

Mostafa Mohsin Montu joins BNP

BSS, Dhaka

Hundreds of leaders and workers of different front organisations of Bangladesh Awami League and Gano Forum led by former parliamentarian and veteran freedom fighter Mostafa Mohsin Montu yesterday joined the BNP.

Presided over by BNP central leader Jamal Sharif Hiru, the joining ceremony held at Kafabagan Cricket Ground here last night was attended by founding secretary general of BNP Dr A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury as the chief guest.

Speaking on the occasion, Montu said liberation war is not the sole property of any individual or party and added that it is the property of all and "that is why I have taken the decision to join BNP."

Montu who was the organising secretary of Gano Forum alleged that some quarters had long been trying to split the nation in the name of the spirit of war of independence. But, he said, we want to establish the ideals of liberation war under the leadership of BNP Chief Khaleda Zia."

Dr A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury welcoming the new entrants said they took the right decision at this critical juncture of the nation.

Kidnapper held, child rescued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police hunted down a kidnapper and rescued a four-year-old child unhurt in the small hours of yesterday.

Farhan Nayem, son of Dr Sarder A Nayem and grandson of Prof Sirajul Islam of Dhaka University, was kidnapped from a house at Uttara on Sunday, and within eight hours of the incident, police went on a manhunt in different places of the city.

Detective Branch (DB) of Police and Uttara police in plain clothes, led by Assistant Commissioner (DB) S M Akbaruzzaman and Investigation Officer Nasirul Islam of Uttara Police Station, acted promptly by launching a combined operation.

The kidnappers demanded a Tk 20 lakh ransom from Dr Nayem for release of his son.

The gang was eventually spotted in front of the Pritom Hotel at

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Hasina begins Comilla, B'baria, Sylhet tour today

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League President and immediate-past prime minister Sheikh Hasina will address at least 21 public meetings and a good number of way-side rallies as part of her election campaign in Comilla, Brahmanbaria and greater Sylhet in the next two days beginning today.

She will start her two-day election campaign programme today from Bhercheror in Munshiganj at 10am and will proceed to Daudkandi to address a public meeting at 11am.

Hasina will also address public meetings at Chandina, Nimsar, Shuagazi, Choudhagram, Nangolkote, Laksam, Barura, Comilla, Debiddar, Muradnagar (Companiganj), Cosba to finish the first day's programme at Brahmanbaria.

The AL chief will start her greater Sylhet campaign on September 26 from Sarail at 11am. The other meetings are expected to be held at Churnaughat, Bahubal, Sreemongal, Moulvibazar, Bishwanath and Companiganj. She will complete the tour by offering ziarat and munazat at the Mazar of Hazrat Shahjalal (r) and Hazrat Shah Paron (r) before leaving for Dhaka.

Rejoinder

The assistant vice-president of National Bank Limited, Feni branch, has denied "giving any interview" to "any correspondent" regarding a news item published in The Daily Star on September 19, titled "National Bank had to act as per wish of Hazari's men."

According to the news item, having spent Tk 8 lakh on refurbishment of new office premises, the NBL had to cancel its plan as Hazari's men disapproved the idea.

Our response: Mohammad Nizam Uddin, while informing the deputy commissioner of Feni about the NBL headquarters' decision to comply with the wishes of Hazari's men, disclosed the matter to this correspondent. We stand by our



President Shahabuddin Ahmad listens to Mozaffar Hossain Paltu during yesterday's meeting with an Awami League delegation at the Bangabhaban.

Hasina promises to build 'New Dhaka' if voted to power

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has promised to build a "New Dhaka" to lessen the burden of population pressure on the capital if her party returns to power.

"We've a plan to build a new Dhaka city adjacent to the capital and the proposed city will be developed in a planned way to provide modern civic amenities," the former prime minister told a huge election meeting in the city yesterday.

Hasina disclosed her plan while highlighting the development works her government had done in the metropolis. "We need your support to further ease the problems you are facing," she told her audience promising them a better living in the capital. She also cautioned them against those who remained absent from the areas for years and appeared at this election season with huge money.

The meeting at the Mohammadpur Town Hall ground was organised to woo votes for AL candidate in the Dhaka-9 (Dhanmondi-Mohammadpur)

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Ctg, Mongla ports becoming vulnerable to oil spillage

STAR REPORT

The Chittagong and Mongla ports are becoming increasingly vulnerable to oil spillage and a consequent ecological disaster due to an increasing number of maritime traffic bringing in 3.5 million tons of oil annually, said speakers at a workshop in the city yesterday.

