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Council of Ministers Number of women, and minorities reduced to half

NAZMUL ASHRAF

Representation of the women as well as the minorities has been nearly reduced by half in the present Council of Ministers.

The percentage has come down to 8.33 in the present Council of Ministers of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia from 16.28 in that of her predecessor Sheikh Hasina.

Apart from Khaleda, the 60-member Council of Ministers, the largest ever of its kind in the country, has only two other women and two members from the minorities. Hasina's 43-strong Council of Ministers had three women besides her and three minorities.

Women's representation has now come down to five per cent from the previous 9.30 per cent in the Council of Ministers headed by Hasina.

The percentage of the minorities is 3.33 this time, down from 6.98 of last time.

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EU urges new PM to foster cooperation with opposition

UNB, Dhaka

The European Union has appealed to the new prime minister of Bangladesh to work for the consolidation of the democratic process and economic development in a spirit of "constructive cooperation" with the opposition.

In a statement on the Bangladesh polls and its outcome, the EU said the newly elected government should also "encourage the opposition to play its part in a peaceful change of power."

A Foreign Office release yesterday said the European Union noted that the parliamentary elections held in Bangladesh on October 1 passed off peacefully.

The European Union had sent an observer mission to oversee the elections. And it is "pleased to see that, according to that mission's findings, the electoral process was conducted satisfactorily, freely and impartially."

However, the EU deplored the acts of violence that had marred the election campaigns.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the EFTA countries that are members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration, said the release.

6000 vehicles remain stranded at 3 ferry ghats

UNB, Manikganj

Nearly six thousand vehicles remained stranded at Aricha, Daulatdia and Natakohla ferry ghats yesterday, causing immense sufferings to the passengers.

Sources said all Dhaka-bound and north-Bengal-bound vehicles are using the ferry ghats instead of Jamuna Bridge following collapse of a bridge at Hatubangha on Dhaka-Tangail Highway on Thursday.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Oct 13		5-34 pm
Oct 14	5-56 am	

Prayer Timings

Oct 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-25
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-10	4-25
Maghrib	5-42	5-48
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

2 Feni AL activists murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Two Awami League activists and another person were murdered in Feni yesterday and the day before.

A gang of terrorists stormed into the house of AL activist Abul Kashem at village Shippur under Sadar upazila in the early hours of yesterday.

The gang entered the house by breaking open the door at about 2 am and shot Kashem and his wife Lutfunnessa.

Lutfunnessa died on the spot while Kashem was admitted to Feni hospital with bullet wounds.

Police recovered the body in the morning and sent it to Feni hospital for autopsy.

The reason behind the attack could not be known till filing of this report at 7 pm yesterday.

Mohammad Yusuf, 32, of village Chardeep, was beaten to death by a gang of miscreants yesterday evening.

A gang of eight stormed into the house of Yusuf at about 5 pm and kidnapped him at gunpoint. They took him to a place near his house and beat him to death.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Feni hospital for autopsy.

On Thursday, armed cadres of BNP attacked the house of AL activist Noor Nabi, 30, at village Jatrahkipur in sadar upazila and kidnapped him at gunpoint.

Family sources said about ten BNP activists took Nabi to Gobindapur village and beat him mercilessly.

Villagers found Nabi lying in a paddy field in an

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Prince Abdullah bin Fahd, Deputy Governor of Makkah, received Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at King Abdul Aziz Airport in Jeddah in the early hours of yesterday.

World leaders greet Khaleda

BSS, Dhaka

World leaders including UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and heads of state and government of different countries have felicitated Khaleda Zia on her assumption of office of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

The leaders include President General Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, Prime Minister of Myanmar Senior General Than Shwe and Thai Premier Thaksin Shinwatra.

Kofi Annan while congratulating Khaleda Zia on her assumption of office of the Prime Minister assured her of continued support and cooperation of his organisation in the diverse activities jointly initiated for the benefit of the people of Bangladesh.

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Khaleda performs Umrah

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia performed Umrah in Makkah in the early hours of yesterday, according to a message received here yesterday afternoon.

Khaleda accompanied by her entourage, performed Umrah and prayed to Allah for granting peace, progress and welfare to the people of Bangladesh as well as the Muslim Ummah.

The prime minister also expressed gratitude to Allah for the success and honour bestowed on the BNP-led alliance in the October 1 general election.

Khaleda Zia also offered her Juma prayers in Makkah.

