

Khaleda tells Greek FM BNP, allies to win next polls with a big margin

Leaders of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia said BNP and its allies would win with big margins the next general elections if held in a free and fair atmosphere, reports UNB.

She told this to visiting Greek Foreign Minister George A Papandreou when he, along with his nine-member delegation, met with Khaleda Zia at 29 Minto Road yesterday evening.

Bilateral, political and economic issues came up for discussion in the meeting that lasted about an hour.

The BNP chairperson expressed her desire that an adequate number of international observers from the European Union, of which Greece is a member, would come here to assess the pre-election political situation as well as monitor the polls.

Replies to a question from the FM, the opposition leader apprised him why they were boycotting parliament. Still, she said, a congenial environment did not return to parliament.

"It is the responsibility of the government to improve the atmosphere of parliament," she was quoted as telling Papandreou.

Responding to the envoy, Khaleda Zia, who is leading a four-party alliance movement, focused on the present political situation as well as "misrule" of the Awami League government.

Her advisor M M Rezaul Karim briefed newsmen on the outcome of the meeting.

Welcoming the Greek Foreign Minister, the opposition leader hoped that present limited bilateral relations between the two countries would be expanded in the days ahead.

She requested him to establish relation of the world-famous Greek shipping and tourism sectors with Bangladesh with the hopes that it would benefit the

people of Bangladesh.

She further requested him to set up a residence embassy of the EU country in Dhaka in a bid to boost bilateral relations between the two countries.

Responding to Khaleda Zia, Papandreou agreed that relations between Greece and Bangladesh had not built up at desired levels and they would be active in enhancing the relationship.

He said trade relation between the two countries is minimal and usually it occurs through European Union.

About shipping, the Greek FM said they would try to take positive measure to enhance cooperation in shipping sector after examining the matter.

On tourism, he assured extending cooperation in developing Bangladesh's tourism sector by awarding some scholarships and on the basis of exchange.

Pakistan pulls back troops from Kashmir border

ISLAMABAD, Dec 20: Pakistan today announced a partial troop withdrawal along the tense unofficial border in divided Kashmir following India's extension of its ceasefire with Muslim militants, reports AFP.

The military's public relations department also called on India to reduce its troop presence in its part of the Himalayan state.

Pakistan has unilaterally taken another bold initiative to withdraw part of its forces deployed along the Line of Control (the unofficial border), the military said in a statement.

The move back has already commenced and the troops have started moving towards cantonments (barracks).

Mirza Golam Hafiz dead

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The namaz-e-janaza for the late leader was held in the afternoon at the Dhanmondi Eidgah Maidan and again at South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. He was later buried in Banani graveyard.

His qulukhawani will be held at his Dhanmondi residence after AS prayers tomorrow.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina condole the death of Mirza Golam Hafiz yesterday.

In a message she said Hafiz actively took part in the 1952 Language Movement and 1954 movement and was jailed twice.

She said he was dedicated to social welfare activities and was a popular personality. He was a popular politician to all.

The prime minister expressed her deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for the peace of the departed soul.

BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, BNP general secretary Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Opposition Chief Whip Khondaker Delwar Hossain expressed their deep shock at the death of Mirza Golam Hafiz.

Recalling his long political career, the BNP chairperson said: "We lost a patriotic politician and a brilliant leader. We'll never forget his contributions to BNP."

Khaleda prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed her sympathies to the bereaved family.

Khaleda went to South Plaza of JS Bhaban to have a last glimpse of the late leader and placed wreath and party flag on the coffin of Mirza Hafiz.

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury, ministers, whips, MPs, politicians, his party colleagues, officials and employees of the Jatiya Sangsad and his admirers from different walks of life took part in the janaza at the South Plaza.

The Speaker also placed wreaths on the coffin.

Life sketch of Mirza Golam Hafiz:

An eminent lawyer, veteran politician, seasoned parliamentarian, architect of newly-formed Panchagarh district and Speaker of the second Parliament Mirza

Golam Hafiz was born in Dinajpur district in 1920.

He did his MA in Economics from Calcutta University in 1941 and DL from Dhaka University in 1948.

Mirza Golam Hafiz took active part in politics from his boyhood. He joined All India Muslim League Federation in 1938.

He went to Dibrugarh (Assam) to participate in the Anti-Line Movement launched by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani and was imprisoned. He was Naib-Salar-e-Suba of Muslim National Guard in Bengal from 1945 to 1947.

Mirza Golam Hafiz was associated with East Pakistan Civil Liberties League as its Secretary General from 1948 to 1950, participated in the Language Movement in 1952 and anti-92A Movement in 1954 for which he was jailed on both occasions.

He was a member of East Pakistan Provincial Assembly from 1954 to 1958 and took active part in the parliamentary activities.

Mirza Hafiz was Vice-president of East Pakistan Bar Council and also of All Pakistan Bar Council for two terms. He was President of Supreme Court Bar Association in 1945 to 1947.

Mirza Golam Hafiz was actively associated with a number of social and law organisations. He was the President of Bangladesh-China Maitri Samity and a member of Dhaka and Rajshahi University Senate. He was President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce in 1976 and President of Ramna Lions Club in 1976-77.

He was elected Member of Parliament from Dhaka-15 (Ramna and Motijheel thanas) constituency in February 1979. He was appointed a member of the Council of Ministers in June 1978 and held the charge of the Ministry of Land Administration and Land Reforms.

