

Big gold haul at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent
Zia International Airport customs authority made another 120 tola gold-haul valued about Taka nine lakh on Friday at 12.17 am.
Police said Sadeq Ali (30), an Indian citizen brought the gold inside his rectum. He reached from Bangkok on a Biman flight.
Customs officials found his activity suspicious and searched his body to recover the gold.
Customs also recovered 860 tolas of gold only two days ago. Customs have made three gold hauls within a fortnight.

Press Note

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Acting Chairman of Jatiya Party at Rangpur on 20th of this month. The Government denies and rejects all the allegations made in the statement as downright falsehood and politically motivated.

The facts are as follows: The allegation that there was no reason whatsoever for detention and transfer of the ex-President from Cantonment house to a house in Gulshan is totally wrong. The ex-President was placed under detention to protect national interest and to save the country from a great calamity.

Incomplete

Electioneering

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mandatory to disclose the sources of money to be spent in elections. These steps were aimed at reducing the influence of money in polls.

The Interim Government amended the Arms Act providing for capital punishment to those possessing unlicensed arms. The arms recovery drive, however, could not eliminate the fear of use of arms during the elections. Official sources said political parties have agreed to help the law enforcing agencies arrest the people with illegal arms.

Elections will be held in 298 constituencies on February 27. Polls in two seats — one in Munshiganj and the other in Kushtia — were postponed following the death of candidates. The candidate at the Kushtia seat was gunned down by unknown assailants. The elections in those two seats will be completed by March 21.

The code of conduct agreed by political leaders with the Election Commission to avoid violence was flouted on many occasions. Offenders were not punished by the Election Commission. Strict enforcement of code of conduct as well as normal laws may keep the violence at lower level on the election day, according to official sources.

61.9 million eligible voters are expected to exercise their franchise in electing the fifth parliament of the country.

Country's first parliament was elected in March, 1973 which survived two and a half years. The second parliament was elected in 1979 which was dissolved by General Ershad when he seized power on March 24, 1982. The third parliament was dissolved before the expiry of even two years and the fourth one could not survive even two years.

Rallies banned from Monday midnight

A 48-hour long ban, beginning from the midnight following Monday, and ending at midnight, following Wednesday, will remain imposed on all public meetings and processions in connection with the coming election to Jatiya Sangsad, reports BSS.

This restriction will be effective throughout Bangladesh except the areas of Jatiya Sangsad constituencies 76 Kushtia-2 and 178 Munshiganj-3, according to an Election Commission press release in Dhaka on Friday.

According to the provisions of Article 78 (1) of the Representation of the People Order, 1972, on person will be allowed to convene, hold or attend any public meeting, and on person will be allowed to promote or join in any procession during the aforesaid period of 48 hours.

Any person, who contravenes the above restriction, shall be punishable. The punishment for such offence is rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years and shall not be less than two years, and also with fine, the press release added.

BNP, JP used black laws of AL: Jamaat

By Staff Correspondent

Acting Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Abbas Ali Khan said if his party was voted to power it would establish Islamic rule.

He was addressing a meeting at Santhia, in Pabna district on Friday.

The Jamaat leader said only Islamic rule could ensure democratic rights, economic emancipation and social security to people of all strata. He said Jamaat would establish a stable government.

Criticising Awami League, BNP and Jatiya Party regimes the Jamaat leader said Awami League government killed democracy by enacting black laws. BNP and Jatiya Party used those laws in their interest, he alleged.

Abbas Ali Khan said Jamaat would introduce an economy based on Jakat system. He called upon the people to vote for Jamaat nominees to establish law of Allah and rule of the honest people.

Moulana Nizami said capitalist and socialist economic systems failed to solve economic problems. People could enjoy freedom only if Islamic economic system is established, he said.

The Jamaat leader said Jamaat would give maximum emphasis on agriculture.

He urged the people to vote for Jamaat nominees to establish law of Allah and rule of the honest people.

Some unruly young men harassed girls and tore up the clothes of three of them at the two entrances of Bangla Academy on Thursday.

