

Hasina tells EU mission AL to win if people allowed to cast vote

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her party is confident of winning the October 1 election with absolute majority.

"We're confident of winning the election if people are allowed to cast vote peacefully in a free and fair atmosphere," she said when chief of EU election observation mission Joaquim Miranda met her at her Dhammoldi residence.

EC Head of Delegation Ambassador Antonio de Souza Menezes, former State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, former Ambassador Walur Rahman and AL chief's Press Secretary Jawadul Karim were present.

Hasina apprised Miranda of the

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A three-member delegation of the European Union Election Observation Mission in Bangladesh led by Joachim Miranda calls on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at the Sudha Sadan in the city yesterday.

BNP leader murder Taher's son, 4 others released on bail

UNB, Dhaka

Five people arrested in connection with the BNP leader advocate Nurul Islam abduction and murder case were released on bail Wednesday.

District and Sessions Judge court here on Sunday granted bail for Abu Shahadat Shibli, son of Awami League leader and Lalmipur Pourashava chairman M A Taher, Jibu League workers Manju and Biplob, and microbus drivers Bahar and Harun.

Six people including M A Taher, his another son A K M Salauddin Tipu and Banglakhan UP chairman Abdul Alim Hamu are now in jail hajat in the sensational murder case.

The planned public gatherings of

Hasina, Khaleda round off cross-country campaign

NAZMUL ASHRAF

two leading parties are expected to be the biggest among hundreds of their kind the two leaders addressed in the last one month. It is anticipated that the two arch rivals would sum up their statements they made during the period.

Yet, their canvassing for the upcoming election would culminate in their addresses to the nation over the state-run radio and television on Saturday, the last day of official electioneering.

Both Hasina and Khaleda had travelled hundreds of kilometres from north to south and east to west, touching off their electioneering in Sylhet, the traditional election campaign launch pad. They defied

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Sending of ballot papers complete

UNB, Dhaka

Election Commission yesterday completed sending ballot papers to the district headquarters.

Officials said ballots were sent to 13 districts on the third and last day of a three-day dispatch.

The districts were: Sirajganj, Tangail, Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Mymensingh, Netrakona, Kishoreganj, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Dhaka, Gazipur, Comilla and Feni.

On the first day on Tuesday, ballots were sent to 29 districts while on the second day on Wednesday to 22 districts.

CEC addresses nations Sept 30

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Election Commissioner M A Syed will address the nation on September 30.

Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar will broadcast live the CEC's speech ahead of the election at 8:30 pm, officials at the EC Secretariat said.

The BNP meeting was arranged at Mondalpara while Awami League called a public meeting at nearby Rail Gate at the same time whipping up tension in the town.

Worried about the prospect of a clash, the additional deputy commissioners yesterday met with leaders of both the parties. Following the meetings, Awami League agreed that its projection meeting be held in front of Chunkha Library after the BNP meeting is over.

Mayor of Dhaka Mohammad Hanif will preside over the Awami League meeting and introduced the party candidates of Narayanganj-4 and 5 constituencies.

Despite change of venue and timing of Awami League meeting, tension was mounting among the people in apprehension of trouble.

Int'l polls monitors start arriving

AFP, Dhaka

A scaled-down team of international monitors has begun arriving in Dhaka ahead of the October 1 elections with their ranks reduced by rising tensions over Afghanistan, officials said yesterday.

Up to 200 foreign observers had been expected to be deployed across the country to monitor polls which have been tainted by allegations of corruption even before voting.

But following the September 11

terror attacks on New York and Washington, several observers, including former US president Jimmy Carter, have withdrawn their participation.

Carter, who was due to head a 30-member team, expressed his support for the election and his confidence that it would be a fair fight, but his comments come against a backdrop of bloody clashes between supporters of the country's fierce political rivals.

More than 120 people have been killed and 4,000 injured, with the leaders of both main political parties, Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League and Khaleda Zia of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), trading accusations of sabotaging the other's campaign.

Most of the trouble has been blamed on supporters of the two women, who maintain a bitter rivalry despite the lack of significant differences in their campaign platforms.