Although direct spill risks are more at Chittagong port now, Mongla also appears increasingly exposed to such threat. Over 200,000 tons of oil is carried annually as fuel in vessels operating through Mongla shipping lane.

The Sundarbans Reserve Forest, world's largest mangrove forest and a World Heritage Site, is at risk as it stands close to the country second seaport at Mongla. Yet there has not been any legal and regulatory framework to deal with such a threat to environment, they added.

The speakers emphasised the urgent need for a national contingency plan and regulatory instruments to prevent oil-spill accidents.

"We have to admit that we have not been able to do much work to tackle any such disaster at our national level. Due to various constraints, Bangladesh has been rather slow to adopt relevant international conventions aimed at mitigating such oil spillage impacts," said Syed Md Elahi, advisor, ministries of agriculture, fisheries and livestock and shipping.

Elahi was speaking at the inauguration of the work-

shop on 'Oil Spill Impact and Response Management Programme' as chief guest at Sheraton Hotel. The Mongla Port Authority organised the workshop.

Mahfuzul Islam, secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forests; Faisal Ahmed Chowdhury, secretary of the Ministry of Shipping; Omkar Shrestha, deputy country representative of the Asian Development Bank (ADB); Albab Akanda, senior project implementation officer of ADB, Manila; and Commodore KM Ahmed, chairman of Mongla Port Authority, among others, spoke at the inaugural session.

Oil is one of the vital growth propellers, but it could be risky as well when spillage occurs due to collision, running aground of vessels due to engine failures, navigational errors, rough weather conditions or dragging of anchors specially in and around the port areas, he mentioned.

With the Sundarbans Reserve Forests only three kilometres away from Mongla port, he stressed the necessity of preparing a cost-effective response management programme depending as much as possible on easily available local inputs and local know-how.

"But any way, we have been able to finalise a draft Regional Oil and Chemical Marine Pollution Contingency Plan for South Asian countries comprising Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka," he said.

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Moderate to heavy rain induced inundation of the road in front of the T&T and AGB Colony at Motijheel in the city yesterday.

AL apprises President of Sunday's bomb attack

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League yesterday apprised President Shahabuddin Ahmed of Sunday's bomb attack on the party's election rally at Mollarhat and blamed "fundamentalists" for perpetrating such acts to foil the upcoming general election.

"The fundamentalists are trying to foil the election and capture state power through all such means," the immediate-past ruling party complained.

A five-member delegation led by its election coordination committee

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lands that belonged to temples and crematoriums of the Hindu community. They also set off explosives inside church."

The former prime minister, who started her day by offering feteha at the mazar of Hazrat Shahjalal (RH), first addressed a meeting at the Madrasah Maidan, organised in favour of ex-finance minister M Saifur Rahman who is running in the Sylhet-1 constituency.

People in tens of thousands turned up for the meeting braving rain. They carried sheaf of paddy and marched towards the meeting venue with colourful processions.

Khaleda accused the AL of looting thousands of crores of taka from the share market and also public properties from the day it had come to power till its last day in power.

"While the country rose to prominence as the emerging tiger during our tenure in government from 1991 to 1996, the AL earned it the title of the most corrupt," she said. "During the AL rule after the independence, SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Bangkok-based ANFE to send polls observers

AP, Bangkok

A Bangkok-based regional watchdog said Monday it will send 30 international observers to monitor the October 1 parliamentary elections in Bangladesh.

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The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFE) will send observers from 16 countries starting Tuesday, and they will remain on the job until October 3, the group said in a statement.

"Extensive cooperation between experienced international observers and prominent local monitoring organisations will increase the chance of deterring and detecting frauds, irregularities and violence," the statement said.

It said the monitors will work in collaboration with the United Nations Electoral Assistance Service.

One stabbed to death in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A garment employee stabbed to death his colleague in the early hours of yesterday, following a row over the proposal of love to a female colleague.

On the night of the incident, Abdul Matin, 22, son of Bisharat Ali, an employee of Paragon Sweater at Malibagh, had had an altercation with Sukkur Ali over the proposal of courtship, and at one stage Sukkur stabbed him indiscriminately.

Critically injured, Matin was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the on-duty doctor declared him dead in the early hours.

