

## Last minute door-to-door campaign as nation prepares for polls

NAZRUL ISLAM

Candidates across the country are bracing for tomorrow's polls by scaling up the door-to-door mass contact, with the curtain having fallen on the official electioneering at midnight last night.

The ban on election campaign like holding, calling and attending public meetings and bringing out processions will remain in force until midnight tomorrow, the Election Commission (EC) said in a press release yesterday.

Violation of the provision regarding violence and brandishing or using arms are punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term extending up to seven years and will not be less than two years and also with fines, the EC said referring to the relevant article of the Representation of People Order.

The press release also said it is also an offence to campaign or begging votes or asking for not casting votes within 400 yards of a polling centre.

Campaigning reached a fever pitch in the city, with both Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia on whirlwind visits to eight city constituencies gearing up the masses for voting for their party nominees. Excited supporters and activists of both the parties accompanied the leaders.

The parties, candidates and the Election Commission (EC) now are busy preparing for the election to the eighth parliament. The EC, according to officials, has been keeping a close contact with returning officers across the country to get up-to-the-minute information.

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Last minute electioneering: Kamal Mujumder, AL candidate for Dhaka-11, in a vehicle meeting people while Sadek Hossain Khoka, BNP candidate for Dhaka-7, addressing a rally in his constituency yesterday.

## 300 foreign observers may monitor polls

M ANWARUL HAQ

Despite heightened global tension following the September 11 horrific incidents in the US, around 300 foreign polls observers are expected to monitor the national elections in Bangladesh tomorrow.

They include two parliamentary delegations from Japan and Nepal.

The Japanese delegation is due to arrive today while the Nepalese team has already arrived.

Many of the observers form

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## 7 killed, 253 hurt in pre-polls violence

Munshiganj AL leader shot dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven people were killed and over 253 injured in pre-election violence in different parts of the country yesterday and on Friday night.

Of the seven, one was killed in Munshiganj, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Feni each and two others were in Bhol.

Munshiganj town Awami League president Jalaluddin Ahmed was shot dead allegedly by BNP activists in front of the municipal office yesterday.

Jalaluddin, also a ward commissioner, was shot while he was returning to home at about 11 am.

He was first taken to Munshiganj sadar hospital and later shifted to Chest Diseases Hospital in Dhaka where the doctors declared him dead.

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## Ban on vehicular movement, cities exempted

UNB, Dhaka

The Election Commission has banned movement of all types of motorised vehicle across the country barring the metropolitan and divisional towns from midnight tonight to midnight on the election day.

During the period, motorcycle, auto-rickshaw, microbus, jeep, pick-up car, bus, truck, tempo, launch, engine-driven boat and speedboat would not be allowed to ply in the country while motorbike and microbus in metropolitan and divisional towns.

The restriction would not be applicable to the vehicles to be used by the candidates, law-enforcers, authorised observers and election agents in addition to those plying the national highways, and long-route river vessels.

Election observers and agents, if necessary, can use vehicles with stickers given by the Election Commission, said a press release.

## CA, CEC address nation today

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Advisor Latifur Rahman and Chief Election Commissioner M A Syed will address the nation today over radio and television.

According to a revised schedule, Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar will broadcast the address of the CEC at 7 pm. Ekushey Television will air it at 9 pm.

Chief Advisor Latifur Rahman is scheduled to address the nation over Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television at 8.30 pm.

## President asks CEC, army chief to ensure fair voting

UNB, Dhaka

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday asked the Election Commission, chiefs of army and police to ensure peaceful atmosphere at all polling centres so that the voters can cast their voters freely and fearlessly.

"Full preparation must be made to ensure peaceful atmosphere in all polling stations," he told Chief Election Commissioner M A Syed, Army Chief Lt Gen Harun-ar Rashid and IG of Police M Nurul Huda who called on him at Bangabhaban.

They apprised the President of the overall law and order in the country ahead of the 8th parliamentary elections to be held on Monday.

There will be no problem at all in holding the general election peacefully, they assured the President.

They said that a total of 13 BDR, police and VDP members would be deployed in each polling station.

In addition, the members of the armed forces will be patrolling nearby polling stations and they will be available to interfere within a few minutes if the situation demands, they said.

## Hasina's call for restraint

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed deep concern at the pre-election violence across the country and asked the people to show maximum restraint in such situation.

Referring to the killings of an AL leader in Munshiganj yesterday and two others in Chittagong the day before, Hasina accused a certain quarter of conspiring to subvert tomorrow's election.

The AL chief was addressing an unscheduled public rally at Malibagh DIT Road crossing in the city at 9:30 p.m. yesterday, the last day for election campaign. The rally was organised to woo votes for AL candidate from Dhaka-6 constituency Saber Hossain Choudhury.

Urging the people to give her party a fresh mandate, the immediate-past prime minister also called upon the voters to see to it that their right to franchise is not snatched.

