

Alija rejects Russian call for UNSC meet

JAKARTA, Jan 27: Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic rejected today a Russian call for a ministerial meeting of the UN Security Council's permanent members to try to get compliance to a territorial division in Bosnia-Herzegovina, reports AFP.

"We will not accept any imposed solution. If it means imposing a solution which was proposed to us during this round of talks, I have to say, we are not going to accept it," Izetbegovic told a press conference towards the end of his one-day visit here.

He was referring to the division of his country between Bosnians, Serbs and Croats according to the results of recent talks in Geneva.

Russia's special envoy to former Yugoslavia, Vitaly Churkin, Tuesday proposed that foreign ministers of the permanent member countries of the UN Security Council (UNSC) meet to get all sides to comply to the division.

"We did not accept a division of Bosnia-Herzegovina but we were forced to accept it... If Churkin has in mind imposing such a solution, I am afraid I won't be able to impose it," Izetbegovic said.

Abbas addresses campaign at DU

By DU Correspondent

The BNP's DCC mayoral candidate Mirza Abbas sought votes on the ground that he had been with the teachers, students and employees of the Dhaka University during the anti-autocratic agitation.

Abbas was addressing an election campaign meeting at the DU campus yesterday afternoon. The Jatiyatada Chhatra Dal arranged the meeting in support of Abbas and the party's commissioner candidates for the Nos 56 and 57 city wards.

The meeting was also addressed by the DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman, MP, Aziz Fardous, MP, and JCD leaders Fazlul Haq Milon, Nazimuddin Alam, Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anny was in the chair.

Addressing the meeting, Abbas strongly denied ever having said that if elected he would force the AL mayoral candidate Hanif to leave the country.

"Even the President of the country cannot oust any citizen," Abbas added.

"Hanif is telling lies against me," Abbas alleged.

Where was Hanif when we were fighting autocracy on the city streets? Abbas questioned.

Campaigning

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their support.

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leaders at almost all the rallies in the city during the past two days, have pleaded that the voters should elect their candidates for protecting 'Bismillah' in the country's constitution.

On the other hand, the Awami League leaders, in a bid to prove that their party was more committed to the Islamic faith, have been arguing that most of their leaders, including Sheikh Hasina had so far performed the Hajj several times. Even Hasina's attendance at the Akheri Munaajat of the Biswa Jtema held recently at Tongi have frequently been pronounced by the leaders to attract the attention of the more religious minded voters.

Justice Rouf said the presiding officers would announce a provisional results of their respective centres as soon as the counting was over.

He said the presiding officers have also been asked to send a copy of the result through post office to Election Commission which should bear a seal of January 30. He said the post offices would remain open throughout the night in the four cities for the purpose.

Twin worries for BNP

From Page 1 Col 7

leaders during campaigning, have raised the interest and excitement to that of any national level polls.

Keeping pace with the intensive electioneering by its arch-rival the Awami League (AL), the BNP has also thrown all its weight behind its party nominees, particularly for the mayoral posts. Despite her tight schedule as the head of the government, the BNP chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has launched herself into hectic campaigning since January 13. She has been spending almost a third of a day everyday in electioneering, going from door to door and seeking votes for the BNP nominees. However, most of her campaigning has remained confined to the capital city and mayoral candidate Mirza Abbas. It is understandable that the BNP hierarchy considers the contest for the Dhaka mayor's chair a prestige issue for the party.

The constituency of the mayor of Dhaka encompasses eight JS seats, all of which were captured by the BNP in 1991 with landslide victories. The defeated AL candidates included Sheikh Hasina, Kamal Hossain, Sajeda Chowdhury and several other well-known and prominent leaders.

However, the AL managed significantly improved showings by poll in more votes in the three by-elections in the city which followed. Now, the AL, having taken lessons from its previous failures, is all geared up and determined to gain control of the DCC. For this, it has been striving relentlessly to get its nominee Mohammad Hanif elected as mayor.

