

Parties should accept

FROM PAGE 1
the caretaker government or deployment of army along might not create the conditions needed for fair and peaceful vote until the political parties extend their honest support to the authorities.

"I would appeal to political parties to renew their commitments of non-violence and accepting the poll results they made to former US president Jimmy Carter."

The European Union, Menezes said, likes to see the political parties engaged in the election accept the results courageously without "ifs and buts."

If a political party accepts defeat gracefully, it would gain tremendous sympathy and respect from the people, he observed.

"At the end of the day, there will be winners or losers and both the parties will abide by that in the interest of building democratic institutions in the country for which the EU is engaged in the election observation," said the envoy of the important donor community.

In reply to a question, the ambassador said he thought that the deployment of army could lower the scale of violence and create confidence among the voters for peaceful and impartial elections.

He welcomed some new measures by the Election Commission to improve the whole election system. He thinks that empowering the army with the authority of arrest and quick disposal of election disputes are positive moves.

About foreign election observers, Menezes said international observation is now part of the electoral process, which would help

improve the election system here in Bangladesh.

The EU is deploying around 60 long and short-term observers to monitor the much-orchestrated election. It is expected to make an initial impression about the election on October 1 and final report later on.

Some 200 foreign observers are expected to arrive here to watch the crucial vote.

Asked if any confusion could arise out of contradictory observations and reports by foreign observers, he said that a Joint International Observation Group would be formed with chiefs of all the observation teams to coordinate their works.

He, however, said the Election Commission's say is final about the elections it is going to conduct.

To a query about complaints by political parties against some local NGOs who are going to field observers, Menezes said the onus lies with those organisations to show that they are truly objective and neutral to concerned Returning Officers.

Asked if the foreign observers would require any special security here after terrorist attacks on America, he said at the moment there was no serious cause of concern and everything here was running fairly.

To another question, he said it is understandable that the whole world is under shock following the terrorist strikes and Bangladesh is also affected by that. Obviously the interest in Bangladesh election will not be as high as it would have been.

Recruiters' malpractice

FROM PAGE 12
International Airport be freed from corrupt practices with a view to stopping illegal migration. Many Bangladesh youths end up being harassed and humiliated on foreign soil for this, they said.

It also called for documentation of Bangladeshis working abroad and guarantee of their rights to franchise.

Talking to this correspondent, WARBE representatives Syed Saiful Haque and Anisur Rahman Khan referred to the most recent case of an 'undocumented' Bangladeshi worker, Milon, who has been languishing for several months in South Korea because of prolonged illness.

After months of frantic efforts by different local and international labour bodies, the Korean Air has now agreed to provide free air ticket to Milon up to Bangkok. As Bangladesh embassy in South Korea regretted to provide any help to poor Milon, all leading media in that country started campaigning for assistance to send Milon home, sources in Dhaka said.

It is learnt that the Ministry of Labour and Employment is now trying to make some arrangement for early home coming of Milon.

Official sources said that it was

AL candidates

FROM PAGE 12
nominated candidates from respective constituencies. "Otherwise you will be considered expelled from the party on charge of violating party decision and breaking party discipline."

Hasina hoped that the dissident candidates, with their good sense, would show respect to the letter as well as the party decision in larger interest of the country, nation and the party.

Among others, Aminul Islam Ratan from Mymensingh-4 and Shahriar Rumi from Faridpur-5 got the ultimatum to quit the race.

No Baghdad

FROM PAGE 1
attacks against the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, said: "Not very, at this time. We're still looking but not very."

"The United States has named Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi-born dissident who allegedly operates a network of Islamic militants from exile in Afghanistan, the prime suspect in the attacks and has said he is wanted "dead or alive."

In the past week, Israelis have been speculating that Washington might attack Iraq as part of its declared war against global terrorism and that Baghdad would fire Scud missiles at Israel as it did in the 1991 Gulf War.

The Israeli army reported over the past days an increase in demand at gas mask distribution centres in operation since the 1991 conflict. Israeli military planners feared at the time Iraq would launch Scuds with chemical or biological warheads.

In the interview, Malka said there was no reason for Israelis to panic "and run to refresh their gas mask kits."

He forecast that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein would target Israel only as a last resort and would be wary of exposing now "what he has tried to hide for the past 10 years," a reference to Scud missiles and launchers.

"But if he feels that the noose is tightening around his neck, he might take steps that would put us in the picture," Malka said.

