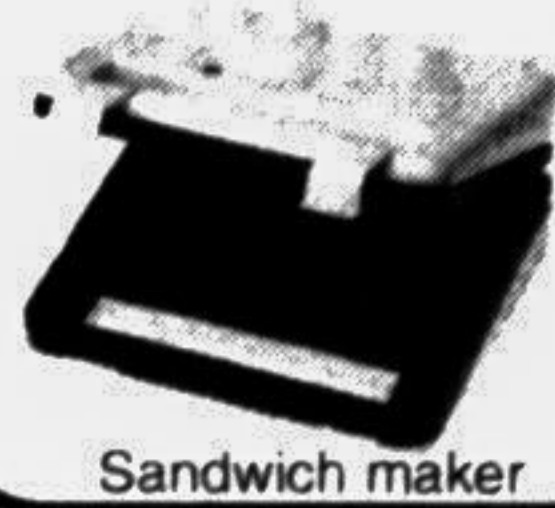




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Abu Hena visits Munshiganj

71 hurt in clashes, polling in 12 centres cancelled

By Staff Correspondent

At least 71 people were injured and polling in 12 centres cancelled due to electoral violence yesterday.

In Sherpur, 50 people were injured in polls related violence in Dhala and Kamaria union parishad election in Sadar thana.

A control room source told UNB, polling in four centres of the two unions were postponed following the clashes.

The centres are: Kuhakanda Bigpara Non-Govt Primary School and Chandernagar Nayapara Govt Primary School in Dhala and Khunwa Govt Primary School and Raghunathpur Tajul Islam Dakhil Madrasah in Kamaria.

In Sirajganj, 21 people were injured in two separate clashes during UP elections in two unions of Raiganj thana.

Eleven of them were wounded in a clash at Gurka Government Primary School polling centre between the supporters of two member candidates of Gurka union parishad election.

Of the injured, the member candidate and Awami League leader Abdul Mannan (46) was admitted to the Sirajganj General Hospital while 4 others at different local clinics.

Another clash at Amsara village of Dhubil union in the same thana between the supporters of the two chairman candidates left 10 people injured.

Election Commission sources said: Polling in 12 centres were cancelled yesterday, the 19th day of the union parishad elections across the country.

Elections were held in a total of 2195 centres in 241 unions under 32 thanas of 29 districts on the day.

Meanwhile, Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena yesterday visited 13 polling centres in four unions under Sadar thana of Munshiganj district. The unions are Panchashar, Bajrajogini, Rampal and Mahakali.

As soon as the CEC went to Munshiganj, BNP MP Abdul Hal appeared before him to complain that the supporters of a ruling party-backed candidate were rigging votes in certain centres including Adariatala Primary School centre in Panchashar union.

The CEC, accompanied by Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police and group of newsmen, visited all the centres. The BNP legislator had complained about. After a lot of queries to people including voters, polling officials and others at the venue, he came to learn that a sort of scuffle took place between the polling agents of the rival chairman candidates at Adariatala centre. Abu Hena even visited the house of a polling agent who was allegedly ousted from a booth rivals. However, the agent was not at home.

The CEC then wanted to know from the chairman candidates said: Polling in 12 centres were cancelled yesterday, the 19th day of the union parishad elections across the country.

didate, who accused his rival of rigging, whether he wanted the polling in the centre to be cancelled. But the candidate replied in the negative and the CEC left the place for other centres.

Abu Hena gave an 'on the spot' decision of postponing polls at Bajrajogini JK High School centre as two young voters had taken away three ballot books containing a total of 85 ballot papers from a polling booth of the centre. Before giving his decision, the CEC talked to the polling officials, voters, members of law enforcing agencies as well as eye witnesses to the incident.

Earlier, polling was postponed at Rampal Primary School centre in Rampal union by the election officials concerned as supporters of a candidate snatched away two ballot boxes. The CEC left Munshiganj in the evening.

However, the 12 centres where polling was cancelled included two each in Kamaria and Dhala unions in Sadar thana under Sherpur district, one centre each in Tarakanda and Kamaria unions in Fulbari thana under Mymensingh, one centre each in Rampal and Bajrajogini unions in Sadar thana under Munshiganj, one in Khaerpur-Abdullahpur union in Astagram thana under Kishoreganj, one in Ekhlaspur union of Matlab thana under Chandpur, and two centres in Chatalpur union in Naairnagar thana under Brahmanbaria.



