# NEWS

# Who casts vote where

### FROM PAGE 1

Most of the candidates of Awami League and the BNP- led 4-party alliance in the city said they will cast their votes by 9 am

AL candidate Saber Hossain Chodhury contesting for Dhaka- 6 seat said he will cast his vote at Khilgaon Government High School polling centre. He said he will go to the centre by 8 am.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, he said, "In 1996, people of of winning the election", he said. the area elected me by giving their verdict against terrorism. The same BNP will cast his vote at the thing happened in 1994 mayoral election. This time I expect the same thing will happen. People will vote in by noon, after visiting some polling favour of peace and development." centres.

Saber also alleged that his main opponent was charged under the Public Safety Act for terrorist acts.

Saber's main rival BNP candidate Mirza Abbas said he will cast his vote at Shaianpur Miria Abbas Women's College centre in the early hours of voting. "If the election is free and fair, I

His main rival Khandaker expect to be elected with a margin of Mahbubuddin of BNP could at least 20,000 votes," he told The not be contacted over telephone. AL candidate Kamal Ahmed

Daily Star. AL candidate Haji Mohammad Majumder contesting from Dhaka -Selim contesting from Dkaha-8 will 11 will cast his vote at Mirpur Bangla cast his vote at Islamic High School School centre. polling centre near Boro Katra at 8 His main rival SAKhaleq of BNP will cast his vote at Dar-us-Salam

am. His rival Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu of BNP will cast his vote at the Jatiya Tarun Sangha polling centre in Lalbagh.

BNP candidate Salauddin "I apprehend rigging by Haji Selim's men in Ward No. 66. So I will Ahmed contesting from Dhaka - 4 will cast his vote at DIT Primarv first go to the centre there to observe School polling centre in Shvampur the situation. I will cast my vote in Kadamtoli. "I expect to be the first the afternoon," said Nasiruddin. voter to cast vote in the centre. I He said he hopes to win with a

margin of at least 30,000 votes. AL candidate AK M Rahmatullah contesting from Dhaka- 5 said he will cast his vote at Gulshan Model High School polling centre at about

complaint regarding this. 8 am. Rahmatullah's main rival, Maj (Retd) Kamrul Islam of BNP will cast his vote at Kala Chandpur Primary over telephone.

# Nation goes to polls today

FROM PAGE 1 "I apprehend violence at Berait,

chool polling centre in Baridhara

Islamia Primary School centre in the

early hours of voting. "I am confident

Brothers Club polling centre in Gopi

Bangh. He said he will cast his vote

AL candidate Alhaj Mokbul

Hossain contesting from Dhaka - 9

will cast his vote at Kishaloy Girls

High School and College centre in

Mohammadpur. "I will visit all the

centres after casting my vote,"

Primary School in Kalyanpur.

expect to win with a margin of at

ast 50,000 votes," said Khaleq.

engaged in making seals to cast

Hossain said.

His rival Sadek Hossain Khoka of

by 8:30 am.

could win a number of seats and Dumni and Paijra polling centres as emerge as a key factor in formation Rahmatullah's men may try to rig of the next government should any votes." Islam said. Islam also hopes of the two major parties fails to to will the election with a big margin. secure single majority. The alliance Mayor's son M Sayeed Khokan called the Islamic Oikya Front has AL who is contesting from Dkakawill cast his vote at Nazirabar fielded 281 candidates

Both Hasina and Khaleda have, meanwhile, expressed hopes that their parties would secure enough seats to form the government on their own. Ershad, who was convicted in corruption cases and served prison terms, stands disqualified from running for the Jatiya Sangsad

The 50-year-old AL, which led the country's liberation war and won the last parliamentary polls to get back to power after a 21-year hiatus, has named candidates for all the 299 seats at stake. It has retained its traditional election symbol, boat.

Its president Hasina, the immediate-past prime minister and daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the architect of the country's independence, will vie for five seats from the Rangpur-6, Narail-1, Narail-2, Barguna-3 and Gopalganj-

3 constituencies The 21-year-old BNP, founded by late Ziaur Rahman, a key figure in the country's war of liberation who was later propelled to power as a soldier in 1976, has cobbled an electoral alliance with the Jamaat-e-Islami, pro-Naziur Rahman Manzur Jatiya Party faction and the Islami

Oikya Jote (IOJ). apprehend trouble in some of the The BNP, which formed the first centres in my constituency. I came government under a parliamentary know that some people are system of government after winning

false votes. I am going to file a His main rival Habibur Rahman Molla of AL could not be contacted

FROM PAGE 1

the 1991 polls, has doled out 49 seats to its partners in the alliance. It has fielded candidates for 250 constituencies, the Jamaat for 31, the JP (Naziur) for 11 and the IOJ for seven.

