

## Election fever grips Rajshahi

From Asiuzzaman

RAJSHAHI, Jan 13: An election fever gripped this northern city with the candidates putting their full force to draw the attention of the voters for the January 30 mayoral election.

The century-old city of a half million people is now replete with banners, posters and wall writings in favour of seven mayor candidates and 257 commissioner candidates for 30 wards.

Everyday, a series of processions parade the city's main thoroughfares as well as the suburban small lanes while high-volume loud speakers are blaring slogans or special announcements of a public meeting or so throughout the day.

Hardly any space is left for pasting a poster on the walls but the die-hard workers of respective candidates are still searching spaces for pasting at dead of night.

Besides these activities, the candidates are wooing the voters at their doorsteps which they consider the only effective way of campaigning. The mayoral candidates are following a comprehensive itinerary to cover the 30 wards of 1.52 lakh voters.

A number of former and incumbent ministers and MPs joined the campaign for their respective party candidates.

State Minister for Land Kabir Hossain, State Minister for Establishment Aminul Huq, Azizur Rahman MP and other party leaders are participating in the campaigning for the ruling party candidate Mizanur Rahman Minu who has just resigned from the mayorship ahead of the polls. He got the symbol "Fish". LGRD Minister and BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder and Information Minister Barister Nazmul Huda recently visited Rajshahi to inaugurate two separate development projects which local politicians termed as part of the election campaign.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is likely to visit the city on January 23 and address a public meeting in support of Minu.

None of the prominent central leaders from the Awami League and the Jamaat-e-Islami so far visited the city in support of their candidates Abdul Matin Khan and Siddique Hussain respectively.

Matin of the Awami League won the symbol "Wheel" while Hussain of the Jamaat-e-Islami got the symbol "Watch".

Former vice-president Moudud Ahmed and former minister Shah Moazzem Hossain last month visited Rajshahi to campaign for the Jatiya party candidate Durul Huda who got the symbol "Umbrella". A number of former ministers and state ministers are staying here for campaigning in favour of Huda. JP central leaders, including acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, will shortly come here to round off the campaign.

The JSD (Inu) and Workers Party-backed candidate Siddique Rahman (Bicycle), BNP dissident independent candidate Enamul Huq (Bullock Cart) and JP (Nationalist) candidate Selim Sarder (Lock) are also continuing their campaigns with the help of their local supporters.

The candidates are promising massive developments and increase of civic amenities if they are given the mandate in the election.

The promises include establishment of water treatment plants for the city dwellers, a full-fledged TV centre, auto-traffic signal system, children's park and tourist resorts on the bank of the river Padma and resuming publication of the Dainik Barta. Facilities for health and education and social services would also be increased, the candidates promise.

### Charity auction in city

By Staff Correspondent

The Finance Minister is poor," Mrs Saifur Rahman was heard saying when successful bidder Sigma Huda walked away with a necklace worth Tk 6700 at an auction in the city yesterday.

Duree Saifur Rahman, wife of the Finance Minister, was attending a charity auction, with Sigma Huda as a special guest, yesterday afternoon at the Gulshan residence of the French Ambassador.

The finest array of classy French perfume and jewellery were put up for sale on the first day of the two-day auction to help the orphans of Nobel Laureate Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity.

The French Ambassador Jean-Michel Lacombe and his wife Myrtum Lacombe took the initiative to bring top ranking haut ton French products to town as a novel step to serve a noble purpose.

Hundreds flocked to bid for brands like Christian Dior, Cartier, Nina Ricci, Dupont, Saraya, Jean Patou, Poger Et Galet, L'orca, Fauchon and others. The shelf value of the products was estimated at around 90,000 US dollars.

"Well, I'm happy to make the donation," Mrs Huda, wife of the Information Minister said while giving her reactions to The Daily Star.

Asfa Hossain, who got another white necklace for Tk 4,300 with bids starting from Tk 1200, also expressed similar views.

A special cup was awarded to the highest bidder, Philippe C Ame. The French consultant working in a Swiss developing agency offered Tk 9,600 for a Dupont cigarette lighter.

The second highest bidder gave Tk 5,600 for a gold-colored ballpoint pen, again from Dupont.

