

Govt employees on polls duty

Ensure security or refrain from taking punitive steps

By Staff Correspondent

A section of the administrative cadre officers and government employees at a meeting at the Secretariat yesterday decided that they would not perform election duty on security reasons.

Some 3,000 officers and employees at the meeting in front of the Works Ministry building adopted a declaration that they would not do polls duty in a "heavily insecure situation" and urged the authorities not to take any action for this.

It was also decided at the meeting that officers and employees would unitedly resist any action against any of them for failure in discharging election duty.

The meeting was attended by a good member of mid-ranking and junior officers including deputy secretaries and assistant secretaries and members of the Bangladesh Secretariat Karmachari Sangjukta Parishad, a combine of six associations of employees.

Leaders of the Stenographers Association, Typist Association, Secretariat Fourth Class Employees Association, Hishab Rashkhan Karmachari Samity, Bangladesh Government Steno-typists Association Sarkari Karmachari Sanghati Parishad attended the meeting.

Sayed Mohiuddin, president and Azizur Rahim.

When contacted last night secretary general of the BCS Administrative Service Association, Md Nuruzzaman Mia told The Daily Star that as employee of the republic, no government servant could deny election duty but, in the present law and order situation everyone was scared about personal security.

He, however, added that the CEC gave assurance of proper security measures in election duties.



Awami League President Sheikh Hasina waving while passing through a city street in a rickshaw during the Opposition-called countrywide rail-road-waterways barricade programme yesterday. — Star photo

Barricade programme

From Page 1

Pickets set ablaze two autorickshaws, one at Mirpur and the other at Kutubkhali, at around 11am yesterday. JP women activists also set fire to a tempo at Mahakhali at noon. A clash between the women activists and women police also took place at Mahakhali.

Shamsul Haq, a photo journalist of vernacular daily the Bhorer Kagoj, was seriously wounded when brickbats were pelted at him allegedly by some activists. He was taking snaps of the scuffle between women police and women activists of JP.

Rail communication was severely disrupted due to the barricade programme. The Noakhali bound Upakul Express from Dhaka was stopped at Comilla station by pickets. They also damaged the windscreen of its engine room, said Railway sources.

Some inter-city train services were cancelled while those that left the stations could not reach their destinations because of barricades raised by pickets at various points, the sources added.

Railway sources further said that fishplates were found missing at Dohazari in Chittagong-Nazirhat section and between Pubail and Tong stations. Those, however, were restored quickly.

Barricades were put up at 50 other spots across the country to disrupt rail communication, sources said. As regards train communication, Dhaka was cut off with Chittagong, Rajshahi, Noakhali and Mymensingh on the day.

Security measures were tightened by deploying police squads at various junction stations, railway sources said.

Road communication was also severely affected as inter-district bus services did not operate. No buses operated to or from any of the three inter-district bus terminals in the city. Barricades were raised at all the entry points of the city.

City bus service also remained off the roads. Rickshaws were, however, seen plying in different parts of the city in larger number. A small number of tempos and autorickshaws also operated.

Police was deployed at the bus terminals.

Sources at the Sadarghat launch terminal said that launch services remained almost unaffected.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong reports: A day-long barricade programme passed off in the city amidst sporadic incidents of clashes between opposition activists and the police.

The city, however, became tense after the evening as sporadic bomb blasts continued even after the barricade hours.

Barricades were raised at the port jetties and other strategic points by the pickets, affecting movement of goods to and from Chittagong Port.

Our Narayanganj Correspondent reports: At least six vehicles were set afire and a dozen others were damaged during the barricade hours in the town yesterday. Sporadic bomb blasts continued throughout the day.

The local office of the BNP was ransacked and set ablaze at around 7 in the morning yesterday.

Khaleda visits Prof Mansur Musa at CMH

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday visited Prof. Mansur Musa, Director General of the Bangla Academy, at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka, reports UNB.

