

Hasina urges people Don't go to polling centres risking life

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday said, February 15 "farfical" elections would have no credibility and legitimacy at home and abroad, reports UNB.

"Stop this shameful joke in the name of vote which has eclipsed the 1988 record of autocracy," she told an extended meeting of the Jatiya Samik League at the National Press Club auditorium yesterday afternoon.

Hasina, who is spearheading a 22-month-old agitation for elections under a non-partisan, neutral caretaker administration, said Prime Minister Begum Zia ignored the people's demand to protect her "ill-gotten wealth" and power.

"She (PM) opposed polls under a caretaker government as she is scared of losing power and illegal fortune amassed through corruption," the Awami League president said.

In a rebuttal to PM's remarks at the Bagerhat meeting Saturday about Opposition's election phobia, Hasina threw a challenge to Begum Zia: "Well, quit power, give elections under a caretaker government and allow people to make their choice through ballot."

Hasina said it is clear to the people why the Prime Minister did not resign — because she is scared of losing power and illegal fortune amassed through corruption, she said.

ing scared of losing power in the elections under a caretaker government.

The Awami League leader observed, already 45 BNP candidates had been elected unopposed and results of the rest seats already prepared in advance, which means that this election is nothing but the worst farce ever.

The Awami League president urged the people not to go to polling stations, risking their lives and property.

On the arms-recovery drive, Hasina alleged the army totally failed to net unauthorised firearms. They should return to barracks. "We do not want that the army tarnish its image by helping vote piracy."

Presided over by Samik League president Abdus Salam, the meeting was also addressed by Awami League presidium member Amir Hossain Amu, Chittagong City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury and Samik League General Secretary Ah-sanullah Masteer.

30 hurt in factory roof collapse

By Staff Correspondent

At least 30 people were injured when the roof of an underconstruction textile mill collapsed in Sardaganj, Joydevpur under Gazipur district yesterday afternoon.

Of the injured, the condition of eight persons were stated to be critical, police said. The injured who were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) were identified as Billal, 20, Malek, 22, Momin, 30 and Zahir, 25.

The accident occurred at the underconstruction mills premises of Square Textile and Spinning Mills at Sardaganj under Kashipur union of Joydevpur thana at around 3 pm, police sources said.

The cause of the collapse could not be known immediately.

The injured people, most of them, construction workers, were admitted to the DMCH, Dhaka Orthopedic Hospital, Savar Thana Health Complex, Savar Gonoshasthya Kendro, Joydevpur police station, Rescue teams of the Fire Service and Civil Defence units from the headquarters in Dhaka, Tongi and Gazipur rushed to the spot, fire service sources said.

A portion of the roof of the premises collapsed on more than 50 construction workers when they were engaged in their work.

Writ in HC

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malondu Btkash Roy Chowdhury and Justice Md Abdul Mannan.

In the petition, the petitioner sought a *rule nisi* on the Chief Election Commissioner and others to show cause as to why the schedule of the parliamentary election in the holy month of Ramadan should not be declared to have been made without lawful authority and having no legal effect.

It was submitted in the petition that holding of election in the month of Ramadan is violative of the fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 28 (1), 7 (2) and 41 of the Constitution.

It was also submitted that election might breed terrorism which would go against the religious teachings and practice during the holy month of Ramadan.

The petitioner referred to the general election of 1970 and submitted that the election was held violating the sanctity of the month of Ramadan and as a result mass killing, rape and torture in took place during the Liberation War.

Barrister Kazi Shahadat Hossain will move for the petitioner.



Hundreds of people gather around the mosque damaged following a rocket attack that left 22 people dead in Pakistani Kashmir Saturday. — AFP/UNB photo

7 hurt in Pak firing, claims India Pakistan will respond to rocket attack: Leghari

ISLAMAHAD, Jan 28: Pakistan's President Farooq Leghari promised today that his country would respond to a rocket attack that killed 20 people in a border village in Pakistani-held Kashmir, but would not start a war with India, reports Reuters.