At the end of the day's bidding, a sum of Tk 2.5 lakh was raised from the sale of 115 lots, according to sources.

The auction will resume today at 3:30 pm and continue up to 8 pm.

**CHT people's grand rally today**

A grand rally of long-marchers of three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban will be held at 10:00 am today in front of the National Press Club, according to a Chittagong Hill Tracts National Coordination and Peace Council press release here last night, reports BSS.

The tribals will hold a cultural function at 2:30 pm and will bring out a peace procession at 3:30 pm.

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at the Tongibari B T Degree College ground in Munshiganj yesterday. — PID photo

### Border talks Muhurirchar situation discussed

NEW DELHI, Jan 13: A two-day Indo-Bangladesh border talks between BDR and BSF at the DG-level concluded here yesterday with both sides agreeing to take steps to check trans-border crime and smuggling, reports BSS.

The Muhurirchar situation was discussed in the meeting. Bangladesh underscored the need for immediate ceasefire by security forces of the two countries in the Muhurirchar area and also suggested survey of the area at an early date to demarcate the border and maintenance of status quo, including cultivation in the disputed area, till the demarcation is completed.

Both sides also agreed to strengthen relations at ground level on the two sides of the borders.

Regarding the enclaves, both Bangladesh and India agreed to adhere to the understanding reached in 1974 in this respect and the border guidelines of 1975.

Director General of Bangladesh Rifles Major General Mohammed Anwar Hossain and Director General of Border Security Forces of India Prakash Singh led their respective teams.

The two sides also decided to check drug trafficking across their borders.

The Japanese Deputy Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata has assured continued Japanese co-operation in the development of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

This was conveyed to M Morshed Khan, special envoy of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia when he met Hata, who is also the Foreign Minister, in Tokyo Wednesday, according to a message received here yesterday.

Khan is now in Tokyo on a week-long visit at the invitation of the Japanese government.

Khan explained the possibilities of enhanced cooperation between the two governments. He also briefed Hata on the outstanding achievements of the government headed by Begum Khaleda Zia, particularly in the economic field.

Khan suggested that sick industries in Japan be relocated in Bangladesh so that those could become profitable. Private sector cooperation may be of great benefit to both the countries, he said.

Morshed Khan conveyed the greetings and good wishes of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to Hata. He also conveyed her thanks to the Japanese government for co-financing the Jamuna Bridge Project.

Earlier, Khan met Takeo Sakurai, Vice President of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and explained in detail the possibilities of investment in the private sector in Bangladesh. He also exchanged views with leading industrialists and business executives present at the meeting.

They expressed the hope that the drive for investment would get further impetus during the forthcoming visit to Japan by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

### BMA doctors

From Page 1 Col 7

On the other hand, the three-day strike called by the non-administrative officials and professionals including engineers and agriculturists, ended yesterday.

Ruhul Matin, a top leader of the agitating officials and professionals, told this correspondent that they would announce their next action programme on or after the 22nd of this month.

The coordination council of the officials and professionals, which is agitating with a 17-point charter of demands for administrative reforms, is scheduled to hold a conference of the organisation January 22.

## Help govt ensure welfare of commonman: Khaleda

TONGIBARI (Munshiganj), Jan 13: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today urged all to work together with the spirit of past united struggles and help the elected government ensure welfare of the commonman, reports UNB.

"We had fought together during the nine-month Liberation War and ousted the autocratic regime by struggling together for nine years. We can achieve our goals if we now work together," she told a huge public meeting at the BT Degree College ground here this afternoon.

Deputy Leader of Parliament Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, State Minister for LGED Abdul Hye, Begum Khwaja Ahsanullah, MP, and local BNP and its front organisation leaders also addressed the gathering.

Begum Zia said the government was carrying forward the programmes for overall development of the country, including improvement of the communication network.

"We have to ensure use of every inch of land to attain self-reliance."

Begum Zia stressed the need for women's development, saying women have to take up self-employment projects, such as nurseries and small and cottage industries in

the rural areas.

Refuting Opposition allegations that there had been no development under the present government, Begum Zia said more than 2000 mills and factories had been set up during the last three years.

