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The ruling BNP held its last projection meeting for Dhaka City Corporation mayoral candidate Mirza Abbas at the Manik Miah Avenue Thursday afternoon. Begum Khaleda Zia was the main speaker. —Starphoto



A section of the crowd at the Awami League's final projection meeting for mayor candidate Mohammad Hanif at the Manik Miah Avenue yesterday. Sheikh Hasina was the main speaker. —Star photo

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NEWS BRIEFS

Court holiday in 4 cities tomorrow

The Chief Justice has declared January 30 as holiday for both the Divisions of the Supreme Court and civil courts and offices in four city corporations of the country to enable the officials and employees to exercise their rights of franchise in city corporation polls. A notification said Thursday, reports BSS.

BNP leader assaulted

Mozammel Haq Babu, a leader of the BNP, was seriously injured yesterday when he was attacked by a group of miscreants at Dhanmondi area, a press release of the BNP Dhanmondi thana unit said here last night.

Times issue confiscated

The government has confiscated the 31st January issue of the English weekly the 'International Times' published from Singapore. Sale, distribution and preservation of the issue has also been banned.

Elect BNP candidates for development: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

Ruling party chairperson and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Thursday urged the voters to elect Mirza Abbas and BNP-backed commissioner candidates to continue the ongoing development works in the capital.

"Vote for the bicycle on Sunday to elect Mirza Abbas, who has already proved his honesty and efficiency in developing the city," the BNP chairperson told a rally of several thousand people at Manik Miah Avenue.

It was the last public rally in connection with Sunday's city corporation polls campaigning which began early this month. Begum Zia said the opposition candidates had no sub-

stantive issues to counter or match the performance of Mirza Abbas, so they started splashing untrue accusation against the government to mislead the voters.

She said the government had no plan to force retire the government employees after 25 years of service or to curtail the festival bonus, as propagated by the opposition leaders.

"Rather these are very much on their minds. They will take such programmes if they come to power," the BNP chief retorted.

Begum Zia said the people had faith in the BNP. That's why they had elected 40 BNP candidates out of the 42 seats

in greater Dhaka district, including all the eight in the city. Later, also, they voted in favour of the BNP in the three by-elections.

She expressed her confidence that the people would once again use their prudence in choosing the right person to run the capital and the three other city corporations.

Begum Zia introduced mayoral candidate Mirza Abbas and her party-backed 90 commissioner candidates to the public amid cheering and slogans. The meeting venue was filled with eye-catching banners and placards including an elephant riding on a bicycle.

Earlier, the Prime Minister

Election rally

'Jamaat is the ultimate choice'

By Staff Correspondent

Central leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday urged the city voters to elect ATM Azharul Islam as the Mayor as his party was the ultimate choice of the people.

At the Jamaat's last election rally at the Shapla Chatter in Motijheel yesterday evening, Jamaat leaders, introducing their mayoral candidate said if Azharul were elected, he would root out corruption and uphold the image of the capital city as the great city of mosques.

The rally was also addressed by the party's senior Nayeb-e-Ameer Abbas Ali Khan, Secretary General Motiur Rahman Nizami, Ali Ahsan Mujahid, Muhammad Qamruzzaman, Abdul Kader Mollah and mayoral candidate ATM Azharul Islam.

Three major parties ruled the country in the last 22 years. But the condition of the commonmen did not improve. Rather, the leaders of the

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Corpn polls cover 14 JS seats

Veritable by-elections

By Asiuzzaman

Sunday's polls in the four city corporations are virtually by-elections in 14 parliamentary constituencies, all of which were won by the ruling party in the 1991 national elections.

The city corporations comprises eight parliamentary constituencies in Dhaka, three in Chittagong, and two in Khulna while Rajshahi Corporation covers only one JS seat.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) bagged 48.16 per cent of votes cast in the February 27 elections followed by the Awami League with 32.20 per cent, the Jamaat with 6.74 per cent and the Jatiya Party with 3.22 per cent in these JS constituencies.