200 hurt in pre-polls clashes

FROM PAGE 1
Bhawaniganj area, a group of people, reportedly the activists of Awami League, attacked the procession at Dewlia More that led to a violent clash between the two parties.

Both the warring groups used lethal weapons during the clash that continued for about half an hour.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

In Patuakhali, about 25 people were injured in separate pre-election clashes between Awami League and BNP activists in Baufal upazila Saturday night.

Witnesses said some 15 people were wounded at Charkachua bazar while five others at Charniazan bazar.

Besides, AL activists attacked an election rally of BNP at Kheyaghat

area in Kachhipara leaving five people injured.

Nine of the injured- Bashar, Sohrab, Nurul, Sabuj, Yunus, Kalam, Ruhul, Kabir and Farooq were admitted to Baufal Upazila Health Complex.

In Manikganj, about 20 people were injured, eight critically, in sporadic clashes between the activists of Awami League and BNP in Gheor upazila Saturday night.

Police and witnesses said the trouble erupted when processions of the two rival political parties came face-to-face in the village of Baliagram.

Eight of the injured Abdul Rouf, Hasan Ali, Moksed Ali, Lal Chan, Hazrat, Farid, Hamid and Harun were admitted to Manikganj Sadar Hospital in critical condition.

Police arrested Baliakhora Union

SAF Games called off

FROM PAGE 1
to join an Afghan jihad, or holy war, against any attack by the United States.

Indian sports officials said Sunday the postponement had been expected.

"The circumstances were such that holding the event would have been very difficult," a sports ministry official told AFP.

"We were looking forward to the games and sports minister Uma Bharti was herself very keen to go to Islamabad along with the Indian contingent," he added.

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President Suresh Kalmadi said it was sad that the Games had to be put off.

"The Pakistani officials had sounded very optimistic till a few days back and they must be feeling really bad that the games had to be postponed," Kalmadi said.

"It is definitely another blow to sports in the region, with the Afro-Asian Games (which were to be held in New Delhi in November) already put off. But it is something sports officials can't help."

Bangladesh, due to send a 200-strong team to the tournament, said it was disappointed but understood the decision.

"We have not been official informed yet about the postponement of the Games, but I am sure everyone will be disappointed,"

Zahir Ahmed, the deputy chief de mission of the Bangladesh team to the games, told AFP.

Even if we are saddened by the news, we will accept the reality because of the situation arising out of the terror attacks in the US."

Sri Lanka's National Olympic Committee Chairman Hemasiri Fernando said: "We had already finalised preparations for the 300-member contingent to go to Islamabad. It is a disappointment for us because the athletes were very eager to participate."

Rukma Shumshere Rana, president of Nepal Olympic Committee (NOC) and vice president of Nepal Sports Council (NSC) also expressed disappointment at the decision.

"We realise the current world situation evolved after the terrorist attacks in the US. However, we will continue to prepare our teams for the games to be held hopefully in the next six months."

Pakistan officials had been insisting up until last week that the Games would go ahead. But with the US rapidly moving planes and ships to within striking distance of Afghanistan, a decision to call off the Games became inevitable.

The Games involve the seven member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Khaleda: AL misrule again

FROM PAGE 12
off the tag of being the most corruption nation (by defeating the Awami League in the October 1 polls)," she added.

Describing the pitiable conditions of roads and bridges in the greater Sylhet, she said the "incompetent and corrupt" AL government even did not take any initiative to repair them. Rather they siphoned off thousands of crores of taka in the name of development, repairing and renovation.

She said the AL continued attack on the BNP across the country and on Saturday its terrorists attacked and damaged vehicle of BNP Standing Committee member Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, who is contesting from the Mohammadpur-Dhanmondi constituency in Dhaka.

Turning to the border situation during the AL regime, the BNP chief said the heroic acts by the patriotic BDR personnel helped the country restore its land in Padua. But the subservient AL government headed by the then prime minister apologised to India and handed over the restored land.

Similarly, the then PM apologised to New Delhi after the Indian BSF attacked BDR outposts and entered into Bangladesh territory at Roumari in the dead of night violating all international norms. A number of brave BDR personnel embraced martyrdom while fighting the intruders.

After the incident, the BNP had demanded that the dead BDR jawans be conferred upon the Bir Shrestho award. But, instead of rewarding the BDR men the AL government took them to task and removed the then BDR chief.

"The country and its sovereignty and the people are not safe in hands of the Awami League because it has no allegiance to Bangladesh," she added.

