

## AL leaders campaign for candidates

By Staff Correspondent

Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged upon the city dwellers to cast their votes in the forthcoming DCC polls in favour of her party candidates to protest against widespread terrorism and corruption, allegedly sponsored by the government.

Hasina, chief of the Awami League (AL), also observed that voters of the Dhaka city should reject the mayoral candidate of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) for his failure to protect the city people from the menace caused by mosquitoes.

The AL chief was addressing a public rally of several hundred people at Hazaribagh crossing of the city last night.

Visibly tired after much travelling across the country, Hasina addressed the Hazaribagh gathering for only three minutes.

She, however, addressed two more rallies in the city — one at Mohammadpur and the other at Azampur in Uttara — in the afternoon.

While addressing these meetings, the AL chief called upon the people to remain alert against any fake voting or rigging of the polls. Party leaders Zillur Rahman and Abdul Mannan also addressed the rallies.

Tofael Ahmed, Amir Hossain Amu and Abdul Jalil addressed the Hazaribagh gathering.

Tofael, arguing the favour of the AL mayoral candidate, said Hanif was polite while his ruling party counterpart was an arrogant person.

Tofael, referring to the recent ten-day strike of the doctors and a three-day strike by the non-administrative government officials, alleged that the government was indifferent towards the problems of both the general people and the professionals.

The AL leader also accused the government of corrupt practices, particularly nepotism.

Amir Hossain Amu, told the rally that although the BNP exploited the religious sentiments of the people during the last parliamentary polls yet the party was not actually committed to the cause. Referring to an AL-sponsored bill seeking a ban on wine and gambling in the country which was rejected in Parliament in the face of opposition from the Treasury Bench, Amu claimed that the AL was committed to the Islamic faith.

The AL chief and many other central leaders of the party have performed the Hajj, Amu asserted in a bid to substantiate his claim.

All the leaders addressing the rally appealed to the people to vote for the fish, symbol of the party's mayoral candidate Hanif. They also sought the people's support for their commissioner candidates.

### Khulna

Meanwhile UNB adds from Khulna, Sheikh Hasina said yesterday people will reject the ruling BNP in the city corporation elections because they (BNP) plunged the country into terrorism, anarchy and corruption.

"The BNP government has failed miserably in running the administration and also polluted the administration with partisan activities," she said.

The Awami League chief was addressing several campaign meetings in favour of the party's mayoral candidate Mahbubul Alam Hiron at Mirzapur, New Market and Kalishpur in Khulna in the morning.

Hasina said no new taxes

## Major parties

From Page 1 Col 3 as part of their mass-contact programme to woo the voters.

A large number of markets had been constructed in the major cities of the country during the Ershad regime and the JP candidates are using the occasion to seek the support and sympathy of the beneficiary shop owners.

The JP, while accusing the present government of abandoning the development programmes it had taken up during the last decade, is promising that these uplift projects would be implemented if the JP won the city corporation polls.

The BNP, while trying to solicit votes, is talking of the long list of development programmes which the mayors, appointed by the party about two and a half years ago, had undertaken arguing that the BNP candidates should be elected to enable them to complete their unfinished task. The BNP is also making fresh pledges to further develop the four major cities.

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Industries Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan being shown an American product by the company representative on the opening day of the third annual US-Bangladesh Trade Show at the Hotel Sheraton yesterday.

— Star photo

### DCC polls diary



By Staff Correspondent

The coming polls have proved a bonanza for the band players. Almost all the 675 commissioner candidates are using the musical men to make deafening noise in a bid to attract the ears of the voters.

The mercenary band members, well versed in the hit tunes of Hindi and Bangla films, with their trumpets and horns have reigned the city roads, adding a musical touch to the city polls.

The slow moving but hard sounding musicians often cause traffic jams, not at all to the liking of the passersby. But one band player was heard saying, "I wish there were elections every month!"

He sure was thinking of the extra cash!

★ ★ ★

Like the band players, verse and slogan writers are also in great demand. Many of the ward commissioner candidates are hiring the slogan writers to make their electoral slogans more catchy and attractive.

And for the verse writers, using — rather parodying — popular television ads or drama dialogues, has become the easiest resort. Some of them were even using tips from the satellite TV programme. Wow! *Kya Scene Hai* (What a scene)!!

★ ★ ★

Thirsty? Need a cup of tea? Here is a way out. Rush to a nearby makeshift campaign stall. Pretend you are looking for your name in the voter's list, wait for a minute or so ... zappy ... you will get your tea or Coke.

★ ★ ★

Supporters of the aspiring candidates, however, are not always so cordial. Many of the ward commissioner candidates were reported to have dropped out of the race allegedly due to the pressure from their rivals. In some cases, however, the sound of the coin had to ring to avoid "wasting of votes by a minor candidate"!

## Euro Union reaffirms support for Owen

ATHENS, Greece, Jan 22: Despite calls for his replacement, the European Union has reaffirmed its support for Lord David Owen as its chief mediator.

### See editorial

tor in efforts to end the war in former Yugoslavia, reports AP.

