

ALPP meet March 10

By Staff Correspondent
Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has convened a meeting of the members elected to the parliament from her party on March 10 at 3 p.m. at the central office of the party.
The executive committee of Awami League will meet on March 12 at 10 a.m. at same venue.
Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka today (Wednesday) for Jamalpur to address a public meeting organised at Islampur in support of Awami League candidate Rashed Mosharraf who is contesting the parliament election from Jamalpur-2 constituency.
Polling in eight centres of that constituency will be held on March 9.

JP reception to Ershad today

By Staff Correspondent
The Jatiya Party has arranged a reception at Gulshan today in honour of the former President I M Ershad for his victory in the parliamentary election.
The party demanded the release to its chairman before the reception, says a press release.
Acting Chairman of the party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Secretary General A B M Shahjahan will be present at the function.

BNP victory rally today

Bangladesh Nationalist Party celebrates its spectacular victory in parliamentary elections through a grand rally in the capital today (Wednesday), reports UNB.
The rally will be held at 3 p.m. at the Manik Mia Avenue as part of the day's programme. Party chief Begum Khaleda Zia will address the rally.
This will be the first post-election rally of BNP in the capital. BNP concluded its countrywide poll campaign with a massive rally at the same venue on Feb 25.
Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangkritik Sangstha (JASAS), the cultural wing of BNP, will perform patriotic songs at the start of the grand rally.
Begum Zia will leave for Jamalpur on March 7 to address rallies there.

Students clash with police in Habiganj: 23 hurt

HABIGANJ, Mar 5: Twenty three people were injured Tuesday police and students clashed at Lakshai upazila head quarters.
A police van met with an accident while on its way to the trouble spot from the district head quarters, police and witnesses said, reports UNB.
Of the injured, 16 were policemen and 7 students, witnesses said.

Khaleda

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Immediately after independence. "But that party betrayed people denying them food and clothing."
The BNP leader said the nightmare of the 1974 famine, which claimed several thousand lives, still haunted the people.
Vowing to protect hard-earned independence, Begum Zia said the national independence might be undone if the party that killed democracy, created famine and established one-party rule got back power.
She reiterated her pledge that her party would restore democracy, protect national independence and ensure food and clothing for the people.
The BNP leader said President Zia had initiated the politics of production in his people-oriented programmes. BNP will continue it, she added.
Begum Zia further said her party would also set up new industries, create employment opportunities by setting up small industries in rural areas, and would stop smuggling.
The probable BNP government will also revive gram sarker, palli chiktisak, rural electrification and mass literacy programmes, besides developing the communication network, she said.
In her first public meeting after the general elections, the BNP chief also pledged for raising age limit for government services, a longstanding demand of students.
On her way from Dhaka, Begum Zia also addressed two wayside gatherings in Daudkandi.



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina talking to party workers who went to Bangabandhu Bhaban Tuesday to request her to withdraw her resignation. — Star photo

Hasina

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Some were found weeping while Sheikh Hasina tried to console them saying, "I am with you and I will remain with you. But, I should not hold the party position for a long time."
Emotional supporters told Hasina that it would be difficult to uphold the ideals of Bangabandhu without her leadership.
A group of students threatened to go on hunger strike if the resignation was not withdrawn.
While pacifying party workers Sheikh Hasina remained gloomy.
Anxiety among the AL workers eased Tuesday evening when it was declared that Sheikh Hasina agreed to withdraw her resignation.

Nizami Jamaat PP leader

By Staff Correspondent
Moulana Mattur Rahman Nizami has been elected leader of the parliamentary party of Jamaat-e-Islami.
Moulana Nizami is the Secretary General of Jamaat-e-Islami and was elected to the parliament from Pabna-1 (Sathia-Bera) constituency.

Kamal, Zohra angry

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was surprised at the incident, she said.
She held that the terror unleashed in front of the party office centering the resignation of Sheikh Hasina indicated a bad women. She said the incident had been tarnished the party image and called upon all democratic minded Awami League workers and leaders to unite to resist the recurrence of such incidents in future.
Awami League president and general secretary however did not issue any statement on the incident. When asked why she issued the statement, Zohra Tajuddin said she can issue a statement as a presidium member. But Awami League insiders hinted that the party leadership did not agree to issue a statement condemning the unruly behaviour with the two senior most leaders of the party.
Both Zohra Tajuddin and Kamal Hossain lost the elections.
Meanwhile, Kamal Hossain on Tuesday met his closed friends within and outside the party. They took stock of the post-election situation and the