Later, the former prime minister addressed, a mammoth election meeting at Chhatk High School playground to seek vote for four-party alliance nominee Kalimuddin Ahmad Milon in the Sunamganj-5 constituency.

She said the former AL MP from this seat had terrorised people and himself made bombs at his house to kill people and opposition activists.

Former MP Muhiur Rahman Manik is contesting the polls in this seat on the AL ticket.

"Terrorism cannot be contained by nominating terrorists like Boma Manik. People who themselves make bombs cannot bring peace."

The alliance leader made a number of pledges, including taking up a massive development project in greater Sylhet and making it a tourism hub.

She then drove to Sunamganj sadar and addressed a huge election meeting at the local stadium to woo ballots for alliance candidate Fazlul Haq Aspia in the Sunamganj-

Awami League general secretary Siddiquir Rahman and Krishnak League activist Dilp Basu yesterday in connection with the clash.

Two separate cases were filed with the police.

In Noakhali, at least 17 people were injured in sporadic pre-election clashes in five upazilas of the district yesterday.

Police said seven people were injured in a clash between the supporters of Awami League and BNP over removing posters at South Mohammadpur in Chatkhill upazila.

Two of the injured Noor Islam, 35, and Suja Mia, 30, - were admitted to Chatkhill Upazila Health Complex.

Besides, clashes between Awami League and BNP supporters left two people injured in Companiganj, and three each in Hatia and Begumganj upazilas.

In Sadar upazila, two people were injured in a clash between two factions of BNP over setting up of an election camp.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people under the banner of Sarbadaliya Muslim Oikya Jote brought out a procession in the town yesterday protesting American conspiracy against Afghanistan and the Muslim community in the world.

They also torched an effigy of American President George W Bush after the procession.

In Mymensingh, about 15 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of BNP and Awami League at Tarakanda in the district Saturday night.

The clash ensued when BNP was holding an election meeting at Chaknapara. Both the groups chased each other and damaged some shops in the area.

Three of the injured identified as Haresuddin, 48, Mainuddin, 45, and Harunur Rashid, 40, were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

BSS adds: Twenty persons including two women were injured when a group of armed terrorists attacked the residence of Alhaj Gias Uddin Ahmed, a candidate of the four-party alliance for Narayanganj-4 constituency, at Siddhirganj Bazar road in Narayanganj on Saturday night.

4 seat. The meeting at Sunamganj stadium was much bigger than the meetings held in Sylhet yesterday.

Tens of thousands of people travelling by bus, trucks and trolleys from remote areas attended the overcrowded meeting. In her speech, the BNP chief urged the people to vote for BNP and the alliance to ensure development and root out terrorism and corruption in the country.

She said if voted to power, her party would set up a new ministry to look into the affairs of the expatriate Bangladeshis and have a minister to ensure welfare of the freedom fighters and their families. Moreover, she said, the BNP would declare the textile sector as a thrust sector for further development of the garment industry.

Khaleda also addressed another huge meeting at Dhirai Upazila playground to garner support for alliance nominee Nasiruddin Chowdhury in the Sunmganj-2 seat.

She asked the people to vote for the alliance candidates to rid the country of the scourge of the AL tyranny.

Earlier, the BNP chairperson was accorded a warm reception at the Osmani International Airport on her arrival. Top-ranking BNP leaders, including M Saifur Rahman, were present there.

Customs rules

FROM PAGE 12
"It is aimed at further facilitating import and export trade in garments sector which earns huge amounts of foreign currency for the country" Shoaib said. The sector also generated lot of employment opportunities and pays substantial amounts of revenue to the government, he mentioned.

He however warned of action against those garments traders involved in the fraudulent practice of selling imported garment fabrics in local markets, instead of exporting garments. A section of customs personnel have links with those unscrupulous traders, he said and sought cooperation of BGMEA leaders to stop this practice.

The meeting chaired by first vice president of BGMEA Ershad Ullah was addressed by, among others, Member (customs) of NBR Abul Kasem, BGMEA President Kutub Uddin and Commissioner of Chittagong Customs House Monjur Mannan. BGMEA director SM Nurul Huq gave the vote of thanks.

Kutubuddin welcomed simplification of customs formalities for garments sector, saying this would save garments traders from harassment.

This step is encouraging as garments sector is in a crisis following the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US, he said.

8 killed

FROM PAGE 1
ers of their party.

Half-day hartal has been called in Mollahat and Fakirhat protesting the incident.

