

Focus on election- '91



BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a huge election meeting at Moghbazar crossing Monday. — Star photo.



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina addressing a huge public meeting at Pargachha, Rangpur on Monday. — Star photo.

Zaker Party

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Reading out the 26-point manifesto Pirzada Faisal said Zaker Party believed that establishment of Islami Hukumat (Rule) on the basis of Quran and Sunnah was the solution to the multiple problems facing the nation.

Calling for a national consensus to establish the ideals of Islam he said that political instability and poverty were the outcome of the absence of such a consensus.

Pirzada Faisal who is a member of ZP's supreme presidium but who is not in the election fray said during the past nine years there were nine elections at the national level and power changed hands on seven occasions. But on no occasion was power transferred through elections. This clearly indicated that democracy is yet to be institutionalised.

The population has marked a 60 per cent increase in 20 years but the national income has not kept pace with it.

Poverty, illiteracy, social unrest, corruption terrorism and immoral activities increased manifold due to political instability, he said.

Pirzada Faisal said Zaker Party was launched at a time when ambivalence to identify national objectives was weakening the country.

Ershad must know

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adding, 'burning or damaging' the BNP campaign camps cannot help its opponents gain public support. 'We don't believe in violence but we cannot sit idle in the face of repeated attacks either', she said.

The BNP leader accused the interim government of not maintaining neutrality in covering the news of the polls campaign in the state-owned media. All political parties should be given equal opportunity but those who were rejected by the people should never get the opportunity, she observed.

She called upon the people to be aware of those indulging in 'politics of sweet words and poems' and said if they were voted to power, misuse would be re-established in the country like the pre-'75 period. We believe in the politics of work and production and not of words' she said calling to vote for her party to lead the nation towards development and restore all development-oriented programmes launched by the late President Ziaur Rahman.

Khaleda Zia assured the people that if elected to power, her party would rehabilitate the families affected in the Liberation War and also in the anti-autocratic movement against Ershad regime. 'Educational area, the worst-affected sector during the autocratic rule, would be looked into and age for government

service would be raised to 30,' she announced amid clappings.

Chaired by Wadud Master, the meeting was also addressed by 34 leaders of BNP and its front organisations including the BNP candidate for the Tejgaon-Ramna constituency Major (retd) Abdul Mannan.

Thousands of people thronged the meeting spot and hundreds of others climbed on the road-side building roofs to have a glance of the BNP leader.

Freedom Party, 8-Party clash: 50 injured

SHERPUR, Feb 11: At least 50 people were injured, four of

them seriously, when Freedom Party workers attacked an election procession of Eight-Party alliance Monday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said, attackers stormed the procession with hockey sticks, iron rods and lethal weapons while it was passing beside Freedom Party's office at Tinani Bazar this evening.

Four seriously injured persons were admitted into local hospital. They were identified as: Abdus Salam (27), Babul (19), Abdur Rahman Lebu (32) and Illia (50).

Politics of killing

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bomb explosion at a victory procession following the fall of Ershad Government.

The meetings and gatherings were addressed, among others, by Awami League and 8-party Alliance nominees including Shamsuzzoha, Mostafizur Rahman, Aminul Islam, Mizanur Rahman, former Whip Abdur Rouf, Azharul Islam and Awami League UK Branch President Nurul Islam Anu.

Referring the various problems of the people in the northern parts Sheikh Hasina said if voted to power, her party would implement Jamuna Multipurpose bridge project, Strajganj town protection scheme and other measures to safe the northern districts from the curse of the river erosion and flood.

Sheikh Hasina strongly demanded publication of a white paper on the total collection of money by the Jatiya Party Government in the name of Jamuna surcharge.

Referring to the state principles, Sheikh Hasina said secularism would not be compromised with under any circumstances. Referring to the propaganda against it, she firmly stated that secularism does not mean religion-lessness, but the right of all to practice their own religions.

Sheikh Hasina said Awami

Five-Party to uphold workers' interests

By Staff Correspondent

Five-Party alliance leader and Workers Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon has said if voted to power five party will uphold the interests of the workers.

He was speaking at several meetings in Barisal on Monday. Mr. Menon said the alliance would fix minimum wages equivalent to the price of five maunds of rice. He said no worker would be sacked unless specific charges against him were proved in the Labour Court.

Five-Party leader said his alliance would introduce free education upto class ten. Maximum ceiling of land will be fixed at 50 bighas, Rashed Khan Menon said.

Agricultural loan system would be restructured, he said, adding that agricultural loans would be made available to the genuine farmers.

