

Khaleda seeks votes for BNP nominees

By Staff Correspondent
Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called on city dwellers to vote for the BNP nominees in the Dhaka City Corporation elections in order to push forward her party's politics of production.

Begum Zia made the call while addressing a campaign rally for the BNP-backed commissioner candidate Jasimuddin at the Rayerbazar Akhramath in the city.

The BNP chairperson reached the spot while campaigning from door to door at the Jhikataola, Hazaribagh, Rayerbazar, Azampur and Katsora areas from 7 pm to 10 pm.

The Prime Minister was greeted by the people of all walks of life while touring the areas to seek votes for Mirza Abbas and the commissioner candidates backed by her party.

She said Abbas was honest and sincere, the two top qualities needed by a public representative for serving the people.

"He is a man inspired with national zeal," the Prime Minister said while urging her audience to vote for Abbas.

Begum Zia further said, "We are proud that direct elections to the country's city corporations are being held for the first time under the BNP government."

Voting is the fundamental right of an adult citizen, and all eligible citizens would be able to exercise this right in the coming elections freely and fairly, she said.

The BNP continues to enjoy public support because the party has pursued a politics of production and development, Begum Zia said. She hoped the people would again give their verdict in the BNP's favour in the coming city elections with a view to strengthening the party.

Jattiyatbadi Chhatra Dal chief Fazul Haq Milon and city leader Abul Khayer Bhuiyan and Jasimuddin also addressed the campaign rally.

Hasina tours city areas on Hanif's behalf

By Staff Correspondent
Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday solicited votes for the party's mayoral nominee in the capital, Mohammad Hanif, saying the candidate was well-informed about the city's problems.

"Hanif is a valiant freedom-fighter of the city and he will play an effective role in solving the long-standing problems facing the city dwellers", the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament told a spontaneous gathering at the Jatrabari crossing in the city while campaigning from door to door in different areas of Demra and Lalbagh thanas.

Sheikh Hasina spent the whole day yesterday canvassing for Hanif and other commissioner candidates from 9 am to 8 pm with a two-hour break from 1 pm.

She walked through the lanes and by-lanes of different areas of Lalbagh thana including Hosni Dalan Road, Azampur, Plassey, BDR Gate No One, Hazaribagh, Nawabganj and Killarmor during 9 am to 1 pm and Muggdara, Sayedabad and Jatrabari of Demra thana and parts of Sabujbagh thana during her five-hour campaign ending at 8 last night.

Hasina, accompanied by central party leaders, addressed at least 20 wayside gatherings during her tour.

Addressing the gatherings, the Opposition leader reiterated there would be no fresh tax for the next five years if Hanif was elected the Mayor. She also pledged that her party nominee would involve the commonmen to solve problems like the mosquito menace, the dilapidated roads, bazars, playgrounds, parks, traffic jams, etc.

Warning against any attempt to rig the January 30 city corporation polls, Hasina told her audience, "We restored the people's right of franchise, and you will have to protect that right by casting your votes in a free and fair manner."

Link between health and environment stressed

By Staff Correspondent
Some 350 health and environmental experts and representatives from other related fields began a meeting on "Environmental Health and Policy Perspective" in the city yesterday to formulate an action programme for the future.

Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf inaugurated the third Annual Scientific Conference (ASCON-III) of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) at the centre's Sasakawa auditorium.

Experts from 17 countries, including the USA and the UK, are taking part.

They will discuss the policy-making processes relating to health, population, social and environmental issues which are necessary for sustainable development. The conference will also redefine the ICDDR,B's role in the areas of environmental research to help bridge the gap between research and policy.

Chaired by ICDDR,B Director Demissie Habte, the opening session was addressed by Dr Peter Arnold, head of the Swiss Development Corporation, Christopher R. Willoughby, Dhaka Mission Chief of the World Bank and Haroon-ur-Rashid, Planning Secretary.

Twenty scientific papers were presented on the opening day. National and international experts and representatives from ministries, NGOs, autonomous bodies, donor agencies and the media took part in the discussions.

The delegates will finalise DCC polls
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In a country of free economy, the decision is a crucial blow to entrepreneurship, they believe.

The Finance Minister should do something urgently, remarked a pensive banner writer of the Fakirpool area of Dhaka.

Most of the city residents are afraid of the knockings on their doors these days. Most feel that the knock on the door at odd hours of the day is that of a beggar soliciting alms.

But these days the knock inevitably are from some ward commissioner candidate who are out to canvass support.

But beggar or not, many city residents are reluctant to open their doors. The campaigner is often taken for a beggar out to beg votes. At least that is the impression given to many a canvasser from the locality.

