



Sammilita Sangskritik Jote forms a human chain at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday protesting arrest warrants against five eminent citizens.

Four-party candidates to win with more votes than in '01

Grassroots leaders tell prime minister

UNB, Dhaka

Grassroots leaders yesterday told BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia that the reigning four-party alliance candidates for the next polls would win with more votes than they got in the last 2001 parliamentary elections.

The president and secretaries of district, pourasobha and upazila units of Chittagong and Comilla districts came up with the predictions during their opinion-exchange meeting with the Prime Minister at her Hare Road office.

BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan disclosed the proceedings of the parleys to reporters after the meet.

Mannan Bhuiyan said that four-party candidates would win the next elections as the government has done a lot of development works in the last five years.

He said the PM urged the party leaders to "work for four-party candidates unitedly and carry the message of development to the countrymen".

Replying to a query about BNP's candidature in the forthcoming general election, Mannan Bhuiyan said the candidature was yet to be finalised.

"We have not finalised the candidature. A parliamentary body will be formed and it will finalise the candidature," he told the journalists.

The BNP leader, however, gave the preview of a choosy selection

process as he said those people who will win the polls would get party ticket.

The Minister was also asked about the case filed by Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment Mahmudur Rahman against five trustee-board members of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

Mahmudur Rahman "personally has filed a case against the CPD members--this is not a government case," he said.

Replying to another query about the debate over Karnaphuli Bridge, he said people of Chittagong are "very much enthusiastic" about construction of the pillar-bridge over the river.

Former PS to Hasina alleges govt harassment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

RAM Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury, a government official who served as a personal secretary to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina during her tenure, yesterday said he tendered his resignation a year ago, but the four-party alliance government has not accepted it yet only to harass him.

"I submitted my letter of resignation on August 9, 2005, but the government did not accept it on completely political grounds," he said at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) auditorium.

The government high-ups then told him that they could not accept his resignation as the letter contained some conditions, he said, adding that he again submitted a letter without any conditions on December 27, 2005, but they again refused to accept it mentioning political reasons.

Obaidul alleged that the alliance government has been harassing and torturing him since their take-over. He has been given posting in different parts of the country in the last five years, he added.

He also said that he wants to quit the government service as he wants to be involved in politics.

Advocate Anisul Haque and Advocate Qamrul Islam were present at the press conference.

Khulna BNP factions hold separate rallies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two factions of Khulna BNP held rallies separately in the city as part of the party's central programme protesting what it said the anarchy created by the Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine over electoral reforms.

The faction led by lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi and Khulna city Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman held the protest rally at Shaheed Mahajir Square, with Zafarullah Khan Shacchu, a member of city BNP convening committee, in the chair.

The other faction led by lawmaker Nurul Islam held the rally in front of the party office at KD Ghose Road, with former secretary of city BNP Nazrul Islam Manju in the chair.

A large contingent of law enforcers were deployed around the venues of the rallies -- only 100 yards away from each other -- to avert any violence.

Speakers at both the rallies warned the Awami League and other components of the 14-party against any attempts to foil the upcoming general elections.



Khilgaon Thana Awami League takes out a procession in the city yesterday demanding immediate execution of the verdict in Bangabandhu Murder Case.

Uncongenial atmosphere for primary education prevails in CHT

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The phantom of feudal anarchy is still haunting the hilly region and thus holds the indigenous children back from having compulsory primary education, said the speakers at a seminar in the city yesterday.

Confining hills, military rule, fear of eviction, threat from settlers--can these be considered as congenial atmosphere for children to get education? Jyotindra Bodhipriyo Larma alias Shantu Larma, chairman of CHT Regional Council, posed the question while in the chair of a daylong workshop on 'Primary education in adivasi mother tongue: Expectations, constraints and the way forward'.

ActionAid Bangladesh and Research and Development Collectives (RDC) jointly organised the programme at Bhami auditorium.

The workshop ventilated that at present the rate of illiteracy and drop out is the highest in the hilly region, and poverty, inability to follow the medium of instruction, lack of awareness and absence of indigenous teachers and educational institutions are the main loopholes in expanding education.

Moreover, as Prof Mohammad Samad of the Institute of Social Welfare and Research at Dhaka University, observed that the curriculum does not reflect the history, culture, folk-tales and struggles of indigenous people and eventually the children failed to incorporate them.

"They read Surya Sen, Khudi Ram, Maulana Bhasani and Sheikh Mujib, but were left ignorant of their own heroes," he said, adding that they have the right to know their rich culture and they must be acquainted with MN Larma and other leaders

from time immemorial.

At the workshop, three keynote papers titled 'Education and language needs of indigenous people', 'Performance of mother tongue and Bangla users' and 'Feasibility study of bi-lingual education for indigenous community' were presented.

The speakers gave top priority to appointment of indigenous teachers in schools, preparing books in indigenous languages and bi-lingual textbooks.

Citing a research, Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University (DU) and general secretary of RDC, said children did well in schools where mother tongue was used as medium of instruction comparing to others in Bangla medium schools.

The discussants voiced concern over the children who have to be occupied in Jhum cultivation for nearly eight months each year.

They emphasised on initiating boarding schools, as did the government of India in Tripura.

DU Vice-chancellor SMA Faiz said disparity between the peoples must be eliminated and this is the reason for progress in Australia where aborigines have been successfully merged with other peoples.

Abdul Malek, professor of the Institute of Education and Research, HKS Arefin, professor of Anthropology and chairman of RDC, Sourav Shikdar, associate professor of Linguistics, Sanaullah, news editor of Prothom Alo, Fazle Hossain Badsha, chief advisor to Adivasi Parishad, Sanjeeb Drong, noted litterateur, adivasi teachers and representatives from different advisories forums also spoke on the occasion.



Family members of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria and civil society members form a human chain in front of Dhaka College in the city yesterday as part of 'Blue for Peace' programme demanding proper investigation into the murder of the former minister.