

BNP steals the show with first mass rally since 1/11

RASHIDUL HASAN from Chittagong

With a contagious festivity the motorcade of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia started towards the port city of Chittagong from the capital around 7:15am.

Escorted by Special Security Forces (SSF) and other law enforcing agencies the motorcade of the former premier included about a hundred vehicles carrying euphoric party supporters, leaders, and activists.

Blocking traffic, swarms of supporters were waiting at different points on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway to welcome the BNP chief. Her security personnel were

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Accept 7-pt demand to let us join poll

Khaleda tells govt at huge rally in Ctg, alleges bid for 'selection' in the name of 'election'

RASHIDUL HASAN, from Chittagong

Demanding immediate hand over of power to an elected government through a free and fair election, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said her party will contest in the December 18 poll if the government meets their already announced seven-point demand.

Addressing an immense mass rally in Laldighi Maidan in Chittagong, she blasted the military backed caretaker government

saying, "The caretaker government did not create a level playing field. The field has been made quite bumpy for us, while for some other parties it has been levelled... so there can be no game of election on that field."

The government is saying that it realised BNP's and its four-party alliance's demands, but there is still no sign of that, she said adding, but it has been meeting the demands of others one after another.

Khaleda's appearance at yesterday's mass rally was her first since the declaration of emergency in January last year.

Thousands of party leaders, activists, supporters and curious citizens attended the rally carrying colourful banners, placards and festoons.

The rallies started gathering at the venue, Laldighi Maidan, since late morning with processions chanting slogans that translates,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

TALKS WITH HASINA Demand for a deferred poll worries US envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador to Dhaka James F Moriarty yesterday expressed his worries over the idea of deferring the national polls, scheduled for December 18.

He said he expects BNP to produce some sort of a solution and hopes to see a good election with all major political parties participating and everybody accepting the results.

Awami League (AL) acting General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam called upon all political parties to take part in the polls and ensure that the elections are held in a free and fair manner.

The remarks came after a meeting between James F Moriarty and AL chief Sheikh Hasina and other top AL leaders at Hasina's home Sudha Sadan in the capital.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

No decision yet on removing Myanmar ships

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Myanmar failed to reach any decision in a high level meeting yesterday on the situation arising out of Myanmar's mobilisation of naval ships in Bangladesh maritime territory for exploration and will sit again on November 16.

Navy ships of the two countries are staying near the exploration site.

Foreign Secretary Touhid Hossain yesterday told BBC radio from Yangon that Bangladesh would withdraw its navy ships after Myanmar removes its rig from the site.

"We have asked officials of Myanmar to remove the rig from there. It will remove the tension. Then we will sit for discussion again," he said. "We will define the boundary and solve all problems through discussion and develop our respective areas accordingly."

On Thursday, Myanmar government rejected Bangladesh's

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Polls rules for schoolteachers under MPO

UNB, Dhaka

Schoolteachers under MPO (Monthly Pay Order) system can contest the parliamentary elections retaining their posts, but they must resign if they want to contest the upazila polls, the Election Commission secretary said yesterday.

M Humayun Kabir made the remark to the reporters in reply to a question after attending a workshop on electoral laws and rules held at the EC conference room.

Divisional commissioners of Dhaka and Chittagong, additional deputy commissioners (revenue and general) of Dhaka, Rajshahi, Barisal, Khulna, Chittagong and Sylhet, zonal executive officers of Dhaka City Corporation and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Allow convicts under EPR to go to higher court for contesting polls: AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday demanded that party leaders convicted by lower courts under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR) have to be allowed to contest the national election if higher courts accept their appeals against conviction.

"Those convicted by lower courts under the Emergency Power Rules will have to be given chance to appeal in higher courts according to the Constitution. If the higher courts accept the appeals, then they will have to be allowed to take part in the election," AL acting General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam said.

The crucial decision came at a

meeting of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC) with party chief Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

According to the EPR, anybody convicted under this law (EPR) would not be allowed to take part in any election.

Held at Hasina's political office, the meeting also demanded that those identified as utility bill and loan defaulters have to be allowed to take part in the election if they repay their dues before submission of nomination papers.

The meeting was adjourned until 5:00pm today.

Contacted, leaders attending the meeting said Hasina showed a positive attitude towards senior party leaders who are widely known as reformists.

Saying that party leaders sued under the EPR could not operate their bank accounts, and it hampered their normal life, Ashraf demanded allowing them to operate their bank accounts and open fresh accounts.

The meeting observed that it is not possible to hold a free and fair election amidst state of emergency, the meeting reiterated that the government to withdraw the state of emergency before submission of nomination form, and deferral of upazila election by a logical time gap.

Ashraf said they want a free, fair and credible election on December 18 with participation of all political parties.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Certificate trade in guise of teachers' training

Most private TT colleges are not equipped to offer courses

SURANJITH DEABNATH

Almost all private teachers training (TT) colleges are incompetent and allegedly engaged in 'selling certificates' as the government has yet to take any action against these institutions.

According to a survey of the education ministry, 89 private TT colleges and six private universities out of a total of 100 such institutions are unfit to offer training courses, especially for Bachelor of Education (BED) and Master of Education (MED).

"Quality teachers are needed for ensuring quality education in the country. But how can we expect quality teachers when anyone can easily get certificates with good results from private TT colleges or universities even without attending classes, doing assignments and

PRIVATE TT COLLEGES IN SHAMBLES	
Category	Total Numbers
Red mark (worst situation)	07
Grey mark (poor condition)	33
Yellow mark (medium quality)	33
Green mark (good performance)	05

receiving practical training?" said Prof Taslima Begum, principal of Dhaka Government TT College.

