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Hanif consolidates lead in repolling

By Staff Correspondent

Islam candidate A T M Azharul Islam bagged 694.

Manzurul Ahsan Khan candidate of the Left-leaning parties, received 162 votes.

With the results of the repolling in 25 centres yesterday, the Awami League's mayoral nominee Mohammad Hanif bagged 18,041 votes while the BNP's mayoral candidate Mirza Abbas received 7959 votes in the 25 centres.

The Jatiya Party nominee Col (Retd) M A Malek secured 1320 votes while the Jamaat-e-

The latest unofficial results of the 734 centres show that Col. (Retd) Abdul Malek has bagged 61,773 votes while ATM Azharul Islam 35,451 and Manzurul Ahsan Khan 5,196 votes.

Polling in 28 centres was postponed following violence and irregularities in the January 30 DCC elections.

Re-elections in three other centres at the Dhaka University was again postponed by a court order on Tuesday

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9 elected ward commissioners

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League candidates for commissioner posts have won in four wards while the BNP's in two and the Independent ones in three other wards, according to unofficial results yesterday.

The nine elected ward commissioners are: Mohsin of

Ward No 26 (Awami League),

Sheikh Bazlur Rahman of Ward

No 46 (AL), Abdus Sattar

Bhuiyan of Ward No 48 (AL),

Haji Mohammad Aleem of Ward No 62 (AL), Mosharraf

Hossain of Ward No 60 (BNP),

Haji Shahabuddin of Ward No

90 (BNP), Haji Mohammad

Selim of Ward No 65 (Independent), Mir Samir of

Ward No 70 (Independent)

and Haji Abdur Rahim of Ward

No 78 (Independent).

Saifur reviews reforms with donors today

By A Special Correspondent

planned months earlier, according to a diplomatic source, has been called to discuss the very reform programme that many blamed for the city corporations election debacle. A number of aid officials will try to assess whether this criticism of the reform programme has caused the government's commitment to reforms to weaken.

The World Bank, which usually takes the leading role in discussions in such forums, has already made an assessment on behalf of the Consortium Members. The World Bank's assessment is that although the government

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CJ to administer oaths to new judges today

By Staff Correspondent

The President yesterday announced fresh appointments of nine additional judges of the High Court division of the Supreme Court in consultation with the Chief Justice, cancelling the earlier notification made on February 3, according to a press release signed by the Registrar of the Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed is due to administer the oaths of office to the new additional judges today at 10:30 am at his office chamber.

The new appointments end the week-long controversy centring around consultation

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No alternative to nationalist forces: Khaleda

Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia last night said there was no alternative to the nationalist forces for the development of the country, reports BSS.

Begum Zia was addressing hundreds of political activists from different parties of Bhairob, who joined the BNP at the Sugandha LGRD Minister and BNP Secretary General

Tofael Ahmed of the Awami League (AL), arguing in favour of holding a debate, alleged that the government was interfering with the country's judiciary by appointing its own men as judges.

At this point, Deputy Leader of the House Professor A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury took the floor to assert that no particular provision of the Constitution had been violated with the appointments of judges without consultation with the Chief Justice. He, however, admitted that a convention

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Describing the villages as the focal point of the development strategy of the BNP government, the Prime Minister said her government had put in relentless efforts to develop the villages for the uplift of the millions.

She urged the newly joined leaders and workers to strengthen the hands of the BNP by spreading the political philosophy and programmes of the BNP and said the BNP had been pursuing a pro-people and development-oriented nationalistic politics.

Serbs to withdraw arms

NATO agrees to use threat of air strikes

BRUSSELS, Feb 9: NATO agreed today to threaten Bosnian Serb forces with air strikes unless they withdraw heavy weapons from around Sarajevo within a maximum of 10 days, alliance sources told Reuters.

The sources said NATO ambassadors were still discussing whether the deadline should be seven or 10 days and whether to describe the threat publicly as an ultimatum.

"But there is now agreement in principle that a deadline will be set, beyond which air strikes will be used," said one alliance source.

AP adds: Bosnian Serbs, fearing possible NATO air strikes, agreed Wednesday to withdraw heavy weaponry from around Sarajevo and put it under UN monitoring, the UN commander said.