BNP-Jamaat creating reign of terror, says Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has denounced 'politics of killing' and called for an end to this.

While visiting a number of party activists with their limbs cut off and now in a city hospital, the immediate past prime minister said, "I hate such torture on people just for satisfying the lust for power."

Hasina went to the Orthopaedic Hospital yesterday and saw the party workers crying in pain in their beds. She held 'BNP-Jamaat terrorists' responsible for creating a 'reign of terror' across the country on the recent polling day and also before and after that.

"They (BNP-Jamaat) have come to power through killing, torture and terrorism. I have no word to

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AL may revise stance on oath of its MPs-elect

REAZ AHMAD

Awami League may revise its decision that MPs-elect from the party would not take oath as lawmakers of the eighth parliament.

Highly placed sources in the party indicated that party President Sheikh Hasina and presidium member Abdur Razzak, both of whom won in more than one constituency in the October 1 parliamentary election, would retain one seat each and vacate the rest.

Retention of seats by Hasina and Razzak would rekindle party moderates' hopes to see Awami League's presence both in the parliament and

also out on the streets for movement against 'crude rigging' in the election, the sources noted.

The Constitution permits a newly elected lawmaker to take oath within 90 days of one's getting elected. However, Article 71 of the Constitution says that if an MP elected for more than one seat fails to notify within 30 days of his/her election that which seat he/she likes to retain, then all of his/her seats get vacated.

MPs-elect belonging to BNP-led four-party alliance and some smaller parties and independent ones already took oath on October 9, 10 and 11. But 61 MPs-elect from

AL refrained from taking oath as per party decision.

A senior AL leader told The Daily Star yesterday that the decision still remained unchanged. Asked about any possible revision of it, he however said, "There is plenty of time for this."

He referred to the 90-day time limit. But asked about vacating extra seats, he said the two AL lawmakers would soon vacate extra seats, retaining one each. The leader however sought anonymity.

Following the October 1 polls, AL alleged 'crude rigging' and demanded cancellation of polls

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

15 killed, 50 injured as bus ploughs through procession at Chakoria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 15 people were killed and 50 others injured, some of them seriously, when a bus ploughed through a procession at Chakoria on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway yesterday.

The procession was brought out by Musalli Parishad, an organisation of Muslim devotees at about 4:30 pm protesting US strikes on Afghanistan.

Seven of the dead were identified as Akter, Belal, Rafiq, Ahmad Ullah, Mossadeq Hossain, Nazim and Nizam. The identity of eight others could not be known till filing of this report at 8 pm yesterday.

Earlier, a rally was held on the premises of a local mosque known as 'Baro Masjid' at Chakoria after Juma prayers. The rally was attended by a large number of people from different parts of the upazila.

Witnesses said, the Cox's Bazar-bound passenger bus from Chittagong ploughed through the procession as the driver lost control over the steering, killing 15 processionists on the spot and injuring 50 others.

The injured persons were admitted to Dulhazara Hospital at Chakoria and Cox's Bazar Hospital.

As the news of the tragic accident spread, hundreds of people thronged the spot, rescued the injured persons and rushed them to hospitals.

High officials of police and district administration visited the spot.

BSS adds: In Gazipur, two people were killed and ten others injured, five of them seriously, in a road accident at Taknagopara on Dhaka-Mymensingh

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

JCD allegedly threatens some DMC students and teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Medical College (DMC) unit of Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the BNP's student wing, is allegedly threatening some students and teachers either to leave the campus or stay out of politics.

A good number of students and teachers of the college said, immediately after the October 1 election the JCD leaders and supporters started bossing common students about in the college and halls asking them not to side with Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student front of Awami League.

According to sources in the college, a group of the students even allegedly asked certain students and teachers, who have associations with Awami League or BCL, not to attend and take classes.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Hundreds of minority people flee Agailjhara in Barisal

MORSHED ALI KHAN, from Kotalipara (Gopalganj)

Hundreds of members of the minority community including local public representatives in the neighbouring Agailjhara upazila of Barisal fled their homes more than a week ago and took shelter in villages in Kotalipara upazila.

These men, women and children are now passing their days in a state of uncertainty, away from their homes and with relatives and friends in Ramshil union. Local people have come forward to help them generously. In almost every house in Ramshil, these displaced persons have been given shelter. They left their houses to escape the wrath of hoodlums under the banner of BNP.