Like Hasina, the alliance leader and BNP Chairperson Khaleda is also running from five constituencies - Bogra-6, Bogra-7, Khulna-2, Feni-1 and Laxmipur-2.

While the JP (Naziur) and the IOJ candidates will share with the BNP the latter's traditional symbol, sheaf of paddy, the Jamaat contestants will run with the party's own symbol, balance.

While the Jamaat opposed the nation's struggle for independence in 1971, the IOJ is viewed as a rightwing party with strong religious undertone.

In the June 12, 1996 elections, the AL won 146 seats and the BNP 116. The JP - unified then - got 32 and the Jamaat three. The AL dislodged the BNP in forming the government with support from the JP and managed to complete a fiveyear tenure.

In the previous elections held in February 1991, the BNP secured 140 seats, the AL 88, the JP 35 and Jamaat 18. The BNP succeeded in forming the government with the support of the Jamaat.

According to the Election Commission sources, the AL secured 37.44 per cent of the popular votes and the BNP 33.6 per cent. In 1991, the AL had 33.67 per cent of the popular votes and the BNP 30.81 per cent.

Nearly 150 people have died in

### widespread political violence across polling process the country in the run-up to the

eighth Jatiya Sangsad elections. An extensive arms recovery drive was launched, which, however, yielded modest result. Only around 5,000 illegal weapons could be confiscated while only 6,200 licensed arms were deposited as a pre-election safety measure. succeeded in creating a climate of According to estimates there are confidence in the general populanearly 250,000 illegal weapons in the country.

The EC instituted a large number effective steps to create a levelof electoral law reform measures. playing field. These include raising electoral expenses from Tk 300.000 to Tk ers in large numbers and also the 500,000. It also brought poll observexpress interest of democratic and ers under legal coverage and tried donor countries in a violence-free to exclude bank loan defaulters and peaceful polls have brought the although most of the defaulters elections under the glare of internawere reported to have been able to tional attention. remain in the race through some legal loopholes.

A code of conduct for electioneering, further reinforced later on, has been flouted in most cases.

The EC came under severe criticism when it had to repromulgate an ordinance related to electoral reforms, probably the first ever in the country's history. The election is marked by pres-

ence of the largest number of domestic observers and also nearly 300 foreign observers

or queen of the day. Nearly 350,000 domestic observers have been permitted to thing after the vote is accepting the oversee elections, which will mean verdict of the people. Both the losers presence of more than nine observand the winners must accept the ers in every centre and several results in a tribute to the people's hundred through rotation - a meawishes and to strengthen democsure which, many feel, could bring undue strain on the conduct of the racy in Bangladesh.

## Rain unlikely FROM PAGE 1

Temperature may change a little and it is likely to be hot in those areas where there will be no rain.

The EC has come under serious

The caretaker government led by

criticism for involving local observ-

ers without maintaining any strin-

Justice Latifur Rahman took several

drastic measures, some of which

generated criticism. However, it

tion through taking some very

The presence of foreign observ-

For the people of Bangladesh,

these elections, unlike any other

before, have generated immense

enthusiasm. However, although

parties and candidates have lite-

rally lavished the electorate with

great attention and bombarded

them with lofty pledges the silent

majority who are the deciding factor

are keeping everyone guessing as

to whom they will cast their vote for.

The ordinary voter is the real king

Observers feel that the important

gent rules.

The officials further said that the but are forced to". They never went low which had developed in the Bay anvwhere near a "No hartal" pledge. 'moved towards land and weak ened' after yesterday's rains. The eighth parliament not knowing low had developed in the westwhether the representatives we middle sea and its adjacent Tamil elect today will discharge their Nadu State of India and crossed it responsibility inside the Jatiya Sangsad or leave us in the lurch on

Dhaka yesterday was 29.9 degree Celsius and the minimum was 24.7 degree. The maximum temperature in the country on the day was 34.4 degree in Dinajpur and the minimum

Laden's assets

### FROM PAGE 1 the Bangladesh Bank for necessary action.

According to sources, the central bank will send circulars to all banks after the parliament election to identify any bank account that might belong to Laden or his groups. If found, the accounts will be frozen. The US government has also

reminded Bangladesh that according to a UN resolution, all countries are supposed to suspend business transactions of Laden.

