

US refugee body hails

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support" the decision of those who choose to repatriate voluntarily...

In the letter signed by Hiram A Ruiz, a policy analyst of the organisation, USCR also thanked the Foreign Minister...

On December 24, the UNHCR Chief Sadako Ogata, in

All Waqf estates to be registered

The State Minister for Religious Affairs Professor M A Mannan, yesterday said all the Waqf estates in the country would be brought under registration...

The Waqf administration he said earned a record revenue of Taka 62 lakh during the fiscal 1991-92...

Addressing a grand Waqf conference here the State Minister said that this collection was made from 15 thousand registered Waqf estates...

He referred to about one lakh 30 thousand unregistered Waqf estates and said, efforts were being made to bring all of them under registration...

No NGO engaged in subversive activities

LGRD Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder told parliament yesterday the government investigation did not find any NGO engaged in activities subversive to the state or society...

He also refuted the allegation that some foreign NGOs are engaged in religious conversion.

Replying to a question from Maulana Ataur Rahman Khan, Talukder said there are at present 676 registered NGOs in the country.

The government has control over the NGOs and they are liable to action if found engaged in any illegal activity, the minister said.

Replying to another question from Abu Bakr of Nature, the LGRD minister said the government is investigating alleged irregularities in co-operative societies across the country.

12 jailed under Anti-terrorism Act in a week

A total of twelve persons were sentenced to different jail terms this week under the Anti-terrorism Act, police said, reports BSS.

Four persons were awarded six-year rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Taka 500 for hijacking in Dhamondi area and another received five-year rigorous imprisonment...

Two persons awarded five-year imprisonment for toll collection under Boalia thana of Rajshahi.

One person in Shibabaya under Manikganj for road blockade, one person in Narayan-ganj, one under Kotwali thana of Faridpur of teasing and beating girls, one in Rangpur for toll collections were awarded different jail terms under the Anti-terrorism Act.



A road block put up by protesters in Mirpur yesterday.

AL stages walkout

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Commission. The Election Commission had earned the reputation at home and abroad by means of upholding unprecedented neutrality...

Besides, the parties preaching Westminster type of democracy at different forums of the country should be aware of the things that the parliament floor had nothing to do with settling election dispute...

Commenting on the way the House entered into the hours-long discussion, completely deviating from the Rules of Procedures of Parliament, the Minister said, that the last night's deliberation would remain as an example of bad test of parliamentarians in the world history of parliamentary democracy.

Our deliberation on any issue should be based on facts, and we should be respectful to each other while we address the House, the Treasury Minister said adding parliament floor should not be treated as Pailon Maidan.

with the present situation continuing, I do not feel tempted to be a parliament member next time, Hoque regretted.

Refuting the opposition claim that the government manipulated the election results by interfering the election process conducted by the Election Commission, Hoque said that if it had such ill intention, the ruling party would not have accepted election results of many polls at different tiers of the local governments...

He also said that it was unfortunate for them that the MPs belonging to the Jatiya Party that imposed a nine-year long autocratic regime on the people were now advising a democratically elected government to follow democratic norms.

From the opposition, nine other members, including Moudud Ahmed of Jatiya Party, Tofael Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim, Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim, ASM Firoze, Mohammad Jahangir, Suranjit Sengupta of Ganatantri Party and Rashed Khan Menon of Workers Party, took part in the debate that continued for nearly three hours.

From the Treasury benches, three Ministers - Rafiqul Islam Mia, Najmul Huda and Abdul Matin Chowdhury - and two members - Ziaur Rahman Khan and Qamrul Islam - participated in the debate.

Deputy leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad made a scathing attack on the ruling party for what he said interfering with the affairs of the Election Commission and thereby undermining its credibility.

Election Commission virtually ceased to function properly at one stage because of the repeated interference of the government machinery, he claimed.

Strongly criticising the presence of controversial Police Commissioner Raqibul Huda during counting in the Election Control Room, the AL leader said, "situation dramatically changed with Huda's entry, he obstructed functioning of the Election Commission."

The angry deputy opposition leader observed that the Mirpur by-election results marked the burial of democracy.

Taking part in the discussion, Ganatantri Party leader Suranjit Sengupta alleged the government abused its executive authority to manipulate yesterday's by-election. He was particularly critical of the role played by the Home Minister and the Information Minister.