She added the whole nation would be paralysed if professional degrees like BED are not provided properly.

Academicians suggest inspection at all private TT colleges with instant action to penalise or even disaffiliate any institutions failing to fulfil minimum conditions, especially college premises, mate-

rials, methodology, record keeping, teaching practice and students' attendance.

Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said a committee will be formed to monitor these colleges and check all kinds of irregularities.

"Allegations are rife that private TT colleges are providing certificates without quality training to the students. We'll take stern action

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

FALU'S CERTIFICATE 2 of 11 doctors did not sign it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two of the eleven doctors of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) whose names were typed on the phoney medical certificate for detained ex-BNP lawmaker Mosaddak Ali Falu did not sign it.

They are Prof M Alauddin, chairman at ENT department, and Prof Pran Gopal Dutta of otolaryngology and neck surgery department. The nine other doctors however signed the certificate.

It was found from photocopies of the papers that Falu attached to his bail petition.

Falu facing a string of corruption cases earned bail from the High Court producing the certificate.

The Supreme Court (SC) on

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

NOMINATION FILING

BNP undecided, Jamaat ready as time running out

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

BNP is still undecided whether to participate in the December 18 national election while only six days are left to go before the deadline for filing nominations ends.

The issue of polls participation has already created a distance between BNP and its key ally Jamaat-e-Islami, which appears quite keen to contest the election.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday reiterated that her party would take part in the polls if the government meets their demands.

She however did not say what would be the response if the caretaker administration declines to

fulfil the demands before November 13, the closing date for submitting nominations.

BNP leaders said they are a bit concerned about Jamaat's "over enthusiasm" for the election.

Talking to The Daily Star, they said their chairperson has already cautioned Jamaat leaders that it's time for a reality check. Going to polls at this time would do no good to their four-party alliance.

According to party sources, Jamaat has already completed preparations for the election. The BNP rank and file, on the other hand, still does not know if they would boycott the general election.

"I have no clues to what deci-

sion our party might take. We will however follow whatever the chairperson should decide with regard to the upcoming election," a district BNP general secretary told The Daily Star, seeking anonymity.

BNP insiders said the party wants no part in the election as it thinks the odds are still stacked against it.

However, Jamaat's arguments that a boycott of the vote would mean letting the Awami League-led alliance win unchallenged have put it in a fix. The prospect of the political opponents gaining the two-thirds majority in parliament is even more worrying.

While Jamaat and Islami Oikya

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

BA to suspend Dhaka-London flights in March

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British Airways has decided to suspend its flights between Dhaka and London Heathrow from March 28 next year, considering non-profitability of the route in recent times.

"The decision to suspend flights between Dhaka and London has been a difficult one to make. However, the route is not making a profitable contribution to our business and we are unable to sustain it," said the airline's Area Commercial Manager for South Asia Amanda Amos.

"We will continue to offer a cargo operation, using connecting flights via the Middle East," she said in a press release.

Customers who had booked British Airways flights after March 28, 2009 from Dhaka will be contacted by the airline for making alternative arrangements.

British Airways has been operating flights to and from Bangladesh since the mid-1970s, at present operating three flights a week between Dhaka and London.

Talking polls and beyond

Polls still in doubt as key issues unresolved Says Badruddoza Chowdhury

WASIM BIN HABIB and SURANJITH DEABNATH

Bikalpo Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) President Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury thinks there is still public confusion about the upcoming parliamentary election as BNP has yet to disclose whether it will contest in the December 18 poll.

Making the electoral administration neutral, and ensuring security of voters, candidates, campaigners, and polling agents are also key issues yet to be resolved, the former BNP leader said in an interview with The Daily Star.

Badruddoza does not think



political parties will indulge in blame games and reject election results if defeated, like before.

"Previous elections were held on the basis of flawed voter lists, benefiting both major parties. As the new voter list is quite flawless, and if the voters are allowed to vote properly without any fear of intimidation, there will be little scope for grumbling," he said.

Talking about the military backed caretaker government's 'failures', he said sudden eviction of street vendors affected the lives of about 1 crore people, and improvement in power

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Find details of the interview on page 11

BJS deadline for removing all non-judicial men from ministry

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Judicial Service Association (BJS) yesterday demanded removal of all non-judicial officials from the law ministry including Secretary Kazi Habibul Awal and Solicitor Israil Hossain and appointment of judicial officials to ministry posts in seven days.

It said current appointments in the ministry are contrary to the principles, ideals and objectives enshrined in the separation of the judiciary as well as the judgment in the Masdar Hossain case.

The BJS made the demand at an extended meeting at Jagannath-Sohel Smriti auditorium on Dhaka sessions judge's court premises.

The BJS leaders urged the government to increase salaries and benefits of judicial officials in line with the recommendations of the judicial service pay commission.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

AL nomination seekers get one more day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday extended by a day the last date for submission of nomination forms and sending recommendations for a panel of five possible candidates by the grassroots committees.

The nomination seekers, who were asked to submit forms by yesterday, now can submit those by today (Saturday).

The AL committees at grassroots level were also allowed to send their recommendations on five possible candidates for the next elections by November 9. But with the extended time, they can do the job by November 10.

"We have extended one day considering heavy demand from the nomination seekers," said AL acting general secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam after the meeting of AL Central Working Committee at party chief Sheikh Hasina's political office in the capital yesterday.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



Awami League leaders and activists throng Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital yesterday for filing nomination papers with the party head office.

PHOTO: STAR