"Pakistan will give a response in this connection," Leghari told reporters when asked to comment on Friday's incident at the village of Forward Kahuta in the Pakistan-held part of Kashmir.

He did not say how Islamabad would respond, but said it would not retaliate against civilians on the other side of the ceasefire line that splits the mountainous Himalayan region.

"I think there is no threat

of war between Pakistan and India," he said.

Leghari said the attack would heighten tension in the region. "It is a wrong and dangerous escalation," he added.

Meanwhile, seven people were injured in border firing by Pakistani troops on Indian position in the Jammu and Kashmir region, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said today, quoting unnamed officials.

"The troops fired at Indian posts across four areas in the Akhnoor sector of the border region, the news agency said. Indian troops fired back in an exchange that took place at regular intervals, it said.

AFP adds, Pakistan today

passed down the seriousness of border skirmishes with India following two rocket attacks in Kashmir, but warned New Delhi against escalating tensions between the two South Asian neighbours.

In a unanimous resolution passed late Saturday, the Pakistan Senate called the two rocket attacks on border towns, "yet another example of the aggression and criminal attitude of Indians."

"The brutal attack which not only destroyed a mosque but also claimed lives of innocent people, is sufficient to open the eyes of the world community before whom India is pleading to be a secular and democratic country," the resolution said.

42 combines, parties to contest JS elections

A total of 42 parties and combines are in the run for the highly contentious parliamentary election set for February 15, reports UNB.

Among them, ruling BNP has fielded the highest number of candidates, in all the 300 directly elective seats, followed by Seven-Party Alliance which put up 98 nominees. Election Commission sources said yesterday.

The other parties or coalitions in the race in 30 or more constituencies are: the Freedom Party (Farooq) 66, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan 54, National Democratic Alliance 50, Bangladesh Muslim League (Zamir Ali) 38, National Democratic Party (NDP) 35, Pragatishil Ganatantrik Shakti 34, Janadal 31 and Jatiya Nagarik Sanghat 30.

Thirty-two other parties are contesting the coming election, boycotted by major opposition parties, in less than 30 seats.

Election Commission (EC) will arrange election campaign of the participating parties/alliances on Radio and Television on prorata basis. The chief of the representative of the parties will be allowed to deliver speeches over the electronic media in the runup to the polls.

Some 1,467 candidates are vying for 254 seats now on stake. Some 47 candidates — all of ruling BNP — from 48 constituencies have been elected unopposed. Among them are Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and her cabinet and party stalwarts.

None of those contesting the BNP this time had been in the last parliament which was dissolved on November 24 last year following opposition desertion on the demand for caretaker government for conducting general election.

Hartal

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One person was killed and at least 50 others were injured during clashes between police and opposition activists in Khulna on Saturday morning. Earlier on January 23, a rally of an opposition party in Sylhet was attacked allegedly by BNP activists.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina in a statement yesterday urged the people to make today's hartal a success.

AL brought out a torch procession yesterday evening to drum up support in favour of today's half-day general strike. Jamaat also brought out a procession following a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mokarram Mosque.

Our correspondent from Khulna adds: City units of AL, JP and Jamaat held separate rallies and brought out processions to drum up support in favour of the hartal.

Khulna city Jubo League also brought out a procession carrying the body of Kamal, who was killed in Saturday's clashes. After post mortem Kamal was buried at Gonaikali graveyard yesterday.

Several bombs were blasted in Khulna town yesterday evening.

DU exams rescheduled

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University authorities have made some changes in the examination schedule due to the opposition-called hartal today.

According to the new schedule, Arabic (305), Philosophy and Economics comprehensive examinations of BA and BSS third year (honours), 1994, will be held on February 2, while Sociology (318) on March 21.

The comprehensive examination of Sociology which was scheduled for March 21 will now be held on March 27, says a DU press release.

Besides, the comprehensive examination of MSS Public Administration, 1993, will be held on February 9 instead of February 14.

Car import

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Pre-shipment inspection (PSI) from December 12, abruptly stopped clearing their consignments that led to huge piling up of cars in the Chittagong port.