In the latest incident, four people were reportedly killed Wednesday near an Awami League rally in the northeastern Sunamganj district. Anti-election strikes have also been threatened for polling day in outly-

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Prayer Timings

Sept 28

5-49 pm

Sept 29

5-49 am

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Source: Islamic Foundation

Alliance to curb corruption, terrorism, if elected

BNP chairperson tells newsmen

REZAUL KARIM

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has said if voted to power, the first task of her party and the alliance led by it will be to eliminate terrorism and root out corruption from the country.

"We have specific plans to curb terrorism at any cost. If voted to power, we will bring all terrorists to book irrespective of their party affiliation. Terrorism has taken a serious turn in the country and it should be eliminated immediately. Otherwise, the country will be ruined," she said.

Talking informally with newsmen accompanying her on board a launch, the former prime minister categorically said BNP will not allow terrorist in the party or in its front organisations. "The national will not be able to implement any good initiative if terrorism is not eliminated."

Without elaborating the plan, she said, "BNP is serious and sincere" about it and people will support it.

She also had a lengthy free and frank discussion on the country's socio-economic and political situation,

election and her party's future plans.

She said there will be one-day weekly holiday on Friday. "We are a developing country . . . A country like Bangladesh cannot afford a two-day weekly holiday".

Replies to a question she her government introduced the system of caretaker government, and this must continue. But Awami League which had launched a movement for this it is now speaking against the concept.

She said if voted to power, BNP will give "complete autonomy" to Radio and BTV and will encourage setting up of more TV channels in the private sector. "We believe in free flow of information and full freedom of the press".

About the role of ETV, Khaleda Zia said it playing partisan role and giving maximum coverage to a particular political party.

The former prime minister looked very much confident about running the country better than in her previous tenure. "We might have done mistakes because I

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One killed in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Khagrachhari

Gunfire left one person killed and four others injured at Dighinala in the district yesterday.

Unidentified miscreants in ambush fired at the people in Baradam area, Dighinala, who were returning to Babuchhara from an election rally of United Democratic People's Front (UDPF) at Choungachhari, killing on the spot Priti Bhula Chakma, 23, said security force sources.

Injured were Uttam Chakma, 25, Milan Kanti Chakma, 27, Regan Chakma, 27, and Amar Bikash Chakma, 22.

Of them, three critically injured were admitted to Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital, and the remaining one to the local health complex.

When the security personnel on patrol rushed to the spot immediately after the incident, the miscreants

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Hasina turns 55 today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President and immediate-past Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina turns 55 today.

However, she will remain tied up with work on her 55th birthday, chairing party's last projection meeting at Paltan Maidan in the city at 3:00 p.m. today, just two days ahead of the October 1 parliamentary polls. With the rally, the AL chief winds up her month-long hectic cross-country election campaign.

Although there will be no special ceremony to observe the birthday, relatives, party colleagues and admirers are expected to be at Sudha Sadan, her Dhammoldi residence, with bouquets to wish her a happy birthday.

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Pre-polls clashes leave one killed, 223 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One person was killed and 223 others were injured in pre-election clashes involving activists of political parties at different places of the country yesterday and on Wednesday night.

The dead was identified as Zahidul Islam, 22, a BNP activist.

Zahidul was beaten to death during a clash between AL and BNP workers at Uliabazar in Islampur upazila of Jamalpur district Wednesday night. At least 50 people were injured in the clash.

According to our correspondent, the clash ensued when an AL procession was passing by a projection

meeting of BNP candidate at Uliabazar at about 7:30 pm. A number of shops were ransacked during the clash.

Police intervene and brought the situation under control. BNP enforced a half-day hartal in Islampur upazila protesting the killing.

Army personnel are patrolling the area. Father of Zahidul filed a murder case against 65 local AL leaders and activists.

Our Staff Correspondent from Sylhet reports: At least 50 people were injured, five with bullets, in a clash between the activists of four-party alliance and Jatiya party.

In Sherpur, at least 30 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of Awami League and

upazila of the district yesterday.

The trouble began at about 5:30 pm when a stone was hurled on the dais of the alliance at Tajpur where BNP candidate Ilyas Ali was present.

BNP alleged that the stone was thrown on the dais from a JP procession. The activists of the four-party alliance attacked the JP

processionists and both the groups clashed for an hour, leaving 50 injured, five with bullets.

The four party activists also ransacked three microbuses during the clash.

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