Prof Musa was hospitalised after he had received serious head injury in an attack allegedly by Chhatra League activists near Azimpur Graveyard on February 9 when he was returning home after attending the burial of a brother-in-law.

The Prime Minister also visited two senior assistant secretaries of the Health Ministry at Suhrwardy Hospital in the afternoon.

The officials, Mizanur Rahman and Sirajul Islam, were injured in bomb attack in front of the Residential Model College at Moham-madpur on February 11.

The Prime Minister visited the injured police personnel at the Rajarbagh Police Hospital in afternoon.

Ctg Jubo Dal leader killed in bomb blast

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 13: One Jubodal leader was killed while a few others were injured in a bomb explosion in Mughaltoli area of the city last night.

Police said, Shah Alam, 25, Jubodal leader of West Madarai received serious bomb injuries along with some party activists near Mughaltoli boys club. He was rushed to Chittagong Medical College hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

According to police the explosion occurred when bombs were being manufactured.

Police and BDR raided the area after the explosion and recovered some bomb making materials.

But BNP leaders say, Shah Alam was killed in a bomb attack by anti election activists when he was holding a meeting of party workers.

Resist one-party polls: LDF

The Left Democratic Front yesterday urged all democratic and anti-communal forces to resist the one-party elections by observing hartal today and 'black day' tomorrow, reports UNB.

The LDF called upon the people to observe February 15, the voting day, as 'black day' by hoisting black flags and staying out of the polls.

At a meeting the Front leaders said Khaleda Zia would have no political legitimacy for talks with the Opposition after the 'one-party' elections.

"She will have to hold on to power like the autocratic Ershad regime by means of arrest and killing after the vote," the LDF said in its reaction on Begum Zia's speech.

The Midnight File

Serbs boycott disarmament talks

VIENNA, Feb 13: Bosnian Serb representatives today boycotted disarmament talks here to protest the transfer of two top Serb army officers to the Hague for questioning on war crimes, officials said, reports AFP.

13 JN hall students granted bail

By SC Correspondent

Thirteen students of Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University, detained under the Special Powers Act, were granted bail by the High Court Division yesterday.

It was the first time the High Court Division had ever granted bail in detention case.

Earlier, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh granted bail to Ahmed Nazir on medical grounds which was reported in the 27DLR (Dhaka Law Report).

The students were enlarged on bail on the grounds of their examination.

A division bench of the HC comprising Justice Bimalendu Bikash Roy Chowdhury and Justice Muhammad Abdul Mannan granted bail to 13 students of Jagannath Hall and Sheikh Rezaul Islam of S. M. Hall with the satisfaction of the Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka.

But Pankaj Kumar Bose of Gopalganj who came to visit his younger brother, Sadhan Bose, a 3rd year student of the marketing department was not granted bail.

The detenus along with 78 students were arrested from Jagannath hall on January 31 on the eve of the inauguration of the Bangla Academy Book Fair by the Prime Minister.

The arrested students were granted bail on February 3 by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka. But these 15 were served the order of detention on February 3 and they could not come out on that bail.

The government lodged two cases with Ramna Thana under the Explosive Substances Act and under the Penal Code against the accused.

Subash Singha Roy, Vice-President of Jagannath Hall Student Union, on behalf of 14 detenus, and Mong A Ching Chak on behalf of Prity-atara Chak, filed separate Habeas Corpus writ petition.

Private Hajj pilgrims advised to collect visa at own initiative

The pilgrims intending to perform Hajj-96 outside government arrangement have been advised to collect visa from Saudi embassy here at their own initiatives, reports UNB.

The private Hajj pilgrims will have to pay 879 Saudi rials Moallim and transportation fees in Saudi Arabia for movement to different places. They can take bank draft for the amount.

The pilgrims should also have an endorsement of 600 US dollars in their international passport out of which they may take 300 US dollars as cash and the rest of the dollars as endorsement cheque.

Each pilgrim must have non-refundable return hajj ticket to come back, said a PID handout yesterday.