The girls went to the Ekushey Book Fair at the Academy premises.

Eye witnesses said at about 6 p.m. When hundreds of visitors were thronging the academy premises, a group of young men created disturbance at the two gates, harassed the young girls and snatched away gold ornaments of some of them.

They also ransacked some shops as the shopkeepers tried to resist them.

However, volunteers of the all-party Students Unity and the Bangla Academy authorities brought the situation under control immediately after the incidents.

Khaleda

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grammes.

Begum Zia said the conspirators who did not want to see the country self-dependent, killed President Ziaur Rahman.

She said if elected to power, BNP would establish new industries to solve increasing unemployment problem.

Wondering why Ershad was afraid of going to jail, she said nobody would kill a betrayer without putting him on trial. She said all the formalities had been completed to take action against the terrorists and the associates of autocracy. They will be put on trial and punished soon, she said.

She said the associates of Ershad could not come to power even if they use huge illegal money.

She said BNP would withdraw irrigation tax from Muhuri project, exempt Taka 5,000 agricultural loan, and exempt agricultural loan and interest up to Taka 5,000 and revenue from 25 bighas of land.

Begum Zia said BNP would extend the age-limit for the youths who had lost their academic year because of movement against autocracy.

Ekushey

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Ahmed, Faiz Ahmed, Begum Jahanara Imam, Gias Kamal Chowdhury and Dr Rafiqul Islam participated in the discussion, while Dr. Khondaker Alamgir and Siddiqur Rahman recalled their participation in the Language Movement.

About 250 poets recited their self-composed poems at the five-hour session at the academy premises. Poet Sufia Kamal attended the function as chief guest while poet Shamshur Rahman presided. Presidential Adviser for Cultural Affairs Izzuddin Ahmed was chief guest at a discussion organised by Nazrul Institute in observance of the day at Kabi Bhaban.

Focus on election- '91

Poll campaign overshadows Gulf war worries

By Staff Correspondent

Electioneering in city is at its highest pitch as countdown for the parliamentary election is nearing its end.

Illuminations of electoral symbols make one wonder whether restrictions on use of electricity after 7 p.m. is still in force. Arches highlighting the party symbols and the candidates potentially have been erected at different places. Traffic jams are now a common feature as massive rallies and demonstrations in support of the party candidates are being held frequently.

Who is going to win — is a question being posed by many citizens. At times, it seems one particular party is dominating over the others, but next morning the situation is changing dramatically and people were talking of the other party.

The contestants are going to every doorstep asking for a 'valuable' vote, but nevertheless they seem to be sure of getting the most sought-after vote. The candidates and their supporters are working almost round-the-clock.

Some organisations are video-taping the campaign for the country's most eagerly awaited election to show how expensive the campaigns of some parties were.

This year's elections are characterised by spontaneous participation of people of all walks of life in the rallies. People are optimistic that polls will be free and fair and there will be no ballot dacoity and media coup this time. Everyone is eager for casting a vote — a trend which was absent for many years.

Many observer groups are

now in city in connection with monitoring the elections. Nearly one hundred journalists representing world's prominent newspapers, television and radio are expected to arrive in the city shortly to cover the elections. Some of them have already arrived of electioneering.

Artists have also entered the propaganda war in favour of their parties. Truckloads of artists were seen singing party songs at different parts of the city. Well decorated trucks and cars with election symbols are rolling past the main thoroughfares of the city.

The city seems to have taken precedence over Gulf war worries for the time being and makeshift election camps are offering good avenue for a healthy outlet of the energy for the youths.

Six lakh tons WFP food for two years

By Staff Correspondent

The World Food Programme (WFP) will provide Bangladesh with over six lakh tonnes of food worth Taka 453 crore for the Food for Works Programme and the Vulnerable Group Development Programme for two years ending in September 1992.

Of the total food aid over four lakh tonnes will be for the Food for Works Programme and over two lakh tonnes for the Vulnerable Group Development Programme, reliable sources say.