Unofficial results were fed to media by sidetracking the Election Commission with malafied intention, Suranjit said.

Earlier, after the Maghreb break, a large number of AL members sought the floor. But the Speaker gave the floor to Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim, saying that he had promised on Wednesday to allow him to speak after the election results were out.

AL stages walkout

But the results were manipulated from Sugandha (Prime Minister's office), Tofael said and expressed apprehension that no election under BNP government can be held free and fair.

Ziaur Rahman Khan MP and Major (Retd) Kamrul MP of the BNP told the House that no election agent of the AL candidate present at the Election Control Room at Mirpur Wednesday evening raised any objection against any procedure relating to the tabulation of votes.

Ziaur Rahman and Kamrul were present at the Control Room. The MPs, said that the AL agents, however, objected to broadcast of the unofficial results. At this objection the officials of the Election Commission readily requested the AL agents to appeal in black and white, the MPs added.

Protesters in Jessore demand fresh poura polls

Jessore, Feb 4: A large gathering of opposition activists practically laid siege to the main road of the town here blocking the entire Daratana Square from 11 am to 12 noon today.

The meeting was held at Daratana Square today in response to an earlier call by Awami League, Jatiya Party and Five-party Alliance demanding re-election in Jessore Pourashava.

Movement of all type of vehicles remained suspended during the time. Business activities of the town also came to a halt during the programme of the opposition political parties.

A joint rally of the AL, JP, and Five-party Alliance was held later at 12 noon at the Daratana Square, which threatened to go for a greater movement if the government did not agree to hold re-election in the pourashava.

Benazir gives birth to baby girl

ISLAMABAD, Feb 4: After denying for months that she was pregnant, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto gave birth to a baby girl, according to news reports Thursday, says AP.

Ms. Bhutto's third child was born one-month premature on Wednesday at hospital in Britain, where she was receiving treatment for gallstones. Both mother and baby, which weighed 6.5 pounds (2.9 kilograms), were reported doing well. The baby had been expected on Feb. 24.

"The decision to perform and earlier delivery was taken in view of the threatening biliary and pancreatic bladder stones and severe pain," Naseer Sheikh, an adviser to Ms. Bhutto was quoted as saying.

Ms. Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, has been in jail since October 1990 on a variety of charges ranging from corruption to extortion. He has denied his guilt and has yet to be convicted of any crime.

West asks Mobutu to give up power

KINSHASA (Zaire), Feb 4: Mutinous troops held two key army bases in the capital Thursday as Western governments stepped up pressure on President Mobutu Sese Seko to surrender his 27-year monopoly on power, reports AP.

Few shots were heard overnight, and there was no sign that Mobutu's presidential guards were preparing new attacks on the two camps.

Student bodies condemn alleged interference in by-elections

By DU Correspondent
Different student organisations yesterday condemned the alleged interference of the ruling party in Mirpur by-election held Wednesday.

The pro-Awami League Chhatra League (M-L) yesterday brought out a procession and held protest rally in front of the DUCSU building.

Addressing the rally the BCL (M-L) leaders protested the controversial results of the by-election.

The leaders also alleged that the role of the ruling party was no less than that of the previous autocrats.

The Ganatantrik Chhatra Otkya (GCO) in a statement yesterday also condemned the 'naked interference' of the government bypassing the Election Commission in the by-election.

Meanwhile, the JSD (nu) backed Chhatra League (B-K) in a statement yesterday resented the alleged interference of the ruling party in the Mirpur by-election.

The BCL (B-K) president Ruhul Qudus Babu and general secretary Abdullahi Quyum in the statement termed the government role regarding the by-election as an undemocratic one.

The BCL (B-K) urged the Election Commission to keep a bold attitude in such situation.

3 kidnapped youngmen rescued

MANIKGANJ, Feb 4: Police rescued three youngmen, kidnapped from Dhaka, in unconscious condition from a minibus at Nabagram on the Manikganj-Jitka road today (Thursday), reports UNB.

The youngmen were brought here in a minibus of the Gulistan-Mohammadpur route in the capital. All their belongings were looted after they lost their senses.

Police suspect a gang of organised miscreants to be involved in the kidnap. Identities of the victims were not known. They were admitted to Manikganj Sadar Hospital in critical condition, hospital sources said.