behaviour of the disgruntled Awami League workers. The Awami League workers raised slogans against Kamal Hussain calling him a conspirator.
Dr Kamal's statement that the polls were free and fair angered the supporters of Sheikh Hasina as it contradicted her claim that the election was rigged. According to party sources, Tofael Ahmed, who is a close aide of Kamal Hussain may also face the same situation. Tofael who has won two seats from Bhola stated that the election was free and fair.
Kamal Hussain, who was inducted to Awami League in 1970 as foreign minister and drafted the country's constitution as law minister. But Dr Kamal could not return to parliament in 1986 and this year. In 1986 all the 'uncles' lost the polls including Kamal Hussain. He contested the polls from Mirpur and lost to Harunur Rashid Mollah of BNP.
Among the senior leaders Abdul Mannan, Zohra Tajuddin, Sheikh Aziz, Mattur Rahman and Major General (Rtd) Khalilur Rahman could not return to parliament. The senior leaders held Sheikh Hasina responsible for their debacle in 1986 elections also.

Royal bite!

LONDON, Mar 5: Queen Elizabeth was bitten by one of her own pet Corgi dogs after she tried to stop a savage fight among the royal dogs, a place spokesman said today, reports Reuter.
The Queen was bitten on her left hand during the dog-fight at Windsor Castle on Sunday and had to have three stitches in her wound, the spokesman said. The Sun newspaper said 10 dogs were involved, including two belonging to the Queen mother.
The Queen mother's chauffeur, John Collins, was also bitten when he tried to break up the fight. Other staff separated the scrapping hounds and helped the Queen back inside the castle.
Animal psychiatrist Dr Roger Mugford said: "Corgis have large teeth and strong jaws. Basically they don't know their own strength."
He suggested the Queen be prepared in future by keeping a dog alarm handy to break up a brawl.
Mugford was consulted by the Queen after an earlier incident in which Chipper, a Dobermann-Corgi cross known as a "Dorgi," was killed by a pack led by the Queen mother's Corgi Ranger.

Mass walkout leaves Lok Sabha without quorum

NEW DELHI, Mar 5: Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party brought India's tiny minority government to the brink of defeat Tuesday leading a mass walkout from Parliament which left the ruling party stranded without a quorum, reports Reuter.
Congress, which has propped up the ruling Janata Dal (Socialist) Party in power for four months, walked out of the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) protesting that two policemen had been caught spying on Rajiv Gandhi.
The main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) joined the walk-out, accusing the government of suppressing an official report on the extent of phone-tapping in India.

Mizan

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cover power in accordance with the joint declaration of the three alliances announced on November 19, 1991.
They said that the Acting President might continue his office till the holding of the presidential election to fulfill the constitutional requirement for smooth transfer of power.
The JP Acting Chairman demanded that parliament members of Jatiya Party including the Party Chairman HM Ershad be released immediately. Otherwise, he said, the MPs of his party would not take oath and wage a country wide movement to realise their demands.
Accepting the election results the JP Acting Chairman said that the elections were peaceful but not impartial because the government controlled radio and television denied JP publicity during the election period. Yet, he said they were accepting the results as a democratic party.
Mr Mizan Chowdhury also demanded withdrawal of all cases against the party leaders and urged other political parties to take the Jatiya Party into confidence for consolidating the democratic process.
Replying to the questions Mizan Chowdhury said that former president Ershad would be their parliamentary party leader. The JP Parliamentary Party sits tomorrow (Thursday) at his residence. He also said that if there was a presidential election Ershad would be their nominee.
Mizan Chowdhury said that the Jatiya Party would play a responsible opposition role inside and outside the Parliament.
Jatiya Party Acting Chairman said that the Acting President could take any parliament member in his Council of Ministers.
But if all the members are taken from a party the government will lose its neutrality, he added.
The Jatiya Party has won 36 seats in the parliamentary elections. Five of the MPs who were present at the press conference were: A T M Fazle Rabbi, Monirul Haque Chowdhury, Moksud ibne Aziz Lama, Hafizur Rahman and Shah Khairuzaman.
Mizan Chowdhury who lost his Chandpur seat is likely to contest from one Rangpur seat which will be vacated by Ershad.
Begum Rawshan Ershad also is likely to contest from another seat.

The Midnight File

Jail for not revealing source

JOHANNESBURG, Mar 5: A journalist was jailed Tuesday for refusing to reveal his sources for a report on the disappearance of a key witness in Winnie Mandela's kidnapping and assault trial. A judge sentenced Patrick Laurence of The Star newspaper to 10 days in jail after he refused to say who told him that the witness left a church refuge with three African National Congress members the night before he was to testify, reports AP.

60 rebels killed in Rwanda

NAIROBI, Mar 5: Rwanda says its troops have repulsed a rebel attack in the central African country's mountainous northwestern corner, killing at least 60 insurgents. The government, in its claim late Monday over state-run Radio Rwanda, said the rebels came across the northern border from Uganda and waged attacks in the Rubengeri district, reports AP.