In a statement issued late Friday evening, the 12-nation EU said it hoped Owen and UN negotiator Thorvald Stoltenberg would "continue their remarkable abilities" to the peace talks.

On Thursday, deputies in the European Parliament voted 160 to 90 to urge member governments to dismiss Owen.

Deputies in the EU's 518-member assembly criticised the "mandate and the strategy of EU and UN mediators, who have arrived at no result and who persist in wanting to cut

### Ershad's trial deferred

The hearing of the case against former president Hussain Muhammad Ershad and two others on a corruption charge was deferred yesterday until January 25, reports BSS.

Under state law, Mrs Bobbitt must undergo 45 days of psychiatric observation. Mrs Bobbitt had been told about

Lorena Bobbitt found innocent

MANASSAS, Jan 22: Lorena Bobbitt was found innocent by reason of temporary insanity.

Friday by a jury swayed by her tearful testimony that she cut off her husband's penis because of years of abuse, reports AP.

Mrs Bobbitt, who was ordered by law to a state mental institution for observation, had no visible reaction. Her supporters shrieked. John Bobbitt wasn't in the courtroom and had no immediate comment.

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According to official sources, the higher authorities of both the ministries have been in touch to solve the dispute, but to no effect until now.

The sources confirmed that the whole issue will be referred to the Prime Minister's office soon by the Ministry of Shipping for a set-

lement.

The vessels were built in Bangladesh between 1983 and 1985 under grants provided by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Swiss government. The vessels, used for carrying food-grain, were operated and maintained by the BIWTC under an agreement with the Food Directorate. But the agreement was not renewed later and the vessels remained unused.

Other sources said private buyers had become interested in the vessels mainly because these could very profitably be used to carry the huge quantities of boulders for the Jamuna Bridge Project.

This is also the reason why the BIWTC is so keen on keeping the vessels in its own fleet.

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## Khaleda

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uled meetings on the day but enthusiastic supporters blocked her way and requested her to address them.

The BNP chairperson, wearing a dark sky-blue chiffon with a matching scarf, acceded to the request of the supporters by speaking with a hand-mike from the open-roof jeep.

There was usual security for the Prime Minister but other things like the TV coverage were discarded as the tour was in connection with a party programme.

At the time of the sun set, the BNP chairperson made a stopover at the Baridhara residence of Kamrul Islam MP to offer Magreb prayers.

Security forces used a search light to watch the roadside highrise buildings when the PM's caravan squeezed through the residential areas.

The charismatic leader waved her hand all through her way greeting the public in a jovial mood.

A number of party colleagues

and cabinet ministers accom-

panied her. The central leaders included Foreign Minister A S M Mustafizur Rahman, Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah, Commerce Minister Shamsul Islam, Deputy Leader in Parliament Prot Badruddoza Chowdhury, Food Minister Mir Shawkat Ali, State Minister for Planning Abdul Moyeen Khan, State Minister for Women Affairs Sarwari Rahman, Salauddin Ahmed MP and mayoral candidate Mirza Abbas.

Begum Zia said at her first meeting at the Mohakhali Para-Medical Maidan that the people of the area first elected her in the February 1991 election and later Kamrul Islam in a by-election when she re-

signed.

She hoped the people would again use their prudence and vote for Mirza Abbas during the up-coming mayoral election.

She said Mirza Abbas had already proved his honesty and efficiency in running the Dhaka city corporation during his more than two and a half years in mayor office.

At a rally at Banani Bazaar, the BNP chairperson said the BNP government switched over to the parliamentary system and also amended the law for direct election to the four city corporations.

The BNP could have run the corporations by its nominees but as the party is committed to democracy it amended the laws providing for direct election," she said amid cheers.

She also said that if the BNP supported candidates for commissioner posts were elected they would strengthen the hands of Abbas and facilitate the development of their areas.

At her rally at Badda, Begum Zia said the BNP government had already implemented a number of pledges made during the 1991 parliamentary polls.

The development of the areas would continue if Mirza Abbas is elected mayor," she added.

At the meeting at Khilgaon Chourasta, Begum Zia said the people of Khilgaon and Sabujbag loved Abbas and elected him MP in 1991. Mirza Abbas also loves the people of the areas and so he did not go to live in the posh Mayar House in Gulshan, she added.

"He wants to serve the people," she said adding "the politics of BNP aims at serving the people, not to be in power only."

"Give him a chance to fulfil his unfinished tasks," Begum Zia urged the voters.

She said the people of the capital did not make any mistake during the election in 1991 when they elected all the eight BNP candidates from Dhaka.

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## The Midnight File

### Arafat to visit S Arabia

JERUSALEM, Jan 22: In a step toward reconciliation, PLO chief Yasser Arafat will visit Saudi Arabia this week for the first time since the 1991 Gulf War. An Arafat aide said Saturday, Arafat had been ostracized by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries because of his support for Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein during the war. Arafat's visit is a very important step in the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian leadership and we are looking forward to seeing this relationship improve," Tibi told The Associated Press.

### Kurds kill 20 in Turkey