

Only 6 out of 37 women candidates elected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only six of the 37 women candidates have been elected in Monday's general election as against five in the June 1996 polls.

Apart from BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, only four other female candidates have been elected to the eighth parliament. They are Khurshid Jahan Haq and Elen Bhutto of BNP, Dr Hamida Banu Shova of AL and Roushan Ershad of JP (Ershad).

Of the total number of women contestants, the AL fielded 10 in 14 constituencies, BNP four in eight, JP (Ershad) four in five, Anwar Hossain Manju's Jatiya Party five, 11-party alliance three, and JSD

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CA hosts reception for foreign observers 'Democracy has won a great victory'

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Advisor Latifur Rahman yesterday urged the development partners to provide more generous official development assistance and give duty-free treatment to all exports to help nurture the fledgling democracy in Bangladesh.

"Democracy has won a great victory in the October 1 elections, the chief advisor told the visiting members of foreign election observer groups and heads of diplomatic mission at a reception held at his official residence Jamuna here.

He said the heroes of this victory of democracy are the millions of voters of Bangladesh. "By festively turning out in great numbers everywhere in the country and exercising the democratic right to vote, they have added a glorious chapter to long struggle for democracy. I salute them," he added.

The chief advisor said democracy cannot stay secure on the edifice of poverty and deprivation and urged the development partners to strengthen their development cooperation with Bangladesh in the coming days.

Expressing concern over global recession and the economic fallout of recent terrorists attacks in the United

States, Latifur Rahman said this might have serious impact on the economy of Bangladesh and sustainable livelihood of our people.

Members of the council of advisors, cabinet secretary, secretaries and chiefs of three services were present at the reception.

Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed, Canadian High Commissioner David Preston, head of the Japanese International Observer team Shin Sakurai, leader of Asian Network for free elections Damaso Macbual and head of EU observers Joaquim Miranda De Silva also spoke on the occasion.

The foreign observers and diplomats described Monday's general election in the country as the fairest one and expressed the hope democracy that would thrive in the country.

They noted the huge turnout of voters, especially women voters, and hailed the Chief Advisor Latifur Rahman, advisors and officials engaged in election duty for excellent arrangements of the polling.

On behalf of the diplomats, the Canadian High Commissioner said they were highly impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment of the people of the country for the democratic process. The turnout of women

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Election hangover still not over... a deserted Purana Paltan crossing yesterday shows a city trying to sleep through election hangover, a day after Monday's polls.

Meeting today AL plans agitation programme

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League that has declined to accept the election results plans massive agitation shortly to protest what it calls a cheat on the people's aspiration.

"We're viewing this election as similar to that of mock parliament election held on February 15, 1996 under Khaleda Zia's government," one leader of the party told UNB yesterday evening.

Dazed by its stunning defeat, the party high command has already asked all its Presidium and central committee members to come back to Dhaka to sit for an emergency meeting today.

Awami League candidates and presidents and general secretaries of district committees and party's important leaders have also been asked to come to Dhaka for a meeting tomorrow.

Both the meetings will discuss the just-ended election matters and draw up massive action programmes against "rigging and fraudulence" at the October 1 election, AL sources said.

They said the way Awami League had resisted the results of the 15th February election it would again resist the outcome of October 1 election through people's movement.

DC's notice Taher's family asked to leave house in three days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Laxmipur

The district administration has served a notice on the family of Laxmipur Poursabha Chairman and General Secretary of district Awami League Abu Taher to leave their house within three days.

Deputy Commissioner S M Zahurul Islam issued the notice on Wednesday night on the basis of a district court order. The court ordered the family to vacate the two storied building on government land.

However, none was available at the house to receive the notice. Abu Taher is in jail in a case concerning murder of BNP leader Advocate Nurul Islam.

The district administration also cancelled firearms licences of Abu Taher and his son Biplab. The deputy commissioner asked police to seize their firearms.

Licences for at least two shot-guns and one revolver were issued to them earlier.

JCD captures DU dormitories

DU CORRESPONDENT

Leaders and activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) occupied all dormitories of Dhaka University with the exception of Jagannath and Zahurul Haq halls in the small hours of yesterday.

The JCD made the bid soon after the BNP-led four-party alliance secured a convincing lead in the parliamentary election.

At about 10:00pm Monday, the JCD workers started turning up on the campus, when they became sure about BNP's success in the polls, campus sources said.

The JCD workers established control over the halls after the leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) left the dormitories at around 11:00pm sensing the debacle of Awami

League.

The JCD workers also removed and damaged the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from different halls, the sources added.

Meanwhile, three rounds of gunshots were fired at Palashi intersection yesterday afternoon, the sources said.

In a statement yesterday, the BCL said outsider terrorists occupied the halls.

BCL President Bahadur Bepari and BCL General Secretary Ajay Kar Khokan urged the authorities concerned to oust the terrorists from the halls.

They also called upon all quarters to unite against the activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir, who are conspiring to establish control over the campus.