The housewife more often than not refuses to open the door, saying that the master of the house is out.

But the inevitable knock returns at some other time of the day. Even if the male members are in, they sometimes convey through others that, he who really counts, is out.

But the inevitable knock returns at some other time of the day. Even if the male members are in, they sometimes convey through others that, he who really counts, is out.



Delegates participating in the 18th Pacific Armies Management Seminar seen with Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan on the opening day yesterday at a local hotel in Dhaka. — ISPR photo

Pacific armies' management seminar begins in city

By Staff Correspondent
Some 150 senior military commanders from 35 countries gathered at a seminar in the capital yesterday to discuss ways and means for successful training and support for the United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

During the ten-day meet of the 18th Pacific Armies Management Seminar (PAMS XVIII) at Sonargaon Hotel, the military officials from the Asia and Pacific Region would also discuss international and national effects of preparing and supporting the UN-authorized peace missions.

PAMS is a non-political, multinational military forum that aims at enhancing mutually beneficial army-to-army associations, enhancing the long-term objectives of promoting peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific and Indian regions through understanding, friendship and communication.

General Frederick M. Franks Jr. of the US Army Training and Doctrine Command and Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Mueleh Rahman Osmany gave the key-note addresses at the seminar.

Lieutenant General John Sanderson of the Australian Army and Secretary of the Bangladesh Defence Ministry Md. Hasinur Rahman also spoke on the first day of the seminar.

Welcoming the participants at the seminar, Chief of Staff of Bangladesh Army, Lieutenant General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan said peacekeeping has ushered a new dimension in peace-making and peace-keeping in today's global and regional scenario.

The complexities of the peacekeeping operations and its widening dimensions warrant a pragmatic and effective approach with multinational forces under a common UN mandate, he pointed out.

General Khan suggested that the United Nations should evolve a decentralised training system to work out the possible role and tasks of the peacekeepers for the future conflicts.

Giving a brief account of the growing involvement of the Bangladesh Armed Forces in the UN peacekeeping missions in different countries, he informed that more than 4000 personnel were presently deployed while nearly 3000 observers and Headquarters Staff were also working in 10 UN-sponsored missions.

Earlier, the US Army Pacific Commanding General Lieutenant General Robert L. Ord III and the Chief of General Staff, Bangladesh Army Major General Muhammad Abdus Salam made their opening remarks at the outset of the seminar.

The day's programme also included introduction to the participating countries, administrative messages, introduction to Bangladesh, introduction to the US Army Pacific Command, overview and syndicate familiarization.

Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, Chief of the Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Mohaiminul Islam, diplomats, senior military officials including Principal Staff Officers attended the opening session of the seminar.

The seminar participants include military and security officers from Australia, Brunei, Canada, the Comoros Islands, Fiji, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, China, the Philippines, Russia, the Seychelles, Singapore, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Tuvalu, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Vanuatu, Western Samoa, the United States and hosts Bangladesh.

Peacekeeping came into existence in October 1945 under a charter of the League of Nations and is becoming an increasingly common vehicle for dealing with regional conflicts.

Several operations were undertaken in the last five years to end bloodshed in crisis situations, monitor ceasefires and promote democratic elections.

In 1993, 13 peacekeeping operations cost the United Nations almost five billion US dollars and involved over 70,000 soldiers. Operations in Cyprus, Macedonia, Bosnia, El Salvador, Angola, Cambodia, Mozambique, Somalia, Iraq, Kuwait, India, Pakistan, to name some, required forces wearing the UN blue beret.

The Bangladesh Army today has a large representation in the UN Peace Operations with more than 4,000 personnel deployed in Somalia, Kuwait, Rwanda and Mozambique and about 300 observers in 10 UN peace missions.

French Lt. Gen. Philippe Morrison and Savar Area Commander of Bangladesh Army Maj. Gen. Muhammad Abdul Matin, Bir Protik, are also expected to address the seminar.

Highlights of the agenda of the ten-day seminar include: Discussion on the management of training and support operations for the multinational peacekeeping forces.

Defining the training and support requirements of a peacekeeping force and how the military prepares for and conduct training and peacekeeping support operations.

Discussion on the potential force structure, budgetary and political ramifications of undertaking training and peacekeeping support operations.

Bangladesh Army and the United States Army Pacific Command (USARPAC) has jointly hosted the moot of the region's military leaders, which is, for the first time, being participated by the People's Liberation Army of China.

Sheikh Hasina has censured the incident at the Ittefaq Bhaban staged by terrorists Thursday night leaving one person killed and wounding another, reports UNB.