According to Election Commission sources, there were 32,84,964 voters in the cities, four of whom 16,63,397 cast their votes in 1991. The BNP secured 8,01,130 votes, the AL 5,35,638 — including the 42,454 votes for the then

CPB's Saifuddin Ahmed Manik who was given the AL symbol 'boat' — the Jamaat 1,12,143 and the JP 53,569 of total votes cast.

However, the Jamaat had fielded candidates in only 11 out of the 14 constituencies while the JP contested 13 seats.

The number of voters in the current corporation polls has reduced to 28,69,040 because of slight adjustment and fresh delimitation of the city boundaries.

In Dhaka, the BNP secured 50.29 per cent of total votes cast in the last parliamentary elections, followed by the AL which bagged 33.50 per cent, the Jamaat 3.37 per cent and the JP 2.59 per cent. Some 9,33,126 votes were cast out of 20,06,713, according to the statistics preserved in the Election Commission.

The BNP candidates who won in Dhaka are: Salahuddin Ahmed (Dhaka-4), Begum

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Hosokawa, opposition reach compromise on reforms

TOKYO, Jan 28: Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa and the leader of the opposition Liberal Democrats reached an eleventh-hour compromise Friday on key political reforms, top politicians said, reports AP.

The accord, only hours before the deadline of Saturday when the legislative session ends, appears to stave off the immediate threat of Hosokawa's government collapsing. He had said he might quit if the reforms failed.

But the bitter struggle leaves Japan's political world in disarray at a time when the economy is badly in need of attention — and only two weeks before Hosokawa is to meet with US President Clinton.

Details of the pact, reached in talks between Hosokawa and Liberal Democratic head Yohei Kono, were not immediately known. But indications were that Hosokawa had to make major concessions to win the

LDP's approval — which could prove a blow to his credibility. For example, the prime minister originally sought to end corporate contributions to individual politicians.

The plan still needs parliamentary approval. Leaders of two groups that had been cautious about the reforms said late Friday night they would support the compromise.

"We have decided to accept the compromise agreement because we should avoid wasting the entire effort we have made so far," said Tomichi Murayama, leader of the left-leaning Socialists, the coalition's largest party. Murayama had previously said his party could not accept anything shots of a ban on corporate donations to individual politicians.

And Taro Nakayama, a former foreign minister and leader of a group of Liberal Democrats that had opposed Hosokawa's reforms, said: "It's too bad, but it's been decided.

We have no choice." Satoshi Arai, legislator and policy chief of the Hosokawa coalition's Japan New Party, said the compromise package was to be taken up by a conference committee Saturday.

The reforms had been doggedly opposed by the Liberal Democrats, who managed to defeat the bills in Parliament's upper house last week.

Badruddoza denies Jamaat allegation

Deputy Leader of the Jatiya Sangsad Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury Thursday refuted the allegation made against him by Jamaat secretary general Matiuur Rahman Nizami for uttering "motivated lies" at an election rally in the city, reports BSS.

In a statement, Dr Chowdhury categorically denied that remark like "Jamaat will at last extend support to the BNP" was ever uttered by him.

Campaigning concludes: City polls tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Rallies, processions and door-to-door canvassing reached its climax yesterday hours before the campaigning for the country's four city corporation polls officially ended at midnight last night.

The Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami held rallies in the capital yesterday to drum up support for their candidates. The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) held its meeting at Manik Miah Avenue in Dhaka a day before.

Campaigning for the polls in the four city corporation areas are banned from Friday mid-

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Malek's record is much better than Abbas : Mizan

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Party acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury has said their nominee is the city's mayoral election, Col (Retd) Abdul Malek, had the best track record among the former mayors.

"Both Mirza Abbas (BNP's nominee) and Col (Retd) Malek worked as the mayor of Dhaka for three years each but Malek did much more for the development of Dhaka than Abbas," he said.

Mizan Chowdhury was addressing as chief guest the last election rally for the JP mayoral candidate at Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital yesterday afternoon. The JP leader urged the city dwellers not to vote for the candidate of the ruling BNP which, he alleged had broken all the pledges it made to the people.