AL calls hartal

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week-long half-day hartal in the Mirpur constituency from Saturday excepting the day of holy Shab-e-Barat of February 7.

The briefing was held at 9 pm at the conference room of the Opposition Leader in the Parliament.

Mohammad Nasim alleged that their agents were forced out of the control room and result despatching was stopped mid-way of the counting.

He said that Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Raqibul Huda acted in favour of the ruling party and helped the Assistant Returning Officer to manipulate the result.

The Opposition chief whisp said that their polling agents were not supplied with any result sheets signed by the presiding officer and demanded re-election in those 16 centres.

He did not however give any list of the centres during the briefing but said it was given to the House by Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina.

The autocrat is ousted but autocracy still remain. This government just changes the technique and hijacks result sheets instead of booths," Nasim said.

He said that the constitution which provides independence and neutrality to the Election Commission was challenged by the ruling party during the election.

Moreover, if (ruling party) used police forces to repress the people and AL workers of the Mirpur areas. "Our programmes are aimed at protesting these anomalies and we also stage walkout to protest it," he said.

The Midnight File

France drafts new proposal on deported Palestinians

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 4: France has drafted a new proposal that would renew UN pressure on Israel to return a group of deported Palestinians. But the United States says it's time to leave the issue behind and concentrate on restarting Mideast peace talks, reports AP.

Violence claims 18 in Medellin

BOGOTA (Colombia), Feb 4: At least 18 people, including businessmen, a police officer and a soccer star, have been killed in Medellin in 24 hours of murder and police violence, according to news reports Thursday. Local soccer star, Omar Canas, and two unidentified men were found murdered Thursday in Medellin, said Caracol radio.

Police killed four suspected terrorists after a high-speed chase south of Medellin Wednesday. The men were transporting some 130 kilos (286 pounds) of dynamite, according to police, reports AP.

Mohsin elected

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Wednesday night. He also expressed ignorance about the news sources quoted by the private United News of Bangladesh (UNB) news agency and the official Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS). However, Rahman said there were scopes for these agencies to collect total results before being compiled by the EC from all 117 centres.

"We finished the announcement of centrewise results (of 117 centres) at 11:15 pm but tabulation of those were not done till then," he said.

According to the Returning Officer, results started coming from the polling centres at 6:30 pm. A copy of the result sheet was sent to the Election Commission and two copies to the control room at DC's office.

Moreover, the Returning Officer claimed, a copy of the result sheet was supplied to each of the polling agents of the 18 candidates.

At this stage, when counting in 78 centres was completed, trouble began. Amid clashes and cracker blasts followed by gunshots the officials stopped tabulating and got ready to leave the control room, the Assistant Returning Officer said. But

Indian citizen held with gun in Khagrachhari

CHITTAGONG, Feb 4: Security personnel yesterday arrested an Indian national with gun from Matiranga thana in Khagrachhari district near the border with India while his accomplices believed to be members of the outlawed Shantibahini fled, reports BSS.

Official sources said the Shantibahini insurgent group moving within Bangladesh territory near the border being challenged by the patrolling security personnel fled leaving one behind.

The security personnel handed him over to Matiranga police station. He has been arrested. He told police that he is an Indian national, Chikanand Chakma is his name and lives at Joytunpara in India.

Five results

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The UNB released another report quoting Salauddin Ahmed, MP, the chief election agent of the BNP candidate, as saying that BNP got 79,118 votes while AL got 76,434 votes.

Rallies at Shaheed Minar banned for two days

By DU Correspondent
The Dhaka University authorities have banned the holding of processions or rallies in the Central Shaheed Minar premises from 8 am on February 20 till end of the Ekushey programme on February 21.

A meeting chaired by Professor Emajuddin Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor and attended by teachers, students and officers of the university appealed to the people to help maintain an atmosphere befitting the significance of the day.

The meeting also urged the political parties not to hang portraits or stick posters on the Shaheed Minar, the national memorial commemorating the martyrs of the Language Movement of 1952.

The Dhaka University coordinates and supervises the observance of the national day that commemorates the glorious movement.

Juba Dal meet today

An emergency meeting of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal Dhaka city unit will be held today at 4 pm at the residence of the Mayor of Dhaka Mirza Abbas. All leaders of the city unit, Presidents and General Secretaries of all thanas and wardens have been requested to attend the meeting on time, reports BSS.

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