

# No credible election without participation of major parties

Says Canadian envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There cannot be a credible election without the participation of major political parties, Canadian High Commissioner Barbara Richardson said yesterday.

Expressing concern over the current political situation, she said the Canadian government is worried about the recent developments

in the country.

The political problems could be resolved, but the diplomats do not have the solution, she said, adding that it is the leaders of the country who have the solution.

The Canadian envoy said this while exchanging views with women journalists at a city hotel. Bangladesh Centre for Development, Journalism and

Communication (BCDJC) organised the meeting.

As a development partner, the Canadian government is concerned over the political violence in the country and it does not want the democratic process to be hampered, Barbara said.

The diplomats cannot interfere in the internal affairs of any country; they merely listen to the politicians and provide information and suggestions, she added.

She expressed her hope that the country's leaders would find out a solution to the prevailing crisis.

Consensus and willingness among the political parties is a must for resolving the political crisis and the leaders should take decisions through understanding, she said.

About the issue of army deployment, Barbara said they (the army) need to be careful and should use their power only when necessary.

"We urge the authority to use the power appropriately," she added.

Barbara also said the Bangladeshis are innovative, courageous and dedicated. They want their leaders to find out the solution and the Canadian government supports Bangladesh in its efforts to reduce poverty, establish good governance and uphold the democratic tradition.

BCDJC President Nayeemul Islam Khan moderated the meeting.



PHOTO: STAR

Canadian High Commissioner Barbara Richardson speaks at a view exchange meeting with women journalists at a city hotel yesterday. On her right is BCDJC President Nayeemul Islam Khan.

## Warrants for arrest against Shamim Osman, Nasim Osman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A court here yesterday issued arrest warrants against Awami League (AL) leader Shamim Osman and his brother Nasim Osman, a Jatiya Party (JP) leader, in a theft case.

First Class Magistrate Hasna Jahan Khanam issued the arrest warrants.

Ismat Hashem, brother of Shawkat Hashem, sports secretary of BNP's Narayanganj district unit, filed the case on December 24, 2001.

In the first information report (FIR), the complainant said the accused held his wife and two daughters hostage and took away Tk 11 lakh and 30 tolas of gold from his residence at Chashara in mid-2000.

He named Nasim Osman, his wife Parvin Osman, son Azmiri Osman, brothers Shamim Osman and Selim Osman and JP leaders Mejbahuddin Ahmed and Dr Habib as accused.

Following a petition of Selim Osman, a High Court bench on April 2, 2005 passed an order to transfer the case to any district adjacent to Narayanganj, but the order reached Narayanganj district magistrate's office on December 28 last year.

The district magistrate has started the process to transfer the case to Dhaka.

## Chittagong jolts at 5.58 on Richter scale

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A moderate earthquake measuring 5.58 on the Richter scale jolted the port city and its adjacent areas yesterday.

The tremor shook the city at

11:28:35am and lasted for 47 seconds.

No damage or casualty was reported.

The epicentre of the quake was 456-km off the country's lone seismic observatory centre in the city's Ambagan area, said the sources concerned.



Guardians wait anxiously on Viqarunnisa Noon School premises in the city yesterday, left, while their wards sit for the admission test of class I, right.



PHOTO: STAR

## Cop action on women activists condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women's and human rights activists yesterday strongly condemned the police atrocities on women political activists during country-wide blockade programme enforced by Awami League-led grand alliance.

In a statement, Peshajibi Nari Samaj, a platform for women professionals, expressed grave concern over the police brutality and demanded exemplary punishment to the persons responsible.

Condemning the atrocities as violations of constitutional and women's rights, Nari Samaj said the way the police clamped down on protesters is totally unacceptable to the people, particularly women of the country.

It also demanded an end to all forms of repression and harassment of political activists.

The signatories to the statement include Mahfuza Khanam, Ayesha Khanam, Dr Sultana

Shafi, Shaheen Anam, Dr Makhduma Nargis, Ferdousi Priyobhashini, Dr Khaleda Begum, Tasmina Hossain, Dr Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, Sara Zaker, Meghna Guhathakurata, Arma Dutta, Dr Mahmuda Islam, Hazera Sultana and Dr Rokeya Sultana.

