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Corruption free society must for dev : PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said a corruption-free society with transparency and accountability in all spheres is a prerequisite for accelerating national development, reports UNB.

"We'll have to ensure transparency and accountability in all sectors for which data collection and dissemination is highly important," she said while addressing the inaugural function of Parishankhan Bhaban at Agargaon in the afternoon.

The complex of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics is being constructed at an estimated cost of Tk 44.52 crore with eleven-storied twin-towers and two 3-storied and one 1-storied buildings to accommodate its office and other necessary units.

State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Statistics Division Secretary

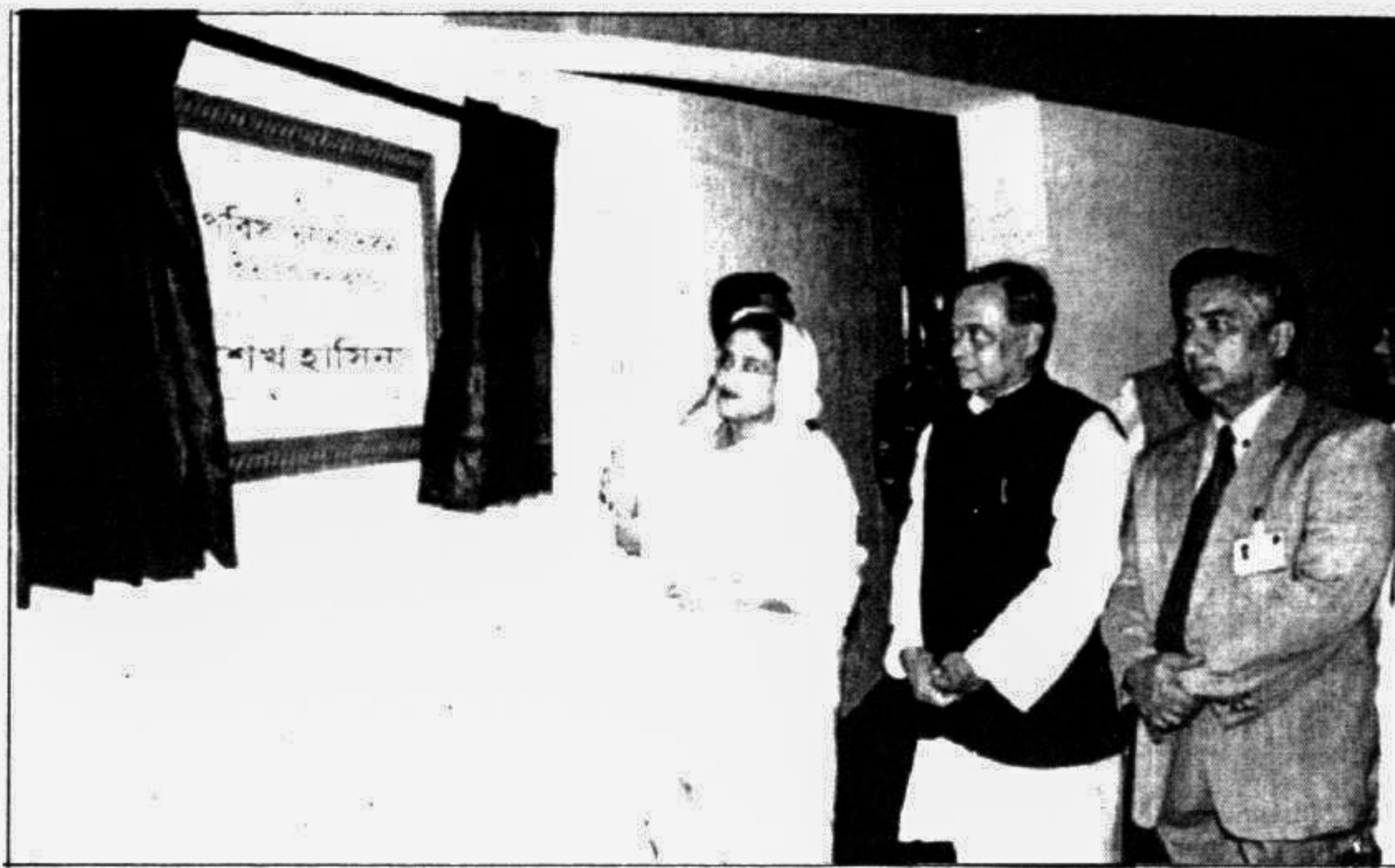
tary Mamunur Rashid also addressed the inaugural function in the newly constructed building.