The AL leaders blamed four-party alliance candidate Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of BNP for mas-terminating the incident.

Leaders of Bagerhat BNP refuted the allegation and blamed Awami League for it.

Neither the DC nor the SP of Bagerhat could be contacted for details about the incident as they were at Mollahat till late night.

UNB adds: The government constituted a two-member committee headed by Additional Home Secretary Rafiq Bhuiyan to probe the incident. The other member is NK Chand, DIG at the police headquarters in Dhaka, an official announcement said in Dhaka.

Downed 'drone'

FROM PAGW 1
Both the CIA and the Pentagon are refusing any comment.

Military sources in Uzbekistan say US electronic surveillance planes are already operating from an airbase outside the Uzbek capital Tashkent.

An official from the opposition Northern Alliance, meanwhile, denied reports Saturday that the Taliban had shot down one of its helicopters in northern Afghanistan.

Another source indicated the US military is not operating unmanned aerial vehicles over Afghanistan.

The Taliban ambassador to Pakistan said Taliban forces used captured Soviet anti-aircraft guns to bring down the plane.

Two US unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have been lost over Iraq this year, while on surveillance missions. Iraq claims to have shot down the UAVs in late August and most recently on September 11.

The most common type of UAV or "drone" is the Predator aircraft, which flies at lower altitudes, making it more vulnerable to anti-aircraft attack. The small, US\$ 3.2 million pilot-less plane normally operates at 10,000 to 15,000 feet and is capable of flying a maximum of 24-30 hours.

Hasina corruption cases

FROM PAGE 12
Natore-3 and Prof Abdul Quddus from Natore-4.

Seeking vote for 'Boat,' Hasina said boat is a friend of the people at times of distress.

Cautioning against vote dacoity, she urged the people to return home with election results after polling is completed so that none can snatch their victory through any "media coup."

Sheikh Hasina said that while in power, Khaleda Zia went to New Delhi but forgot to realise Bangladesh's share of the Ganges waters although the country's northern and western parts were turning into wasteland.

Raising a slogan to be emulated by her faithful Hasina said, "We will eat full stomach and vote for Boat."

She also promised to develop Chalan Beel through Haor-baor Board, supply electricity to each village, gas to northern districts through Bangabandhu Bridge upgrade, each upazila sadar to municipality and union to an administrative and development unit.

If elected, her party also would introduce free female education up to degree level, give 100 per cent government allowance for teachers of non-government schools and colleges, separate pay scale for them, ensure house for each homeless people and improve socio-economic condition of the commonman.

She also said if AL could regain power in the October 1 polls, her government would not make any laws against the Quran and Sunna.

"Give me vote, we will present you a terrorism-free educated

Candidates to give ID cards to their respective agents

UNB, Dhaka

Within barely 24 hours, the Election Commission had to change its decision on identity cards of polling agents as it misunderstood an article of the relevant law.

Following the fresh decision, the candidates themselves, not the assistant returning officers, will provide their respective polling agents with identity cards.

The decision was taken in a meeting of the commission yesterday morning with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) M A Syed in the chair.

However, the decision of submitting the lists of polling agents to the assistant returning officers by the candidates by Tuesday remained as it was, said a spokesman for the EC.

The EC on Saturday had asked the candidates to submit the lists of their respective polling agents along with their photographs. The photo of each agent were wanted in order to provide them with the ID cards by the authorities concerned.

BNP: Atmosphere

FROM PAGE 1

Mannan Bhuiyan said they requested the CEC to take effective measures to ensure that voters can turn up at the polling centres and return home safely and to check possible "vote rigging by Awami League".

During the one and half-an-hour meeting, the BNP delegation which included Syed Hasan Ahmed and Haris Chowdhury focused on appointment of polling agents and announcement of the election results.

Bhuiyan said the EC agreed with them that a major segment of illegal arms are yet to be recovered. "With a large number of armed cadres still at large, a peaceful election is not possible," he added.

The government, if it wants, can recover all illegal arms in only three days, the BNP leader said

Earlier at a meeting in the morning, the Commission decided that it would meet at least once a day till the election to review the overall situation. The meeting chaired by the CEC also took up the issues of violation of election rules and code of conduct by candidates.

The Commission once again directed the authorities concerned

nation with a self-reliant economy," Hasina told a rally at Durgapur High School ground in Rajshahi.

She introduced her party candidate from Rajshahi-4 constituency comprising Durgapur and Puthia upazilas, Tajul Islam M Faruk.