Young man stabbed to death in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified youths stabbed to death a young man near Rahmatullah Model School at Lalbagh in the city yesterday afternoon, police and hospital sources said.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Ziauddin, 23, son of Giasuddin of Pushpa Shaha Lane in Lalbagh area.

Ziauddin was found lying in an unconscious state near the school.

Rickshawpuller Hasan took him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared him dead. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Makim Kazi, victim's brother-in-law, filed a case with Lalbagh thana accusing six unidentified yesterday.

Attack on houses of some AL leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified people attacked the houses of some Awami League leaders in the city and in Keraniganj yesterday.

A gang of youths ransacked the house of DCC Ward Commissioner Kamal Hossain at section-11 of Mirpur at about 10:00am, sources said. Police, however, could not confirm the incident.

In another incident, some youths threw stones at the house of Mahub Uddin Ahmed at sector-4 in Uttara Model Town in the evening, family sources said.

Mahub who contested from Munshiganj-3 constituency has been defeated in the just-ended polls.

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Analysts observe

A verdict against terrorism and abuse of power

SHAHRIAR KARIM

Political analysts, academics and economists have termed the election result an "outburst of people's sentiment against terrorism and lawlessness".

They also said the verdict is actually not as much in favour of the BNP-led alliance as is against the immediate past ruling party Awami League (AL).

"People have given the verdict as they got angry over abuse of power by Awami League during its rule. Don't think people liked BNP or BNP had any better programme and leadership. The BNP-led alliance swept the polls on negative popular vote against Awami League," Dr

Sirajul Islam Chowdhury of Dhaka University said.

Analysing the election results, renowned economist Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud said, "The electorate has given the next government an overwhelming majority (in parliament) to take steps against terrorism and to establish rule of law."

Any measure for economic development and poverty alleviation as promised in the election manifesto will not bear fruit without ensuring rule of law, he commented.

"The overwhelming majority also represents heightened popular expectations from the next government, thus reposing a great responsibility on it. This will be an opportunity

for bringing about a fundamental change in the political culture. For this, the elected government has to take steps which will give a clear and credible signal that terrorism under political patronisation will not be tolerated," Prof Mahmud commented.

Leftist politician Badruddin Umar said, "All credit for the defeat of AL goes to it. AL itself brought its downfall with its arrogant attitude and lawlessness that gave the people a sense of insecurity."

Despite good turnout of voters in the last two polls, Badruddin Umar does not see any bright future for democracy in the country as the two major political parties have "misera

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A Russian border sentinel observes the Tajik-Afghan border at a post near the village of Pyanzh. Tajikistan, a former Soviet republic, is expected to give key support to any military action against the ruling Taliban.

Alliance poised to strike, Blair warns Taliban

AFP, Brighton, UK

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has delivered Afghanistan's ruling Taliban regime its bluntest warning yet that military action is imminent over its refusal to hand over terrorist suspect Osama bin Laden.

In a hard-hitting speech later yesterday extracts of which were released in advance by his aides to reporters, he was to say that the Taliban's time was up.

Blair would say that the US-led alliance, with possible British support, will target Taliban troops, supplies and hardware, and bin Laden's own forces and training camps, the officials said.

It is the clearest sign yet of military action, and also the most detailed official indication of what form the offensive will take.

Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said the Taliban could still end the threat of military strikes by handing over bin Laden and closing down his network.

"We have tried very, very hard over the last few weeks and we will continue to strive to secure some entirely peaceful conclusion to this huge threat," he told the BBC.

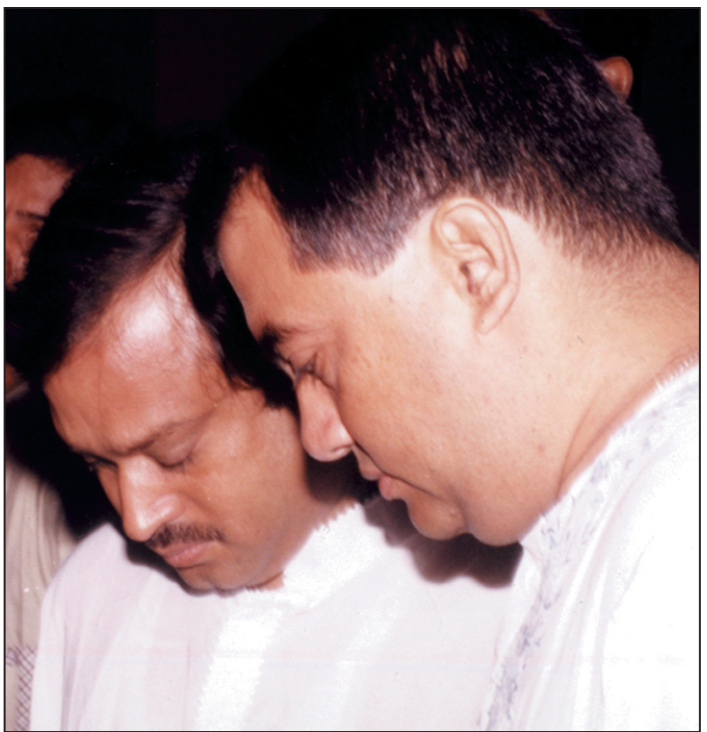
But he added: "Military action may well have to be used unless there is some dramatic change of mind by the Taliban."