Proceedings

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The arms were handed over to the committee headed by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on December 24, two days before the expiry of the deadline set by the government for surrendering of illegal arms.

The petitioner alleged that the criminal case was filed with a collateral purpose.

Mizan wants JP projection on TV, Radio

Acting Chairman of Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury Monday said organisational activities of the party for the last few days proved that jail, warrant of arrest and oppression would not be able to stop the progress of Jatiya Party, reports BSS.

Addressing a reception at Gulshan given to Mr. Helaluddin Helal, president of the city Jatiya Sechhasebak Party after his release from jail, Mr. Chowdhury said Jatiya Party sincerely wanted a fair and impartial election but the activities and principles of the government was contrary to that.

Referring to the ban on broadcast and telecast of the Jatiya Party news in the state-owned radio and television, he said, 'things were different in 1988, when we participated in parliament elections. By taking part in that elections we saved the nation from a constitutional crisis.'

Central president of Jatiya Sechhasebak Party Munshi Abdul Latif presided over the meeting.

Sheikh Shahid

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and the other part was rented to Shantinagar High School on monthly basis. Later, it was published in abandoned property 'Ka' list of the Gazette on September 23, 1986.

On August 6, 1975, a person with the fake name of Qamaruddin applied to the Works Ministry demanding ownership of the house, through different Government procedures the case was referred to the court of settlement for settling the issue. In the meantime when Qamaruddin died, Messrs Property Development Ltd, BRTC Bhaban, Dhaka, bought the property from Mr. Bahadur Ali and Mrs Razia Begum who claimed to be the owners of the property on the basis of Warishan (heredity) and made strong lobby in the Works Ministry to delete the property from abandoned list.

Legal adviser of the Works Ministry, other official and former Secretary of the Ministry gave their opinion against releasing the property from the abandoned properties list without the verdict of the court of settlement.

Without caring for these opinions, former Works Minister Sheikh Shahtul Islam, with an understanding with Messrs Property Development Ltd, and with a view to having illegal financial gain and to help others to benefit financially, prepared a summary of the case to get approval of the former President to delete the property from abandoned property list.

But the former President returned the summary to the Ministry on November 26, 1988 without any decision or approval.

Accused Sheikh Shahidul Islam having failed to realise his interest through the President, finally took help of falsehood and released the property from the abandoned property list by giving order in the name of the President on November 30, 1988, and on the same day in a very hasty manner took personal initiative to complete all formalities of the Ministry to issue Government order releasing the property from the abandoned properties.

Anji-Corruption Bureau is investigating the case. Any authority or person proved to be connected with the case, in course of its progress, may also be identified as accused of the case, the handout added.



Police Monday blocked a President Secretariat-bound procession of journalists, press workers and employees of newspapers and news agencies at Bijoy Sarani. — Star photo

BTMC grapples with Tk 320m shoddy deal

Moazzem Hossain

The Taka 320 million shoddy deal for cotton purchase that was cancelled after the fall of Ershad regime is awaiting arbitration.

Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) saved Taka 71 million by cancelling the scandalous orders without any tender. It proposed advocate Ashrarul Hossain as the arbitrator.

But, one of the three sellers involved in the deal has not agreed with BTMC's proposal. It wants a different arbitrator and also settlement of the case outside Bangladesh.

The purchase agreement, however, provides for arbitration in Dhaka in case of its cancellation, according to BTMC sources.

The entire deal is now under investigation by the Special Tribunal probing into cases of corruption and other irregular deals under Ershad regime.

There were three sellers involved in the procurement deal: Hanslik, All American and Marcot. H. N. Hasan Shibli of All Haj International was the local agent for Hanslik. The agents for All American and also Marcot were the one and same

cents a lb (pound) higher than those of other BTMC purchases around that time and also the international rates at Liverpool in the UK.

On this basis, an excess payment of over Taka 71 million in foreign exchange would have been involved if the orders had not been cancelled. And BTMC, already in financial straits because of losses incurred over the years, would have been burdened with an additional load of yet another shoddy deal. The purchase order was cancelled in December 12.

The entire deal was finalised at Textile Ministry level with approval of the highest authorities, the sources said. The supplies were made on deferred payment basis carrying a 4.75 per cent rate of interest on the amount under 180 days suppliers' credit.

24-hour strike

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of Journalists (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), Bangladesh Newspaper Press Workers Federation (BNPWF) and Bangladesh Newspapers Employees Federation (BNEF)

jointly held a central rally at a National Press Club Monday.

