds and the areas were jolted three times residents said. The panic-stricken residents in Netrakona town rushed out of their houses when they were awakened by the quake.

Two students of Tejgaon College were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullet injuries on Saturday morning.

The students are Aslam (20) and Dipu (22).

Students alleged that a group of Jatiya Party workers armed with firearms, knives and cocktails attacked a meeting of Chhatra Otkya Parishad on the college compound at Indira Road.

The armed hooligans hurled cocktails and fired shots, the students alleged.

Aslam, a Chhatra Otkya Parishad member and a student of HSC second year student, received leg injuries.

Mobashsherul Haque Dipu, another second year HSC student, who went to pay tuition fees was shot in the back.

Police, however, could not mention any particular group responsible for the incident. The Principal of Tejgaon College filed a case with Tejgaon thana.

### Unemployment rose to 40 p.c. during Ershad rule: Menon

HARISAL, Feb 2: Five-Party alliance leader Rashid Khan Menon today called for establishing an honest democratic government to take the leadership of the country which had been economically ruined during the corrupt administration of former President Ershad, reports BSS.

Addressing a meeting in his constituency of Uzipur here, Mr. Menon said the rate of landless people in the country had risen to 60 per cent while unemployment increased to 40 per cent during Ershad's term.

The Five-Party alliance leader pledged to reduce the price of agricultural inputs by 50 per cent and eradicate corruption if his alliance was voted to power. He also promised to rehabilitate the affected peasants of the last devastating floods.

He told his voters that he had spoken about the people during the mass movement and wanted to speak about the peasants in parliament after becoming their elected representative.

## Human rights abused in Bangladesh: US

WASHINGTON, Feb 2: The United States said on Friday that political violence and human rights abuses were widespread throughout the South Asia Subcontinent where democracies were struggling to control bitter ethnic conflicts, reports Reuter.

The US State Department's Annual Human Rights review of the world recorded a deterioration in the situation in Sri Lanka as well as an upsurge in violence in the Indian states of Kashmir and Punjab.

Pakistan and Bangladesh were also plagued by abuses, but the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal achieved a dramatic improvement of its human rights situation.

The report praised India's functioning democracy and vigorous free press but said severe social tensions related to violent ethnic, caste, communal and secessionist politics strained the system.

It listed problems as: "Security forces excesses against civilians particularly in Kashmir, separatist terrorism in Punjab including political murder and kidnapping, as well as harassment and beatings by police, in detentions for prolonged periods without charge. Political killing on an increasingly wide scale, torture and deaths of suspects in police custody."

In Sri Lanka the situation in the northeast worsened after a temporary improvement earlier in the year and extrajudicial killings redoubled after negotiations between the government and the Tamil Tiger guerrillas broke down.

Political killing carried out by the government's security forces, police, vigilante squads and separatist groups remains a leading human rights problem," the report said.

Pakistan was plagued by kidnappings and random violence in the Punjab and other frontier regions, exacerbated by ethnic tensions and a disintegration of law and order.

Physical abuse of prisoners and detainees by police was largely unchecked and there was persuasive evidence of misuse of police powers to extract confessions from suspects.

In Bangladesh, the fall of the government of President Hussain Muhammad Ershad in December 1990 was preceded by violent demonstrations which left around 100 people dead and 1,000 wounded.

After Ershad's resignation, there were numerous revenge attacks on his supporters.

The report praised Nepal for sweeping changes which resulted in the human rights situation improving dramatically in all spheres of life and for all sections of society.

"Political and religious detainees were released," said the report and almost all limitations on the exercise of freedom of religion, speech, the press and associated were ended.

## WB unhappy

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Implementation problem because of stoppage of pipe-line laying works at Golapganj in Sylhet. The local people there resisting the work on grounds of their objection to location of the condensate separation plant.

Energy Ministry sources said most credit agreements in energy sector including power have more or less the same set of conditionalities. Moreover, other multilateral donors such as Asian Development Bank and also bilateral donors like OECD of Japan, ODA of the UK, KfW of Germany are also largely involved in energy and power sector as either co-financiers with World Bank or singular source of funds for some specific projects.

The sources said that any disruptions to external assistance flows in heavily aid-dependent energy sector would have "chain-effects".

Besides, the reforms programme supported by International Monetary Fund (IMF) under its ESAF (Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility) is also tagged to several conditions, similar to those of World Bank. The suspension of aid in energy sector by the bank may influence the IMF's disbursements of ESAF fund, the sources said.

The situation was reviewed on Saturday at a high-level meeting with Energy Adviser Prof. Wahiduddin. Six advisers and high officials of the Energy Ministry attended it.

Sources said: the interim government will make an appeal to the World Bank not to suspend aid flows in energy sector. "The political government that comes to power after the February 27 parliamentary elections will be in a better position to deal with policy issues," the sources noted.

"The PDB's alling performance is a major concern for the interim government. Total investments of the government until now in PDB are about Taka 7,000 crores in current prices. But, the organisation has not been able to give any satisfactory returns."

### 'Some parties resorting to terrorism'

Secretary General of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Maulana Matur Rahman Nizami Saturday expressed doubts over holding of Parliamentary elections in due time, reports UNB.

