



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing an election rally in Mirpur yesterday. — Star photo



A procession in Mirpur yesterday in support of Kamal Ahmed Majumdar, Awami League candidate for by-election. — Star photo

Rigging in poura-polls alleged Hartal, gherao in three districts

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League, Jatiya Party and the five-party Alliance in Jessore gheraoed the office of the Returning Officer yesterday demanding fresh pourashava election.

Meanwhile in Magura tension prevailed as all the opposition parties intensified campaign for a half-day hartal yesterday in protest against alleged rigging of the pourashava election.

And in Faridpur yesterday, a half-day hartal called by Awami League in protest of rigging in the pourashava polls was observed peacefully.

Our Jessore Correspondent adds: The opposition parties brought out a big procession in the town demanding a fresh and impartial election there.

They also handed over a memorandum to the Returning Officer, who is the Additional District Magistrate.

The opposition called for a day-long hartal today (Tuesday) in support of their demands.

UNB from Magura adds: The action of the combined opposition was also to press for re-polling, alleging that Saturday's election was rigged at least at 10 centres in favour of ruling party candidate Dr Mahbulul Haque Siddique, the brother of a minister.

Election to Magura Pourashava was postponed amid-still-poll violence and alleged stuffing of ballot boxes.

A huge procession was brought out yesterday by the opposition to drum up support for today's hartal.

Meanwhile, at least 15 people, including three women, were injured in a fierce clash between rival villagers at Singra in the Sadar thana yesterday, past enmity was said to be the cause.

Witnesses said the clash started when an armed group attacked the houses of Abdul Barik Mollah at about 7:30 am Monday.

The attackers ransacked the dwelling houses of Barik Mollah and his brothers Tarik Mollah and Atik Mollah. Valuables worth an estimated Taka 50,000 were also looted.

Of the injured, Torunnessa (30), Asta Khatun (40), Kohinor Begum (10) and Abdul Majid Mollah (55) were

admitted to the Sadar Hospital with serious cuts.

And in Faridpur, the agency said, the hartal from 6 am to 12 noon was marked by closure of all commercial houses and educational institutes. All kinds of transport were off the roads during the period. Banks resumed transaction after hartal hours.

Additional law enforcing agencies were deployed at different trouble points of the town.

Later in the evening a meeting was held at the Mojuddin High School ground presided by Chairman elect of Faridpur Sadar Pourashava Fazlul Kabir Chand.

The speakers at the meeting criticised hartal callers for creating unnecessary inconveniences to the people.

The January 30 election was conducted in a free and fair atmosphere, they said.

In Manikganj, at least 10 people, including two policemen, were injured yesterday as supporters of three chairman candidates in last pourashava election clashed over polls results.

Witnesses said supporters of defeated independent candidate Mahidur Rahman attacked the supporters of newly elected chairman Ramjan Ali of Jatiya Party in the town yesterday morning, leaving five people seriously injured.

The injured JP activists -- Javed Ali (50) and Rafiqul Islam (25) of Poul village, Ataur Rahman (37) of Boundia village, Abdul Mannan (25) and Nazim Uddin (45) of Nava Kandi village of Sadar thana -- were admitted to Manikganj Sadar hospital in critical condition.

Another five people, including two police constables, were injured when supporters of defeated candidate Mosharraf Hossain (ind) clashed with Ramjan's men at Dudhbari area of the town in the afternoon.

Police picked up seven people after the clash.

The district administration called a meeting with the local leaders of all political parties today (Tuesday) at 11 am to avoid further untoward incident.

CHT councils

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requested the government to defer the elections by another 365 days for the sake of success of discussion with the leaders of so-called Shantibahini. The election Commission has given its consent on the matter.

Since the Jatiya Sangsad was not in session and since it appeared satisfactory, the President promulgated three ordinances extending the time-limit to hold elections to the local government councils of the three hill districts by 545 days (180+365) from the date of expiry of the tenure of these councils in July last year.

The statements said that the bills should be deemed to have executed from December 12 of 1992.

Opposing the Rangamati Hill Tracts Local Government Council (Amendment), 1993, Fazlul Karim Selim (AL) wanted to know why the Foreign Minister was seeking to introduce the bill when the issue concerned the Minister for Local Government Affairs.

He said he would also oppose the bill because the issue was a political problem and it had to be solved politically.

PM opens indoor stadium at Mirpur

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said yesterday the present government wants to build Mirpur as a development and prosperous township providing all civic amenities, reports BSS.

Inaugurating the construction work of National In-door Stadium at a ceremony at Mirpur Begum Zia said it will be considered as a milestone in the over-all development of the area.

Last-minute

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Ahmed Majumdar by leading a large procession which marched through the main streets in the area.

The JP also organised its last campaign meeting calling for votes for its candidate Belal Ahmed.

Campaigning through holding rallies and processions came to a stop midnight last night as ordered by the Election Commission.

BNP-Khaleda

From Page 1 Col 3

"Work on the hospital will start soon", she added.

Nationalisation of local girls' school and women's college will be given due consideration, she assured responding to a demand from hundreds of girls at the meeting.

Presided over by City BNP President Lt Gen (retd) Mir Shawkat Ali MP, the meeting was also addressed by LGRD Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder, Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah, State Minister for Communication Fazlur Rahman, State Minister for Social Welfare and Women Affairs Sarwar Rahman, City Mayor Mirza Abbas, State Minister for Environment and Livestock Goyeswar Roy, Salauddin Ahmed MP and Amanullah Aman MP.

