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The Daily Star

Let us devote our efforts to ensure free and fair polls on February 27. Cast your vote judiciously and allow others to exercise their rights.

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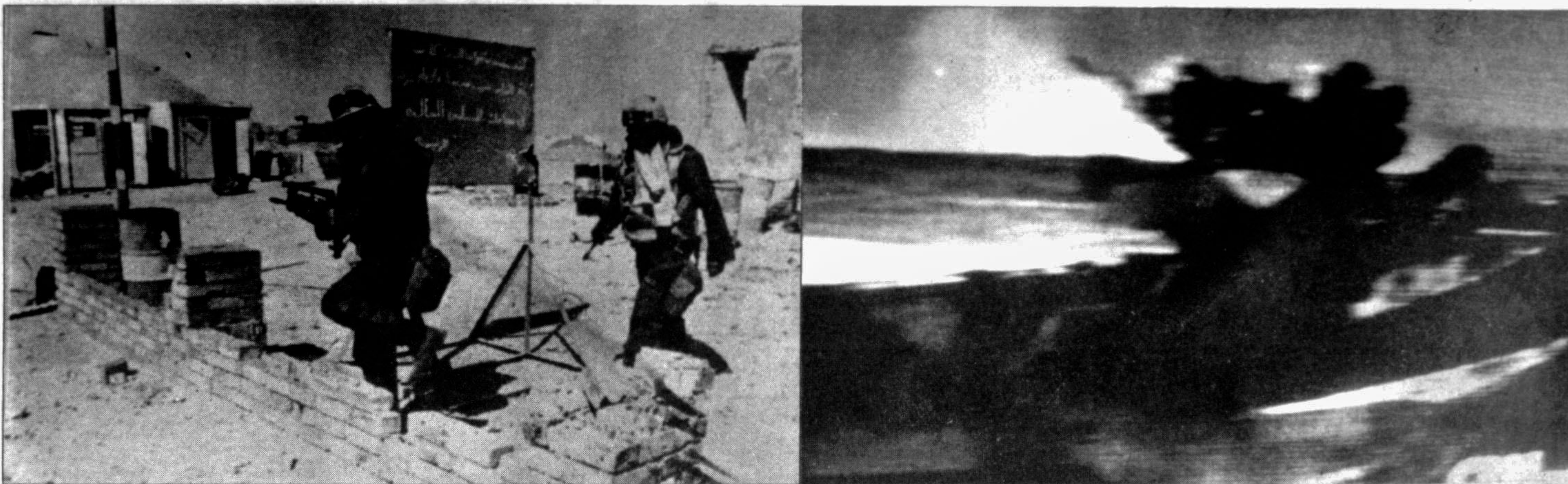
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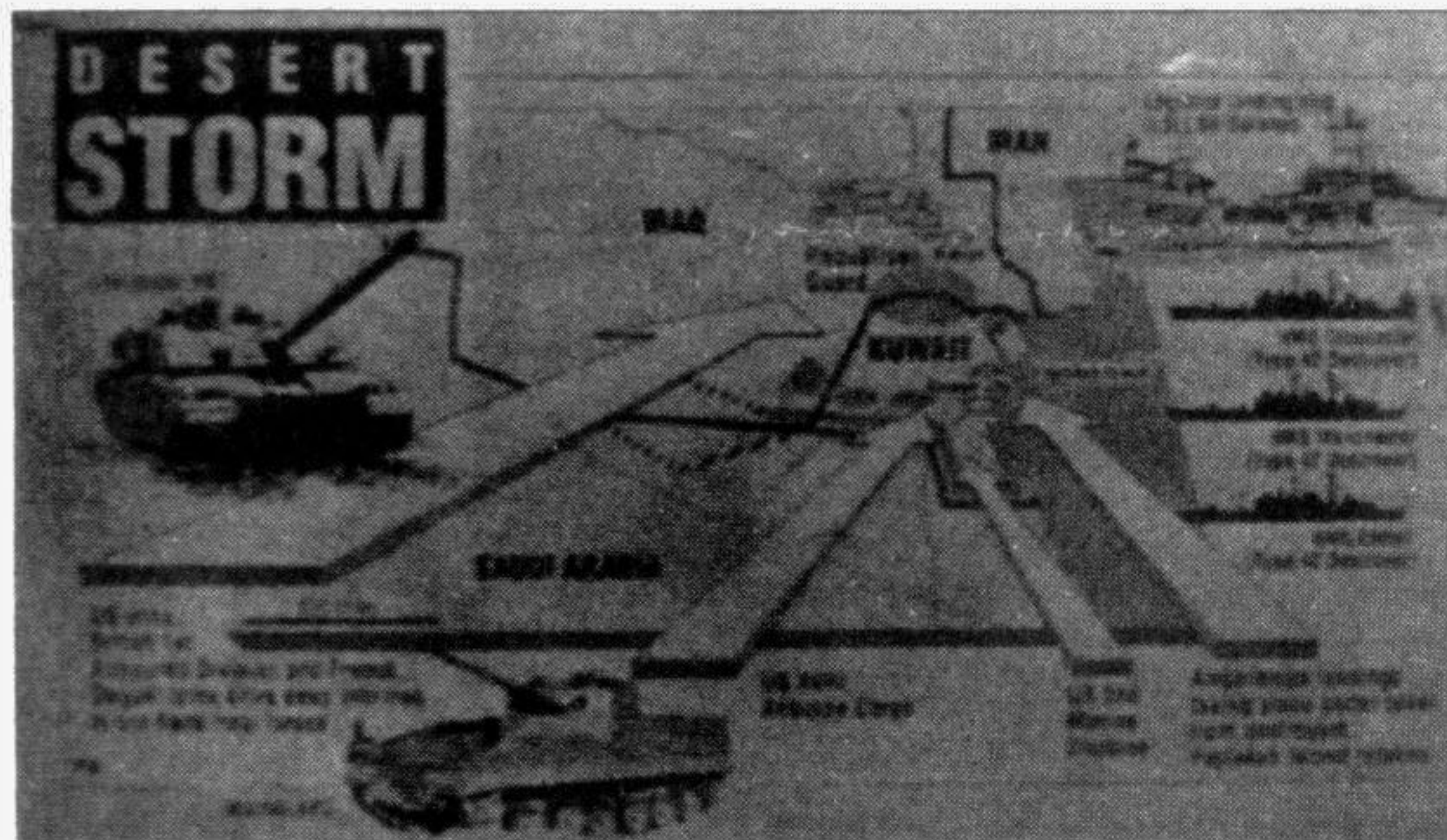
10 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 3.00