Leaders promised us

FROM PAGE 1 this time around we would have a "No boycott, No Hartal" pledge.

Was it too much to ask? Look at the irony of the situation. For the last

touring the country and addressing

hundreds of meetings so that we

elect their party candidates. But

when asked "will you desist from

boycotting the parliament if we elect

you or pledge to us that you will not

call hartals when in opposition?" the

answer was always full of "ifs" and

"buts" - if the Speaker behaves

neutrally, if the Treasury bench is

not abusive, if we are allowed to

speak, if we are not insulted... if, if

and if. There was never any cate-

gorical affirmation that "If you vote

for us we pledge to fight for and

represent you REGARDLESS of

how the Treasury bench or the

Take the case of hartals. Is there

any doubt in anybody's mind that it

is the most destructive thing for us?

Having been the head of the govern-

ment, haven't Khaleda and Hasina

seen it from inside how crippling

hartals have been for the economy?

Why then is there this refusal to give

us a "No hartal" pledge. Sheikh

Hasina in one of her earlier meet-

Further the hartal calls at the district

and lower levels by her party and by

front organisations significantly

On hartal the BNP and its chief's

So here we are about to elect our

For the sake of democracy and

for our future we urge upon our two

leading political parties to change

the way they have been doing

politics. It has done nobody, includ-

ing themselves, any good. Hartals

and boycott did not lodge either of

The development partners will

watch very carefully how the next

government fights poverty and

corruption and ensure observance

of human rights and strengthening

of democratic institutions and

They also said that the level of

development partnership would

one pretext or another.

FROM PAGE 12

aspects

process.

FROM PAGE 12

version of Islam.

Taliban regime.

FROM PAGE 1

and four Germans

reported here vesterday.

fied US and British sources, said the

attack was designed to kill bin

Laden and would be carried out

alongside strikes against air and

ground forces of Afghanistan's

said that air and missile strikes

to be Noor Mohammad Mandol of

Jatiya Party (Ershad) in Rangpur-6

constituency where her husband

Similarly, Khaleda may be in for

a tough fight from Manjurul Imam of

the AL in Khulna-2 seat. However,

she is also likely to face some

opposition from Quamrunnahar

Hasina has a maximum of seven

rivals including Mufti Shahidul

Islam of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) in

the Narail-2 seal while a minimum

of three including Maolana

Mohammad Omar in the

Gopalganj-3 constituency, where

Dr. MA Waied Mia hails from.

Putul of the AL in Bogra-7.

her ancestral home is.

According to the weekly, sources

position was "we don't want to call it

diluted the credibility of her pledge.

Speaker behaves"

As a mark of respect for the "Wil several weeks candidates of both of the People" the loser must accept parties were going from door to the election results. If there are door, literally begging us for our faults then use the legal mechanism votes. Yet they were not willing to to correct it. promise to us that they will carry out The ruling party must be gratheir obligation as our representacious in its victory. It must make the tive in the parliament. Both Sheikh first move for changing the existing Hasina and Khaleda Zia were

for the future:

the two governments it only hurt the

people and damaged the economy.

herefore, we suggest the following

destructive political culture. The ruling party should make the first move by declaring that it will nominate highly respected, credible and widely acceptable candidates for the Speaker and Deputy Speaker (the latter from the opposition), after consultation with all concerned and will permit them both to resign (or de-link) from their respective parties. This will ensure their neutral role. This process is followed both in the UK and in

Australia Instead of trying to form a "Government of Consensus" which essentially deprives the parliament of an effective opposition, try to form national policies on the basis of "consensus". So the approach should be consensus on policies and not on forming the government. Nominate Chair for Standing Committees from the Opposition,

especially for some key Oversight Committees. Elevate the status of the Leader of the Opposition to the rank of ings with editors as the PM said that