A dedicated philanthropist, Mirza Golam Hafiz is the founder of Mirza Golam Hafiz College in Atooi, Dr Abdela Hafiz Girls School in Panchagarh, Shishu Sadan and Moulana Azimuddin Madrasah in Mirzapur and Mirza Golam Hafiz High School in Tutiaria.

He was sworn in as Minister in March 1991 and held the Ministry of Law and Justice.

CHT engr murder

Blood-stained clothes of suspects recovered

From Our Correspondent

KHAGRACHARI, Dec 20: Khagrachari police raided the residence of one Kamolendu Dewan at the town's Narayan Khaliya area and recovered blood-stained clothes of some suspects earlier arrested in connection with killing of M Shahjahan, Executive Engineer of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB).

Police acting on information from the four suspects, who were arrested from the town's Sanbari area last week in connection with the killing, also recovered a knife used in the killing and part of a footprint.

Meanwhile, Matiranga police arrested one Halez Ahmed alias Hafez, a First Information Report (IFR) named accused from Matiranga area.

M Shahjahan, Executive Engi-

neer of CHTDB, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in front of his residence on Wednesday last.

The arrested are identified as Nurul Alam, 20, Aunshi Marma, 23, Anutur Chakma, 26, and Ripon Chakma, 22.

Pankaj, night guard of the deceased engineer, identified the suspects as involved in the killing and one of the accused Nurul Alam confessed that seven of them were involved in the killing incident.

However, police is yet to unveil the motive behind the killing.

Meanwhile, different professional bodies and socio-cultural organisations have continued to protest the killing of M Shahjahan and demanded trial of the persons responsible for the gruesome murder.

Death of Mirza Golam Hafiz condoled

Individuals and leaders of various political parties have expressed deep shock at the death of former Speaker Mirza Golam Hafiz, reports UNB.

Those who condoled the death of Hafiz included Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, Jamaat-e-Islami Maulana Matir Rahman Nizami, president of Panchagarh Chamber of Commerce and Industry Delwar Hossain.

Dhaka City BNP acting president Salauddin Ahmed and general secretary Abdur Salam and Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal president Mahbubul Alam Tari and general secretary Shamsuzzaman Dudu also condoled the death.

In separate condolence messages yesterday, they prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

PM hosts Iftar for govt officials, elite

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked government officials and elite to join her in the struggle for changing socio-economic condition of the deprived masses, reports UNB.

"Continue your service to the people and help us so that we can ensure economic emancipation of the poor," she said while hosting an iftar party at Ganobhaban in the evening.

Ministers, MPs, judges, vice-chancellors of different universities, academics, diplomats, business community leaders, high civil and military officials and friends and relatives of the prime minister attended the party on the lawn of Ganobhaban.

Nearly three thousand invitees joined the iftar with the Prime Minister under a huge canopy erected over the western lawn.

She said five distressed women in each ward would be given Tk 100 each so that they could feed their children on Eid day.

Besides, the government issued 45,000 special VGF cards for providing ration to poor people across the country, including the flood-affected districts, on the occasion. Winter clothes and relief were also distributed among them.

Earlier, Hasina went round the iftar party exchanging greetings with the guests.

3 policemen shot by terrorists in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Dec 20: Three policemen suffered bullet wounds as terrorists fired on them in a daring attack on an outpost 14 km west of Sattakantha headquarters this (Wednesday) evening, reports UNB.

The injured policemen were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital "in critical condition."

The BNP chief imposed a moratorium on the activities of JCD.

Police said the JCD leaders

insisted that Nasiruddin Pinto be given a key post in the new central committee.

The hardliners had earlier

made several attempts to execute their plans. But all the attempts went in vain due to strong opposition by majority of the party leaders and activists in BNP and JCD, sources said.

Sources also said that the

hardliners, failing to implement

their hasty plans, have now

become desperate and are putting

pressure on the party chair-

person to see their plan through.

A strong resentment was pre-

valing in the rank and file of BNP

and its front organisations over

the move of the hardliners.

Sources said that Khaleda

Zia is now determined to

form fresh central and DU com-

mittees with new faces in the

leadership to bring dynamism in

the party activities and intensify

the current anti-government

movement.

Meanwhile, the BNP hardliners,

despite strong criticism

within party, are still trying to

establish supremacy in the JCD

and win over the party chief with

their plans. They briefed Khaleda

Zia about the student wing and



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia placed wreaths on the coffin of Mirza Golam Hafiz and offered prayers for salvation of his soul at the South Plaza of the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

-Star photo

JCD crisis likely to be defused soon

By Abul Kalam Azad

Crisis in Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student front of the opposition BNP, is likely to come to an end in a few days following resumption of the activities of JCD unit at Dhaka University (DU), sources said yesterday.

The DU unit committee, which was suspended following the violent clash, was led by Manir Hossain and Mostafizul Islam Mamun as its president and general secretary respectively. Habib-un-Nabi Sohel and Nasiruddin Ahmed Pinto were the president and general secretary of central body respectively.

The student leaders briefed her about the ongoing crisis in the JCD and requested her to resolve it shortly. At the meeting, Khaleda Zia also said that a decision regarding the suspended central committee would be announced in a few days.

The leaders and activists of both the central committee and DU unit expressed satisfaction at the move by Khaleda Zia to solve the long-standing crisis. Sources said Khaleda herself took the initiative following the failure of the BNP leaders who were assigned to solve the crisis.

Whatever the decision is and who ever is made leader, you will have to accept my decision," Khaleda told the JCD leaders.

The BNP chief imposed a moratorium on the activities of JCD.

Sources also said that the hardliners, failing to implement their hasty plans, have now become desperate and are putting pressure on the party chair-

person to see their plan through.

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