Massive Allied ground assault launched: French, British forces push into Iraq



French soldiers walk past the wreckage of an Iraqi position after entering Iraq (left) while amphibious crafts of allies drive ashore Kuwait. — AFP and TV photo

Kuwait City freed



- ★ Allied paratroopers in Kuwait City
- ★ Earthshaking firepower backs ground onslaught
- ★ Allied casualties remarkably light: Schwarzkopf
- ★ Iraqi infantrymen shot to pieces
- ★ Attacks repulsed: Iraq
- ★ 5,500 Iraqi troops surrender
- ★ Saudis, Egyptians meet no resistance during drive into Kuwait
- ★ Towns liberated
- ★ Saddam line breached
- ★ US warns Iraq against use of chemical weapons
- ★ War plans remain unaltered

NICOSIA, Feb 24: Allied forces seized control of Kuwait City within hours of launching their ground war on Sunday, the Kuwaiti News Agency KUNA said, reports Reuter. "Reports received from KUNA correspondents at the war front with Iraq said Kuwait City is now under the control of International Allied forces only a few hours after the start of the full land offensive launched to expel the Iraqi forces of occupation from Kuwait," said the agency. Earlier Allied paratroopers landed in Kuwait City Sunday shortly after the United States and the rest of the anti-Iraq coalition began the ground battle for the emirate. Residents of the city contacted on the exiles' underground communications network said the skies filled with

paratroopers soon after the allies launched their thrust to drive out Iraqi occupation forces, he added. "We are hearing good news. American troops are inside the city", Hasan Al-Sanada of the Kuwait Information Ministry said. The United States and its Gulf Allies launched an all-out ground attack backed by earthshaking firepower to drive Iraqi forces from Kuwait. President George Bush promised swift success in a battle Iraq's Saddam Hussein has vowed to make long and bloody. Early reports from Saudi Arabia spoke of a thrust into Kuwait 40 miles (60 km) inland from the Gulf. British and French forces were reported pushing into Iraq itself west of Kuwait.

