



BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public gathering as part of election campaign at the Registry Maidan of Sylhet town on Monday last. — Star photo

Election scene in 16 N-dists

From M A-Ali Himu

NATORE. June 10: Election campaigning in sixteen northern districts reached climax as candidates and their supporters make last minute effort to win hearts of common voters.

Many places were festive scenes with placards, banners and mikes while some candidates were seen going door to door asking voters to vote in their favour.

All the four major parties have strong organisations in this region. In 1991 election, out of total 72 seats of North Bengal, BNP captured 27 seats while AL bagged 17 seats, JP got 18 seats, Jamaat-e-Islami got seven seats and NAP and CPB got one and two seats respectively.

But this time, political observers say, candidates of AL and BNP will have to face tougher contest facing the candidates of JP and JI. The greater Rajshahi consists of Natore, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi districts and have 18 parliamentary seats. Of them, BNP bagged 9 seats, AL got 5 seats, JI got 3 seats and JP got one seat in '91 election.

There are four constituencies in Natore district. According to observers, Natore-1, 2 and 3 seats may go for BNP candidates. But they have to face strong battle with their arch rival AL. Fazlur Rahman Patal, former State Minister for Social Welfare is contesting from Natore-1 seat. Natore-4 seat is likely to witness triangular fight among AL, BNP and JP. AL candidate Abdul Kuddus is learnt to be popular in the area.

Out of total six JS seats in Naogaon district four seats are

likely to witness neck and neck fight and remaining two seats likely to face triangular fight. Strong close contest is expected between AL and JP in Naogaon-3, AL and JI in Naogaon-4 and BNP and AL in Naogaon-5 seats. Triangular fight among BNP, AL and JI is likely in Naogaon-1 and among JP, BNP and AL is likely in Naogaon-6 seats.

Jamaat candidates may see easy sail in all the three seats of Chapainawabganj political leaders say. But they are likely to face strong battles with AL in Chapainawabganj 1 and 2 seats and with BNP in the remaining seats.

Triangular contest among Jamaat, AL and BNP in likely is Rajshahi-1 and Rajshahi-5 seats while close fight between BNP and Jamaat may take place in Rajshahi-2, between AL and JP in Rajshahi-3 and between AL and Jamaat in Rajshahi-4 seats.

There are seven constituencies in Bogra district. Of them BNP bagged six seats and Jamaat got one seat in 5th parliamentary election. Some observers say that the situation may not change this time while others say that BNP candidates may face strong battles with their Jamaat, JP and AL rivals. The BNP Chairperson and Former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is contesting from Bogra-6 and 7 seats this time.

Joypurhat district consists of two seats, both of which were bagged by BNP in 1991. This time BNP candidates will face tougher contest with Jamaat candidates who have strongholds in the area. AL and JP are also strong in the two seats. Jamaat central leader Abbas Ali Khan lost this seat by

only 78 votes in 1991 election.

Of the total five JS seats in Pabna district, in 1991 election BNP won three seats and Jamaat bagged two seats. This time, from Pabna-1 seat, Jamaat Secretary General Matuor Rahman Nizami is expected to face strong battle with his powerful rivals AL candidate Prof. Abu Sayeed Chowdhury and BNP candidate Major (Retd) Monzoor Kader, a new entrant.

In Pabna-5 seat, Jamaat candidate Maulana Abdus Sobhan will also face tough contest with AL candidate, Air Vice Marshal (Retd) A K Khondoker and BNP candidate Rafiqul Islam Bakul. AL candidate in Pabna-2 seat may see easy sail this time while triangular fight is likely in Pabna-3 and 4 seats among BNP, AL and Jamaat.

In Sirajganj district, out of total 7 seats, BNP won six seats and AL Organising Secretary Md Nasim bagged one seat in 1991 election. This time, the JP leader and former Deputy Prime Minister M A Matin is contesting the polls. This is why, BNP may lose one of its seats in Sirajganj.

The greater Dinajpur consists of Panchagarh, Thakurgaon and Dinajpur districts. Greater Dinajpur has 11 JS seats. Of them, AL bagged eight seats while BNP, Jamaat and CPB won remaining three seats each in 1991 elections. AL may lose Dinajpur sadar seat this time as Jamaat has emerged as much stronger organisation there. Elder sister of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Khurshid Zahan Haque is contesting from this seat.