Presided over by Reazuddin Ahmed, President of BFUJ, the rally was also addressed by Amanullah Kabir, Secretary General, BFUJ, Zahurul Haq and Ruhul Amin Gazi respectively president and general secretary of DUJ, Jahangir Kabir and Mir Mozammel Hossain respectively president and secretary general of BNEF, Mosharraf Hossain and Bazul Rahman Milon respectively president and secretary general of BNPWF.

In his speech Mr. Reazuddin Ahmed urged the Acting President to withdraw the new ordinance and to announce the new Wage Board Award in one month's time.

Mr. Amanullah Kabir said the interim government had created a new black law instead of repealing the Special Powers Act, Printing Press Act and other black laws. Mr. Zahurul Haq said the interim government had failed to maintain neutrality.

The leaders also warned the Acting President not to be associated with the owners to foil the legal rights of the employees.

After the rally a procession headed towards the President's Secretariat but police halted in near Bijoy Sarani.

Perez

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'As I am not a military expert, I cannot evaluate how necessary the military actions taking place now are', he noted. 'What we know about the war, which I prefer to call hostilities, is what we hear from the three members of the Security Council which are involved - Britain, France and the United States - which every two or three days report to the Council, after the actions have taken place.'

In a solemn, sometimes rambling speech filled with religious references, Saddam said the Iraqi people grew 'more radiant before the whole world' with every hour that the war raged.

'The most important thing is that their place with God Almighty is getting firmer and more sublime, because Jihad (Holy War) is the road to glory,' he said in speech broadcast by Iraqi Radio on Sunday.

It was the first time Saddam's voice was known to have been broadcast since he gave an interview to the US Cable News Network (CNN) two weeks ago.

'Every hour and day that has passed since the beginning of the siege against the gathering of vanguard believers in Iraq is an hour and day of defeat for the gathering of atheism, oppression, and tyranny,' he said.

'Therefore, those of the sons of our nation and the goodhearted people who are searching for victory in terms of hours, days and months, must not search for it outside this great and immortal chapter of the time that has passed.'

'Victory is present in every hour, day and week since the first hour of the siege, and the first hour and day of the armed showdown and until the last hour and day, when God permits the end of this war.'

Royals

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skiting last month 'as the country stood on the brink of war and playing with her gang, very publicly, at a high-spirited dinner in a London restaurant.'

Buckingham Palace, in a rare public response to a newspaper article, issued a statement defending the royal family's behavior and setting out a long list of Gulf-related royal engagements.

The Midnight File

Sedition trial begins in China

BEIJING, Feb 11: A leading democracy activist charged with sedition went on trial Monday despite his efforts to win a postponement by staging a hunger strike. More than a dozen police stood around the courthouse in central Beijing and blocked foreign journalists from reading a small notice that announced the trial of Chen Ziming. However, Chinese were allowed to read the notice, reports AP.

350 arrested in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, Feb 11: Israeli security services recently arrested 350 militants with the Islamic movement Hamas in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, an army communique said Sunday. The sweep yielded a quantity of pistols and other firearms, along with the organisations archives, the statement said, reports AFP.

Journalist missing in Gulf

CAIRO, Feb 11: An Egyptian journalist working for the Middle East News Agency (MENA) in Baghdad has not been heard from since the start of the Gulf war, press reports said Sunday. Mahmoud Abdel Azim had chosen to stay in the Iraqi capital to cover the war but neither MENA nor his family has heard from him since January 16, reports AFP.

Earthquake rocks Guam

MENLO PARK (California), Feb 11: An earthquake measuring 5.8 on the Richter Scale rocked Guam but there were no immediate reports of injuries or damages, the US geological survey reported Sunday. The quake hit the U. S. territory at 12:15 a.m. (14:15 GMT) and was centered about 240 kilometers (150 miles) northeast of the Pacific island, said AFP.

14 Vietnam martyrs alive

WASHINGTON, Feb 11: Fourteen men among the 58,175 names carved in the black granite Vietnam Memorial of those who died in the war are alive, according to Defense Department records. It's a very sobering thing, said veteran Andrew Hilden. But I guess we have been able to laugh about it - that we've got a walking dead man around. The Pentagon has publicly acknowledged three of the 14 names listed by mistake, reports AFP.

14 killed in bus ambush

PIETERMARITZBURG (South Africa), Feb 11: At least 14 people were killed and 11 injured when two buses were ambushed on Sunday evening near Pietermaritzburg, capital of South Africa's strife-torn Natal province, a police source said. 'We have 14 bodies and expect to find more,' he told Reuters. It was not immediately known who was responsible for the attack.