"We have to give maximum stress on education," she said and listed a number of educational development programmes taken up by the government.

Saying that the people were, and are, in favour of the 'sheaf of paddy,' the BNP's election symbol, Begum Zia called upon all to strengthen her party for carrying forward the uplift programmes.

Responding to local demands including construction of roads, expansion of the power sector and nationalisation of educational institutions, she assured that all problems would be solved in phases.

The Prime Minister also assured the local people of constructing their long-cherished bridge over the river Dhaleshwari to connect the district with the capital.

Earlier, the Prime Minister visited the Barunnessa High School and Sukhabash Government Free Primary School at Teenshiri and enquired from the students about the progress of their studies.

The Commerce and Energy ministers were with her during the visit.



Graffiti on city walls regarding the DCC polls are to be erased forthwith following a decision at a meeting between the Chief Election Commissioner and representatives of the major political parties in the city yesterday. — Star photo

### Woman torches herself in city

A 25-year old woman allegedly set herself on fire in the city yesterday in an attempt to commit suicide, reports UNB.

Police said Fahmida Begum Bithi made the suicide attempt at the residence of her boyfriend at Tejgunipara.

Seriously burnt, Fahmida was fighting for her life at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors are on an indefinite strike. The emergency squad of BMA volunteers was looking after her.

Police said Bithi, who had been studying computer engineering in Russia, had an affair with one Asif Mahmud Alam alias Imon, who is also studying there.

Daughter of Advocate Habibullah, Fahmida went to Imon's residence at 85/A Tejgunipara in the morning and urged his mother to accept her as a daughter-in-law.

Being refused Bithi poured kerosene on her person and set herself on fire.

On information, Tejgaon police rushed to the spot and sent her to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

### Environment Act

From Page 1 Col 8

ministries, departments and autonomous bodies should henceforth be advised to use treated and seasoned wood for office furniture and other uses.

Taking note of the relative advantage compared to unseasoned and untreated wood, the meeting observed that the use of seasoned and treated wood would be more economic and would retard long-term deforestation.

## Economic policies must be consistent

By Staff Correspondent

Serious shortfall in the implementation of the overall industrial policy has been identified by economists as the major reason for the sluggishness in investment within the country.

The economists also viewed that consistency of government policies is more important than merely a good policy. High tax rate is not the major constraint, but uncertainty about the tax rate is a constraint, they observed while addressing a seminar on "Export-led Growth and Industrialisation" held yesterday at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

(Related story on page 6)

Speakers at the day-long seminar also observed that the government's supportive role to help entrepreneurs gain a competitive strength is needed if it really wants to attain an export-led growth.

The seminar, held in three sessions including two business sessions, was inaugurated by the State Minister for Planning Dr Moyeen Khan while it was addressed by noted economists Dr Debopriya Bhattacharya, Dr Akhtar Mahmood, Dr Mustafizur Rahman, Dr M M Huq, Dr Zaid Bakht, Dr R A Mahmood Dr D K Roy, Dr Ali Rashid and Dr Jim Love of the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.

Dr R A Mahmood and Dr D K Roy, in a keynote paper prepared jointly, stressed the need for tapping the increased market opportunities of the world and said appropriate government policies and quality of the private sector are the two major factors that can enable the

### Diarrhoeal deaths declining in Bangladesh

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh is the second largest country affected by diarrhoeal diseases in South Asia.

World Health Organisation (WHO) officials in the country at a press conference in the city yesterday said 20 per cent of the diarrhoeal diseases break out in Bangladesh. India tops the list with 65 per cent of the diarrhoeal disease patients.

"But as awareness about the diseases has become almost universal in Bangladesh, deaths from such diseases are showing a declining trend," WHO representative in Bangladesh Dr A N A Abeyesundere said.

From 1972 to 1980s, the mortality rate of children under five per thousand was 200. After 1990, the rate decreased to 155 due to better management of the National Diarrhoeal Diseases Control Programme of the country, according to Dr Abeyesundere.

Twenty-five per cent of the children out of 155 die from diarrhoeal diseases," he added.

