

AL to build poverty-free Bangladesh if voted to power: Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday vowed to build a Bangladesh free from hunger, poverty and unemployment, if her party is voted to power in the upcoming general elections.

"If we get a chance to serve the country again, our prime duty will be ensuring economic emancipation and political freedom as well, so that the poor do not get stuck in the cycle of poverty or fall victim to any loan shark or briber," said the AL chief. Hasina was speaking at a dis-

cussion marking the historic March 7, the day when Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman called on the Bangalees to get prepared for a decisive struggle to force the Pakistan junta into conceding independence to our nation, at the Institute of Diploma

Engineers in the capital. "We will increase the education rate up to 100 percent and facilitate every unemployed youth to get a job. We will build such a country that father of the nation dreamed of and in that golden Bangla no one will have to die of hunger," said Hasina. Except AL, others adopted the policy of using the poor to beg aids from foreign organisations only to become richer by grabbing the major portion of the aids, Hasina added without naming any BNP-Jamaat coalition leader or Nobel laureate Prof Yunus. Every important decision in the history of the country, including the one of the War of Liberation was a political one, Hasina observed.

Terming the AL regime from 1996 to 2001 as a golden era of the country, the former prime minister pointed out different development works of her tenure. She said her government brought self-dependency in food, increased power generation, literacy rate and adopted women development policy when they were in power.

A nation could not stand up right if economic emancipation is not achieved, she remarked. The AL president said her father fought all his life and even sacrificed it for bringing political, economical and social freedoms, which, she said, have not been achieved even after 36 years of the War of Liberation in 1971.

Hasina said the defeated forces of the liberation war have been trying to take revenge as they killed Bangabandhu on August 15 in 1975 and four national leaders on November 3 the same year.

"We will have to identify those forces to build a golden Bangla as Bangabandhu dreamed of," said the AL chief adding that the speech of March 7 of Bangabandhu will inspire the nation to move forward.

AL Presidium members Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, and Col (retd) Sawkat Ali, Prof Abu Sayeed, Abdul Mannan, Abdur Rahman, Rahmat Ali and Qamrul Islam took part in the discussion moderated by former lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor.

SAARC MINISTERS' CONFCE

Bangladesh for holistic approach to address energy crisis

UNB, Dhaka

Energy and Power Adviser Tapan Chowdhury, now in New Delhi to attend the Saarc energy ministers' conference, yesterday urged the regional leaders to take a holistic approach to address the energy crisis across the South Asian region.

The Energy Adviser particularly emphasised the utilisation of huge hydro-potentials of the region to meet its electricity crisis, according to a message received here.

Expressing Bangladesh's commitment to exploring all avenues to ensure the energy security of the Saarc region as a whole, he suggested its most economic and efficient uses to tap the hitherto untapped hydroelectric potentials of the Saarc region.

"Research and cooperation to tap such resources should also be given due attention in any scheme of regional cooperation involving the Saarc member countries," he said.

Tapan Chowdhury said: "The main objective of the conference should be to adopt a holistic approach to the strategy that we may adopt to meet our present and projected energy requirements."

He said the Saarc countries should be able to agree on certain broad parameters of cooperation to help one another and also to plan in a manner so that whatever is done can generally contribute to the common good for all the countries of the region.

The Adviser said Bangladesh is now at the crossroad of facing the challenges of providing adequate commercial energy for the economy to thrive.

He mentioned that the government of Bangladesh is putting its best efforts for the development of indigenous natural resources, which have been playing a vital role in the energy sector and thereby in the socio-economic development of the country.



A singer performs at a cultural function at Nahar Garden on the occasion of Bangladesh Janashanjog Samity's annual picnic recently.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Co-ordination among govt depts stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday underscored the need for co-ordination among different departments of the government to effectively address the issue of environmental degradation in the country.

They also spoke of increased collaboration among governmental agencies, non-governmental organisations and international development actors.

The seminar titled 'Reclamation and Environmental Improvement of Derelict Urban Areas in Dhaka City' was held at Institution of Engineers Bangladesh in the city.

The programme was jointly organised by Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet), Cluster Association of Environment Industry of the Basque Country (Aclima) and Flemish Institute of Technological Research (Vito) with the assistance of European Commission.

Former president of IEB QI Siddique chaired the programme.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina along with party leaders places wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday marking the historic March 7.

PHOTO: STAR