The Prime Minister regretted even after 28 years of independence the country could not attain expected levels of development for disruption of democratic process.

"If democratic process does not continue, there also does not exist transparency and accountability and corruption engulfs entire society," she said.

The country had been under overt or covert military rule for a long time for which corruption massively spread in society and seriously disrupted development, she said.

Hasina said the present government restored democracy in the country through an arduous struggle and is trying to mop up corruption by ensuring people's power.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurating the Parishankhan Bhaban in the city yesterday. — PID photo

Ershad Shikdar refuses to make confessional statement

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 25: Notorious crime lord Ershad Shikdar has flatly refused to make any confessional statement.

"If you want to torture me to death, you may go on. But I am the last man to give confessional statement under 164," Shikdar was quoted as saying to senior police officials during interrogation on Sunday and also today.

A KMP source said that both complainants and witnesses of three murder cases filed against Shikdar have identified the *alamats* (evidences) recovered from the bed of the Bhairab river.

They identified the *alamats* under 164 on Sunday, said DC (South) of KMP Mazharul Huq. Huq said Surjo Banu, mother of Shikdar, has identified clothes of her son. Selina and Ayub, wife and younger brother respectively of Insaaf also identified clothes of the victim, Insaaf. Abdul Hamid identified clothes of Kamal.

Police said that Sratik League activist Siraj was killed on October 2, 1997 at the Skid Ghat. Insaaf and Kamal were murdered on the same night following the same *modus operandi*. Their bodies were cut into three pieces each and dumped into the river near Fish Landing Ghat, police said quoting confessional statement of Noor-e-Alam, body guard of Ershad Shikdar.

Meanwhile, the CMM's Court here has granted a five-day remand of Farida Banu, 58-year-old mother-in-law of Ershad Shikdar. But the CMM said she must be interrogated in presence of a female police officer among others. Farida will be questioned in connection with Jahangir murder case. Jahangir was Ershad's house tutor. Ershad killed him suspect-

Hearing of contempt petition against Nasim today

A contempt of court petition against Home Minister Mohammad Nasim for his statement in Parliament on September 6 is likely to come up for hearing in the High Court today, reports UNB.

The petition, filed by lawyer of the Supreme Court Mohammad Ataur Rahman, said the Home Minister by his statement in Parliament vilified the role of the highest judiciary and the judges of the Supreme Court.

The statement of Nasim was widely broadcast and telecast by Bangladesh Betar and TV and also published in the press the following day, said the petitioner.

He submitted the clippings of two dailies, which published the statement of Nasim.

DU student's death

From page 1

cles. When a section of DMCH employees chased the students, exchange of brick bats and chase and counter-chase began. DU students from nearby class rooms also joined the agitating students.

Around the same time, another section of DMCH employees ransacked the doctor's canteen, some rooms of the Dental College and some office rooms of DMCH. Neither police nor hospital sources could confirm why they went on the rampage inside the hospital.

The injured students included Mithu, Masum, Sattar, Shaheed, Sajal, Towhid and Muihaed. They were treated at the DU Medical Centre and clinics nearby.

Later, the agitating students in a memorandum to DU Vice-Chancellor Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury demanded proper investigation into the death of Monir, punishment of the persons responsible and financial help for the poor family of the student.

Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf and State Minister for Health Amanullah visited the hospital after the incident. They held a meeting with the

Biman flight Dhaka to take up issue with Islamabad

By Special Correspondent

The government is taking up with Pakistani authorities the issue of holding a Biman flight shortly after take-off from Karachi airport and ordering it to land back in violation of international aviation rules, Biman sources said yesterday.

The flight from the Gulf via Karachi on Sunday was asked to return by Pakistani air traffic controllers (ATC).

ATC radioed the Captain of the Airbus 310 on way home not to proceed further.

It asked the flight 15 minutes after take-off to return to Karachi airport for a check of the immigration status of certain Pakistani passengers said to be of Bangladeshi origin. As it prepared to land, the ATC asked the captain to go back, saying immigration check was not required.

We have requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take it up through diplomatic channels, a Biman official said.

Biman is issuing a statement clarifying the whole situation today, he said.

Army name 7 civilians to run Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Oct 25: Pakistan's military rulers today named seven civilians, including central bank governor Mohammad Yaqub, to run the country in conjunction with the army, which seized power in an October 12 coup, reports Reuters.

Four were appointed to a National Security Council which will oversee the running of the country. A further three civilians were appointed to the ministries of foreign affairs, finance and the office of the Attorney-General.

None of those appointed held jobs in the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who has been in protective custody since he was toppled pending investigation of his financial affairs for alleged corruption.