The National Programme Officer of WHO, Bangladesh, Brig Q M S Hafiz, who was present on the occasion, disclosed that between June 1 and November 17 last year, 2 lakh 4019 persons were affected by diarrhoeal diseases in the country. One thousand thirty-three of them died.

"According to WHO, the number of deaths is sufficiently low," he added.

According to statistics provided by the Health Directorate, Sirajganj tops the list of the worst diarrhoea affected areas followed by Bogra, Comilla, Tangail and Dhaka.

"But diarrhoea is all over the country — no place is actually better than any other. For instance, you will get more diarrhoea patients in the southern region only during the months of January to March, then it gradually spreads everywhere," he informed.

### Wall-writings

From Page 1 Col 7

would study the matter more carefully.

It was also disclosed in the meeting that 737 polling centres would be set up in the capital for the 90 city wards.

During the meeting the ruling party delegates said the government was committed to holding the city polls in a free and impartial manner. The Opposition representatives hoped the government would honour its commitment.

Works Minister Barister Rafiqul Islam Mia, Food Minister Mir Shauqat Ali of the ruling BNP, Tofael Ahmed, MP, Rahmat Ali, MP and Mozaffar Hossain Paltu of the Awami League, Ismail Hossain Bengal and Kazi Piroz, Rashid of the Jatiya Party, Sheikh Ansar Ali of the Jamaat-e-Islami and Saiful Haq and Kamrul Ahsan of the Workers' Party attended the meeting.

### CCI & E

From Page 1 Col 8

The CCI&E has divisional offices at Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, and Barisal. It also maintains district offices at Comilla, Sylhet, Myrinsingh, Bogra, Pabna, Rangpur and Dinajpur. The total manpower under the offices now stands at 230.

According to informed sources, the authorities are now considering several suggestions about revamping the CCI&E, including closing down of all branch offices and maintaining only a small office with a cell in Dhaka for certain functions such as monitoring of the trade. Another opinion suggests maintaining only the divisional offices, along with the headquarters in the capital.

However, some observers believe the existence of the CCI&E office is essential for monitoring the trade and maintaining discipline.

### Dhaka hosts

From Page 1 Col 6

ICDDR, B and NIDED, Calcutta, will also take part. The WHO and the UNICEF will be represented by staff members from their headquarters, Regional Office and country offices.

Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf will inaugurate the meeting at Hotel Sheraton at 8:30 am on Sunday. The opening session will be chaired by Prof Md Nurun Nabi, Director General of the Health Services of Bangladesh.

As diarrhoeal diseases spread geographically, effective control of such diseases could be ensured only through an inter-country approach, Dr Abeyesundere said.

The press conference was also attended by WHO officials Dr K B Singh, Dr R L De Silva, R S Bhattacharya, Dr H Troedsson and Brig Q M S Hafiz and Project Director, Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases Programme Project, Dhaka, Dr Ashraf Hossain Sarkar.

## The Midnight File

### 5 killed in Afghan fighting

ISLAMABAD, Jan 13: Five people died after 16 rockets hit parts of Kabul today, state-run Radio Kabul said. The broadcast, monitored here, said the rockets were fired by Hezb-i-Islami forces of Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The rebel forces had also made aerial bombing raids on the Afghan capital Kabul, killing an unspecified number of people, it said, reports AFP.

### Five Indian soldiers injured in Somalia

MOGADISHU, Jan 13: Five Indian soldiers were wounded in a night ambush on a UN military patrol by unidentified attackers in southern Somalia early today, a UN spokesman said. They were hurt when a command-detonated device exploded under their truck and it overturned," UN spokesman Major Tim McDavitt said. Their injuries were from the truck rolling over, not from shrapnel," reports AFP.

## BNP trying to win polls at any cost: Hasina

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged the ruling BNP was trying to win the city corporation election at any cost and urged all to guard the polling stations to foil any attempt to snatch the people's voting right, reports UNB.

She made the call during a door-to-door campaign in the Ramna thana area seeking vote for her party's mayor candidate Mohammad Hanif.

She walked down the Eskaton, Eskaton Garden, Bailey Road, Siddeshwari, Maghbazar, Nayatola, Meererbagh and Bara Maghbazar areas, talking to the people and urging voters to vote for her mayor and commissioner nominees.