In another statement, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association protested and condemned the police atrocities on children and women during the blockade programme.

Such atrocities, which are contrary to the spirit of democracy and humanity, have tarnished the image of the country abroad, the association said.

It also called on the police to refrain from resorting to any kind of repression.

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a human rights organization, also condemned the mass arrest and police brutality during the blockade programme.

## SC reopens today

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court opens today after a 24-day winter vacation.

On the day, hearing of some public interest litigation cases, including appeal of former military ruler HM Ershad against his conviction in a graft case and legitimacy of Justice Mahfuzur Rahman as acting CEC, are likely to be held.

Besides, an application seeking ad interim anticipatory bail may be moved before the High Court by eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hosain, an accused in the case of Nov 30 vandalism on the Supreme Court premises.

On the other hand, the pending contempt of court case against 13 government officials, including top four bureaucrats, for disparaging the court edicts on separation of the judiciary from the executive is set for hearing today.

A petition for overturning the stay order on the operation of the High Court verdict that directed the Election Commission to collect some personal information from aspirant MP candidates during the filing of nomination papers might be moved before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

## Tarique files defamation case against Quader

Court orders judicial probe

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court ordered judicial inquiry into a criminal case filed yesterday by a lawyer on behalf of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman against Awami League (AL) Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader for making a defamatory statement on January 7.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mizanur Rahman passed the order after Advocate Mohammad Sanaulah Miah filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, seeking an arrest warrant against Quader in connection with the statement.

In his complaint, Sanaulah mentioned that Quader at a press conference at AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue on January 7 made a statement, saying that sons and daughters of Tarique and former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar go to school in the vehicles of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

The statement was published in

different national dailies the following day and Tarique was aggrieved with the statement and gave a power of attorney to Sanaulah to file a defamation case against Quader, the complainant added.

The statement was false, fabricated and concocted and it was made to tarnish Tarique's image in the political arena as well as in the society, Sanaulah said.

## DU exams postponed

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University authorities yesterday postponed all the scheduled examinations under course system until January 14, says a press release.

Schedule of other examinations will remain unchanged, the press release added.



PHOTO: STAR

Commuters travel in a rickshaw van to reach their destinations in the city yesterday as public transport was off the road during the blockade programme enforced by Awami League-led grand alliance.

## ZIA KILLING 'Grand alliance a union of masterminds'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

Rajshahi

Rajshahi City Mayor and BNP candidate for Rajshahi-2 (City and Paba upazila) constituency Mizanur Rahman Minu yesterday alleged that the grand alliance of Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, former president HM Ershad and Liberal Democratic Party Chairman AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury is 'basically a union of the masterminds behind the killing of President Ziaur Rahman'.

"If we (BNP-Jamaat alliance) are elected again, we will ensure proper trial of Zia's killing by suing the three masterminds together," he said while addressing a press conference at a city restaurant.

"Hasina returned home from abroad 17 days ahead of Zia's killing while Ershad was the chief of army and Chowdhury was staying just beside Zia's room at Chittagong Circuit House," Minu said, adding, "Some of the unruly members of the army were punished, but the trial of Zia's actual killers is yet to be held."

Minu claimed that a congenial atmosphere for holding polls has been prevailing all over the country, and "We have already formed many committees even at ward level to motivate voters to go to polling centres and trained up workers to

resist the anti-election forces."

While replying to some questions Minu was visibly embarrassed over his government's failure to bring natural gas to Rajshahi, setting up of agro-based EPZ, power outage and price hike of essentials.

In a written statement, Minu claimed that he had initiated 20 development projects for Rajshahi in last five years.

He also pledged to implement 20 more development projects including widening of city roads, supply of natural gas through pipelines and setting up of 30 MW power plant.

About Jamaat candidates at his and other constituencies in Rajshahi, Minu said they could not withdraw their nomination papers in time.

Speaking on the occasion, Jamaat City Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said his party is not contesting for any seat in Rajshahi.

"Our leaders could not withdraw nomination papers for want of time," he added.

Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industries President Lutfar Rahman, BNP leaders Ekhlak Hussain, Kamrul Monir, Shafiqul Haq and Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul were present at the press conference.