General Pervez Musharraf, who overthrew Sharif, pledged to set up the Council in a keynote address one week ago but disappointed Western states by failing to say when Pakistan would return to democratic rule.

The Council members are Sharfuiddin Pirzada, a constitutional expert who was appointed senior Advisor to chief Executive Pervez Musharraf, State Bank governor Yaqub, Attiya Inayatullah, a prominent Population Affairs Minister and Imtiaz Sahibzada, a former prominent civil servant.

An official statement said Abud Sattar, a former foreign affairs secretary, was appointed Foreign Minister, private banker Shaikat Aziz was named Finance Minister and Aziz Munshi was named Attorney-General.

'Demonstration Day' observed Resign, hand over power to caretaker govt: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

Senior BNP leaders at a rally in the city yesterday reiterated the opposition's demand for immediate resignation of the Awami League government and early national election for establishing a people's government.

They asked the ruling AL to step down immediately and hand over power to a neutral, caretaker administration, and warned that it would oust the government through a mass upsurge if it failed obliged.

City BNP organised the public rally at Paltan Maidan yesterday in observance of the countrywide 'Demonstration Day' to protest against alleged attacks on opposition pickets during Oct 21 hartal and killing of a Shibir activist in Chittagong.

BNP's alliance partners Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote also held separate rallies and brought out processions in the city to mark the day.

The BNP leaders said that people of all walks of life were frustrated with the 'misdeeds, corruption, nepotism, politicisation and repression'. People now want a fresh election to choose their government 'anew'.

Speaking at the rally, BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan strongly criticised the Prime Minister for her comment against opposition's one-point movement and said that she might realise it when her party would have no time to abdicate.

He asked the PM to resign immediately and hand over power to a caretaker govern-

ment for fresh national election for the benefit of the people and herself. "Don't try to stay in power anymore because people now do no longer want the Awami League in power for even a single moment," Bhuiyan added.

The BNP secretary general in his speech alleged that the government was yet to implement a single pledge made to the people, prior to the election, and was trying instead to stay in power through resorting to repression and oppression on the people.

He said that the AL, which was committed to separate the judiciary from the executive, was now hatching conspiracies to curb the independence of the judiciary.

Bhuiyan warned that the people of the country would not tolerate any attempt at curbing the independence of the judiciary and freedom of the press and asked the government to refrain from making 'objectionable' comments against the judiciary and the press.

Presided over by city BNP convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, it was addressed, among others, by Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Tariqul Islam, Mirza Abbas, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Amanullah Aman MP, Abdus Salam, Habibunnabi Khan Sohel, Kazi Abul Bashir and Chowdhury Alam.

The meeting over, BNP activists brought out a procession, which terminated in front of the party central office after parading different city streets.



Indo-Bangla border coordination conference in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Operatorship

From page 1

istry then wanted to scrutinise the Petrobangla clearance that lacked some necessary documents. Finally, on last Thursday, the Ministry cleared the matter.

Cairn, along with another company, Holland Sea Search, has been operating in these two blocks under two separate PSCs signed in 1994 and 1995. After it struck the Sangu field in early 1996, it brought in US oil company Halliburton Brown & Root and Shell Oil as investment partners to develop the field.

During this time, Cairn acquired Holland Sea Search shares and sold those to Shell Oil without informing Petrobangla. Shell Oil remained in the shadows and started gradual take-over of Cairn's concerns in Bangladesh.

Cairn now maintains a low-profile office in Dhaka with only a few staff. Shell has launched full-fledged office with some 22 expatriates from July last.

Commenting on the operatorship transfer, a high official said Petrobangla had just initiated audit of Cairn during the period of 1996-97 and Cairn was unwilling to cooperate. "Maybe the operatorship change would help the auditing, but it may create potential problems for us to pressurise Cairn which is now not accountable to the government."

Border talks begin

From page 1

though the BSF acknowledged that the 1974 treaty could help avoid many frontier disputes, they refrained from making any commitment to implementing the accord.

However, both sides at the high-profile conference agreed to take effective steps to clamp down on cross-border smuggling and other criminal acts. Bangladesh side raised issues like violation of status quo by BSF and Indian nationals in Muhurir Char area and in adversely possessed lands at Nayagram in Sylhet as well as shootings by the BSF at different border points.

"Push-in" of Bengali-speaking Indian nationals to Bangladesh, regular incidents of kidnapping and trespassing by BSF personnel and Indian nationals were also complained.

The host side alleged that BSF and Indian nationals regularly infringed the agreed border guidelines.