Thakurgaon district is a stronghold area of AL. AL candidates of all the three seats

here will face neck and neck fight with BNP candidates.

Panchagarh has two seats. This time BNP candidate Barister Jamir Uddin is likely to face close contest with JP candidate Shafiqul Alam Pradhan in Panchagarh-1 seat. CPB won Panchagarh-2 seat in 1991 election. This time this seat may be bagged by AL.

The greater Rangpur consists of Gaibandha, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari and Rangpur district. Greater Rangpur has 22 JS seats. In 1991 election, JP won 17 seats while AL bagged 3 seats and NAP and CPB got remaining seats each.

Situation of JP is better this time. AL and Jamaat have also strong organisation in this region. But BNP seems to have weaker organisation this time. This time Jamaat may win one seat while AL is likely to get two seats political leaders hope. But they have to face to face battles with their powerful JP candidates. They added, JP chairman H M Ershad is contesting from 4 seats of Rangpur, and one seat of Kurigram-1. Ershad will face a member of his then cabinet minister, Moidul Islam Mukul, a new entrant in BNP, in Kurigram-1 seat. Leaders of JP are expecting to capture 20 seats this time from Rangpur region alone.

According to a study over 72 JS seats in Rajshahi Division, it is observed that at least 21 Awami Leaguers who are not nominated this time are contesting the coming polls, as independent candidates while 17 former BNP politicians and 17 former JP politicians are contesting as independent candidates.

Vote for JP to ensure dev of rural Bangladesh: Manju

PROJUPUR. June 10: Jatiya Party Secretary General Anwar Hossain Manju said here Saturday the politics of his party was concerned with the vast majority of the people living in rural areas of the country, reports BSS.

Addressing a big electioneering meeting at Kauhkhali, he said, in the June 12 election the electorate would choose those persons who would stand by them and work for their welfare. He said the Jatiya Party government had set up health centres at the union level, taken administration and judiciary to the door steps of the people and established four high courts outside Dhaka.

But the past government had stopped all these welfare measures to the detriment of the rural people, he said adding those who had stopped all these works would be made answerable to the people.

He called upon the electorate to cast their vote in favour of Jatiya Party nominees to establish their right and ensure their due share in the development of rural Bangladesh.

Jamaat to ensure due share of Ganges water: Golam Azam

JOYPUKHAT. June 10: Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Prof. Golam Azam said here Saturday Bangladesh needed an honest, God-fearing, bold and efficient government for the realisation of the due share of the Ganges water from India, reports BSS.

He was addressing six big public meetings at Pachtr, and Panchbibi thana sadar under Joypurhat district and at Manda, Sapahar, Nazipur and Damuir under Naogaon district.

The Jamaat chief said if mandated by the people in the coming election, his party would ensure the due share of the Ganges by solving the Farakka problem. Only Jamaat could present an efficient and bold government to the nation, he maintained.

UP member injured in bomb attack

SATKHIRA. June 10: A member of Union Parishad in Sadar thana was injured in a bomb attack near his residence on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Abdul Rashid member of Kuskharhi came under attack by a gang of miscreants when he was going for election work. Police said the gang hurled bomb at him injuring him seriously. He was rushed to the Sadar hospital.

A case was registered with the police.

One held with gun, cartridges

KUSHTIA. June 10: Police raided a house in village Pant under Kumarkhali thana recently and arrested one person with one foreign made gun and twenty four cartridges. The arrested person is said to be a member of Biplobi Communist Party, reports BSS.