The source said limit of depreciation benefit for re-conditioned and used cars was likely to be raised to 70 per cent, in line with the demand of the importers of old and used vehicles.

A decision in this regard would come in a day or two, the source added.

Currently, private re-conditioned vehicles use to get depreciation benefit up to 50 per cent — that means while assessing duty, the value of a vehicle aged four years and above is set at half the value of a similar but new car.

Importers claim that the existing depreciation rates do not match the real international price of used vehicles.

At a meeting with the NBR last week, Bangladesh Re-conditioned Vehicles Importers and Dealers Association (BARVIDA) demanded the limit be raised to 60 per cent for cars aged five years and 70 per cent for those aged six years and above.

\$18.5m ADB loan for jt
venture cement factory

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a term loan amounting to 18.5 million US dollars for a joint-venture cement factory to be set up in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The credit is the biggest from the Manila-based multilateral development financier for any private-sector manufacturing project in the country, signalling ADB's growing emphasis on funding private enterprise.

Besides, the loan sources in the Board of Investment (BOI) said yesterday, the ADB puts 4 million dollars in equity to the giant 90 million-dollar (equivalent to about Tk 360 crore) project.

Sources said Asian Finance and Investment Company (AFIC), the private-sector credit arm of the ADB, was also putting a stake of \$5 million in the venture which will be the biggest and the most modern cement plant in the country.

Apart from the ADB and

One killed, 4 hurt in Chokoria gunfight

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 28: A fierce gunfight between two rival groups in Chokoria thana of the district today left one person dead and four others wounded, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said the clash occurred at 10 am over cultivation of salt in a disputed land in the coastal belt.

They said the two groups exchanged about 35 shots during the hour-long fight.

The dead was identified as Abdul Gafur, 24, while the wounded are: Nurul Alam, Mozammel Haq, Noor Mohammad and Kabir Ahmed.

The injured were admitted to a local clinic and Health Complex.

A case was filed with Chokoria police. One person was arrested in this connection.

Admin reform

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ment bodies.

The five-member committee, headed by former Secretary M Nurul Nabi Chowdhury, has been asked to submit reports on the remaining organisations by March 31.

Sources close to the expert body told UNB that recommendations were being made after conducting extensive survey on functions, workloads, equipment, objective conditions, practical situation, economic resources and other relevant matters of the organisations.

They said the committee had recommended abolition of some departments, created during British rule to meet the requirements of the existing conditions, which have become obsolete and redundant with the passage of time.

On the other hand, recommendations have also been made to open new organisations and expansion of certain establishments to cope with the fast-changing milieu.

Special DU Senate meet today

By DU Correspondent

A special meeting of the Dhaka University Senate will be held today to discuss irregularities in different sectors of the university, sources said.

Seven teachers and 25 registered graduates in a letter had requested the Vice Chancellor to call a special meeting of the Senate by January 29, sources added.

The two agenda mentioned in the letter were — irregularities in appointing teachers and officers in the university and delay in the implementation of the decisions taken by the Senate.

2 JCD leaders held in Pabna: Hartal today

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Jan 28: Local BNP and its front organisations have called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the town tomorrow protesting the arrest of two JCD leaders today.

Police and witnesses said Raquib Rana (25), VP of Pabna Commerce College Students Union, and Jufikar Ali, district JCD leader, were arrested from their residences during a pre-dawn raid by the law-enforcing agencies.

Police said Raquib was arrested in connection with two cases under sections 148/149/323/325/307 and 148/149/448/380/427 of BPC. Zulfikar was arrested under Section 54 CrPC.

Oath after
3 years!

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday issued an order for oath of a municipal chairman three years after his election.

Shamsul Alam Master of Patiya thana, Chittagong was elected in June 1992, but he complained to the Election Commission that due to the "influence of a powerful person" he could not take oath.

In its order, the EC asked the Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong to come to the EC office on February 4 and complete the process of oath.

The CEC expressed his regret for the incident.