On their part, the Indian side alleged "unprovoked firing by the BDR" and "intrusion of criminals."

Sources said the Indians also made off-repeated allegation of cross-border operation by Indian insurgents and illegal migration by Bangladeshis into India.

"Bangladesh denied outright existence of any Indian insurgents here and also illegal mi-

grants," one official told UNB after adjournment of the talks.

The meeting will resume on October 28. In the mean time, the Indian delegation will be out of Dhaka for two days.

Sources said the BSF DG and his delegation members would go to Rangamati and Cox's Bazar districts. They are likely to visit some disputed areas along the frontline.

However, talking to UNB, a high official of BDR said they had no idea of the delegation's trip outside Dhaka.

Various other issues, including exchange of enclaves, Tinbigha Corridor, border demarcation, smuggling of arms, drugs and other items, repair and maintenance of boarder pillars, and woman and child trafficking came up in the opening round of talks.

Director General of Indian Border Security Forces Sri EN Ram Mohan led his team while BDR Director General Major General Mohammad Azizur Rahman led the home side.

BDR Deputy Director General, sector commanders, directors concerned, staff officers and officials from home and foreign ministries, Bangladesh Land Record and Survey Department and representatives from Joint River Commission of the two countries are attending the conference.

Khaleda demands withdrawal of false cases

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has demanded withdrawal of false cases filed against her party's Chittagong leaders and workers, including city committee's convenor Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin and general secretary Golam Dastagir Chowdhury, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, Khaleda also demanded immediate release of the arrested leaders and workers.

"Awami League terrorists and police unleashed a reign of terror in the port city during Thursday's hartal and on Sunday by resorting to baton charge, firing teargas shell and opening gunfire on the leaders and workers of opposition parties," she alleged.

Shibir activist Ansarulah was killed in the gunfire, she said, adding that the government has been harassing the people, including BNP leaders and workers, by lodging false cases.

MOU to promote trade with Mizoram signed

AIZAWAL, Oct 25: The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and the Mizoram Chamber of Commerce today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to promote trade between Bangladesh and Mizoram, reports UNB.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CHTCCI) and the Mizoram Chamber will act as coordinators in this regard.

The MOU said the governments of Bangladesh and India are now exploring areas of co-operation, including trade and commerce, as would be mutually beneficial for citizens of both the countries.

"Bangladesh and Mizoram, with their experience of inter-regional trades prior to independence and presently having a long stretch of common border, may take pioneering steps in the form of border trade between Bangladesh and Mizoram," it said.

"It is highly encouraging that taking the advantage of cordial relations between India and Bangladesh, the trading community of Bangladesh and Mizoram are very keen to progressively proceed with a programme of sustainable trade and commerce between Bangladesh and Mizoram."

FBCCI director Selima Ahmed and Mizoram Chamber president R Thamawia signed the MOU on behalf of their respective sides.

FBCCI president Abdul Awal Mintoo was present during the signing of the MOU after a 2-hour discussion at the state guesthouse at Aizawl.

Afsar, held by mistake, freed

By Staff Correspondent

Afsar Ali, who was arrested on charge of planting grenade in the two city mosques and the Daily Janakantha office, has been released from Dhaka Central Jail.

Ali, an assistant to a cook and a part-time mason, was set free on Tuesday following a request from Badda police who certified him as an innocent person. Police said they were misguided by one of their 'sources'.

Afsar Ali told The Daily Star that he would not file suit for compensation because he did not want further harassment in police custody. Police officials said there was no provision for paying compensation to a person arrested on suspicion under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Earlier Badda police and the DMP commissioner had described Ali as a 'notorious criminal' having high political connections. They also said that he was a BNP activist. But the commissioner's claim could not be substantiated.

A Daily Star investigation revealed that Ali was mistakenly arrested from Badda on October 11 instead of one Afsar Ali Mollah in connection with planting of grenades in two mosques and a newspaper office two weeks back.

Local people brought out a procession demanding release of Ali soon after his arrest and also held meetings with the local MP and Ward Commissioner for his release.

Power failure

From page 1

The power supply situation was almost same yesterday as Dhaka and its adjacent areas suffered 100 megawatt power shortage. The DESA got allotment of 900 megawatt from the Power Development Board against its requirement of more than 1,000 megawatt.

A DESA official admitted that priority is not given to the industrial belt in distribution of power. The industries areas suffer power failure as much as the market and shopping centres do, the official admitted.

Tongi, which houses around 500 mills and factories alone, had a power shortage of three megawatts yesterday. Its requirement is around 19 megawatts, the DESA source said.