10 hurt in clashes in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

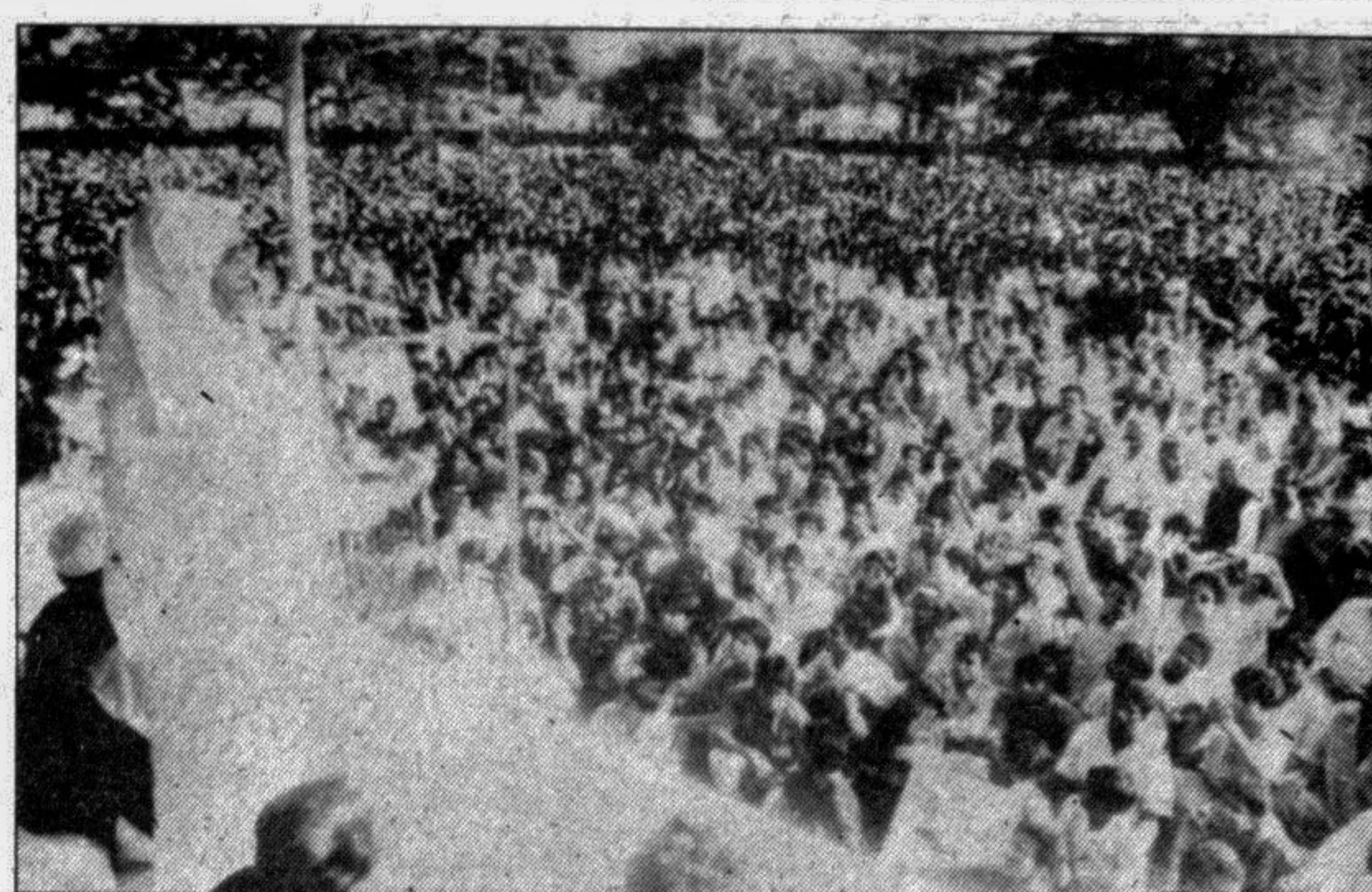
BARISAL. June 10: At least 10 persons were injured in two separate pre-polls clashes at Banaripara and Chakhar in the district Saturday. Five seriously injured were admitted to Chakhar hospital.

Police and witnesses said the clash erupted when an electioneering procession of Awami League came face to face with a procession of the BNP supporters at about 4 pm. Condition of seriously injured Ayub Ali, 33, and Tundia, 27, are reported to be critical.

Following the incident, Awami League supporters brought out a protest procession at Chakhar at about 6:30 pm and when it came in front of the local BNP office, both the groups locked in clash.

36 firearms, 26 hand-made bombs recovered in Bogra

BOGRA. June 10: Bogra police recovered 36 firearms, 26 cocktails and 73 rounds of bullets and arrested 21 persons for possessing illegal arms and ammunition from different parts of the district during the last two months, reports BSS.