Deputy Prime Minister or a senior she and her party would never call minister higher than that of normal hartal again even if she goes into the cabinet ministers. opposition. This pledge did not find Allocate 75 per cent of the time of any place in the AL party manifesto the Prime Minister's question hour or in Sheikh Hasina's last address.

only for the opposition. These are some of the initial ideas to make the parliament effective, avoid boycott and make it the centre of all politics as it was meant to be. There could be many other suggestions. The main thing is sincerity of purpose and genuine wish to solve the problems that have bedevilled our democracy so far But to get the whole process started we must have enough foresight, enough sagacity and sufficient respect for the voters to accept, graciously, the verdict that is pronounced in this election. Without it there is no beginning of the healing

process that we need so very badly. After long five years we have a chance to make a new beginning. We will not get another for the next five. Let us not miss it.

# **Diplomats happy**

### all the parties.

Stressing the importance of holding election in peaceful atmosphere the German Ambassador said, political parties also have their own responsibilities in this regard.

The Head of Election Monitoring Team of Japan and former Japanese Cabinet Minister Shin Sakurai also called on the Chief Adviser along with the Japanese Ambassado

# Hasina unhappy

### FROM PAGE 12 Hasina alerted.

Alleging that police and district administrations in Feni were acting like BNP activists. Hasina said. " seems as if they would capture Feni-1, 2 and 3 seats through media

coup." The AL chief called on over 75 million voters in the country to exercise their franchise without fear. Hasina reminded the first-time voters that voting is a sacred constitutional responsibility. She also hoped the new-generation voters would vote for the Awami League.

"If AL men want to register a case, the police show reluctance, but they take prompt action in case of complaints by BNP men," Hasina alleged raising question about the neutrality of both civil and police administrations.

Hasina mentioned an army officer, Lt. Col. Toufiquddin, saying he was acting in favour of a BNP candidate, and also an independent candidate in Shariatpur-1 constituency. "Auronga, the independent candidate. has established a reign of terror in villages of Shariatpur by hiring armed goons from Dhaka.

## fear was created among the voters

of the areas. The briefing was interrupted for 15 minutes halfway through because she received a phone call from former US president Jimmy Carter.

The telephonic conversation over, Hasina told newsmen that Carter wanted to know about the latest pre-polls scenario in Bangladesh. "I told him about the incidents of intimidating the minority voters. He felt sorry that he could not come to observe the polls this time due to September 11 terrorist blitz in the US.

International Affairs Secretary of the AL Abul Hasan Chowdhury and Hasina's Press Secretary Jawadul Karim were also present. Earlier in the afternoon, AL

Election Conducting Committee held its daily briefing to the press at

Paltu and Abdul Mannan Khan informed the journalists of the violent incidents that targeted AL leaders and workers and also the minorities across the country.

national development. of the majority prevails, he said.

the AL polls office in the city. AL leaders Mozaffar Hossain

during the democratic march of the country. These unfortunate incidents took place as the roots of terrorism, black money and muscle power are set deep into the fabric of

handful of terrorists cannot subvert Latif observed that all elected memthe efforts of all.

bers would have to play an impor-"You should remember that the tant role for national development: terrorists, however much powerful constructive roles of the members of they might be in the strength of the treasury bench and the opposiarms, money and muscle power, are tion will help strengthen the demomorally weak.

cratic system and accelerate They are bound to retreat in the face of united resistance of the In a democratic polity, election is people. he noted, urging the people that medium through which opinion to build up united resistance with assurance that they will get total In today's election, a total of 1933 support from the members of the candidates are competing for 299 aw-enforcing agencies in combatseats. "Among them, one will be ing the terrorists

winner in a seat on the basis of In his observations on political majority votes and others will be parties, the chief advisor said those defeated," he said urging all candiwho are in politics, regardless of dates of all parties to gracefully their party affiliation, have taken up politics with a commitment for The head of the caretaker govpeople's welfare, service and ernment, who claimed that overall national development

law and order had improved a lot in "So, despite differences of last two and a half months after he opinion and ways between the took office for holding the polls, said major political parties, they should there were however some incidents take each other in cognisance and of deaths across the country in confidence for people's welfare and clashes between the activists of national development.'

He hoped collective realisation "Such sad incidents shock us on the part of political parties, their spirit of public welfare and responsible role would help the nation reach its cherished goal through the forward march of democracy and development.