ECNEC okays Tk 279cr gas pipeline project

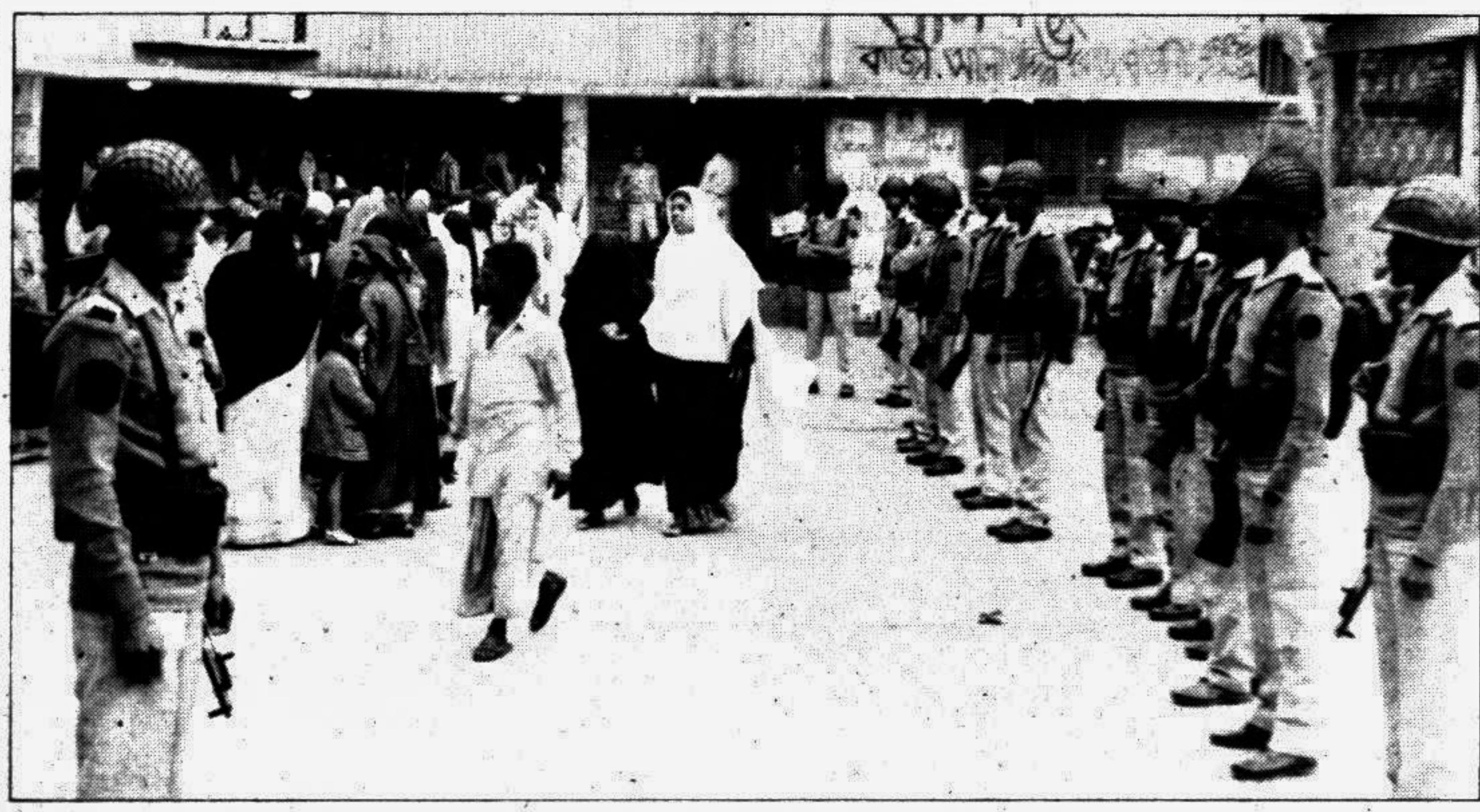
The Executive Committee of the National Council (ECNEC) at a meeting yesterday approved the Ashuganj-Bakhraab Gas Pipeline Project at a cost of Tk 279 crore with a foreign exchange component of Tk 185 crore, reports UNB.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman chaired the meeting held at the cabinet room.

The meeting also approved an inter-ministerial recommendation to vest more administrative and financial powers to the ministries, divisions, departments, organisations and project directors for rapid implementation of the development projects.

This will notably accelerate the implementation process of projects, the meeting observed.

Under the gas project, 55 kilometre long pipeline will be constructed from Ashuganj to Bakhraab to remit more gas from Sylhet area to meet the increasing demand in Bakhraab area. The work is expected to be completed in 1997, official sources said.



BDR personnel keep vigil as voting progresses peacefully during the re-polling at the Siddiq Bazar Community Centre in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

Reforms not the cause for polls debacle, says Saifur

By S Y Bakht

form programmes of the country. This is absolutely wrong, erroneous and misconceived."

The Finance Minister vowed to continue with the reform process.