Hasina formally launched the electioneering in the area, offering feteha at the mazar of Hazrat Shah Mokhdum (RA) in Rajshahi city.

Bargerhat-2 incident Case against 4-party nominee, 27 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A case has been filed with Bagerhat Sadar thana accusing 28 people of burning houses in Utkul Union and resorting to terrorist activities in the minority-dominated area on Thursday.

Most of the accused belong to Four-party Alliance, including Bagerhat district BNP president MA H Selim, who is contesting the coming general election from Bagerhat-2 constituency.

Refuting the allegations brought in the FIR Selim told newsmen the AL candidate for the seat master-minded the pre-planned attacks in Utkul.

None has been arrested in connection with the incident, police said.

EU team

FROM PAGE 1
Friday, the 15 EU leaders said they were convinced that the fight against global terrorism could only be won if it had the backing of moderate Islamic nations and is accompanied by new diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East.

Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt said the diplomatic mission to the Islamic countries would try to cement the support for the global drive against terrorism and make sure it survives the shock of a likely military action by the United States.

"We have to do everything possible to make sure (the support) remains. It is one of the reasons to send the delegation," he said.

Verhofstadt, representing the EU, will travel to Washington on Thursday for talks with President George W Bush.

At Friday's summit, EU leaders said a targeted US retaliation against countries harbouring terrorists was "legitimate" and said each of the 15 nations was ready to participate in such action.

Spain said Sunday it would go a step further and offer the United States military support in line with a 1989 bilateral defence pact.

to take stern action against those violating the rules and the code of conduct.

Election Commissioners Shafiuur Rahman, MM Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali and senior EC officials attended the meeting.

US sanctions

FROM PAGE 12
fellow Muslim neighbour as tens of thousands of Afghans flee toward their frontiers in anticipation of a US military attack.

India and Pakistan, where military ruler President Pervez Musharraf has agreed to back Bush despite stiff domestic opposition, both welcomed the presidential order on sanctions.

It does not apply to separate sanctions relating to Musharraf's takeover of power in 1999, but will allow Washington to vote in favour of multilateral aid packages such as one Pakistan is negotiating with the International Monetary Fund.

Bush, in a memorandum released by the White House, said continued sanctions for the 1998 tit-for-tat nuclear tests "would not be in the national security interests of the United States."

Laden gone missing

FROM PAGE 12
spiritual leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, had given his seal of approval to a fatwa (edict) issued by a council of 1,000 senior Islamic religious figures last week in the capital, Kabul, requesting bin Laden to leave of his own accord, in his own time.

It was the first sign the Taliban was reconsidering its position on bin Laden.

"We are trying to find him and when he is found we will place the ulema's decision before him," the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press quoted Mutmaen as saying.

"Then it is up to him to leave Afghanistan or not," he was quoted as saying.

Previously, the puritanical Islamic regime had refused to consider handing him over unless the United States produced evidence to try him in an independent Muslim court.

Asked if he was worried that something might happen to their missing "guest," Mutmaen said:

"No, he is never alone. He has his followers with him. Also he knows how to look after himself."

A Washington report adds: The

ern Afghanistan as opposition forces under warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam claimed he had cut off a Taliban supply route leading to the town of Mazar-i-Sharif near the Uzbek and Tajik borders.

Dostam told AFP by telephone that his men had killed at least 60 Taliban fighters and secured a key highway. A Taliban official confirmed the opposition had advanced but said the fighting was ongoing.

Opposition forces have pledged to work with the United States in the event of an attack and military experts have suggested that the Mazar-i-Sharif airfield could be a key target for capture.

Mutaen said that neighbouring countries supporting the US-led coalition would face "serious consequences" and the Taliban has repeatedly warned that any attack on Afghanistan would trigger a holy war.

A massive array of US firepower has been deployed to the region.

Reports in the British press said that advance teams from US and British special forces had already arrived inside Afghanistan to consult with opposition forces and pinpoint bin Laden's position.

Two US aircraft carrier battle-groups are in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, more than 100 extra warplanes have been deployed to the area and two more carriers and a 2,200 strong force of Marines are on the way.

proximity of Uzbekistan to Afghanistan, which continues to harbour international terrorist Osama bin Laden, has raised concerns for the safety of Americans in Uzbekistan," the State Department said.

A department statement also said that the personnel of a US "government-affiliated organisation" located outside the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, were preparing to leave the country