



The Ramna thana Awami League brought out an election procession in the Dhaka-10 constituency of the city yesterday. — Star photo

Biswas tells foreign observers Election will be more transparent than before

The caretaker government and the Election Commission have taken all possible measures for holding the forthcoming election in an impartial and credible manner to make it a model, reports UNB.

This was stated yesterday by President Abdur Rahman Biswas while talking to Commonwealth and SAARC observer groups who are here to oversee the June 12 general election of Bangladesh.

President Biswas hoped that the election this year would be more transparent than before. "It can act as a model for other countries if the efforts are successful," he told the polls observers.

Officials said a 4-member Commonwealth election observer group led by Tan Sri Dr Mohammad Ghazali Shafie called on President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban.

Welcoming them, President Biswas observed that there was great enthusiasm among the people for the forthcoming elections, which he said, would be held in a free, fair and impartial manner.

President Biswas said the caretaker government having constitutional strength and footing had taken great care to ensure congenial atmosphere

Ershad

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concerned within 15 days of the announcement of the election schedule, the sources said.

Ershad was registered as a voter in Rangpur, according to JP sources. When contacted the Deputy Commissioner of Rangpur, who is also the RO of the area where Ershad was registered as voter, said he did not receive any request for Ershad's postal ballot.

CEC: Any irregularity

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The army would intervene only in case of emergency and would operate under the supervision of a magistrate.

Considering the inadequate number of magistrates to do the job, other officers have been vested with magistrate's power to join in the duty. In addition, some 1,650 magistrates from Dhaka are being mobilised across the country, Abu Hena said.

In the rural areas where good communication system is lacking, "additional people" will remain stand-by in the polling centers and in case of any violence, rigging, overpowering or other irregularity, they will rush to inform the police, BDR, the army unit or the TNO serving as the Assistant Returning Officer, the CEC said.

At every district headquarters, a control room will be set up with representatives of the EC, police, BDR and the army.

About the counting of votes, the CEC said that the candidates have been instructed to ask their polling agents at the centres to obtain a certified copy of the result immediately after the counting is over.

Abu Hena said that the chances for rigging in the election were "very slim" because of the "tremendous awareness" among the people. Presence of the polling agents (numbering at least five in every centre), Electoral Enquiry Committee and the observers would work as a "check and balance," he said.

About the Taka three lakh ceiling set for a candidate's election expenses and its alleged widespread violation, the CEC said that he would have sought amendment to the law if he had time in his hand.

"But as per law every candidate is required to send his source of election expenses within seven days after the date of withdrawal," he said adding that the candidate is also required, by law, to submit a statement on his expenses within fifteen days after the polls.

Khaleda goes to Ctg today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 8: BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia is scheduled to visit different constituencies of the district for the third time tomorrow.

She will arrive here in the morning and address public meetings at Katgarh Bazar in Doublenmooring thana and New Market crossing in Kotwali thana in the port city.

JP to file writ today seeking Ershad's release

The Jatiya Party yesterday alleged that a deep-rooted conspiracy is being hatched to prevent the party from getting majority in the Wednesday's parliamentary elections, reports UNB.

Briefing newsmen, JP Election Conducting Committee chairman Saeed Tarek said the caretaker government was blocking the way of free and fair election by not releasing Ershad on parole to record his television speech.

He told the press that a writ petition will be filed today in the High Court, seeking Ershad's release before the polls.

1500 'chocolate' bombs recovered

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, June 8: Kotwali thana police recovered 1,500 "chocolate" bombs from two young men at the Rupsha ferry ghat here today.

The police said, the two men — Rezaul Karim and Saiduzzaman — were going to Gopalganj after buying the bombs from Khulna Bazar.

A case has been filed with Kotwali thana.

JCD worker

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Police lobbed 5 rounds of tear gas shells to bring the situation under control. Later police also fired 4 rounds of bullets. The protesters then dispersed but JCD worker Anwar Hossain was seen lying on the road. He was taken to hospital with bullet injuries in his head. He died shortly afterwards.