On Saturday afternoon, Matin on his way back to his residence for lunch proposed to Ruma. But she turned down the offer and complained to Sukkur, her alleged lover. A case was filed with Khilgaon Police Station in this regard. Arrested was Sukkur.

Feni Jubo League leader killed, 100 hurt in pre-polls clashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Feni Jubo League leader was killed and over 100 injured when Awami League and BNP activists clashed in different parts of the country yesterday and Sunday.

Of the injured 50 were in Sirajganj, nine in Feni, four in Khulna, 12 in Barisal, two in Natore, 20 in Jhenaidah, and 12 in Rajbari.

Our Feni correspondent adds, a Jubo League leader was killed and nine Awami League leaders and activists were injured when terrorists attack them at Ukkilbari Dargah when they were going to Sonagazi from Feni town by a microbus yesterday.

Local AL blamed BNP leader Mosharraf Hossain, BNP candidate for Feni-3 constituency, for the attack which BNP denied BNP leaders said agitated people attacked them.

The dead was identified as Ehtesham Ibrahim, union Jubo League president.

Of the injured, six were identified as Faizul Kabir,

Sonagazi thana AL president and Bogadhana UP chairman, Mohammad Ilias, Char Darbesh UP chairman, Advocate Nasiruddin, the chief election agent of AL candidate Mahbubul Alam Tara, Jubo League leaders -- Nasiruddin, Kazi Badal and Adar.

The armed terrorists intercepted the microbus at Ukkilbari Dargah at about 12:15 pm. They beat and stabbed them indiscriminately. They also took away Tk 3 lakh in cash, a licensed revolver of Advocate Nasiruddin and mobile telephone set.

Ehtesham succumbed to his injuries on way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at about 6:30 pm. Faizul and Nasiruddin were also shifted to DMCH in critical condition.

The rest were admitted to Sonagazi Health Complex and Feni Sadar Hospital. AL brought out a procession in Feni town yesterday evening protesting killing of Ehtesham.

Meanwhile, police havildar Ahjad Hossain was shot

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TIB meetings 'Vote for honest, qualified candidates'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB), yesterday organised two meetings in Mymensingh to create awareness among people to vote for honest and qualified candidates in the October 1 general election.

The meetings, held at the bar association building at Mymensingh town and at Madhupur upazila, were addressed by some local candidates from different parties.

The candidates pledged that they would help the authorities to maintain law and order during the election and work for development of their areas even if they fail.

The meetings were organised with the help of Conscious Citizens' Committee (CCC), a local organisation.

The meeting at Mymensingh town was addressed by, among others, Motiur Rahman of Awami League, Delwar Hossain Khan Dul of BNP, Anil Bandhu Das of Jatiya Party (Manju), Sheikh Siddiqui Rahman of BASAD, Shah Asaduzzaman of CPB, Nasreen Monayem Khan (Independent) and M. Kawser Hossain Harun (Independent), all candidates for Mymensingh - 4 seat. Prof. Shamsul Islam was in the chair.

The meeting at Madhupur was addressed by candidates Dr. Abdur Razzaq of AL, Fetema Khan of JP and Khandaker Abdul Gafur Montu (Independent). TNO of Madhupur M. Enamul Huq presided.

A writ petition was filed yesterday challenging the caretaker government's decision to allow the US to use Bangladesh's airspace, naval territory, airports and refuelling facilities in its action against international terrorism.

Supreme Court Advocate Mohammad Ruhul Qudus (Babu) filed the writ petition in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court yesterday.

Defense secretary and foreign secretary have been made respondents.

After a brief hearing, a vacation bench of the High Court comprising Justice M A Aziz and Justice Sikder Maqbul Hug adjourned the hearing for one week.

Use of airspace by US Govt decision challenged

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News Analysis

India lukewarm to Bush's decision to lift sanctions

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

It is felt that lifting of the sanctions would acquire real meaning if they related to removal of curbs on use of high technology for the dual purposes of industrial and military uses. That is the key area where India has been looking forward to waiver of the punitive measures as substantial economic sanctions had already been done away with by the Clinton administration in 1999.

Government circles, mainstream political parties and major industries believe that the sanctions on American economic assistance to India lost much of their bite in the last two years when the US administration under President Bill Clinton had begun removing them in phases.

Expectations are also high that after the latest waiver 149 Indian entities, mostly companies and some research organisations, can deal with their American counterparts without obtaining special clearance. This will lead to industrial sales, transfer of high technology,

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