An agreement in this regard was signed in Dhaka recently by the Director (Operations) of WFP in Bangladesh Gaston Eyben and Dr. A. K. M. Mohsin, Additional Secretary of the Economic Relations Division.

WFP will provide 4,01,400 metric tonnes of wheat worth Taka 294 crore for the Food for Works Programme. WFP assisted FWP commenced in 1974, and in seven phases so

far about 24.6 lakh tonnes of wheat has been committed.

WFP's food assistance represents about one-third of the commitment for the 1990-91 FWP which is also supported by Canada, Australia, European Economic Community (EEC), Germany, Belgium and Bangladesh.

Under the Vulnerable Group Development Programme 2,08,038 lakh tonnes of wheat, 1,728 tonnes of pulses and 648 tonnes of vegetable oil worth about Taka 159 crore will be provided by WFP. The WFP commitment represents 48 per cent of aid received under VGD Programme.

Under it 4,55,000 VGD women card holders get 31.25 kg of wheat a month, 25,000 women get training to gain skills to increase their income, and 80,000 children get cooked food in day-care centres, orphanages and nutrition rehabilitation centres.

Mizan's plea to resist possible media coup

By Staff Correspondent

Acting President of Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury urged people to remain vigilant against a possible media coup in the February 27 parliamentary elections.

He was addressing separate meetings at Gaibandha, Palashbari, Pirgonj and Parbatipur on Thursday.

Mizan Chowdhury said people would not tolerate any attempt to defeat their candidates through a media coup.

UNB from Narayanjanj adds: A Jatiya Party procession paraded the streets of the town in Narayanjanj Friday demanding immediate release of deposed president Hussain Mohammad Ershad.

The rally, organised by the local unit of Jatiya Party, chanted slogans calling the people to vote in favour of 'Plough', the party's election symbol.

Local JP leaders also held meetings at different points of the town.

C' wealth team to observe polls from 5 places

Star Report

Five teams of the 12-member Commonwealth group for parliamentary elections will observe the polls from five places. The group led by Dato K. Pathmanaban, a former Deputy Minister of Malaysia, arrived Dhaka Wednesday.

A spokesman of the group told The Daily Star Friday that one of the teams will stay in Dhaka while others will be stationed in Rangpur, Sylhet, Khulna and Chittagong. The teams, which will be assisted by officials of the Commonwealth Secretariat, will leave Dhaka Sunday for the four places outside the capital.

Meanwhile, the Commonwealth observers' group met Awami League leader Dr Kamal Hossain, Jatiya Party Acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, and the President of Coordinating Council of Human Rights, Father Timon on Friday. The leaders of All-Party Students Unity (APSU) also met the Commonwealth observers and discussed the elections.

The Commonwealth observers are expected to call on the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed today (Saturday).

Members of the 30-member SAARC observers group have started reaching Dhaka. Seven members from Nepal and two others from Sri Lanka are now in the city while other members from Pakistan and India are expected to arrive in a day or two.

Observers from the Washington based National Democratic Institute and Japanese Diet (parliament) are also expected to reach Dhaka by Sunday.

16 candidates of ML (Kader) withdraw

Bangladesh Muslim League (Kader) has withdrawn 16 of its candidates from the run-up in Wednesday's parliamentary voting alleging that the elections will not be free and impartial, reports UNB.

The Midnight File

Bush's night out at theatre

WASHINGTON, Feb 22: President George Bush spent a night out on Thursday at Ford's Theatre, where President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, as attempts proceeded to end the Gulf war. A Soviet peace plan for the Gulf delayed the President's departure from the White House for 14 minutes, reports Reuter.

Gorbachev's conference cancelled

MOSCOW, Feb 22: A scheduled press conference by President Mikhail Gorbachev was cancelled today, the Foreign Ministry announced. No reason was given for the sudden change of plan, though it was earlier announced Gorbachev was to hold another meeting this afternoon with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz following more than two hours of talks he had with him Thursday night, reports AFP.