Washington clamped a blackout on news from the front. A British television correspondent, relaying reports from the front said the ground was "shaking with the bombardment". At least 190 Kuwait oil wells are ablaze, covering much of the war zone in a shroud of smoke. AFP from Riyadh says: Allied forces storming into Kuwait and Iraq have met only light Iraqi resistance and Allied casualties have been "remarkably light," General Norman Schwarzkopf said Sunday. Speaking 12 hours into the ground offensive to force Iraqi troops out of Kuwait, the Commander of US Forces in the Gulf said more than 5,500

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Inside today International

Schwarzkopf ordered to extend hammer blows



Bush has directed General Schwarzkopf to use all forces available including ground forces to eject Iraqi army from Kuwait. Page 5

Feature

Due to the outbreak of a massive ground war in the Gulf region between the Allied and the Iraqi forces, the daily feature page will remain suspended for a few days to allow extensive coverage of the war developments.

People want sheaf of paddy, says Khaleda Zia

KERANIGANJ, Feb 24: Bangladesh Nationalist Party chief Begum Khaleda Zia today reiterated her allegation that a certain political party had resorted to terrorism against her party members being scared of the country-wide popularity in favour of the sheaf of paddy, reports BSS.

"The party has become furious on BNP as the wave of popularity in favour of the sheaf of paddy is sweeping the country," she said urging the interim government to net in all terrorists to ensure free and fair polls on February 27.

Begum Zia was addressing a huge election rally at Char Kaliganj field under the upazila

organised by Keraniganj thana BNP. Presided over by the thana BNP chief Mohammad Nazimuddin, the rally was also addressed by Amanullah Aman, the VP of DUCSU and BNP nominee in the constituency.

Referring to the nine-year autocratic regime of Ershad, Begum Zia said he had destroyed the harmony of the society by implanting different types of corruption like bribing, theft, looting and misappropriation of state money in the name of development.

She said Ershad and his cronies had swallowed crores of taka from the development fund which was received from foreign countries and agencies

as grants and aid during his tenure of office. "He did nothing for the country but catered up the development money," Begum Zia said adding that his misrule had only produced a handful of billionaire thieves rendering the mainstream population poorer.

Besides, Begum Zia said, Ershad ordered killing of innocent students, workers and women along with letting loose a reign of terror all over the country during the people's movement against him.

However, she said, the people's uprising had toppled him and the nation was demanding his trial and punishment for

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No force can halt victory, asserts Sheikh Hasina

KHULNA, Feb 24: Awami League President Sheikh Hasina today said Wednesday's polls would decide whether the country be ruled by a democratic government or "military dictators", reports UNB.

Addressing the big public meeting here at the Circuit House maidan this afternoon, she alleged certain quarters apprehending their terrible debacle in the ensuing election were planning violence and rigging to tamper people's electoral verdict.

"An unprecedented wave has been touched off by 'boat' across the country. No amount of force can halt its victory,"

Hasina told the election rally amidst cheers and thunderous applause.

She hurled a double-prong assault on BNP and Jatiya Party for their "misdeeds" in the last 15 years and cautioned the electorate the people's right to vote and food would be confined to barracks again if votes were cast for "sheaf of paddy" or "plough".

"Last 15 years of Zia-Ershad rule was marked by coups, killings, loot and corruption," she said, blaming late President Ziaur Rahman for killing hundreds of jawans and officers, prisoners and political activists to consolidate his power.

Reiterating her party stand for restoration of parliamentary democracy ending the "Zia-Ershad system", Hasina called for installing a strong government to salvage the crippled economy.

"We're to clear all rubbish piled up in different vital sectors due to corruption and maladministration in 15 years," said Hasina.

Indicating BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, Hasina said the leader of a particular party, unnerved amid the surge created by boat, was talking "nonsense" and hurling invectives on Awami League.