Prof Rehman Sobhan receiving a citation and crest from Abdullah Abu Sayeed of Biswa Sahitya Kendra at a civic reception accorded to him in the city yesterday - Star photo

Rehman Sobhan

From page 1

social justice. Prof Rehman Sobhan is a symbol of revolutionary spirit, they said. He earned respect and confidence of all sections of people irrespective of their social status and political difference for his moral values and patriotism, they observed.

The reception ceremony began with a welcome address by Abdullah Abu Sayeed, president of the Biswa Shahittaya Kendra. Binaok Sen read a paper highlighting important events of his life.

The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam, former adviser to the caretaker government Wahiduddin Mahmud, Zillur Rahman Siddique, Rashid Khan Menon, MM Akash, Director of BIDS Abu Abdullah, AMA Muhi, Bhorer Kagoj Editor Matiur Rahman, economist Atiur Rahman, trade union leader Monzurul Ahsan Khan and proprietor of the University Press Limited Mohiuddin Ahmad spoke on the occasion. Khan Sarwar Murshid presided over the function.

Prof Rehman Sobhan in reply said, "I really feel I am not fit for such an honour".

"In our time, we worked in group and were simply a part of a big political and social process and still we are the part of that process, Prof Rehman said adding "Today's reception, as I feel, is recognising a generation which formed part of the process."

DUTA polls today

Election to the Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) will be held today, reports UNB.

Voting will start at 9 am and continue till 2 pm without any break at the Dhaka University Club. Some 1,100 teachers of the university will cast their votes to elect 15 executives of DUTA for 1998.

Two panels - Blue and White - are contesting the election.

Incumbent DUTA president Prof Mostafa Chowdhury of Political Science and general secretary Dr Hossain Mansur of Geology are contesting for the same posts from the Blue panel. The other panel's candidates for these posts are Prof AFM Yousuf Haider of Physics and Prof Nazrul Islam of Psychology.

Road link

From page 1

The workers alleged that the authorities closed the mills without proper notice to deprive them of their monthly salary for November and the Eid bonuses.

Traffic congestion

From page 1

mostly trucks, are now waiting at the three ghats," said an official over telephone from Aricha ghat yesterday.

He, however, said that it will take two more days to return to normal situation with smooth ferry service.

In the meantime, BIWTC has taken special measures to intensify ferry services at the Aricha ghat. Four more ferries, now under repair, will soon join the fleet of 24 ferries operating at present.

Gas explosion damages shrimps worth Tk 4cr

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 27: Exportable frozen shrimps worth about Tk four crore were damaged due to an explosion in the ammonia gas pipe at the freezing plant of Modern Sea Foods at East Rupsha on Thursday.

However, none was injured in the explosion.

Ershad

From page 1

secretary Prof Humayun Kabir Hiru said, "the act of not allowing former President and JP Chairman HM Ershad MP to enter the cantonment for attending the janaza is totally illogical."

Ershad was stopped at the Banani check post at 1:30 pm and was not allowed to enter the cantonment yesterday while he was going there to attend the janaza.

"It is immoral to obstruct a Muslim from attending the janaza, it's a direct interference in religious and fundamental rights of a citizen," Hiru said.

Rabi crops

From page 1

char areas along the two sides of Padma, Jamuna and Mahananda have gone under water as the Indian authority opened the sluice gates of Farakka to save some areas on their side from inundation due to excessive rains, the sources said.

Picnic

From page 1

there at about 1 pm. She went round the Orchid picnic spot, surrounded by green trees and a lake full of pink water lily.

She went from one table to another on the green lawns, where officials, employees and their wives and children were waiting for the Prime Minister. Scores of other picnic parties came to the park for picnic today.

The entire atmosphere at the National Park turned into a scene of mirth and merriment when the news of Prime Minister's arrival reached other picnicers.

Hundreds of enthusiastic people, enjoyed their time with the country's Prime Minister.

Little boys and girls, accompanied by their mothers, took snaps with the Prime Minister, and also took her autograph. Hasina left the picnic spot for Dhaka at about 2:45 pm.

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Wilful loan defaulters

From page 1

"The Bangladesh Bank is not functioning properly against them and a system has to be developed to deal with the defaulters," he said.

He identified political influence as a main problem in bringing discipline to the sector. Nothing is working against the defaulters because they get political refuge, he maintained.