The body was sent to the Bholu Sadar hospital morgue for autopsy.

The BNP held a meeting in front of the Town Hall this afternoon to protest the killing.

Meanwhile, the BNP activists detained a prison van tonight. The prison van was released after the release of the two arrested BNP leaders on bail.

Former BNP MP Mossaraf Hossain Sahjahan has condemned the killing and said AL is responsible for this. Former AL MP Tofael Ahmed has denied the allegation.

The Police Super said, the death of the JCD activist was mysterious.

'Fake' cassette seized

JHALAKATHI, June 8: An audio cassette with the recorded voice of an unknown woman imitating Awami League president Sheikh Hasina was seized by police in the town on Friday night, reports UNB.

The cassette reportedly contains remarks like "Rakkhi Rahini will be re-established if Awami League goes to power" and "the friendship treaty with India will be renewed."

Acting on a tip, Sadar thana police recovered the cassette from a mike shop in Purbachadkati area of the town, allegedly owned by a BNP supporter, Abdul Barek, who was absconding.

Police made a GD entry in this connection.

People crossing

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under the normal rules. Bangladesh Rifles has been discharging its security duty along the border constantly so that none can enter Bangladesh illegally. Besides, directive have been issued to Bangladesh rifles to strengthen vigil on the border to stop illegal entry into Bangladesh on the eve of the election, it added.

The government called upon the people to report to the concerned district or thana officials about any definite information on the illegal entry of fake voters.

Japanese

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During their stay, the team members will observe polling and vote counting, and pay a courtesy call on President Abdur Rahman Biswas. They will also meet Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman and other prominent political leaders.

The team will meet the press before its departure.

69-hour

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Election Commission.

Its commercial service will be transmitted through the channel 'Ga' instead of channel 'Kha' on 10 kw microwave. No commercial service will be transmitted from any other regional station.

Besides, different kinds of reports on election-related affairs will be broadcast in-between the election bulletins.

Attractive songs and plays will be presented during the nonstop radio broadcasting.



The Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal brought out a procession in the city yesterday to drum up support for BNP candidates. — Star photo

Six BNP dissidents

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Khan, who is contesting from Chandpur-3 constituency has already been expelled from the party. Others might also face similar actions unless they withdrew themselves from the election race, a party leader said, seeking anonymity. Alam won the 1991 election on BNP ticket.

Of the six, three more including former state minister A B M Zahidul Haq (Kishoreganj-1), were elected to the fifth parliament. Two dissidents who won the 1991 elections are Kamruddin Ehiya Khan Majlish (Sirajganj-7) and Khandakar Badruddin (Tangail-7) while the two others are Rafiqul Islam (Chandpur-1) and Principal Amirul Islam (Kushtia-3). BNP sources pointed out.

Besides, two other BNP men are said to be in the election race as independent candidates although they are not active in seeking votes.

One of them is Habibur Rahman Habib, who joined the BNP failing to get nomination from the Awami League, filed nomination papers as an independent candidate from Pabna-4 and did not withdraw his candidature. Habib is currently accompanying the BNP chief in her countrywide election tour and is not campaigning for himself.

Meanwhile, senior BNP leaders like Mirza Golam Hafiz, Humayun Khan Panni, Mujibur Rahman, Ansar Ali Siddiqi, Osman Ghani Khan, Abdur Rouf Chowdhury, Mia Mohammad Mansur Ali, Mujibur Rahman Sarwar, M A Jinnah and Prof Abdul Hafiz, who won the 1991 polls and did not get party nomination this time, were not involved in the party's election activities, party insiders said.

Although most of the dissidents were tamed in various ways, a good number of them ignored all sorts of threat and persuasion from the party.

Party leaders including Maj Gen (rtd) Golam Mowla, Air Vice Marshal (rtd) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, Brig (rtd) Anwar Hossain and Abul Khaer Bhuiyan, who win the February 15 election and were denied party nomination this time, were also feeling frustrated and taking less interest in working for the party, insiders said.