Benazir's bodyguard arrested

ISLAMABAD, Feb 22: The government of Pakistan's Sindh Province has arrested about 150 alleged bandits and terrorists, including former Premier Benazir Bhutto's bodyguard, Sindh Chief Minister Jam Sadiq Ali said Thursday. Mr. Ali who is accused by opponents of crushing Benazir's Pakistan People Party (PPP) in her home province in southern Pakistan said law and order had improved after the PPP government's August 6 ouster, reports AFP.

US Secretary's son sentenced

ALEXANDRIA (Virginia), Feb 22: The son of US Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan was sentenced Thursday to 20 years in prison for breaking into a woman's apartment and raping her. Robert Lujan, 28, was convicted of the crime in January by a court in Alexandria, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, reports AFP.

Copter fired upon in Guatemala

GUATEMALA CITY, Feb 22: Leftist rebels opened fire against Guatemala's Defence Minister and the head of a governmental human rights agency as their helicopter was about to touch down in a guerrilla stronghold, a government official was quoted as saying on Thursday. Their helicopter was riddled by rebels with several rounds of machine gun fire on Wednesday but no one was injured, De Leon told the afternoon newspaper La Hora, reports Reuter.

Sikh militants asked to surrender

NEW DELHI, Feb 22: The chief administrator of Punjab urged Sikh militants Thursday to surrender, offering to relocate them in "safe places" outside the troubled northern Indian state, reports AFP.

Governor Prakash Malhotra said in a public speech that those who did not take up the offer and continued with "anti-social acts" would be dealt with sternly, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

Mr Malhotra, a former Indian Army Chief, said in the

Sikh holy city of Amritsar that Sikh Militants fighting for a separate homeland should surrender and lay down arms, PTI said.

He said those who take up the offer would be rehabilitated with "all amenities to lead a normal life" outside Punjab where eight years of violence linked to the separatist campaign have left more than 12,000 people dead.

Mr Malhotra's offer, made at the first of a series of Punjab peace marches, appeared to be aimed at Sikh militants fearful or revenge attacks from their more hardline comrades.

Thousands of people including political workers and school children, took part in the march, PTI said.

The 67-year-old governor said he had taken up his recent appointment to the post with a "one-point programme" to bring peace in Punjab.

His speech came as at least 12 people died in separatist violence in the rich farming state bordering Pakistan, PTI said.

Violence related to the militant campaign for a theocratic homeland called Khalistan has left about 566 people dead so far this year.

Hasina

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They are Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Akhtaruzzaman, Mohammad Ashraf Hossain Mollah, Khairul Kabir, Momtaz Hossain, Moslemuddin Bhuiyan and Prof. Najma Rahman.

Sheikh Hasina said the politics of killings and conspiracy were introduced on the night of August 15, 1975 through the killing of the father of the nation under the instigation of the anti-liberation forces when he was taking various development programmes for the economic emancipation of the poor people.

Referring to the autocratic rule of Ershad, Sheikh Hasina said he had destroyed the economy and political institutions of the country and let loose a reign of terror during his regime.

Sheikh Hasina said Ziaur Rahman had justified the killing of Bangabandhu and his family members by giving the killers lucrative jobs and Ershad had established them both socially and politically.

The Awami League chief also said that Zia and his army Chief of Staff General Ershad had plundered Taka 50,000 crore in foreign exchange which was received from foreign countries and agencies for the development programmes. Besides, there was free-style looting of government fund and rampant corruption and bribing during that rule, she said.

Referring to the nationalisation programme of the Awami League government, Sheikh Hasina said the workers and the general masses had become the owners of the industries under that programme but Zia destroyed that solid base by selling out the industries at throwaway prices.

At least 55 per cent of the total industries in Bangladesh are now closed rendering thousands of workers jobless, she said.

Torch relay by Swadhin Bangla booters

By Monzurul Haque Sohel

The torch relay by the Swadhin Bangla football team from Mujibnagar in Meherpur to Dhaka ended yesterday (Friday) at 7 p.m. at the National Stadium.

The relay was organised to motivate the people to be vigilant against any activities that might help the return of autocracy and machinations of anti-liberation forces. The theme of the relay also included the message world support for peace with a view to spanning future generations from the scourge of war.