"If you again vote for the BNP, you won't be able to speak against the government's failures and misdeeds," warned the leader of JP that

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HC rejects plea for postponing DCC polls

The writ petition filed by Dr Mohiuddin Farooque, secretary general of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association, restraining the Election Commission from holding election to the offices of mayor and commissioners of the Dhaka city corporation was rejected Thursday by a High Court Division Bench, reports BSS.

The bench comprising Justice Mohammad Ismail Uddin Sarker and Justice Kazi Ebadul Huq in their judgement said: "We do not consider that further direction is necessary from this court upon the other respondents (Ministry of Home Affairs, LGRD and the Dhaka City Corporation) to comply with the direction issued by the Election Commission."

The court also said that though this court felt it desirable to mitigate the allegations of environmental pollution it discharged the petition on this particular issue.

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Vote for AL nominees for check & balance: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the city dwellers to vote for her party candidates in the city corporation polls with a view to ensuring effective check and balance in the country's politics and administration.

Hasina, chief of the Awami League (AL), was addressing a huge public rally at the Manik Miah Avenue of the city yesterday afternoon in support of her party's mayoral and commissioner candidates in the Dhaka City Corporation elections.

Arguing in favour of her party's candidates, Hasina said, with the opposition in power of the city corporations the ruling party would be compelled to behave democratically with the city dwellers.

"Plus, none from the ruling party or the opposition would dare to indulge in corruption with the BNP in state power and the AL in the city administration," Hasina argued further.

Turning to the Election Commission, the AL chief expressed her apprehension about the fairness of the city polls scheduled for tomorrow.

Hasina alleged that the Election Commission had already failed to stick to the commitments it had made during discussion with the opposition parties.

In a bid to substantiate her allegation, Hasina said that the Chief Election Commissioner promised that voting would take place in the election centres

fixed during the last parliamentary polls held in 1991. "But the commission has already changed a number of polling centres for the city corporation polls," Hasina added.

She also criticised the commission's decision of making separate polling centres for men and women voters this year.

In the previous years, men and women voters of a same area used to cast their votes in separate booths of a same polling centre.

Referring to the issue, Hasina wanted to know whether the Election Commissioner had made this arrangement for the benefit of the ruling BNP. She, however, did not explain the is-

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NATO sends plans for air strikes to UN

Senate okays resolution to lift arms ban on Bosnia

WASHINGTON, Jan 28: The Senate passed a non-binding resolution urging President Bill Clinton to lift the arms embargo against the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina, reports AFP.

The "sense of the Senate" measure was approved Thursday by an 87-9 vote, as Secretary of State, Warren Christopher urged US allies to prepare for military action to relieve the Serb-besieged towns of Srebrenica, in the east, and Tuzla, in the north.

"I'm deeply disappointed that both this administration and the previous one, failed to assert the leadership necessary to move the international community toward policies that would let the Bosnians, at the very least, defend their families and their homes," said minority leader Bob Dole, who introduced the amendment to a state department authorization bill.

There's nothing good that comes out of our continued inaction and paralysis," said Democratic Senator Joseph Biden.

International mediators are pressing the Bosnian mainly-Muslim government, Croats and Serbs to accept a plan that would divide the republic along ethnic lines. Geneva peace talks have failed, with the government demanding that their share have access to the sea and that the Serbs return more land that was seized by force and "ethnically cleansed."

Meanwhile, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has sent the United Nations its plans for possible air strikes in Bosnia-Herzegovina and air support for UN troops there, a NATO spokesman said in Brussels Wednesday.