Rallies banned

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Bangla Motor Link Road to Sonargaon SAARC Fountain crossing, from the east end of Panthapath to the Mirpur Road crossing through Green Road link road, from Farmgate to Parjatan crossing, from Parjatan crossing to the Karatoa crossing on the Mirpur Road through Crescent Road, from Karatoa crossing to Dhanmondi Boys' High school on Mirpur Road, Indira Road, Khetur Bagan, the restricted areas of the Sangsod Bhaban and all other adjoining roads, the DMP press release said.

DMP also banned carrying of all kinds of weapons, explosives, sticks and other harmful and illegal objects in the above mentioned areas, it added.

Equipment

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be embarrassing for both our governments were to become widely known that British taxpayers had funded an important piece of equipment which, through neglect, had fallen into disuse. We would hope the CAA places priority on the proper use of this equipment... we shall be ready to consider a request for assistance from technical assistance funds."

But the CAA started dilly-dallying over the question of paying Customs Duty (CD)/VAT for the spare parts to be imported for the repair work.

According to rules, the beneficiary of the fund is supposed to bear the cost of CD and VAT for the spare parts that will be required for refurbishing the rotten timber decking on the hover platform of the DARS.

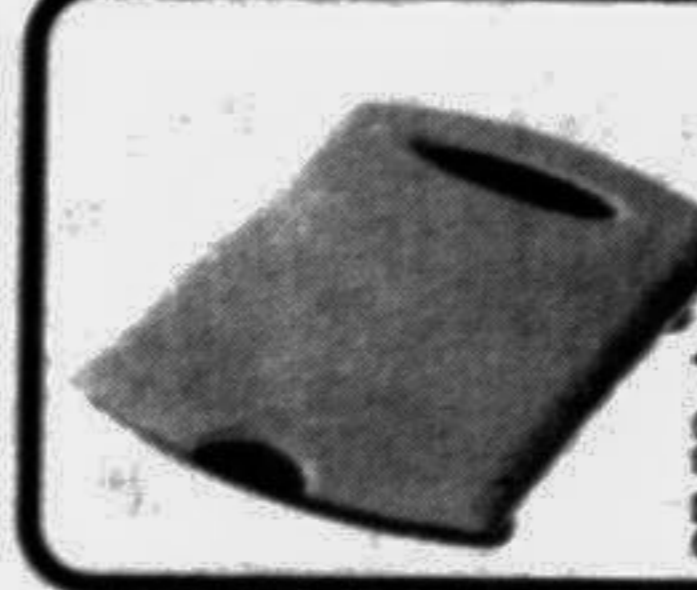
Although this was explicitly mentioned in the GOB rules, the CAA, after more than two years, had sent a letter to the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism in November, 1995, asking for clearance for CD/VAT.

The Ministry made further dilly-dallying on the issue and finally, on May 25, 1996, gave its clearance about payment of CD/VAT which was viewed as a "redundant exercise" by some officials in the CAA, the sources said.

Officials of the CAA told this correspondent that if the authority did not take immediate steps to avail this fund for repair of the DARS the fund might be withdrawn.

The agent who acts on behalf of the British government in handling all aid programmes wrote to the Chairman of the CAA in November, 1995, "Failure to take speedy steps for repair of the DARS may result in the British Government's withdrawal of the offer to fund the refurbishing." The costs would then fall on the CAA," it had said.

The Daily Star contacted the public relations department of the CAA to know the official position on the cause of delay of the repair work. But it did not make any comment.



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Hasina's polls campaign tour

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina will address public meetings at different places of Natore, Naogaon and Rajshahi districts today, reports UNB.

The AL chief will fly to Ishurdi and then address election rallies at Lalpur, Natore, Singra, Naogaon and Rajshahi. She will return to the capital this afternoon, said a party press release.

Hasina

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money and resources through corruption. She urged the people to give reply to this through ballots.

Explaining her party programmes for Sylhet division, she said that if voted to power, her party would try to improve the lot of the labourers of the tea gardens and fix wages for them in keeping with the prices of essentials. Flood problems in Sylhet region would be solved through proper planning, she said.