Shamsul Alam Master, a leader of Jatiya Party had defeated BNP candidate Mah-mud Ali in the race.

Attack on BNP polls campaigners:

CHITTAGONG, Jan 28: At least eight BNP supporters were injured when unidentified persons attacked them during their election campaign at Nanupur in Fatikchhari thana today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said they attacked the supporters of Nazibul Bashir Maibhandani, a BNP nominee for the constituency of Chittagong-4, when they were returning home at about 8 pm.

Lawyers

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cling to power by snatching people's franchise.

The chief guest of the function, Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, narrated to the lawyers how the opposition parties were compelled to go for a movement for election under caretaker government.

"We are repeating the movement for ensuring voting rights of the people the way it was done against autocratic Ershad," she said blaming the ruling BNP for creating such situation.

Hasina said the Lalbagh carnage after mayoral election and Magura by election instilled in the Opposition the apprehension that there could not be any free and fair election under this party government.

The Leader of the Opposition in the last parliament said the ruling BNP did not allow the opposition parties to talk people's problems in the last parliament, which finally compelled them to quit the House.

"We want to make people the real source of power," Hasina said, adding a government formed through a fair election will be accountable to the people. Political and economic freedoms of people and stability can only be ensured under such a government, she observed.

Hasina said 90 per cent people would not go to the polling centres to cast their votes in the "one-party farfical" elections, scheduled for February 15, which has been boycotted by all major opposition parties.

The meeting was presided over by Advocate Shamsul Huq Chowdhury, President of the Parishad, Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman, Advocate Shudangshu Shekar Halder, Dr Zahir, Barrister Showkat Ali Khan, Advocate Basat Majumder, Advocate Mesbauddin and Advocate Ozair Farooq took part in the discussion.

Awami League leaders Syeda Johura Tajuddin, Abdus Samad Azad, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razaque, Surunjit Sen Gupta and Begum Matiya Chowdhury also attended the meeting.

The Midnight File

China ships parts for Pak N-power plant

BEIJING, Jan 28: China has shipped parts for a nuclear power plant it is building in Pakistan, according to an official newspaper report. The condenser, high and low-pressure heaters and other equipment left Shanghai Friday for Chasma, the Liberation Daily reported Saturday, says AP.

LTTE steps up attack on troops in Jaffna

COLOMBO, Jan 28: Tamil Tiger guerrillas have stepped up attacks in their former citadel of Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka despite a large military presence in the region, defence sources said today, reports AFP.

An estimated 150 rebels from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were believed to be trapped in Jaffna, the capital of a de facto state of the

Tigers captured by security forces earlier last month, the sources said.

"They keep infiltrating areas dominated by the troops and try to carry out hit-and-run attacks," a defence source here said adding that troops had been alerted for fresh attacks.

There had been a spate of attacks against army bunker lines in Jaffna and at least five rebels and one soldier died in gun battles and a mine explosion in the past four days, officials said.

Tens of thousands of Tamil civilians who fled the fighting in Jaffna between October and December last year still remain in refugee camps located on the southern and eastern regions of the Jaffna peninsula still under rebel control.

However, about 10,000 people have trickled back to the Jaffna town to take advantage of generous rehabilitation allowances and food provided by security forces, officials said.

The military lost some 500 soldiers and claimed to have killed more than 2,000 LTTE guerrillas in the battle for Jaffna.

Rule nisi

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din Chowdhury and Shahabuddin of Hobiganj district, Ariful Islam Masum and Iqbal Hasan Khan of Dhaka, and Shahabuddin of Dinajpur district.

Talking to The Daily Star, counselor Nizamul Islam Nasim said all the detained people were arrested in December and January.

The combined team of the law enforcing agencies failed to recover any weapon or "other form of incriminating articles" from their possessions, he said.

Advocate Nasim said the arrested were not shown any warrant of arrest, nor any order from any authority.

He said that the law enforcing agencies had failed to serve any ground for those who were arrested in Dhaka while, for Hobiganj and Dinajpur, the grounds were "vague and unspecified."

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Uttara	Divisional Engineer	893366
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