The relay started from the Mujibnagar memorial monument in Meherpur on February 21. Mamtazur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner of Meherpur lit the torch.

Twenty-eight members of the Swadhin Bangla football team, including players and officials, participated in the race.

The relay ended when Zakaria Pintu, captain of the team, formally handed over the torch to Prof. Mantruzzaman Miah, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University at a simple ceremony yesterday evening.

On their way to Dhaka, members of the football team also attended several roadside meetings organised by the district sports associations of Chuadanga, Jhendidah and Faridpur and the Muktiyoddhya Sangsad units of Chauadanga and Magura.

These meetings were arranged to congratulate the freedom fighter footballers, who formed the team on May 13, 1971 to boost the morale of the freedom fighters and mobilise support and funds for our independence struggle.

The team had played 17 matches in different places of India, especially where there were concentrations of Bengalee refugees.

Speakers at the roadside meetings said the people of this country have at long last got an opportunity to implement their democratic rights and any conspiracy to foil this must be resisted.

Earlier, the Swadhin Bangla football team was congratulated by the district sports association of Meherpur upon their arrival at Meherpur on February 20.

Before beginning the torch relay the football team laid wreaths at the Mujibnagar memorial and laid a foundation stone at the monument premises.



RIYADH: Kuwaiti nationals volunteering to assist the British troops as interpreters flash the O. K. sign upon arrival from London, late 22 February, at Riyadh International Airport.

Bush's ultimatum to Saddam

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"If this war starts today, then the whole world will see that it was started in conditions when the Soviet Union has really won an enormous achievement in the attempts to find a political settlement," Primakov said.

UN council

AFP reports from New York: The Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations will brief the Security Council on Iraq's response to his country's peace plan, UN sources said Thursday.

The security council is going to session on Friday night to discuss the Soviet plan.

Soviet President Gorbachev is getting in touch with the leaders of member-countries of the United Nations Security Council following progress in Gulf peace talks between Soviet and Iraqi representatives, Tass news agency reported.

According to Xinhua, the UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar Wednesday described the Soviet peace proposal as 'a unique opportunity for peace in the Gulf region.'

According to AP, France said Friday that Iraq's acceptance of a Soviet plan to end the Gulf war is a 'step in the

right direction' and gives hope for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

But several crucial points remain unclear, said Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, notably the evacuation of Kuwait and the validity of UN resolutions.

"France considers that the hour is decisive and the way opened by the Soviet plan could lead to the peaceful solution it has always hoped for," a statement by Dumas said.

But British Prime Minister John Major on Friday rejected the Soviet-Iraqi plan to end the Gulf war.

In brief remarks to reporters outside his Downing Street office, he said the plan was 'certainly an improvement' on what Iraq had offered before but was still 'not good enough.'

In New York, Ambassadors from China, Cuba, Yemen and Ecuador, all council members, called the Soviet plan a positive step.

Egyptian Ambassador Amr Moussa said Iraq's acceptance of an unconditional withdrawal was a very important first step. But Saudi Arabian Ambassador Samir Shihabi said there were too many conditions along with the unconditional withdrawal.

Tehran Radio said Ayatollah Mohammad Emami Kashani urged the United States and its Allies to end their 'crimes'—stop the war and the killing of Iraqi civilians.

Saudi Arabia consulted its Western and Arab Allies on Moscow's proposals today.

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia in a headline speech on Tuesday also affirmed the Gulf Arab demand for reparations for the damage to Kuwait and losses to the Saudi treasury which has gone into debt to pay for the Allied war effort.

But Jordan, which has been consistently sympathetic to Iraq throughout the conflict, hailed it as a 'great initiative' that would meet everyone's aims.

The Egyptian government refused to make any official comment.

In Damascus, the officials news agency SANA said the Syrian Foreign Ministry was 'studying with interest' the Middle East—was still waiting to be officially informed of the plan.

But Iraq's other biggest political ally in the Arab world, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, remained silent at Baghdad's apparent decision to drop its linkage between