AL president Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting during her election campaign at Sylhet Govt Alia Madrasa premises on Saturday. — Star photo

Nine leading politicians in race in Moulvibazar, Habiganj

From Rajat K Goswami

MOULVI BAZAR. June 10: A total of nine leading politicians are contesting in the 5th parliamentary election (1991) from two seats (Moulvibazar-3 and 4). This time he is being considered as a strong candidate.

Of these leading politicians five were former ministers of AL, BNP (Zia), JP and BNP (Khaleda) governments. Eight of them have experienced election battles and only one is contesting this year for the first time. Of the total VIP candidates of two districts six were elected MP in the past elections while three were never elected though two of them were candidates in previous elections.

In the election race, five leading politicians are being considered as strong contestants while four are being considered as weak. A female candidate is also included in this list of leading politicians.

Former finance minister M Saifur Rahman of BNP, whip of the opposition in 5th Parliament Azizur Rahman of AL and Central President of the Ershad Shishu Kishore Sangathan Mrs Nilufar Zaman Neela (Independent) are considered as leading politicians in Moulvibazar-3 (Sadar and Rajnagar thana) constituency.

M Saifur Rahman of BNP was finance minister for the longest period. He was also the chairman of the board of governors of the World Bank and IMF. He was elected MP in the

2nd parliament (1979) but suffered serious defeat in 5th parliamentary election (1991) from two seats (Moulvibazar-3 and 4). This time he is being considered as a strong candidate.

Azizur Rahman of AL was the Whip of the opposition in 5th Parliament. He was also elected MP in 1970 and 1986 election. A senior parliamentarian of the country Azizur Rahman is also a central leader of AL. Rahman is also a popular and powerful candidate in the election race. He will face BNP nominee and former Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the coming polls.

Neela Chowdhury, president of the Ershad Shishu Kishore Sangathan is contesting as an independent candidate. Chowdhury sought JP nomination in this seat.

In Moulvibazar-2 (Kulaura thana), two leading politicians are contesting. They are president of Bangladesh Muslim League Al-Haj ANM Yousuf and former president of Bangladesh Chhatra League (AL) Sultan Md Monsur Ahmed.

Muslim League President Al-Haj A N M Yousuf was elected MP in the 3rd Parliament (1986) but suffered serious defeat in the 5th parliamentary election (1991). Yousuf is the vice-chairman of the Bangladesh Bar Council.

This time Al-haj ANM Yousuf is also fighting from

Moulvibazar-1 seat.

In Hobiganj-2 (Baniachong and Ajmirgonj thanas), two former ministers are contesting against each other. They are minister of H M Ershad government Sirajul Islam Khan and adviser of the first cabinet of late president Ziaur Rahman Zakaria Chowdhury.

Sirajul Hussain Khan (JP candidate) was the only minister of Ershad government who served for the longest period. He was elected MP in 1986 and 1988 elections. In 1991 election, Khan stayed away from the race. This time he is being considered as a strong candidate. His main rival is Sharif Uddin Ahmed of AL, MP of 5th parliament.

Zakaria Chowdhury (BNP nominee), an industrialist was an Adviser in the first cabinet of late President Ziaur Rahman. In 1991 election he was defeated by a local leader of AL Sharif Uddin Ahmed.

In Hobiganj-3 (Sadar and Lakhai thanas) former state minister of H M Ershad government and well-known industrialist Syed Md Kaiser is contesting as an independent candidate.

In Hobiganj-1 (Nabiganj and Bahubhat thanas), former State Minister Dewan Farid Gazi is contesting as an AL nominee.

He was also an AL nominee in 1991 election but suffered serious defeat to a local JP leader Khalilur Rahman Chowdhury who is again contesting against Gazi.

Election scene in Cox's Bazar

From Abdul Monayem

COX'S BAZAR. June 10: With only one day to go for the 7th parliamentary election thousands of people of Cox's Bazar district have been gripped by the election fever.

Candidates of main four political parties are holding processions and meetings almost every day. Contesting candidates are also mobilising supporters through door to door contacts and regular meetings with the help of local workers. Local people said that, neck and neck fight may take place between Awami League and Jamaat candidates in all four seats of the district.