"Turn up to the polling stations

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## Business bodies hope polls would be peaceful

STAR REPORT

Leaders of three important business bodies yesterday hoped that the election would be held peacefully and provide a stable government to steer the nation to economic progress.

The economic stake in the forthcoming national election is far too great to enumerate. Naturally, the business community sincerely expects that the election will be held peacefully, they said in a joint statement.

Latifur Rahman, president of

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## 'Accept with grace both victory & defeat'

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Envoys of 13 western countries and chief of the European Union (EU) resident mission in Bangladesh have urged political parties to accept 'with grace both victory and defeat' in tomorrow's polls and not to 'engage in violent activities.'

They hoped that people of Bangladesh irrespective of sex, religion communities and groups will turn out in large numbers to exercise their franchise and further strengthen the democratic process in the country.

"As friends and well-wishers of Bangladesh, we make these urgings," they said.

In written remarks at a press conference yesterday, ambassadors and high commissioners belonging to what is now known as

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## People want a change Khaleda ends campaign with call for tolerance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the people to "teach terrorist and corrupt Awami League a lesson" by voting for 'sheaf of paddy' in tomorrow's general election.

"The Awami League is again begging vote as it did in the 1996 polls. But the people will not be misled this time because they do not want to return to Awami misrule," she said.

Addressing a mammoth election meeting at Naya Paltan in the city, the former Prime Minister said the nation is eagerly waiting to give a befitting reply to Awami League because it made many mothers lose their sons, women lose their husbands and sisters lose their brothers in the last five years.

Tens of thousands of people from different parts of the city converged on streets in Naya Paltan, Kakrail, Fakirerpool, Bijoy Nagar and adjoining areas. It was virtually a human

sea as crowds spilled over to nearby lanes and by-lanes. People were also seen on rooftops.

The All Party Action Council (APAC) of BNP-led four-party alliance organised the meeting. All alliance candidates in the city were introduced at the meeting.

Amid cheers, repeated claps and full-throated slogans, the BNP Chairperson said that AL came to power in 1996 through rigging and manipulating polls results by media

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BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia waving to the crowd prior to addressing the last election meeting of the four-party alliance at Naya Paltan in the city yesterday.

## Highlights of 4-party rally

We will free Dhaka from terrorism and traffic jam.

We will make girls' education free up to HSC level.

We will raise to 100 per cent contribution to teachers' salaries.

BNP set up 82,000 industrial units during 1991-96.

Muslims can die but can't bow their heads.

BNP turned Bangladesh into 'Emerging Tiger.'

AL came to power through media coup and admin coup in 1996.

AL misappropriated Tk. 600 crore in Frigate and MIG-29 purchase.

AL gave arms and drugs to the youths.

Food worth Tk. 2750 crore was imported in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001.

## Rally wears a festive look

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The last election campaign rally of the BNP-led four-party alliance in the city yesterday wore a festive look as thousands of jubilant supporters thronged the meeting venue amidst fanfare.

With the beating of drums, young supporters of BNP and its alliance partners gathered on the Naya Paltan road in front of BNP central office much ahead of the arrival of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at the venue at 4:40 pm.

Holding aloft colourfully decorated symbols of the alliance, 'Sheaf

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## 2 killed, 15 hurt in Ctg blast

UNB, Chittagong

Two people were killed and 15 were injured in bomb explosions in the port city's Double-Mooring and Bakulia thana areas last night.

One person was killed and four-injured in an explosion at a house at Sultan Colony in Pathantuli area of

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 30		5-57 pm
Oct 1	5-50 am	

Prayer Timings		
Sept 30		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-57	6-04
Esha	7-45	8-15
Source: Islamic Foundation		

## Preliminary observation report by Monday midnight: EUEOMB

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of European Union Election Observation Mission in Bangladesh (EUEOMB) here yesterday said it would reveal the preliminary observation report on the eighth parliamentary election around midnight on Monday.

The statement about how free and fair the election would be made available on Tuesday morning (at about 11am) followed by the most substantial report on Wednesday, EUEOMB chief Joaquim Miranda De Silva told the news agency at Hotel Sheraton.

He said the final report would be prepared after discussion with the 62-member EU observation team, expected to be back in the capital from across the country by Tuesday.

About pre-election observation, he said a tense situation and uncertainty over women and minority voters' turnout in the election have been prevailing in the country thanks to political confrontation and violence.

"There are also positive aspects ... We found positive role being played by the authorities concerned, the government," said Miranda, a

member of the European Parliament.

Meanwhile, at a roundtable at Hotel Sheraton yesterday Miranda expressed more concern over the aftermath of the election results than pre-election scenario as pointed out by other participants.

"Why are there too many (incidents of) violence, why there are too many illegal arms? That's the electoral system," he told the roundtable on "Independent Election Observation-An Important Tool For a Fair Election."

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## Announcement

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a 4-page special on 'Election 2001' on pages 5, 6, 7 & 8.