The organised campaigns of the AL in all the 90 city wards have posed a serious challenge to the ruling party. The eventual outcome would not only be a question of who becomes the mayor; rather, the results would reflect the general opinion of the people in the eight JS constituencies in metropolis. This is why the polls are so significant for the BNP as well as for the AL and the others.

The ruling party has had to confront multifarious problems regarding the present polls.

One such problem was regarding the party's nominations for the posts of commissioners. Because it is the ruling party, there were too many aspirants for the BNP nominations. Apparently the leadership failed to efficiently handle this tricky issue.

While only one official BNP candidate was nominated for each of the 90 wards under the DCC, yet some of the other aspirants did not withdraw from the race. And this situation has clouded the chances of many BNP nominees. Moreover, the official BNP candidates as well as those BNP supporters contesting independently, have been keeping their electioneering confined to their own constituencies, often ignoring the need to campaign for the party's mayoral nominee Mirza Abbas.

On the other hand, with the exception of a few cases, the AL solved a similar problem in the wards quite astutely and the party's commissioner candidates have been simultaneously working for their mayor nominee. This is one plus-point for AL that has worried the BNP.

The AL leadership confidently claims that it has ensured casting of the party's 'solid votes' in the city while a large number of voters who did not vote for it in 1991 have now promised to back Hanif. The AL leaders are also optimistic about getting a good number of votes from the people of the lower-middle class, the uprooted street hawkers, the rickshaw-pullers and other working people.

"They will vote for us since the BNP could not ameliorate their suffering," said a central leader of the AL who believes that the current economic stagnation will also adversely affect the BNP in the city polls.

There is no question that the BNP policy-makers are well-aware of the situation, and have been working to cope with it and win the game.

According to some political observers, the mayor nominees of the Jatiya Party and Jamaat are also expected to erode support for the BNP which, again, may be to Hanif's benefit. This is no less a worry for the BNP election strategists.

BNP secretary general Abdus Salam Talukder addressed a series of meetings at Nakhla para rail crossing, Dhanmondi, Nawabganj, Tannery Square and Swarighat urging the voters to exercise their right to franchise judiciously.

Salam Talukder said, the voters in the capital had rejected the opposition Awami League because they betrayed the people.

He said, the BNP government had fulfilled all the pledges made before the 1991 parliamentary election by switching over to the parliamentary form of government, exempting agricultural loan and raising the age limit for government service to 30 years.

The BNP secretary general urged the voters to vote for the 'bicycle' in Sunday's polls.

The meetings were also addressed by Mir Shawkat Ali, Mahbubul Alam Tara, Nazrul Islam Khan, Mohammad Shahajan, Barkatullah Bhulu, Shahidullah Khan MP and student leader Nasiruddin Pintu.

BNP gears up campaign in city

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Special measures

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Bodyguards wrested a man (kneeling away from the camera) to the ground after he lunged at Prince Charles (right) and fired shots from a toy cap gun before an audience of thousands of people in Sydney yesterday. — AFP photo

Fisherman killed in BSF firing

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 26: One fisherman was shot dead and two others received bullet injuries when the BSF opened fire on them from a patrol boat in the Isamati river near Padma Shakra BOP under Satkhira district last night.

According to BDR sources, at about 2100 hours last night, the BSF opened fire on a fishing boat inside the Bangladesh territorial water.

Boatman Ibad Ali died on the spot while Moqbul Husain and Idris Ali were admitted to Satkhira hospital in a critical condition.

Couple robbed at Dhanmondi

By Staff Correspondent

A couple was robbed of their gold ornaments and cash at Dhanmondi, Road No-3 last night.

Three muggers waylaid the couple on a rickshaw and snatched two gold-chains, two gold-rings and a wallet with cash at dagger point at around 8 pm.

The three youngsters ran away from the scene immediately after the incident. No case was lodged.

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Supporters distributing leaflets in favour of their candidate in the Dhaka City Corporation polls near Gate No 1 of the Bangladesh Secretariat in the city yesterday. — Star photo

AL chief doubts fairness of polls

RAJSHAHI, Jan 26: Sheikh Hasina today expressed doubts about the fairness of the upcoming city corporation polls, renewing her charge that the ruling party was engaged in flagrant violation of the election rules, reports UNB.