Bypolls in Faridpur-4 tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Parliamentary by-election to the Faridpur-4 seat takes place tomorrow with the major opposition parties boycotting it to press their demand for the removal of the Chief Election Commissioner, Mohammad Abu Hena.

Awami League (AL) candidate Saleha Mosharraf and Zaker Party nominee Mostafa Ameer Faisal are the two main contenders in the by-polls, the 22nd of its kind to the seventh Jatiya Sangsad.

The Faridpur-4 seat fell vacant following the death of AL MP Mosharraf Hossain.

Notwithstanding the fact that the major opposition political parties in the country have decided to refrain from taking part in the by-polls, the ruling party has apparently decided to put all its weight behind its candidate, the widow of late Mosharraf Hossain.

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Food and Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury and State Minister for Relief and Disaster Management Dr. Mozammel Hossain took an active part in the electioneering in favour of their party candidate. The ministers were given all out support by the local AL MPs in the electioneering.

Campaign by the ministers had, however, triggered controversies in the local political circles in the constituency comprising Sadarpur and Charbhadrason areas.

During their visits to the constituency, the ministers reportedly did not maintain official protocol and they were blamed for violating election code "by promising development projects and handing out donations in cash and kind."

The Zaker Party candidate has, meantime, accused the ruling party of conspiring to rig the by-election. The party has also lodged formal complaints with the Election Commission, which, in turn, formed a body to probe into the allegations.

Meanwhile the Election Commission secretariat has opened a cell in its conference room in the city to collect and provide unofficial results of the Faridpur-4 by-election.

The cell will provide information including results of the election to the media. Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television will put election results into air in their regular news bulletins from 6 pm on the day.

The election commission will invite two representatives of all political parties, news agencies and newspapers to the cell to ensure transparency in circulation of the results.

UNB from Faridpur adds: Zaker Party candidate Pirzada Alhaj Mustafa Ameer Faisal withdrew from the race today saying voting will not be free and fair under the present Chief Election Commissioner.

Announcing his election boycott from a public meeting

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Inderfurth on Pak situation Coup no remedy for flawed democracy

By Staff Correspondent

The US has expressed concern over the situation in Pakistan and said unless democracy is restored, there is no scope for normal business with Islamabad.

"Until we see restoration of democracy in Pakistan, we have made it clear we would not be in a position to carry on business with Pakistani authorities," Karl F Inderfurth, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs said during a hearing before the House International Relations Committee, according to a USIS press release in Dhaka Sunday.

The hearing was held on October 20.

In his testimony before the Committee, Inderfurth further said, "The press in Pakistan and here (US) has focused, in recent days, on the rationale for the General's actions. Much of the coverage has seemed to support General Mosharraf's statement that Pakistan had hit rock bottom. For our part, we are not justifying or condoning the General's actions. As a matter of principle—one that we believe applies throughout the world—the remedy for flawed

democracy is not a military coup."

He cited Section 508 of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act that applied against Pakistan. The Act contains a prohibition against a broad range of assistance for a country whose democratically elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree.

"As a practical matter, most forms of assistance are already prohibited for Pakistan under the Glenn Amendment and other statutory restrictions," Inderfurth told the Committee.

He further said that previous Army Chief General Zia anticipated a brief period of military control when he took power and ended up ruling for 11 years.

Pakistan's long-term stability lay in developing civilian political institutions which are self-correcting through political process, not through expedient military intervention, he said.

He hoped that Pakistan's authorities would acknowledge and fulfil their duty to restore Pakistan to civilian, democratic, constitutional government as soon as possible.

Announcement

The Daily Star will honour students with outstanding results in their 'O' and 'A' level examinations this year.

For this purpose we are inviting candidates who sat for these examinations for the session June '98-June '99 to register their names at The Daily Star office. Candidates who appeared privately are requested to register at The Daily Star office. Those who appeared from schools are requested to contact their respective schools directly.

The criteria to be fulfilled to qualify for registration are as follows:-

(1) For 'O' level:-

a) Minimum Six A's in two consecutive sittings (June '98 to June '99).

b) Highest mark obtained in a given subject in Bangladesh.

(2) For 'A' level:-

a) Minimum three A's in two consecutive sittings (June '98 to June '99).

b) Highest mark obtained in a given subject in Bangladesh.

(3) Physically challenged students who appeared at the above mentioned examinations and qualify through their achievements will be given special awards.

Eligible students are requested to contact Ms. Raffat Binte Rashid at The Daily Star office with their original individual candidate statement of results (along with photocopy) on Wednesday 27.10.99 and on Thursday 28.10.99 between 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

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