It said no pilgrim would be allowed to take any passport other than his own international one.

The organisations and agencies which will arrange visas for private pilgrims must ensure accommodation at Makkah and Medina and transportation arrangement before the hajjis leave for Saudi Arabia.

Each pilgrim should have 12 copies of (4x3 size) recent photographs with him to meet different needs.

48-hr hartal

From Page 1

rejected the one-party polls." She alleged that the police had attacked people in capital Dhaka and in Barisal town during the barricade programme and arrested many of them.

"The government, using police, BDR and its terrorists force went on a rampage in the Barisal town, ransacked the offices of opposition political parties, including the Awami League office," Hasina said claiming that at least 50 of her party workers were injured.

The Awami League chief urged the people to observe "a people's curfew" tomorrow and not to come out of doors during the polling hours.

SC Bar Assoc

From Page 1

In a resolution adopted at the meeting, the association expressed deep concern at what it called use of the army, BDR and police by the party in power for its political interest.

The association also urged the armed forces not to help hold the 'blue-print' election in view of the peoples' demand and demanded that the armed forces be taken back to barracks.

The meeting was chaired by Advocate SM Zillul Huq, Vice President of the Association while Barrister Amirul Islam, Advocate Wajir Farooq, Saidur Rahman, Joyal Abedin and Mahbub Alam spoke among others.

Bomb scare

From Page 1

received the call, the caller wanted to talk to the CEC. He then told the private secretary that the building would soon be up as there was a powerful bomb.

Uniformed and plainclothes securitymen immediately sealed off the EC Secretariat. A three-man-team from the Special Branch equipped with modern bomb detecting devices scanned every room of the Secretariat. All visitors including pressmen were barred from entering the building.

An EC official said that army would be deployed at the EC Secretariat from today.

Plainclothes securitymen at the EC said to this correspondent that two persons were arrested on suspicion from near the EC headquarters at around noon yesterday. They were later handed over to Tejaگون police. The two were identified as Rafiqul Islam, 25, and Saidul Islam, 27, from Talata Government quarters Agargaon.

When contacted, Tejaگون police said that they were released after warning.

Meanwhile, EC officials and staff were asked to take necessary preparations for spending the next two days within the office premises.

Many officials and staff of the commission were seen yesterday preparing for this. Some rooms have already been supplied with beds. The office canteen which remained closed during the month of Ramadan will open today to facilitate their stay.

Shun violence

From Page 1

avoid further violence to avoid intimidation and anti-democratic acts, and as we've said before we believe in the fullest possible transparency in the electoral process," Burns said.

The State Department spokesman said Washington hoped that domestic and international observers approved for the election on Thursday would receive maximum cooperation from the Dhaka government.

He also regretted the failure of efforts to mediate between the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and opposition parties led by the Awami League.

Relation

From Page 1

position leader Hasina stood on way to a solution to the political crisis.

This is not true, she said responding to the newsman during an exchange of views on the country's current political situation and February 15 general elections.

"We are both attending many social functions. There we get together and talk. There is no personal conflict between us," the Prime Minister said smiling.

"The difference between us is completely political," she said.

Kidnapped girl rescued

By Staff Correspondent

Police rescued a four-year-old girl within four hours she was kidnapped by the housemaid from her residence at Nayanagar at Gulshan in the city Monday night.

Tamanna, daughter of Moulana Delwar Hossain was kidnapped by the maid, Parvin Akhter, 19, at around 6:30pm Monday, police said. A ransom of Tk 1.5 lakh was demanded for her release.

Gulshan police rescued the girl from Kamalapur railway station and arrested the kidnapper at around 10:30pm. The maid with the kidnapped girl, Tamanna, was on way to Chittagong, police said.

The father of Tamanna had received a letter in which he was asked to be at the gate of Chittagong EPZ at 3pm Wednesday with Tk 1.5 lakh to get his daughter back.

Police suspected that an organised gang of child lifting in Chittagong was behind the kidnapping.