"In spite of the Election Commission's endeavours, polls cannot be free and fair under the ruling BNP," she said, alleging that the ministers and the BNP candidates had been ignoring the election rules.

The Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament warned of launching a vigorous anti-government agitation if the electoral mandate is tampered with by the governing party.

Three killed, 30 hurt in Savar road accident

SAVAR, Jan 26: Three people were killed on the spot and 30 injured when a Chapainawabganj-bound coach collided with a rice loaded truck at 8 tonight near Jahangirnagar University gate on the Dhaka-Aricha highway, witnesses and police said, reports UNB.

The bodies could not be identified immediately and were taken to Savar Health Complex and CMH.

Manzur's 12-pt plan for DCC

From Page 1 Col 8

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Emphasising on collecting city corporation taxes and removing corruption, he said a new taxation system should be introduced which would be convenient for both people and the DCC.

Manzur also plans to increase commuting facilities in the city, discourage rickshaw-pulling — but not banning rickshaws in the city — and improving the quality of the water supply by WASA and increase water supply facilities.

"We would hardly need any bigger budgetary allocation to implement these plans. These plans are feasible. By cutting administrative costs and checking corruption we hope to gather more money for public welfare," Manzurul Ahsan Khan said.

Huda urges press to give objective coverage of polls

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He believes that terrorism originates from unemployment and ruling parties' patronisation. He plans to create new employment opportunities and discourage any sort of political support for terrorists.

In order to provide social security to the women in the city, he plans to set up women's organisations in all the 90 wards.

A children's day-care centre for the working mothers would also be set up in every ward, if he were elected.

The mayoral candidate plans to employ only women in the vacant posts of the DCC and in schools in future to increase their participation in employment.

"It is possible to introduce a project for low cost modern housing for the lower middle class people who will buy the flats in installments," Manzur said.

He also plans to rehabilitate and allocate lands for the slum dwellers of the city and provide exclusive space for vendors everywhere in the city to make the footpaths free.

According to Manzurul Ahsan Khan, the education system of the metropolitan city has collapsed and it has become a business. In this context he feels the necessity to set up

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A good number of city health centres would be built to make the capital's health system meaningful. These centres would be run by doctors in exchange of an honourarium fixed by the DCC.

To keep the city neat and clean, the Left Alliance candidate says, a 'green force' involving the street children would be organised in each ward. These 'green forces', headed by the ward commissioners, would collect garbage and plant trees and do other similar jobs.

Emphasising on collecting city corporation taxes and removing corruption, he said a new taxation system should be introduced which would be convenient for both people and the DCC.

Manzur also plans to increase commuting facilities in the city, discourage rickshaw-pulling — but not banning rickshaws in the city — and improving the quality of the water supply by WASA and increase water supply facilities.

"We would hardly need any bigger budgetary allocation to implement these plans. These plans are feasible. By cutting administrative costs and checking corruption we hope to gather more money for public welfare," Manzurul Ahsan Khan said.

Huda urges press to give objective coverage of polls

Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda urged the press here yesterday to give objective coverage of the forthcoming city corporation polls and help institutionalise democracy, reports BSS.

Barrister Huda was exchanging views with editors of national dailies and news agencies at the Jatiya Press Club.

The Information Minister said the BNP has been taking steps to ensure freedom of the press and consolidate democratic institutions since it was voted to power in the free and fair polls of February 27, 1991. He lauded the role of the press during the nine year democratic movement in forcing the autocratic regime to quit.

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Man fires blanks at Charles in Sydney

SYDNEY, Jan 26: A man ran out of a crowd and fired two blanks from a starter's pistol at Britain's Prince Charles on yesterday, reports AP.

The prince, 45, was unharmed. No one else was harmed.

The man ran about 30 yards (metres) from the crowd and onto a stage where the prince was about to speak to more than 10,000 people at outdoor celebrations marking Australia's national day.

Security guards wrestled the man