As she covered different lanes and by-lanes of those areas on foot along with hundreds of workers and supporters, enthusiastic people came out of their houses and shops and greeted her with claps and slogans.

### Parents seek justice for the murder of their daughter

By Staff Correspondent

A retired judge Harun-or-Rashid Khan yesterday accused his son-in-law of murdering his daughter, Nilufar Rashid Nilu, for dowry. Nilu was murdered at her husband's house in the city more than a year ago.

He alleged that his son-in-law, Kazi Mahbubuddin Ahmed,



Nilufar Rashid

had often put pressure on Nilu for a plot at Gulshan which was owned by the retired judge.

"I tried to make Mahbub happy by giving him a plot at Bashabo, but Mahbub was not satisfied," said Nilu's father.

Nilu's parents were briefing newspaper reporters at a city hotel yesterday evening. Nilu's elder brother, Dr. M. Rashid Khan, was also present.

"I made petitions to the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the Inspector General of Police (IGP) in this regard.... But the investigating police officers are side-stepping my allegations," Harun-or-Rashid said.

Thirty-five-year-old Nilu, wife of Mahbub — a businessman — was brutally murdered at her husband's Bashabo residence on December 2, 1992.

But the house servant Bellal, 16, was arrested on the day on a charge of murder and sent to the Dhaka Central Jail after he had made a confessional statement under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr. P. C.).

The retired judge said, Mahbub had influenced Bellal to make the confessional statement. "There can be no reason for Bellal to kill Nilu," he added.

The doctors who made the autopsy said in their report that Nilu was strangled to death and it was a case of homicide.

However, Nilu's death is still shrouded in mystery. According to her husband, he found his wife's body lying in dining space with severe bruises when he entered the house. But nothing was missing from the house, not even the gold ornaments which Nilu was wearing.

According to the police investigating officers, they were still trying to unearth the motive behind the murder.

A senior police officer, who visited the spot on the day, told The Daily Star that it was a pre-planned murder.

An officer of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) who is now in charge of the investigation said, they were waiting for a report of the bite marks which were reportedly found on Nilu's body.

### Chinese CP team in city

An eight-member high level delegation of the Communist Party of China, headed by Wen Jiabao, an alternate member of Politburo of the central committee and secretary of the secretariat of the Communist Party arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a four-day visit.

### Biswa Ijtema

From Page 1 Col 5

erected on the eastern bank of the river Turag to accommodate the devotees. All arrangements of the pandal and other facilities like water, gas, electricity, and sanitations have been completed.

A tin-shed pandal was setup in the north-west part of the venue which is exclusively reserved for the foreign participants. The area is again divided into three regions — Arabs, non-Arabs and the Sub-Continent.

Another pandal was setup to accommodate the important personalities from within the country. Two podiums were erected for the sermons and for conducting the Akheri Munajat.

Hundreds of loudspeakers have been installed at the venue for the convenience of the devotees. Two parking places have been opened on both the sides of the venue for vehicles.

Hazrat Maulana Enamul Hasan, Amir of the World Taki Jamaat, will conduct the Akheri Munajat (concluding prayers) of the Ijtema on Monday afternoon.

### Coal stock

From Page 1 Col 4

However, this proposal was not accepted by the higher authorities, the source added.

When sought last night for ascertaining the latest situation about the coal disposal plan, the Coal Controller was not available for comments.

### Stagnation

From Page 1 Col 4

The key factors that are holding the economy in a stranglehold have been hinted at in the Bangladesh Bank Governor's exchanges with the press. In financial year 1992-93 the government's collection of revenue increased by 18 per cent while its expenditure increased by around 8 per cent. ADP implementation during same period was unsatisfactory. Thus, the government has sucked out purchasing power from the economy. This was to be injected back in higher amount after adding foreign aid as investment through the Annual Development Programme, which has not happened. Plus, there was the expectation of additional private investment, which is yet unfulfilled.

Therefore, on a net basis, there has been a leakage of purchasing capacity from the monetised part of the economy which, in the absence of channels to return as investment or consumption expenditure, are accumulating in Bangladesh Bank as foreign exchange reserve.