"We also have to differentiate the wilful and fraud defaulters from the ones who are victims of circumstances," Haroon said. "There is no reason why actions should not be taken against the criminal defaulters. But those who are victims of government decisions and tax structure could be dealt with through bank-client relationship."

Haroon also identified the recent reporting on defaulters as a 'media trial' and said there is no point in holding such 'media trial'.

"The whole business class has been maligning by exposing a few cases of defrauding," he observed.

However, his remark was contradicted by Editor Motiur Rahman and Ibrahim Khaled, Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank.

Motiur Rahman said it is the duty of the press to write on defaulters while Ibrahim Khaled said, "What is the use of keeping your disease hidden. Rather, if it is known to everyone, it may create pain, but it can be cured quickly."

Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, a leading economist and former adviser in the caretaker government, said the financial sector must be recovered from its weak state now for effective private investment.

To overcome the crisis of the financial sector, there must always be honest intention of the highest authorities in the government. This intention must be expressed frequently to create an enabling environment for reform," he said.

Dr Moïn Khan, a BNP MP and former state minister for planning, said time has come to analyse how public money has been used and misused for private investment. This is a problem that cannot be cured just by publishing names of defaulters to create social pressure. It is not right that loans can be realised by pressurising the defaulters, he said.

Maid murdered in city: 2 arrested

By Staff Correspondent

A teenage maid was found dead at her master's flat at Naya Palton under Motijheel thana yesterday morning.

On receiving information, police went to the spot and recovered the body of Shefali Begum, 18, from the third floor of a four-storey building.

Police suspected that Shefali was murdered on Friday night. The motive of the murder could not be known immediately.

Meanwhile, Motijheel police arrested two persons, identified as Ripon and Bazlur Rahman as suspects. Both of them are the employees of a business house owned by Abdul Mannan, the master of the maid.

Police said, Mannan along with his family members went to his village home in Daudkandi thana of Comilla district on Friday morning keeping Shefali alone in the flat.

Mannan, at the time of his departure, requested owner of the building, Bazlur Rahman, to take care of his flat and maid. Yesterday morning, Jahanara, reportedly a dweller of a nearby building went to the flat of Mannan and found the door open.

As she got inside, she saw the body of Shefali lying on the floor. There was a scarf around her neck and the body was tied up. However the body didn't bear any sign of injury. A knife was found beside the body, police said.

Seeing this, Jahanara cried out and informed the landlord who telephoned police at once. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

A case under section 302 was lodged with Motijheel thana in connection with the murder.

BNP won't return

From page 1

"But we will have to stay and we cannot allow such intrigues to succeed... Therefore, it's our sacred duty to protect every inch of our land," she said and called upon all "nationalist, patriotic and Islamic forces" and professionals to unite to safeguard national interests.

Referring to her government's negotiations with the PCJSS, earlier, the former prime minister said that despite their efforts for peace they did not sign any agreement by accepting the "unjust and unconstitutional demands of the terrorists."

"We believe there can be no accord at the cost of national interest and we tried to reach an even agreement."

Referring to the proposed Regional Council (RC) in the CHT and its powers a provided in the accord, the BNP chief said, "The RC appears to be an alternative government within the government. The agreement has snatched constitutional powers of the government."

The Opposition leader also warned the government against "its conspiracy to hand over the gas-oil blocks to foreigners".

In her 32-minute speech, Begum Zia also bitterly criticised the 18-month-old government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for its "failure in all fields."

"Over the last 18 months, this government achieved nothing and used all its strength to oppress its political opponents. It has only finished the work undertaken by the BNP government. It failed to do anything itself," she said.

Chaired by the city BNP convener Sadek Hossain Khoka, MP, the meeting was also addressed by party secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP and some other central leaders including Abdus Salam Talukdar, Dr Khandakar Mosharrar Hossain, MP, Moudud Ahmed, Mir Shawkat Ali, MK Anwar, MP, M Shamsul Islam, MP, Akbar Hossain, MP, Haris Choudhury, Abdul Hasnat, Mirza Abbas and Selima Mirza.

The rally was rounded off with a cultural programme, presented by Jasas. BNP's cultural front.

WE MOURN We, at Sunbeams condole the demise of Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Abdul Mannaf, Chairman of the Governing body of Sunbeams, who expired on the 27th of December '97 at 1:30 am (Inna . . . .). May Allah rest his soul in peace and give his family strength to bear the loss. D-1173

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