He assured that the nonparty

## Go to polling centres without fear: CA places. choice. If anyone obstructs you on the way to the polling centres or

from casting votes, inform the police, army or BDR personnel

immediately." The CA said he had already given candid directive to the lawenforcing agencies to arrest and take tough action against the 'terrorists-evil forces' if they try to obstruct voting adding that the law enforcers

were always on the red alert. Latif asked the election officials and law enforcers to ensure congenial and peaceful environment at the polling booths at any cost. He also asked them to perform their duties with utmost neutrality to ensure fair voting by the people and complete all other activities, including vote

count and preparing results. Reiterating his direction to the returning officers, assistant returning officers, presiding officers,

assistant presiding officers and polling officers to play their role without any fear, the chief advisor said. "Arrest those who come to cast false vote and take action according

to rule, immediately." He issued a strict order asking

yesterday morning. The maximum temperature in

was 23 degree in Svlhet.

The AL president brought allega tion against another army officer, a major, whose name she did not mention, saying, "Although this officer has been given the charge of Dhunat (Bogra) area, he was illegally operating at Sariakandi and once tied an elected chairman with a tree there.

Hasina gave a long list of constituencies where, she alleged, violence was perpetrated against her party men, the minorities and female voters. These constituencies include Chuadanga-2, Faridpur-4, Shariatpur-1, Comilla-6, 7 and 12, Noakhali-4, Feni-1, 2 and 3, Chittagong-4 and 8, and also the districts of Khagrachhari, Kushtia, and Netrokona.

Besides, Hasina mentioned some areas in Dhaka where the AL has a large support base, and said

M Muhaddes appointed

Deputy Director General

Muhaddes, who also entrusted with additional responsibility of Chief Advisor's Press Secretary, will be posted in New York till December 31 2002, said a handout.

press minister UNB, Dhaka

(Programmes) of Bangladesh Betar, M Muhaddes, has been appointed Minister (Press) of the Press Wing of Bangladesh Mission in New York.

the society," observed the immediate-past chief justice.

accept the verdict of the people.

The CA sounded a stern warning that any attempt to disrupt voting would be put down in order to uphold the propriety of people's franchise.

rival political parties.

"I unequivocally say that immediate and stern action will be taken against those who will try to disrupt the peaceful polling environment resorting to terrorism, casting false

votes and capturing booths during the voting," he cautioned. He said the caretaker government had clearly directed the members of the law-enforcing agencies to be on high alert to thwart any such attempts.

He also urged the people in general and the electorates in particular to remain alert so that a

to be alert about false votes and

requested the government, semi-

government and non-govern-

ment officials in charge of conduct-

ing the polls not to bow to any evil

with more spirit keeping yourself

beyond all sorts of fear for the

greater interest of democracy," he

In this context, the CEC cau-

tioned the officials that they should

not hesitate to take punitive action

"Perform your duties accordingly

caretaker government had taken all possible steps for holding a free, fair and impartial election.

The chief advisor expressed his deep conviction about holding election in a festive and peaceful manner due to initiatives taken by his administration.

Greeting the new voters enrolled for the first time, Latif suggested to them to go to the polling centres taking with them their parents and other members of the family. "Success of democracy in Bandladesh and future development of the nation largely depend on your good choice.'

Not only police, BDR and army,

tasks can arrest anybody for cogni-

necessary, at troubled centres,

Voting will not be taken in any centre

where any voter is deprived of

The CEC made it clear that fake

voting cannot be stopped only by

laws. It can be checked if the elec-

tion officials, representatives of the

candidates and voters present at

the centres remain alert and con-

said for the first time information

announced on different TV chan-

CEC said voters in many areas

election within 90 days of the disso-

we have taken all sorts of prepara-

tions so that the voters do not have

to face any problem in going to poll

"Excepting this natural reason

casting vote due to troubles.

scious, he observed.

nels, radio and websites.

lution of parliament.

centres.

Addressing the womenfolk and minority voters he said, "Go to the polling centres without fear and cast your vote for the candidate of your

zable offence.

election officials to stop the voting at any centre if any incidents of terrorism, false voting and capture of booth take place.

"We will not accept any election that is not transparent. If necessary, for ensuring free, transparent and neutral polling, repeated voting will be held in the centres where voting may be stopped for any trouble."

On the eve of the crucial polls, he asked the law-enforcing agencies and district and upazila administrations to be on the highest alert so that none can create a law-and-

order situation anywhere in the country before or after the polls.