Parvin started working as a maid at the house some days ago, police said. She told police that she was assured Tk 5,000 if she could hand over the girl to the gang.

Parvin was given Tk 100 for rail fare to take the girl to Chittagong, police added.



Police Monday night rescued a child (in the arms of her father) from traffickers at Kamalapur Railway Station and arrested one Parvin Akhter (Front). — Star photo

Two minors burnt alive in Mirpur

By Staff Correspondent

Two sisters, aged about five and six years were burnt alive in a fire in Mirpur section 12 in the city early yesterday.

The devastating fire gutted around 17 tin-shed houses leaving at least 60 people of about 18 families homeless, police said. The fire broke out reportedly from an electric short circuit at about 2.30 am.

The deceased children — Tami, 6, and Ratna, 5 — were the daughters of one Abul Kashem, father of four. Kashem was a vegetables vendor in a local market.

At least 20 families were residing in around 300 square feet one-room houses each, police said. Most of them belonging to the low income group, mainly small vendors and workers of local garments factories, were the tenants of the houses for which each family used to pay about Tk 700/- per month.

One Alauddin was the caretaker of the residential plot where the makeshift houses were built, said a policeman adding that one Tora Khatun was the owner of the land.

The blaze engulfed the whole area within a very short time when most of the inmates were in deep sleep. The supply of electricity in the houses was taken from a single connection. According to police, there was only one metre for all the sub-lines.

Businessmen clash in Sylhet; 15 hurt

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Feb 13: At least 15 persons were injured in a clash between two groups of businessmen at Jaintapur bazar this afternoon.

Of the injured, three with critical wounds were admitted to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

PM: Caretaker govt

From Page 1

people in their movement.

About the voters' turn out in tomorrow's elections, Begum Zia said people would go to the polling centres in a large number if there is no intimidation or threats to voters from the Opposition side.

She said that in the face of opposition threats, the turn out might be little less. But that will not affect the credibility of the elections, she added.

"If the turn out is less, it will also prove the sovereignty of the Election Commission and no-interference of the government," Begum Zia said adding, "Despite all odds, I am hopeful of a good turn out as the scenario between urban and rural area is different."

If such acts of violence continue even after the elections the government has the responsibility of taking stern action to protect the life and property of the people.

The Prime Minister earlier gave a resume of her party's efforts to reach a consensus with the Opposition to resolve the crisis.

She said that the ruling BNP had given enough con-

cessions since the beginning of dialogue and shown much sincerity to resolve the crisis created by the Opposition. She blamed the Opposition for the continuing crisis.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Commerce and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam and Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Mohammad Mozammel Haq were present at the press conference.

Indemnity issue

Begum Khaleda Zia said, she had not made any commitment to opposition leader Sheikh Hasina for scrapping the Indemnity Ordinance that blocked the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"It is completely untrue," the Prime Minister told a correspondent.

Begum Zia said: I did not make any commitment to anybody. No private commitment. Whatever I committed, I did it in my party's election manifesto and my election projection speech.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina repeatedly claims that Begum Zia had committed to her to scrapping the ordinance in the last Parliament.

Ballot boxes snatched at many places

From Page 1

set the office on fire, according to witnesses.

The Opposition activists ransacked a dozen other offices including the BNP district office, DC's office and foiled another election campaign meeting at Hasan Ali High School premises.

In sporadic bomb attacks in the town, at least 25 others were injured. Of them the condition of school teacher Abdul Aziz (30), an unidentified woman and one Shawkat Ali (40) were serious.

Meanwhile, another campaign meeting was foiled at Matlab thana.

Our Jhenidah Correspondent reports: Anti-polls activists set ablaze the Maheshpur election commission office Monday night. Witnesses said, documents and furniture were damaged in the fire.

Earlier, the Maheshpur BNP office was also ransacked.

In Courtchandpur in the afternoon, anti-polls activists set the local BNP office on fire.