The AL chief claimed that local AL MPs in the 5th parliament had submitted flood control plans to the Parliamentary Committee on Water Resource and Flood Control. But the then Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, who is also the local nominee of BNP refused to allocate funds to implement the flood control plans in Sylhet region.

She also introduced her party nominees Md Shahab Uddin (M'bazar-1), Sultan Md Monsur Ahmed (M'bazar-2) and Azizur Rahman (M'bazar-3).

Violation of code of conduct AL complains to EC against Biswas

The Awami League yesterday urged the Election Commission not to give election duty to those teachers who had met with the President recently, reports UNB.

"We have conveyed to the EC our apprehension that the President may influence them... they should be relieved of their election duty for the sake of free and fair election," AL leader S A M S Kibria told newsmen in the city yesterday afternoon.

A 3-member AL delegation met Election Commissioner Abidur Rahman earlier in the day and lodged a written complaint accusing President Abdur Rahman Biswas of violating election code of conduct by pledging to upgrade Barisal BM University College to a full-fledged university.

Referring to much talked Feroze Rashid won't contest elections

By Staff Correspondent

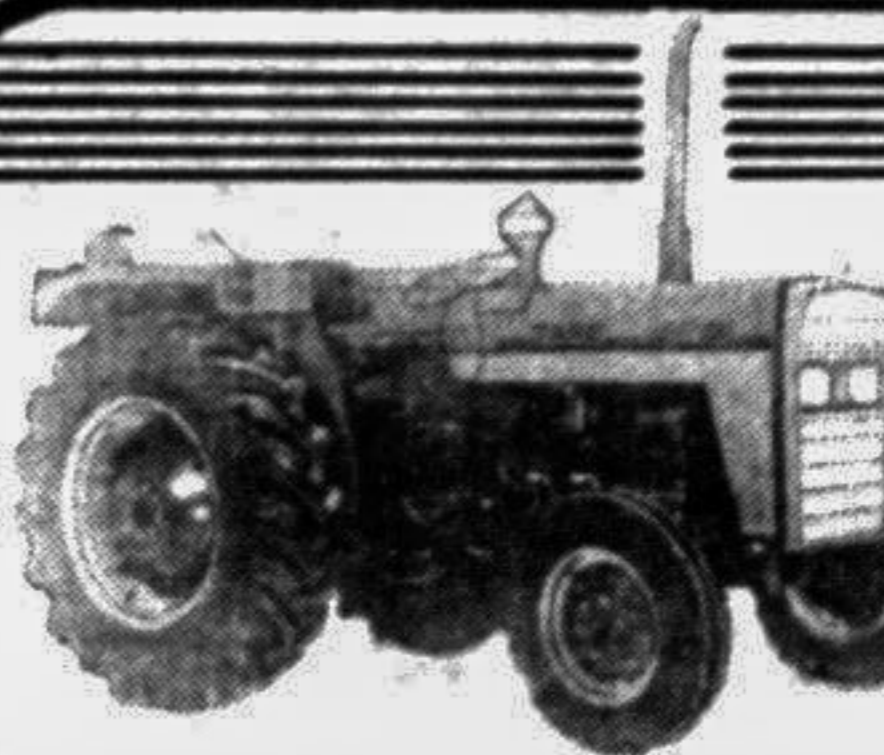
Kazi Feroze Rashid, a Jatiya Party (JP) candidate for Dhaka-9 and Gopalganj-3, announced the withdrawal of his candidature from both seats yesterday his spokesman said.

Earlier Kazi had announced the withdrawal of his candidature from Dhaka-9 constituency on Friday night.

about cassettes regarding recent incident in the army, he alleged that those 'secret' audio cassettes were being played in different election camps of BNP. Playing of such cassettes are also contrary to the election code of conduct.

The Awami League leader alleged that BNP activists had attacked the house of Tofael Ahmed in Bholu yesterday, leaving some seven BCL members injured.


Replying to a question, Kibria said reported influx of people from India was a pre-planned propaganda against Awami League. He said BDR are in the border to stop illegal intruders.



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