Abdul Mannan Talukder, an employee of The Daily Ittefaq, succumbed to his bullet wounds while another employee was injured by a speeding jeep used by the armed attackers late Thursday night.

In a statement yesterday, the Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament called the incident at the Daily Ittefaq "very painful and unfortunate". The Ittefaq flourished over the years by dint of labour and intellect of journalists and employees, she said.

Hasina said it is the responsibility of the management of the paper and also the government to provide security to the working journalists and employees in a newspaper office. "But the BNP government has not only failed to ensure security to the commonman but also to newsmen," she added.

Clinton-Assad meet today

GENEVA, Jan 15: Syrian President Hafez al-Assad arrived Saturday in tightly guarded Geneva for a meeting with President Clinton aimed at reviving the Mideast peace process, reports AP.

Clinton was due to land later in the day for their Sunday meeting.

11 get life terms for killing one in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Jan 15: The First Additional and Sessions Judge A F M Mostafa has given life transportation under Section 302 of the BPC today to eleven accused persons convicted of killing one Nazrul alias Naoraz at Durgapur village under Bakerganj thana of the district.

The convicted persons were also fined Tk 5000 each and in default are to suffer RI for another 6 months.

The convicted persons are Habibur Rahman Khan alias Habib Peshkar, Feroj Alam Khan, Abdur Razzak, Habib Chaprashi, Shahaj Alam Khan alias Chandu Khan, Feroj Alam Chaprashi, Kalam Akon, Nazrul Khan, Sahed Ali Khan, Habib Mirzha and Saha Alam.

The prosecution case, in brief, is that on June 20, 1991 the accused persons along with some others stormed the house of Nazrul in broad day light and at one stage killed him with lethal weapons. They had previous enmity over a piece of land.

Twenty-two witnesses were examined.

In his judgement, the learned Judge said that the convicted persons were directly involved in the murder of Nazrul.

The medicare situation appeared to be alarming as doctors refrained from attending even the critical patients, relatives of the patients at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Salimullah Medical College Hospital alleged. But a source in the Bangladesh Medical Association, which called the indefinite strike to press home their 21-point demands, said that special squads were attending the emergency patients.

Eight new deaths have been reported from the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. While the admission of new patients are 58, nearly 30 old patients have left the hospital voluntarily mainly due to negligence on the part of striking doctors, hospital sources said. The number of daily admission in this hospital is over 100.

The cabinet also decided to form a cabinet committee to evaluate the progress of the activities of different ministries and divisions.

Ministers, State Ministers in-charge of different ministries and divisions attended the meeting.

Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Secretaries and Additional Secretaries-in-charge of different Ministries and Divisions were present.

UN bodies' meet
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The Dhaka meet bears special significance since this would be the first time these UN bodies would be meeting outside New York or Rome, where all their previous policy conferences took place.

Eimi Watanabe, resident chief of the UNDP and resident coordinator of the UN system in Bangladesh, at a meeting with the media earlier, had described the holding of the UN bodies' conference in Dhaka as 'significant' and a recognition of Bangladesh's role in environment and development issues.

The UN agency chiefs, during their stay in Bangladesh, are expected to visit some projects and also call on the Prime Minister, ministers and officials.

Chakmas
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Meanwhile, official sources say, several thousand Chakma refugees have returned home on various occasions, evading the eyes of their adamant leaders and the Indian Border Security Force. According to some of the returnees, they came back to their homesteads only to escape the sufferings of a harsh camp life in Tripura state.

Menon condemns
Rashed Khan Menon, General Secretary of the Bangladesh Workers' Party, has expressed grave concern at the killing of an employee of The Daily Ittefaq.

In a statement yesterday he said the tension prevailing in the newspaper office was known to all concerned including the government, and the tragic incident could easily have been avoided if timely measures were taken.

He demanded punishment of the killers.

The Midnight File

Clinton arrives in Geneva

GENEVA, Jan 15: US President Bill Clinton arrived in Geneva today for talks on Sunday with Syria's President Hafez Al-Assad aimed at putting new life into the Middle East peace process. Clinton, accompanied by his wife Hillary, flew from the Belarus capital in Minsk where he made a stopover after his summit meeting in Moscow with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, reports Reuter.

Bosnian PM threatens to boycott Geneva talks

SARAJEVO, Jan 15: Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic has threatened to boycott peace talks in Geneva next week unless the shelling of besieged Sarajevo stops, Sarajevo Radio said on Friday. "Speaking about the future of the Geneva talks, Silajdzic stressed that if the aggressor continues to destroy Sarajevo and other towns and to kill civilians during the Geneva talks, the talks will not be held," reports Reuter.