Headless bodies found in Manila

MANILA, Mar 5: The headless bodies of three men were found in Manila today, apparently victims of summary execution, Philippines police said. The corpses were discovered within a short distance of one another in the densely-populated Quezon City district. The heads have not been found, reports Reuter.

Mig-29 at Manila show

MANILA, Mar 5: Two Soviet Sukhoi SU-27 jet fighters arrived at the Philippines Air Force Headquarters in his city today to take part in an airshow here next week. The twin-engine fighter interceptors, one a two-seater trainer version reached Manila and a Mig-29 was also scheduled to fly today, reports AFP.

Japan expels illegal workers

TOKYO, Mar 5: The Japanese Ministry of Justice has made an order for the expulsion from the country of 3,110 foreigners (mainly citizens of South Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand) whose visas were found to have expired, who were working illegally or had entered Japan illegally, reports IAN.

Rebels for polls in Iraq

MADRID, Mar 5: Iraqi opposition leader Mohammed Baker al-Hakim said in an interview published today he wanted free elections in Iraq after ousting President Saddam Hussein, and believed Iraqis would elect a Muslim government. Rebels in Iraq were driven by "a Muslim impulse and are marching on the road of revolutionary Muslim leadership", he told El Pais newspaper by telephone from Tehran, reports Reuter.

Huge drug haul in Iran

NICOSIA, Mar 5: Agents in Iran's Western Azerbaijan province seized 2.4 tons (2.2 metric tons) of pure morphine in the biggest drug haul in recent years and arrested 30 members of a narcotics ring, Tehran radio reported Tuesday. "Some of the drug smugglers were sentenced to death by a special court", Mokhtar Kalantari, commander-in-chief of the Komitah, the local law enforcement agency said, reports AP.

Largest party

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Rahman Nizami, MP-elect, Ali Ahsan Mujahid, Abdul Kader Mollah and Barrister Abdur Razzak.
Mr. Abbas Ali Khan urged the Acting President to maintain the democratic spirit and requested him to invite the largest party in the Parliament to form the government.
The Acting President assured them that he would perform his duty, whenever so required.
Mr. Abbas Khan also drew the attention of the government to the fact that many Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia were not receiving their salaries for the last several months. He requested the Acting President to exert his influence so that those Bangladeshis did not have to pass hard days without salaries.
According to another report, leaders of four political parties said that their parties would give full support to BNP if it reverted to parliamentary form of government.
Justice Shahabuddin said the first session of Parliament would be held on April 5. He advised the party leaders to open dialogue with the BNP and Awami League.
The official release said: Leaders of four political parties today called on the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, at President's Secretariat during which they discussed post-election situation in the country.
Ganotantri Party chief Syed Altaf Hossain, BKSAL General Secretary Abdur Razzak, CPB General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and NAP (M) General Secretary Pankaj Bhattacharya who met the Acting President said the members elected to Jatiya Sangsad from their parties would give full support to BNP if it reverted to parliamentary form of government.
They reiterated their commitment to the joint declaration of the three alliances signed in November last year.
The leaders said in a parliamentary form of government BNP being the majority would form the government.
The Acting President gave them a patient hearing and reiterated the constitutional position.
Justice Shahabuddin said the first session of Parliament would be held on April 5. He advised the party leaders to open dialogue with the BNP and Awami League.

Menon

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called upon the Awami League not to raise unnecessary controversy. He also reminded that there was no bar in forming the council of Ministers with the members of the majority party.
Much ado about these issues would only give rise to the avenues of conspiracy, he observed.
Menon said the people would not forgive if impediments were created in the way of realising the democratic rights of the people due to petty individual and party interests.
This was for the first time after the independence the people had voted freely and without any hindrance.
Anyone showing unwillingness to accept this reality will only reflect inferiority complex, he said.
Earlier, in another reception accorded to him at Kara public academy Menon urged all for ensuring the democratic rights of the minority community.
Headmaster of Dharmara High School Mobarak Sarder and Headmaster of Kara Public Academy Narendranath Biswas also spoke at the reception.