Addressing an election rally near Fakirpool Bazar on Saturday afternoon, the Jamaat leader said, "If elections were not held within the due period under the caretaker government, a constitutional crisis will erupt". In that case chances of taking over of power by "undesirable forces" cannot be ruled out, he said.

Proper growth of democracy depends on holding of a free and fair election by the caretaker government, he said, accusing some political parties of violating democratic norms and resorting to terrorism.

Publication in the papers about the code of conduct was not enough, the Secretary General said, urging the caretaker government to rigidly implement it.

Nizami, addressing the electorate in the city parliamentary constituency of Acting Amier Abbas Ali Khan, called upon the people to vote for 'Scale' and help establish rule of Quran and Sunnah.

## The Midnight File

### Bush's 'national prayer day'

WASHINGTON, Feb 2: President George Bush today proclaimed Sunday a national day of prayer and urged Americans in a radio address to pray for Allied troops in the Gulf and for peace reports. Repeatedly invoking God, Bush said troops in the Gulf were at war against "evil that threatens world peace" and were compelled by a vision of "moral order", reports Reuter.

### Quake jolts Meghalaya

NEW DELHI, Feb 2: An earthquake measuring 4.7 on the open ended Richter Scale rocked northeastern India early today causing no damage, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported. Tremors lasting 10 seconds were recorded at 5:46 am (00:16 GMT) in the neighbouring states of Meghalaya and Assam which share borders with Bangladesh and tiny Bhutan, reports AFP.

### Devastation by Allies

RUWEISHED (Jordan), Feb 2: Refugees fleeing allied attacks on Iraq and Kuwait told Saturday of a nightmare journey along heavily bombed highways to reach sanctuary in Jordan. "The people of Kuwait are praying for a truce so they can escape to safety," said Fatima Jamal Jumaa, a Jordanian mother. "We saw many burning cars on the road" from Kuwait to Baghdad, said Mrs. Jumaa, who was squeezed into a car with six girls, aged 3 to 12, and with a baby on her lap, reports AP.

### French planes hit Iraq, Kuwait

PARIS, Feb 2: French war planes attacked Iraqi troops near Iraq's border with Kuwait and an ammunition dump near Kuwait City today, the Defence Ministry said. Two of the raids were against artillery and mechanised units of Iraq's elite Republican Guard entrenched near the Iraqi border with Kuwait. The third raid was against an Iraqi munitions depot 30 km (20 miles) south of Kuwait City, reports Reuter.

### 'Stupid attempt of Saddam'

RIYADH, Feb 2: The Chief of US Air Force in the Gulf says Iraq's thrust into the Saudi town of Khafji was a "stupid" attempt to seize the initiative after two weeks of hammering from Allied air strikes. "I didn't expect to see him (Iraqi President Saddam Hussein) go on the offensive like this," Lt Gen Chuck Horner told reporters on Thursday, states Reuter.

### Way to knock out Scuds

TEL AVIV, Feb 2: The United States has consulted Israel over the most effective way to knock out Iraq's Scud missile launchers, Army Chief of Staff General Danahomron disclosed here today. Washington has supplied Israel with Patriot anti-missile batteries to intercept the Iraqi Scuds and has put heavy pressure on the government here not to riposte to the attacks, reports AFP.

### Walesa to go to Baghdad

ROME, Feb 2: Polish President Lech Walesa said he was ready to go to Baghdad in line with the duty conferred upon him as a Nobel Peace Prize winner, according to an interview in the catholic weekly, Sabato, today. He also said we must be realistic about proposals for an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, which he felt must be held before the situation degenerates, reports AFP.

## Pak quake toll rises to 300

ISLAMABAD, Feb 2: Rescue workers trudged through knee-deep snow Saturday to reach remote mountain villages devastated by an earthquake that rumpled through Afghanistan and Pakistan, killing at least 300 people, officials said, reports UNB.

More than 500 people were reportedly injured in the minute-long quake that jolted residents from their sleep shortly before dawn Friday.

The quake also shook the Soviet central Asian republics of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, triggering landslides and causing some damage but apparently no casualties.

Officials said the quake was centered in the Hindu Kush mountains, about 200 miles (320 kilometers) northeast of the Afghan capital of Kabul.

Kabul radio reported five people died in the quake that destroyed dozens of homes in the Afghan capital and damaged some government offices. More than 80 houses were destroyed in the three provinces neighbouring Pakistan, the radio said.

Officials in Pakistan said the number of dead and injured was still unclear because the worst hit areas were in Pakistan's remote and rugged mountainous regions bordering Afghanistan.

Government officials said at least 300 people had died in the quake, although the official death count was 164.

The government-run Pakistan Times said snow-clogged mountain passes prevented rescue

crews from reaching some of the most remote villages shattered by the quake, which registered 6.8 on the Richter scale.

A quake of that magnitude is considered severe, capable of heavy, widespread damage in populated areas. The Richter scale measures ground movement as detected by seismographs.

In most of the hardest hit villages, there are no medical facilities and what does exist is antiquated and inadequate.

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