AL secured two seats, BNP and Jamaat secured one each in the 1991 elections in the district.

Number of total voters in the district is 7,26,706. Of them 3,72,814 are male and 3,53,892 are female voters. The latest situation of 4 local constituencies are stated as follows:

COX'S BAZAR-1 (Chokoria thana): Number of total voters - 2,11,538 of them 1,08,245 are male and 1,03,293 are female voters. A total of 83 polling stations will be set up in this constituency for June 12 election. Salah Uddin Ahmed of BNP, Enamul Haq Manju of Jamaat, Salah Uddin Ahmed of AL and Monwar Alam of JP are the main contestants in this seat.

Other candidates in this seat are, Haji Basirul Alam (Workers Party), Md. Abdur Rahim Bangladesh (Islami Oikya Jote), Abu Hossain Mono (Independent), Manarul Islam (Independent), Md. Ibrahim Chowdhury (Independent), Md. Rafiq Ahmed (Independent), Md. Shafiqullah (Independent).

Local people and political leaders expect triangular fight among the Jamaat, AL and BNP candidates.

COX'S BAZAR-2 (Maheshkhal and Kutubdia thanas): Number

of total voters 1,56,109 of them 81,892 are male and 74,217 are female voters. Polling stations are 74.

Total seven candidates are contesting from this seat. They are Advocate Sirajul Mustafa (AL), Alamgir Md Mahfuz Ullah Farid (BNP), Shafi Ullah Kutubi (Jamaat), Wing Commander

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BARISAL: Shawkat Hossain Hiron, JP (I) candidate from Barisal-5 (Sadar) seat is addressing a public meeting during his election campaign recently. Mahabub Uddin Ahmed (C), AL candidate for Barisal-5 seat is talking to local people in his polling camp. Dr Ehteshamul Haq (Nasim Biswas) BNP (R) candidate for the Barisal Sadar seat is seen shaking hands with a voter in the town. — Star photo



NARAYANGANJ: To encourage the voters to cast their votes and to make them aware about their voting rights, a rally was brought out by the district scouts here last Thursday. — Star photo

Polls will be held peacefully, hopes CEC

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL. June 10: Chief Election Commissioner Abu Hena today said election is a democratic process, democracy is a pre-condition for election.

He was addressing a meeting of government officials in the conference room of Divisional Commissioner in the morning. The meeting was also attended by political leaders and candidates of different constituencies.

"I have learnt from the people of different walks of life and the government officials that a congenial atmosphere is prevailing in the district, and I hope the ensuing parliament election will be held in a peaceful manner in the area," the CEC said in his address.

Abu Hena assured the candidates attending the meeting that neutral role of the administration and congenial law order would be ensured at any cost during the election.

Among the candidates, Rashed Khan Menon of Workers Party, Mahabub Uddin Ahmed, Bir Bikram, of Awami League, Shawkat Hossain Hiron of Jatiya Party and Moazzem Hossain Alal of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) spoke on the occasion.

The divisional commissioner, Yahya Mollah, welcomed the participants in the meeting, which was also addressed by Range DIG Nurul Alam Chowdhury, DC Mohammad Muzibur Rahman.

Death penalty for killing wife

CHANDPUR. June 10: A man was awarded death penalty for killing his wife for dowry here on Saturday, reports UNB.

According to prosecution story, in brief, Jahangir Hossain, 45, of village Kalikapur in Matliab thana beat his wife Taslima Begum, 20, to death for failing to realise dowry on July 19, 1995.

A case was filed and police after investigation submitted charge sheet against him.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Salam Mowla delivered the judgement after examining the witnesses and records.

Gunfight between police, Sarbahara men in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL. June 10: A group of armed Sarbaharamen escaped arrest after a gunbattle with the police at Banaripara thana area of the district Thursday noon.

Witnesses and police said that on a secret information a contingent of Banaripara thana police raided a group of armed Sarbaharamen at Mandalbar of Narerkath village. Sensing the arrival of police there the Sarbahara activists jumped into a nearby ditch. When police chased them, the Sarbaharamen fired on police.



BARISAL: The Chief Election Commissioner, Abu Hena, addressing district officials, candidates taking part in coming election and local journalists at the DC's conference room last Saturday. — Star photo