Anti-polls activists also hurled bombs at a campaign meeting at the Jhenidah Thana Parishad auditorium with bombs. During the bomb attack one police constable, Wares Ali, was injured.

In Kathalbag area of Bakharba village under Shaikupura thana four youths were injured in explosion while making bombs late Monday night, witnesses said.

Our Sherpur Correspondent reports: Anti-polls activists snatched ballot boxes from three polling centres in the town.

Two policemen were hurt in clashes with Opposition activists at the Raghunath Bazar area in the evening yesterday.

The anti-polls activists hurled a petrol bomb on a traffic police post in Sherpur town, which later spread in a fire. The fire was brought under control after the fire brigade rushed there.

During the day, a number of shops were also ransacked by the agitators.

Our Khulna Correspondent reports: At least 25 persons including three members of the Ansars were injured in a 45-minute clash between police and Opposition activists at Royal Hotel Square in the city yesterday.

Of the injured, the condition of district BCL secretary Abul Kalam, BCL leader Jahangir and Jubo Dal activist Kamrul is stated to be serious, party sources said.

Witnesses said, the clashes spread all over the city as police dispersed an AL procession by lobbing tear gas shells at around 6:45 pm. Five bombs were hurled at the DC office.

A series of bombs were blasted near the Jubo Dal office at Johra gate at noon while scores of crackers were blasted on the Agrani Road and Iqbal Road.

Our Staff Correspondent in Chittagong reports: Anti-polls activists set fire on some election centres at City Girls School, Aparna Charan Girls' School and Railway Colony School.

A BNP camp was set ablaze at around 6:30 pm at the Lalkhanbazar. Bombs were hurled at Pahartoli, Andarkilla and some other places aiming. Bombs were also blasted in front of the DC's residence.

UNB adds: Anti-polls agitators set fire to the residence of BNP central leader Oil Ahmed's father-in-law at Laldighi last night.

In Sirajganj, seven persons were injured in a clash between pro and anti-election activists in front of the Tarash Degree College yesterday.

Earlier in the morning, anti-polls activists foiled a training programme for election officers at the college premises by hurling crackers and pelting stones.

In Rajshahi, clashes between police and Opposition activists left at least 12 people injured yesterday evening at Shaheb Bazar Zero Point.

Earlier, the AL, JP and Jamaat brought out separate processions in the city in support of their 48-hour hartal call. While the AL procession was passing by Zero Point, several crude bombs were hurled at police.

Two of the injured were admitted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital with bullet wounds.

In Bogra, the unit offices of BNP and Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal were burnt late Monday when several petrol bombs were hurled, witnesses said.

Anti-election activists hurled bombs on the NDA candidate for the Bogra Sadar constituency, N Alam, Monday afternoon at Kanugari in the town, injuring him seriously.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reports: Anti-election activists snatched away ballot boxes from Gaibandha Sadar TNO office and threw them to a nearby pond. They also ransacked the office.

The activists also ransacked Sadullapur thana BNP office and locked in a clash with the police in which the Sadullapur thana OC was injured.

Meanwhile, the activists ransacked Sundarganj thana VDP and BNP offices.

The Gaibandha Thana Parishad employees and bank officers submitted memorandums to the DC saying that they would not perform election duties.

Our staff correspondent from Barisal reports: Eight people were injured three of them seriously, in clashes between the activists of BNP and the Opposition parties at around 11 am in Sadar road in the town. The Opposition activists earlier set ablaze the BNP office.

The police rushed there and lobbed tear gas shells to disperse the two-hour long

BNP office to remain open for 48 hours

The central office of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) at 28/1 Naya Paltan in the city will remain open for 48 hours from today on the occasion of the 6th parliamentary elections, reports UNB.

BNP candidates, and presidents and secretaries of its city, town, district, pourashava and thana units have been requested to send the election results and any information related to it over telephone.

The telephone numbers are 415955, 418214, 419585 and 833809 and the fax number is 838687.