"Reform is an inevitable process in today's world and there is no turning back from

The full transcript of the interview will be published on Saturday

it for us. We have excellent macro-economic fundamentals and this is precisely the time to benefit from the reforms because the painful period is over."

During the hour-long interview at his Secretariat chamber, Rahman dwelt at length

on his views about the reasons behind the ruling party's recent electoral debacle and responded to criticisms that he had pushed the reforms too quickly leading to economic hardships.

Replying to a question about harassment of some regular taxpayers, he announced the immediate withdrawal of all such irregular and counter-productive measures, which he claimed were not authorised.

He said the economic issue was not even raised before the polls results were announced.

"If the economic issue was the cause (of the defeat) then why did we win in Khuina, which is an industrial belt? The economic issue was never

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Gunshots, blasts rend JU campus

By JU Correspondent

Acts of violence on the Jahangirnagar University campus continued for the third consecutive day yesterday. There were gunshots and explosions despite the presence of police, forcing many students to leave the campus.

The ousted faction of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, JU unit, continued its occupation of the Al-Beruni Hall and made its presence felt with frequent firings. On Monday afternoon, a group of the JCD men had stormed the hall and forced their rivals out.

In the face of continuing terrorism, the academic and administrative activities of the university have virtually collapsed. No classes were held yesterday and the university buses remained in the garage. All examinations of the university have been postponed.

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NBR withdraws notification

Star Report

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday ordered immediate withdrawal of a controversial notification to a section of the regular taxpayers seeking details about their miscellaneous expenditures on birthdays, anniversaries and other such occasions, according to a highly placed source yesterday.

The NBR has decided to withdraw that notification immediately, said the source.

The recent notification created resentment among the regular taxpayers who received it and was seen as a glaring example of harassment by tax officials.

An over-enthusiastic deputy income tax commissioner issued the obnoxious notification on his own without any approval from anybody.

The notification asked the taxpayers to furnish information about the expenditures relating to medical treatment, birthdays, anniversaries, festivals and educational expenses of their wards.

The concerned tax official has been asked to provide an explanation for his unauthorised action, the source noted.

He said that the NBR is soon going to open a 'complaint cell', where taxpayers can lodge complaints if they are harassed by tax officials. Details of the cell, along with contact telephone numbers, would be published in newspapers through advertisements soon.

CAAB -companies row stalls STOL service

By Asiuzzaman

A tug of war between the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) and the licensed companies has delayed the launching of planned Short Take-Off and Landing (STOL) air services in the country.

The companies which obtained provisional air transport licences (PATOL) have demanded assurance of security, safety and other facilities needed to operate an airline but the CAAB has so far declined to give such assurance in writing.

Sources in the CAAB told The Daily Star that the proposed six airstrips around the country were not fully ready for operation although the authorities had announced January 31 as the tentative date for inauguration of the service.

In the backdrop of the pre-



The Central Shaheed Minar in the city is being given a face-lift before The Shaheed Day on February 21. — Star photo

Dhaka, Delhi must foster a spirit of accommodation

By M Anwarul Haq

Bangladesh can expect to solve the water problem and other outstanding issues with India only on the basis of accommodation and a spirit of give-and-take. That is the political reality of the situation."

This was stated by I K Gujral, a former External Affairs minister of India while talking to The Daily Star in an exclusive interview at the conclusion of his visit to Dhaka as a participant in an international seminar organised by the BISB.

The water problem cannot be seen or solved in isolation. Maybe India can give some water, but it can also expect some concessions in certain areas in return," the bearded, bespectacled minister holding the charge of Foreign Affairs in V P Singh's cabinet stated without mincing words.

Speaking candidly on the state of Indo-Bangladesh relations, Gujral felt that the ties between the two neighbours were clouded with doubts, suspicions and misunderstanding. He said there is a "sense of misperception on either sides" and insisted that both Delhi and Dhaka "should not be prisoners of the slogans and attitudes which keep us distant

all areas."

When asked why Bangladesh should be deprived of its rightful share of the Ganges water, Gujral said, the reality is that, neither country has sufficient water for running industry, agricultural production or even for drinking purpose. Although there is scope for a more beneficial sharing arrangement, the stress must be on augmentation, he insisted.

I K Gujral, who did a long stint as Information Minister and served in several other positions under Indira Gandhi and was his country's Ambassador to Moscow and later quit the Congress with V P Singh to become the External Affairs Minister, hinted that India may be more flexible in accommodating Bangladesh's water needs if Dhaka made more trade concessions and allowed transit facilities, and also the use of the Chittagong port.

According to him, the Chittagong port was being utilised only 50 percent. What is the harm if you allow the use of Chittagong port for transit of our goods to eastern India. You will definitely be benefited by

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