Pakistan offers to mediate in Afghan conflict

ISLAMABAD, Jan 15: Pakistan today offered to host a regional peace conference to help end a 15-day-old factional fight for power in the Afghan capital Kabul, reports Reuter.

Foreign Minister Aseef Ahmad Ali told a news conference he made the offer to a special envoy from Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani who met him in Islamabad today at the head of a delegation.

The Afghan group, led by envoy Ahmed Shah Ahmadzai, earlier also met Pakistani President Farooq Ahmed Leghari, who told them, Islamabad wanted an end to the latest fighting that has killed or wounded thousands of people and forced thousands to seek refuge in Pakistan.

All said Islamabad would review the decision.

AP ads from Kabul: The president's army and rival Islamic factions exchanged air strikes and rocket fire Saturday in one of the most intense battles since fighting erupted January 1 in the capital.

Saturday's nonstop warfare appeared centered near the Kabul River in the southeast part of the city, the most hotly contested area.

President Burhanuddin Rabbani's jet fighters carried out several air strikes, but were countered with air raids by pilots loyal to warlord Rashid Dostum, a former Communist army general.

Mostafiz feted
Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman was accorded a reception here yesterday by the Brothers Union Club for receiving the highest award in Republic of Korea "Gwangwha Medal" for diplomatic excellence, reports BSS.

The Foreign Minister, who is the chairman of the governing body of the Brothers Union was recently conferred with the award in Seoul by the ROK President.

The occasion was also addressed by Agriculture and Irrigation Minister M Majidul Huq, who is also the chief patron of the club. State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain Khoka, president and secretary respectively of the club Amanullah Mian and Shanzuzaman Duda.

The ambassador of ROK Sung-Oh Shin also spoke.

Also present on the occasion were Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Jute Minister Hannan Shah and Labour Minister Mannan Bhuiyan.

C&F employees
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Chittagong Port Amanul Islam Chowdhury, Collector of Chittagong Sea Customs Manzur Mannan and other officials of the Labour Directorate and government bodies.

The association of C&F agents' employees had called an indefinite strike Wednesday in support of their 8-point demands.

The demands include re-fixation of wage structure, issuance of appointment letters, transportation, residential accommodation and group insurance facilities.

The employees were assured of a sympathetic consideration of their various demands.

Passport Lost

Passport No: G 11219
Name: Md Abdus Samad
Father's name: Md. Shamsul Haque Miah
Passport issued from Dhaka on 30th January '89.

Cautioned to all concerned/immigration.

The passport of above named person was lost in Khulna today 15-1-94. If anybody found please contact Khulna Kotwali Thana or undermentioned address:

Md Aziz Haque
Noornagar WAPDA Colony
Boyra, Khulna. Phone: 62408 D-37

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A more wintry week forecast

By Staff Correspondent
Winter may finally be descending over the country as the mercury is expected to drop by one to two degrees Celsius within the next two days and fall further during the week.

According to the Met Office, the sky is expected to remain cloudy over a large part of the country, including the capital, throughout the day today and may be accompanied by light drizzle.

A seasonal low persisted over the south Bay yesterday and its effects extended upto the central Bay region. The day's weather was also influenced by a westerly low over the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and a complex low over Madhya Pradesh and its adjoining areas.

The sky is expected to remain cloudy, and light rainfall may occur over the Rajshahi Division and the regions of Kushtia, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Tangail, Comilla and Sylhet. It is forecast to remain partly cloudy but dry over the rest of the country.

Night temperature is expected to fall by one to two degrees Celsius all over the country during the next 36 hours.

The weather is expected to improve but the temperature is likely to fall further during the next few days.

Meanwhile, UNB adds: At least two people succumbed to a shivering cold yesterday in Lalmonirhat district, which is in the proximity of the Himalayas across the border.

The dead were identified by villagers as Momena Bewa, 75, of Dalgram in Kaliganj thana

40 tonnes hashish seized in Pakistan

PASNI, Pakistan, Jan 15: Elite Pakistani anti-narcotics troops seized 40 tonnes of hashish being carried in a caravan of 400 camels escorted by 60 armed men, army officers said today, reports Reuter.

The US-funded Anti-Narcotics Task Force unit fought a two-hour gun battle on Friday after being airlifted to the smugglers' camp in rugged mountains 400 km (250 miles) west of Karachi. The smugglers fled, leaving the hashish behind.

Army officials today showed reporters slabs of hashish from one of Pakistan's biggest drugs hauls in recent years and said the caravan had been tracked after it left neighbouring Afghanistan.