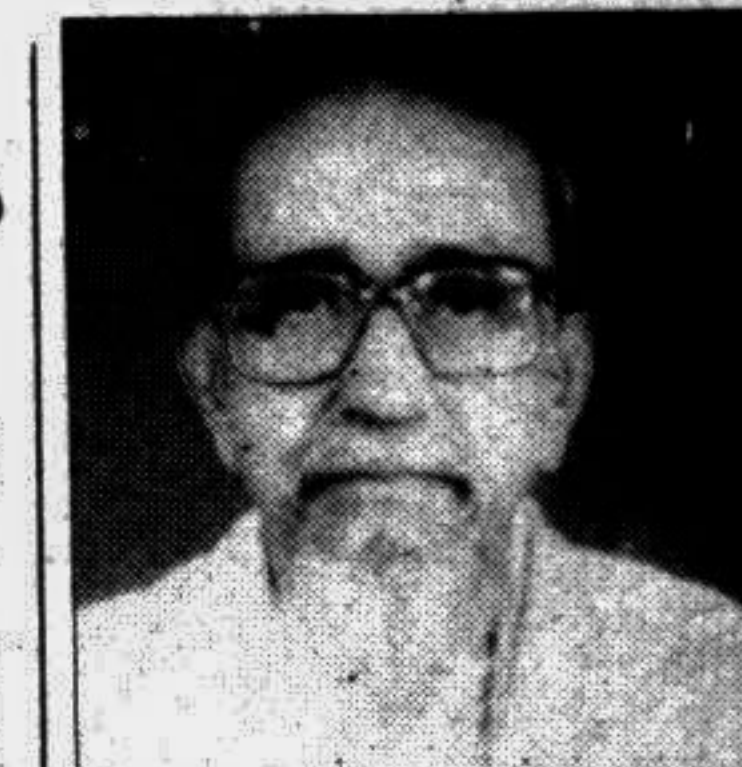
He added that the 16-nation alliance was ready to meet any UN request to help break the siege of the Bosnian towns of Tuzla and Srebrenica.

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Prof Razzak is ill

By Staff Correspondent

National Professor Abdur Razzak, who had been suffering from hernia and other complications, left Dhaka for Singapore recently. He was due to undergo an operation at the Gleneagles Hospital.

According to family sources Prof Razzak's condition deteriorated after reaching Bangkok and he was admitted at the Bangkok Bumrungrad Hospital on January 27 where he was operated upon the same day.

Family sources described his condition as 'not good' and said he has been kept in the intensive care unit.

Professor Razzak had undergone a prostate operation in 1989 in Singapore.

Biman captain held with Tk 61.32 lakh

By Staff Correspondent

A captain of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Mohammad Azhar Rahman, was held at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) for carrying local and foreign currency equivalent to Tk. 61.32 lakh Thursday evening just before he was due to fly an aircraft.

Biman's flight BG 039, to Dubai and Riyadh, scheduled to take-off at 7 pm was delayed for almost two hours due to the incident.

Captain Rahman was charged with trying to smuggle the money out of the country and was handed over to police yesterday. He was immediately suspended by the Biman authorities.

A source at the ZIA said the captain was held at the airport's apron area by customs personnel when he was about to board the aircraft.

The source said that on-duty customs preventive and

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Double murders in Mirpur

By Staff Correspondent

Three persons, one of them a minor boy, were murdered in the city's Mirpur area in two separate incidents during the last two days.

One Mainuddin, 28, enraged following the rejection of a marriage proposal, instantaneously murdered one Mohammad Shahiduddin, 42, and his five-year-old son Murad at their Pallabi residence early yesterday. He also injured 14-year-old Suborna, whom he wanted to marry, and her mother Shahnaz Begum by stabbing repeatedly.

Pallabi police said the incident occurred at around 3 am yesterday and they arrested Mainuddin, who was a paying guest in the house, after an hour-long effort and rescued the injured members of the house.

Both Shahnaz and Suborna were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with severe stab

wounds on their hands, reports our DMCH correspondent.

Police said Mainuddin stabbed Suborna's father Shahiduddin — a retired non-commissioned army personnel — to death and slaughtered Murad, the only son of the couple.

Relatives said Mainuddin, owner of an audio-video shop at Mirpur, was living with the family as a paying guest and about two weeks ago had proposed to marry Suborna, a student of Class Six. But her father Shahiduddin rejected the proposal, they added.

Police said that they laid a siege to the house for almost an hour as Mainuddin threatened to throw acid on the police outside. Later police forced Mainuddin to surrender and arrested him with a knife and a bottle of acid.

Mainuddin was taken to the

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