Pak-Tunisia PMs talk Gulf

LONDON, Feb 11: The Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, held talks with his Tunisian counterpart, Mr. Hamed Karoui, on the Gulf war in Tunis last night. BBC reports quoting Tunisian radio. Mr. Sharif who arrived in Tunis as part of his tour of Arab Maghreb countries said his visit was aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis, reports PTT.

Gulf war won: Saddam

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to Washington to brief Bush on the progress of the 25-day-old war.

He told reporters flying home with him that the air campaign had reduced the fighting power of some Iraqi divisions by as much as 40 per cent.

Although Cheney did not say when a ground and amphibious assault might begin, a senior American military official said some US forces just arrived in Saudi Arabia and they need three or four more weeks to prepare.

'The guys just off the boat, they could use some more time,' the official told the Associated Press in Riyadh on condition of anonymity. He was referring to the ground units recently arrived from Europe. Such forces have the specialised M-1 battle tanks designed to take on Iraq's Soviet-made T-72 tanks.

Iraq said it would welcome a ground assault by the allies, who now have about 700,000 soldiers in the region, including 505,000 Americans.

Meanwhile, President Saddam Hussein told Iraqis not to look for a Gulf war victory in the future because they had already won just by withstanding more than three weeks of Allied bombing.

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stamped with his great victory. God willing,' Saddam said.

He praised the steadfastness of the Iraqi people, most of whom have been left without power or running water by Allied bombing. Food is scarce and no petrol is available for private vehicles.

Saddam said the date of Iraq's victory was the day the United States decided to go to war.

The Iraqi leader said US President George Bush had acknowledged US weakness by forming an alliance with other countries.

'(Bush) lost his credibility on the day he credited the weapon of confrontation which the West had built up against the entire Warsaw Pact to confront a single Third World country - a country of Arabs to which they used to refuse to attach the importance which God wanted for them as human beings and proprietors of a divine message.'

Saddam said that although Bush had called on the whole world to help him, Iraq had called on no one but the faithful and God.

Bush remarks

In Washington meantime, President Bush said, 'I heard what Saddam Hussein said, and I didn't hear him say anything about him getting out of Kuwait. Of course that's what the whole world is wanting to hear.'

President Bush said on Sunday he had no objection to a new Soviet attempt to end the Gulf war but said he was going to decide on the timing of a ground offensive 'at the right time.'

Bush told reporters it was

'all right' that Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev decided to despatch an envoy to Baghdad to convince Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to leave Kuwait.

'It's all right', Bush said during impromptu remarks on arriving at the White House from a weekend visit to his Camp David retreat. 'He's staying with the coalition. That's all right.'

Gorbachev has voiced concern that the US-led forces were exceeding the United Nations mandate to oust Iraqi troops from Kuwait. He sent a personal envoy, Yevgeny Primakov, to urge Saddam to withdraw his troops.

Bush dodged questions about launching a ground offensive against Iraqi positions in Kuwait, saying, 'I'll make all those decisions at the right time.'

Bush brushed aside vows by Saddam to fight on against the Allies, despite the cost to Iraq.

Command Council meet

Meanwhile, President Saddam Hussein chaired a meeting of Iraq's decision-making Revolutionary Command Council overnight Sunday just hours after vowing to fight against a US-led coalition.

PLO warning

Meanwhile, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat says everyone stained with Iraqi blood from the Gulf war will be punished.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) backs Iraq against a US-led coalition of 28 countries fighting to expel it from Kuwait.

He accused the United States of having sabotaged Arab attempts to solve the Gulf crisis peacefully.

Khmer Rouge

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ern in western Cambodia and more than 7,000 civilians have been trained to repair Cambodia's infrastructure when peace comes.

A reporter saw dozens of new U.S. supplied farm machines during a trip through guerrilla held territory.

Washington aids the two non-communist guerrilla groups: the Khmer People's National Liberation Front led by former Premier Son Sann, and the forces of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, former ruler of Cambodia.

They are allied with the communist Khmer Rouge against the government Vietnam installed after it invaded Cambodia in December 1978 and ousted the Khmer Rouge regime.

Guerrilla leaders say the United States has asked them

to stop seizing more territory and, instead, consolidate their control of areas they have captured since the major Vietnamese troop withdrawal in September 1989.

The U.S. congress has authorised up to 20 million dollars in aid this year, mostly for areas of western and northern Cambodia under non-communist control. That could pay for the largest development programme ever in impoverished rice country that has known little change for centuries.

American officials said more than 1,000 medics trained in the U.S. programme treat more than 100,000 civilians each month.

Thousands of people, some of whom walk for weeks from government controlled areas, have come into the guerrilla zones for medical treatment.

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