Refuting allegations that

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Two killed, 77 hurt in poll violence

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 24: Two persons were killed and more than 30 persons injured in a continued clashes between the supporters of Awami League and National Democratic Party at the Gohira village under Raizhan upazila here during the last two days.

Twenty persons were also injured in a clash between BNP and Jatiya Party workers in Satkhira while 23 were injured in Sirajganj in a clash between BNP and AL supporters on Sunday.

A Juba League leader Rizwan Alamgir was allegedly shot dead by NDP activists on Saturday at 8.30 pm when NDP activists attacked an AL camp.

AL called a day-long hartal in Raizhan on Sunday in protest against the killing. But the NDP supporters tried to break the hartal. At one stage chase

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Srinivasan meets Mizan

By Staff Correspondent

Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh K. Srinivasan met Jatiya Party acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury at his Gulshan residence on February 19.

Mizan Chowdhury's family sources confirmed his meeting with Srinivasan and outgoing Japanese Ambassador Takeo Iguchi. Iguchi met him on Saturday.

According to information, the Indian High Commissioner went to Mizan Chowdhury's residence at about 6-30 p.m. on February 19 by a small car bearing number 'dot' 24-02. Mizan Chowdhury received him and they had an hour-long meeting.

Trouble makers being rounded up

By Mustafa Kamal Majumder

Police have started rounding up suspected trouble-makers in most districts with a view to making the February 27 elections violence free.

Meanwhile, 693 illegal fire arms, about nine thousand bullets, cartridges, and 382 explosives were recovered between January 27 and February 19, according to reliable sources.

Earlier 693 illegal arms, about 1600 bullets, cartridges, and nine explosives were surrendered to police during the amnesty period.

The present raids are being carried out under instructions of the Ministry of Home Affairs which has distributed a manual of laws and rules relating to

maintenance of law and order, and specifying powers and functions of officials at different levels.

Another manual of election laws and rules prepared by the Election Commission has also been distributed among Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers and other police officials to facilitate speedy action against election related offences.

Police have also started opening log books at thanas to record election offences as and when they come to their notice. Control rooms are being opened at the districts to keep track of these developments.

Reports coming from the

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Golden era if voted to power: Abbas

By Staff Correspondent

Acting Ameer of Jamaat-Islami Abbas Ali Khan Sunday said if voted to power his party would usher in a 'golden era' in the country's history by establishing Islamic rule.

He termed last 20 years' rule as autocratic and said establishment of Islamic rule could only bring an end to this.

The Jamaat chief was addressing a big election meeting of his party in Motijheel Commercial Area in the city.

He alleged Awami League during its three and a half years of misrule introduced black laws to oppress and ex-

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AL, BNP final show of strength today Stage set for Feb 27 polls

By Staff Correspondent

Over a month of electioneering for February 27 parliamentary election ends at mid night today. Election Commission will impose a 48-hour-long ban on election campaign from zero hours tonight.

The major political parties — Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Awami League (AL) will close their hustings by holding separate mass rallies in the metropolises.

BNP will hold a rally at Manik Mia Avenue today at 3 P.M. while Awami League's rally will be held at the same time at Panthapath, only a kilometre from Manik Mia Avenue.

Both Awami League and BNP, contenders for power,

are expected to demonstrate massive show of strength of their party in the rallies.

BNP chief Khaleda Zia and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina will address the final party rally making final appeal to the voters seeking mandate.

Election Commission has made elaborate arrangements for ensuring free and fair elections. Security forces have moved to upazilas to help the civil administration. The Election Commission has commissioned about four lakh officials to conduct the polls in 298 seats.

Election in two seats one in Munshiganj and another in Kushtia was postponed follow-

ing death of candidates. In Kushtia, JSD (Rab) candidate was gunned down.

According to Home Ministry sources about 3,83,000 members of the security forces, including 30,000 army men and 8,500 BDR personal have been deployed to maintain law and order during the elections. The security men other than members of the armed forces have already taken positions at the respective centres to ensure peaceful atmosphere.

There will be no fresh deployment of security forces in the Chittagong Hill Tracts as the 24 Infantry Division is responsible for maintaining law

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