6 KIIIea FROM PAGE 1

The dead was identified as Suraj Ali, 50, of Singua village in Ghaghotia union. He was reportedly a BNP activist

Ten shops were ransacked during the clash.

Our Correspondent from Mymensingh says: A female supporter of BNP was killed and 10 people were injured in an attack at village Bhorpur in Gafargaon upazila yesterday afternoon.

A group of miscreants attacked the houses of Rafiqul and Shafiq, police said. Panna. 30. wife of Rafiqul died on the spot following the attack with sharp weapons. The miscreants also ransacked the houses and set fire to those.

Rafigul and Shafig were admitted at Gafargoan Health Complex. BNP claimed the victim as its supporter and blamed AL for the killing. Army personnel visited the spot.

Our Kushtia correspondent adds: At least 21 people were injured, six of them bullet-hit, during a gunfight between activists of AL and BNP at Mahiskundi Bazar under Daulatpur upazila in Kushtia yesterday.

The clash ensued at 12 pm when BNP activists allegedly attacked and ransacked an Awami League election camp.

Police arrested BNP cadre Tazu with arms.

A tense situation was prevailing in the area.

Mobile phones FROM PAGE 1 cases, failed due to leakage of information through mobile phones, intelligence sources said.

The decision to shut down mobile networks on the election day was taken early last month but it was kept a secret apprehending widespread protest and possible court injunction. some sources said.

The step would seriously affect work of journalists, election observers and others needing guick transmission of polls reports.

Landline telephones provided by Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) would be in normal operation, officials pointed out.

There are some 4.5 lakh landline phones provided by the BTTB.

During the 1996 general election, there was a small number of mobile phones in the country, provided by only one company. But now there are about six lakh mobile phones.

Sources in the four private com panies which provide mobile phone service claim that they incur a revenue loss of over 125.000 dollars a day if their networks are kept closed.

lepend critica lv on these fac tors. The envoys also thanked the Lauding the strenuous efforts of Chief Advisor for the excellent the Caretaker government, he said support and security made availthe measures taken by Chief able to foreign observers by local Adviser and his government would administration ensure successful election.

In a separate meeting, the Terming Bangladesh as one of Ambassador of Germany the most important partners of Japan in South Asia. Shin Sakurai expressed "the fullest support" to the work of the caretaker governsaid Japan would like to see peace. ment and underlined that the elecstability and prosperity in tion results should be accepted by Bangladesh in the coming days.

**US** rejects

who were

leader of Afghanistan's opposition Northern Alliance as saying that his arrested in August and charged with proselytising, a serious offense under the Taliban regime's strict men would launch a new offensive against the Taliban within two days and with the support of the US.

"We hope and believe our offen-Meanwhile, AFP from London adds: The United States and Britain sive, in a number of places throughout the country, will be backed by plan to attack bases controlled by America attacking from the air, Laden within 48 hours, newspapers Soleh Muhammad Registani was quoted as saying. The Observer, quoting unidenti-

The Observer also said that it had obtained crucial evidence linking bin Laden to the September 11 strikes on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

It said it had seen a secret intelligence dossier compiled by an Arab state with a long-standing interest in bin Laden, which revealed that at least one of the 19 hijackers involved in the terrorist attacks was trained by the Saudi-born militant's

### could begin as early as Sunday and that US and British Special Forces would offer support in the attack. The Mail on Sunday tabloid meanwhile guoted the military network. al-Qaeda.

# Hasina, Khaleda

election, joined BNP as he was

denied party nomination this time. Khaleda is running against a maximum of nine rivals including Haroon-or-Rashid of AL in Laxmipur-2 and a minimum of four candidates in Bogra-7. The BNP leader has seven rivals including Col. (retd.) Zafar Imam of the AL in Feni-1 constituency, where her

paternal home is. Mahbubul Alam of the AL is among six candidates contesting

Khaleda in Bogra-6 seat. In the last general election in 1996, Khaleda bagged all the five seats she contested from. Hasina won the three seats she sought mandate from in 1996, too.

Six each in Barguna-3 and However, this is for the first time Narail-1 seats including Kazi Abdul that Hasina is seeking election from Mannan of IOJ and Dhirendranath five seats. Khaleda has been seeking mandate in five seats in all the Saha of BNP are running against the AL chief. Saha, who won the general elections since democracy Narail seat on AL ticket in the last was restored in 1990.