BNP candidate for the by-election Syed Mohammad Mohsin also spoke on the occasion.

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Jahanara Imam

From Page 1 Col 8

the afternoon after one-and-a-half-month stay in America.

The Samannay Committee leaders and supporters greeted the 64-year-old anti-fundamentalist crusader showering her with flower petals, and presenting bouquets and garlands.

They also chanted anti-Jamaat and anti-Golam Azam slogans.

Jahanara Imam who has been suffering from cancer, went to the USA on December 17 and underwent two successful surgeries in her mouth.

Among others Abdur Razzak MP, Shawkat Ali MP, Hassan Imam, Sahriar Kabir, Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Kazi Aref Ahmed, AFM Mahbulul Huq, Abu Osman Chowdhury, Panna Kaiser, Sumita Devi, and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya were present at the airport.

Earlier, inside the airport terminal, she told reporters that the people's court and the movement against the anti-liberation forces got massive support from the expatriate Bangladeshis.

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Nirmul Committee members receiving Jahanara Imam at Zia International Airport yesterday. — Star photo

Bill to disinvest BSRS

By Staff Correspondent

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Diarrhoea: 715 died, Minister tells JS

By Staff Correspondent

At least 715 people had died and a total of 37,715 had been affected with diarrhoea around the country since the beginning of the new year, Health and Family Welfare Minister Choudhury Kamal ibne Yusuf disclosed at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

Responding to a call attention notice on a matter of public importance by Awami League member Mohiuddin of Pirojpur, the Health Minister noted that 338 unions of 30 thanas of the six districts under the newly-formed Barisal district were the most affected.

"This year the diarrhoea situation suddenly started early in January, as it normally begins around April and continues upto the rainy season, and it took an acute form and initially the government was taken unawares," he added.

However, the Minister assured the House that all resources were mobilised and that the situation was now under control. A total of 217 doctors, including those from the army, were currently working in the area.

He said that the situation was gradually improving and that during the last 24 hours 374 people were affected and only two died, which he termed "not very many" in a region where more than a crore people live.

He refuted charges that there was a shortage of medicine in the affected areas saying that he personally visited the region recently to ensure that adequate steps were being taken. He noted that the AL member Mohiuddin Ahmed from Bakerganj was also present during the visit.

The Health Minister went on to identify the salinity of the water in the region and poor sanitary conditions as the primary reasons for the outbreak of diarrhoea.

Heated 'debate' in JS

From Page 1 Col 5

Election Commissioner who had already earned a reputation at home and abroad for his ability to conduct neutral elections across the country.

The Treasury bench requested expunction of Hasina's statement.

The BNP MP also said that the leader of the opposition should go to the Election Commission and request it to take preemptive measures if she feared that the poll would be rigged.

Refuting the opposition allegations the Acting Deputy Leader of the House, Maj Gen (retd) Majidul Huq, told the House that the allegations brought only two days before the polling day were designed to misguide the nation to cover up apprehended defeat of the opposition. He said every one at home and abroad credited the BNP government for holding the last three by-elections freely and fairly in which the Awami League candidates won.

Gen Majidul Huq said the hard earned democracy should not be jeopardised by raising concocted allegations to serve petty party interest. Such allegations based on hearsay would only vitiate political atmosphere, he added.

The Food Minister, Shamsul Islam and deputy minister for LORD, Abdul Hat, also refuted the opposition allegations against the government in the pourashava elections and said it was the Awami League workers who created a reign of terror in Munshiganj.

Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah of the Treasury bench observed that Hasina's statement on the Mirpur by-election was a clear aspersion on the Chief

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The Midnight File

Biggest offensive against Khmer Rouge

PHNOM PENH (Cambodia), Feb 1: The government has launched its biggest offensive since UN peacekeepers arrived and its troops appear headed toward Khmer Rouge headquarters in Pailin, UN officials said Monday. Government soldiers are forcing an undetermined number of villagers and recently returned refugees to transport ammunition and attack the Khmer Rouge in fighting that has spread to five of the 11 military sectors of Cambodia, said UN spokesman Eric Berman, reports AP.

Floods kill 30 in Java

JAKARTA, Feb 1: Thirty people are dead and 40 missing after catastrophic flooding hit Java over the weekend leaving tens of thousands homeless, media Indonesia reported Monday. Provisional casualty and damage figures from the police said most of the victims were drowned or buried by landslides triggered by the torrential rain which hit the island of 120 million inhabitants last week, reports AFP.

Poetry festival

From Page 1 Col 5
He also alleged that the fundamentalists and the communal forces were rising and spreading in the Sub-continent.

The function was also addressed by the festival committee convenor Majharul Islam, Samudra Gupta, Mohan Rathan and Muhammad Samad.

The festival began with the hoisting of national and festival flags over the pandal erected for the occasion at the TSC.

Following the inauguration the guests and the parishad members brought out a procession from the mazar of the National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam at the Dhaka University Central Mosque premises. The procession dispersed at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Later in the afternoon at 3 pm recitation of self-composed poem was held.

A seminar on "Spirit of Liberation: Our Poetry" will be held at 10 in the morning and a recitation programme in the afternoon today.

Uttara plots

From Page 1 Col 8
allotment of plots to these 508 applicants was somewhat complex task because their applications lacked necessary papers.

The situation was made