Reports of task forces

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to receive the remaining reports of the task forces by this week.
While the full reports of the task forces will now be presented to the leaders of 12 political parties having representation in the Jatiya Sangsad.
Parliament summoned
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The Election Commission is expected to publish the official results today (Wednesday). The newly elected members of parliament will take oath after publication of the official results. Except the Jatiya Party all other political parties are unanimous, not to take oath from Shamsul Huda Choudhury, Speaker of the fourth dissolved Parliament. The Parliament sources said that in the event of members' refusal to take oath from Shamsul Huda Choudhury, he (Incumbent Speaker) might designate any one to administer the oath, as per Rules of Procedure.
The special feature of the fifth Parliament is that both the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition are women. BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia has already been elected leader of the BNP Parliamentary Party. Awami League Parliamentary Party is expected to meet on March 10 to elect the leader and deputy leader of the ALPP.
The fourth Parliament was dissolved by ousted president Ershad on December 6 in the wake of a mass upsurge. The caretaker, neutral government held the elections on February 27.
The fourth Parliament was elected on March 3 in 1988 in a controversial elections which was boycotted by all the major political parties. Voters' turnout was hardly 3 per cent. Jatiya Party got 251 seats in the elections.
The first Parliament was elected on March 7 in 1973. Bangladesh Awami League got 293 seats in the first Parliament and there was no opposition group. The formation of opposition group requires at least ten members.

Anandabazar

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said neither religious sentiment, nor the talk of nationalism would be of much help because the country's wealth is not increasing keeping pace with its population growth. The paper said there is also no such prospect.
The editorial continued. The people of Bangladesh should raise demand for merging with India if they are prepared to accept this reality.
It said 'people from both sides of the border may be afraid of this call. West Bengal may be reluctant to go for unification simply on grounds of common language. Even Delhi will be afraid of this because of the manifold problems facing Bangladesh.
India's resources are also limited, even though it is geographically large.... It's upto the people of Bangladesh to decide whether they will be driven by emotion or by practical knowledge', the editorial said.
Following the publication of the editorial the Bangladesh Mission in Calcutta was asked to take up the matter with the Editor of the paper.
Meanwhile, a section of the press in Calcutta has started propaganda that workers of Bangladesh Nationalist Party are ransacking houses of people of minority communities for not having voted for them.
The statesman, and the 'Bariaman' of Calcutta published such baseless news items on Monday, according to reports.
The canard by the Indian press has created serious resentment among the people of Bangladesh. Leaders of different political parties and socio-cultural organisations have condemned the vicious propaganda against Bangladesh. They described this as an assault on Bangladesh's independence and sovereignty.

Rebels seize Karbala

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The reports of unrest in the north was the first indication the Kurds, an ethnic minority which had been struggling for independence from Baghdad, may have joined the effort to unseat Saddam.
The Iraqi opposition, in separate reports from Iran and Syria, said the two southern cities, Najaf and Karbala, were taken by anti-Saddam rioters.
Baghdad Radio on Monday carried a statement purportedly from Ibrahim, Deputy Chairman of the Council, in which he was quoted as appealing to a group of civilian and military officials to rise to the "major challenges" facing Iraq.
He did not specify what those challenges were, but it was an apparent reference to the unrest.
There was no way to verify the opposition claims.
Jabr said: "Najaf fell into the hands of the protesters after bloody clashes. Twenty-two protesters were killed. Army units in Najaf have surrendered to our heroes."
Karbala is also in the hands of our people," he said.
Opposition prisoners in both Karbala and Najaf have been freed and two public buildings have been burned.
The governor of Karbala fled just before the city fell, Jabr said without giving the name of the official.
Karbala and Najaf are both holy Shiite cities. The Shiites make up 55 per cent of Iraq's 18 million population.
Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency, in a report monitored in Nicosia, quoted an unidentified spokesman for the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq as reporting the fall of Najaf and Karbala.
Refugees reaching the Iraqi border town of Safwan, most of them Kuwaitis trying to get home, said demonstrators were also marching in the southern Iraqi cities of Nasiriyah, Shutra, Suq ash-Shuyukh, Amara, Samawah and Kut.
In some places, they said, Iraqi troops were shooting women and children.
The special forces are destroying everything in front of them. If anybody shouts from a building they knock it down," said Mahar Hakawati, a Jordanian photographer who came to Kuwait from Basra.
IRNA had earlier quoted refugees streaming into Iran as saying Saddam's eldest son, Uday, 26, was killed in the Basra fighting, along with a

provincial governor and the mayor of the city.
Meanwhile, Iraq said Tuesday that all Allied prisoners of war had been freed, and the US military announced plans to release 294 Iraqis -- the first batch of more than 60,000 soldiers captured during last week's lopsided ground war.
On Tuesday afternoon, Baghdad radio quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying: "Iraq has completed the handing over of all prisoners of the countries that had taken part in military operations against Iraq."
The radio said 35 POWs were handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross. The ICRC confirmed that number, saying the group comprised 15 Americans, nine Britons, nine Saudis, one Kuwaiti and one Italian.
The US command said earlier there were 38 Americans missing in action and nine known prisoners of war in Iraqi hands before Monday's releases.
The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein late Monday, said the broadcast, monitored in Nicosia.

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