# People want peace CEC firm to hold fair polls

loves took me to them, close to them. It is not true that I was not tired, but love of the people washed all my tiredness.

About women folk of the country, she said during the campaign she found that the women were now more conscious than they had been in the past. They are very much eager to exercise their franchise. "I found women braving rain to see and listen to me. Now the womer want to hear directly from the politicians.

Khaleda said she always wants to make Bangladesh a prosperous country and place it in a dignified position in the international community. "I also want to see the children groomed up as educated and worthy citizen of the country and that all citizen live in peace and happiness."

Asked by a newsman whether she was in anxiety about her victory in the five seats she is contesting, the BNP chief said: "I'm not at all worried. People love me verv much. I rendered my service to them tirelessly and they also elected me time and again.

Asked by a reporter of the Daily Telegraph of India whether she would renew the 25-year friendship treaty between India and Bangladesh, she said, "We have a very good friendship with India and I think treaty is not necessary for friendship. We maintain friendship and relationship with all, particularly with the neighbours.

Replying to a question from a reporter of Kolkata-based Bangla daily Protidin as to when she will visit India, Khaleda said, "I will go (to India) when you will invite me.

When the reporter asked her again after New Delhi which city she will prefer to visit, her reply was, "Let me vite first."

ered her electioneering.

## Live results

FROM PAGE 12 cover the results of the election live on the Internet at: www.bangladeshinfo.com. The live coverage will begin at 3:00pm today, and will continue until announcement of the final unofficial results.

## Caretaker govt FROM PAGE 1

out of women voters would be more than that of male voters because of various steps taken by the caretaker administration.

Replying to a question. Moinul Hossain said, "As far as law and order is concerned, we have tried our best to put things in the right place. But it can't be expected of us to clean up all the mess piled up for years." The caretaker government tried to do everything 'justly' and 'fairly'

FROM PAGE 1

The BNP Chairperson expressed optimism about her success in the election. She thanked the journalists for extending all-out support to her over the years, especially those who cov-

Muyeed Chowdhury said that 350,00 local and 270 foreign polls observers have been permitted to monitor the election. However, he added that there might be about 100,000 local observers in the field.

appeal to you to cooperate with the law-enforcement agencies to resist the troublemakers.

The CEC reiterated his call for all to exercise franchise with enthusiasm. He assured the people of allout steps to fulfil the commitment of the Election Commission utilising his limited powers. The CEC appealed to all voters

forces.

as per existing law against those who will not perform their duties

accordingly. "Those who will not perform their duties up to expectations will not be deployed for election activities in

directed the officials.

future," he forewarned. The CEC said adequate cautionary measures had been taken for security of the polling centres. Police, ansar, VDP and BDR men have been deployed, and army troops sent in aid of civil administra-

"I firmly believe that the presence of army restored confidence in the people for going to the polling centre and casting votes without fear.

He said as per the amended He said the EC created a fair electoral law the army would not environment so that the voters could only patrol, they were empowered to come out from their homes without arrest anyone trying to create troufear and exercise their franchise. ble at the polling centres as well.

"Vote is not only your right, it is your responsibility too," he told the but any official involved in polling voters pointing out that the voters, by participating in the polls, would About apprehended violence on strengthen the foundations of the polling day, he said the EC democracy and pave the way for would take voting repeatedly, if

building a nice future. About women voters, the CEC said, of 7.5 crore voters, 3.63 crore are women, but female voters in some areas had been deprived of franchising their right for long due to

tions This time the EC with the help of

NGOs and local administrations took steps to allow the deprived Turning to election results, he female voters to cast vote in those technology would be used in result areas, including Jhenidah, dissemination. Apart from traditional Madaripur, Kurigram and Cox's system, this time results will be Bazar.

The CEC welcomed the fresh voters for their involvement in voting About prevailing weather, the for the first time in their life. "Through your vote it will be proved that the might have to face trouble going to the polling centre due to rain, but it youth community of the country has was the EC's obligation to hold the their faith in democracy'

He ordered all election officials to strictly follow the Representation of People Order and urged the people to perform the national responsibilities in making the 8th general election a total success.

fatwa (religious edicts) and supersti-