Pakistan's president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf also told the British Broadcasting Corp. that a U.S. military strike appears likely. Pakistan has been trying unsuccessfully to mediate.

"We were interacting with them (the Taliban) so that moderation could take place and maybe this kind of action is averted," Musharraf told the BBC. "But it appears because of the stand that the Taliban have taken, that confrontation will take place."

The president said it now "appears that the United States will take action in Afghanistan, and we have conveyed this to the Taliban." Asked if the Taliban's days were numbered,

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Visibly dejected Sabar Hossain Chowdhury (right) and Haji Mohammad Selim, losing Awami League candidates in the just-held polls, share a quiet moment, minutes before the party's press conference yesterday.

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Ctg Shibir cadre Sajjad held with AK-47 rifle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Notorious Shibir cadre Sajjad Khan, the prime accused chargesheeted in the sensational 8-murder case in Bohaddardhat, was arrested with a sophisticated AK-47 assault rifle from his Chalitatali residence at Panchlaih here yesterday evening.

One of his associates Delwar Hossain, 27, was also arrested with him.

A large contingent of Detective Branch (DB) police arrested Sajjad and Delwar at around 5.30 pm after a gunfight.

One empty magazine, a black hand bag containing 65 bullets and some money and a life-jacket were also recovered from his possession.

I got arrested at a time when the party for which I worked is going to the power," Sajjad said this while he was talking to the journalists at a police camp near his residence immediately after his arrest.

NATO says US has proved Laden link to attacks

AP, Brussels

The United States gave its NATO allies clear evidence yesterday that "conclusively" links Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida network to the Sept 11 terror attacks, NATO's secretary-general said.

In response, the alliance dropped the only condition on invoking Article 5 of its charter, which states that an attack on one member is an attack on all, Secretary-General Lord Robertson said.

"We don't intend at the moment to discuss how NATO will translate this decision into operational action," Robertson said. "The United States are still developing their thinking and they will come back to the alliance in due course when that thinking is crystallised."

NATO allies last month agreed to invoke Article 5 if Washington could show that the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were directed from abroad.

Yesterday's classified briefing had demonstrated that, and Article 5 was now "fully invoked," Robertson said.

NATO officials said that means each member state is morally bound to help the United States if asked.

"The United States of America can rely on the full support of its 18 NATO allies in the campaign against international terrorism," Robertson said.

Robertson refused to elaborate on the "additional information" provided by US Ambassador at Large Francis X Taylor, who is US President George W Bush's coordinator for counter terrorism.

The NATO secretary-general said the information must remain secret for now "for obvious reasons." He said the briefing covered the attacks themselves, the results of the investigation so far, what is known about bin Laden and al-Qaida, "their involvement in the attacks and in previous terrorist activity, and the links between al-Qaida and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan."

The United States was also briefing its allies directly in their capitals, Robertson said. In Pakistan, which neighbours Afghanistan and has promised to cooperate with the United States against bin Laden, the US ambassador briefed the president, Gen Pervez Musharraf, on the status of the US investigation of bin Laden.

In the Belgian capital, where the NATO session was

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Palestinian students clash with Israeli troops in West Bank

Four-day trial period for truce ends

AP, West Bank

Israeli soldiers scuffled with Palestinian students and teachers protesting a military checkpoint blocking the main road to their West Bank university yesterday.

Israeli soldiers fired rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the protesters who had been sitting in the middle of the road chanting slogans. Eight people were lightly injured by rubber bullets and 20 were treated for gas inhalation, Palestinian ambulance workers said.

Meanwhile, Palestinian officials said an initial four-day trial period for a cease-fire was completed at midday yesterday and they expected Israel to ease restrictions.

"We really hope ... we will see

genuine steps in lifting the closure and siege and deployment of Israeli troops," said Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat.

Both sides say they remain committed to the truce, though it has been marred by violent demonstrations and shootings. Eighteen Palestinians have been killed in the past week by Israeli troops. No Israelis have been killed, but the army said its troops have faced dozens of attacks by Palestinians.

The roadblock near Bir Zeit University was among those meant to be lifted by Israel as part of last week's cease-fire agreement. The army said students got too close to their jeeps, prompting the soldiers to respond.

In other incidents, a roadside bomb was detonated on the Israeli-Egypt border in the southern Gaza Strip overnight. No one was injured.

In Washington, a senior US official said Monday that President George W Bush's administration was planning a new peace initiative for the region, but it was put on hold after the Sept 11 terror attacks in the United States.

The proposals would seek a settlement that would include the creation of a Palestinian state, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The administration planned to make its efforts public at the special session of the UN General Assembly that had been set for Sept 24, but the attacks in New York and Washington temporarily sidetracked the plan.