Gopalganj district administration has deployed armed policemen in Ramshil to prevent possible attacks by those elements. Police officials on spot duty said the district administration has been embarrassed by the 'influx of refugees.' Additional police force would be deployed at the troubled spots and the 'refugees' would be encouraged to return to their houses, officials said.

In Ramshil, many of the displaced men and women

narrated to this correspondent how the goons created a reign of terror for the minority community in the early hours of October 2.

Shefali Sarkar, Union Parishad Member of Raziar, said she and her family were attacked as soon as the election results became clear.

"The hoodlums took out violent processions around our houses, shouted slogans, threw stones and struck on our doors with sharp weapons while we remained inside, terrified," Shefali said.

"Before sunrise, I along with six members of my family escaped in a small boat and came here," she said.

Other displaced persons, who arrived in Ramshil in the last three days, said the gang members have now started realising toll from the members of Hindu community.

Subash Chandra Gain, an official of BNKG Girls High School and College at Agailjhara said the attackers also targeted Awami League activists, regardless of their religion.

"They came to all the houses belonging to our com

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Pakistan reminds US of its promise not to target Afghan civilians

AP, Islamabad

With Afghanistan's rulers claiming 200 civilians had died in a US attack, Pakistan yesterday reminded the United States of its assurances that only terrorists and their supporters would be targeted in the air campaign.

"We condemn terrorism, but we feel sorrow and pain over the killing of innocent Afghans," Foreign Ministry spokesman Riaz Mohammed Khan told reporters. "We have been assured again and again that only terrorists and those who provide protection to terrorists will be targeted."

The ruling Taliban militia claimed yesterday at least 200 people had been killed two days earlier in an airstrike on a village outside the eastern city of Jalalabad. It was the largest casualty claim to date by the Taliban and could not immediately be independently verified.

The United States has said that

the raids are not targeting civilians. There was no immediate Pentagon comment on the Taliban claim, but military officials have noted they do not intend to comment on every such report.

As the campaign of US-led airstrikes moved into its sixth day, angry demonstrations broke out in Pakistan on the first Friday since the start of the air assault. In Kabul, the Afghan capital, the Imam at a central mosque prayed that the United States would suffer the same fate as Afghanistan.

The air campaign was launched after the Taliban repeatedly refused to hand over Osama bin Laden, chief suspect in the terror strikes a month ago on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The report of the airstrike on the Afghan village of Karam came from Zadra Azam, the deputy governor of Taliban-controlled Nangarhar province.

"We're still digging bodies out of the rubble," Azam said, adding that villagers from nearby had rushed to help with the rescue and recovery effort.

The village is very close to the town of Darunta, about 130 kilometers east of the capital, Kabul, in an area where Laden is believed to train fighters for his Al-Qaida network.

In addition, the Taliban's official news agency said at least 10 people were killed and several homes were destroyed in Argandab, north of the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar.

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A BM-21 missile launcher of Afghan opposition fighters shells Taliban positions yesterday in the province of Kapisa, about 45 km from Kabul.

Kofi Annan

United Nations Organisation

Founded in 1945
Based in New York
189 countries

Security Council
15 members,
5 permanent
(Britain, China, France,
Russia, United States)

Nobel Peace Prize, 2001

A career devoted to the UN
Ghanian, 63 years old
1962: Joined the United Nations
1993-1996: Under-secretary general for peacekeeping operations
December, 1996: Elected UN Secretary General (re-elected in June 2001)
October 12, 2001: Joint winner, with the UN, of the Nobel peace prize

UN, Annan share Nobel Peace Prize

AP, Oslo

The United Nations shared the Nobel Peace Prize with its leader, Kofi Annan, yesterday for moving to the forefront of efforts to achieve peace and security in a post-Cold War world.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee said the United Nations and Annan would share the 10 million Swedish kronor (943,000 dollar) award in equal parts, citing "their work for a better organized and more peaceful world."

Annan, 63, became UN secretary-general in 1997 -- the first leader to be elected from the ranks of United Nations staff. He has been praised for his character,

moral leadership, his focus on civil wars in Africa and elsewhere and his efforts to combat AIDS.

In an unprecedented vote of confidence, he was unanimously re-elected to a second five-year term by the 189 UN member states in June, six months before his first term expires on Dec 31.

"The end of the Cold War has at last made it possible for the UN to perform more fully the part it was originally intended to play," the awards citation said, singling out Annan for "bringing new life to the organization."

UN spokesman Fred Eckhard woke Annan and told him the news shortly after it was announced at 5 am

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