

Hasina rolls out AL's charter for change

Highlights 5 poll pledges, vision up to 2021

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday unveiled her party's election manifesto titled 'Charter for Change' highlighting five promises: lowering of commodity prices and avoiding an economic depression, curbing of corruption, raising production of power and energy, eradication of poverty and inequity, and establishment of good governance.

The AL chief declared that the party formed a vision for the country's development by the year 2021, which is titled Vision-2021 in the manifesto and is dedicated to the young generation of voters who got registered for the first time this year.

- Stronger ACC
- 5,000megawatt power by 2011
- Free education up to degree level
- Permanent pay, wage commissions
- Job for one youth a family
- Trial of war criminals



The year 2021 will be the golden jubilee of the country's independence.

The former prime minister also rolled out the party's broader election pledges of 23 points amid a rapturous applause from an audience of a cross-section of people in a hotel in the

capital. "We want to utilise the immense potential of the new generation of voters to prepare them to face the challenges of globalisation in the 21st century," Hasina said while reading out the key points of the manifesto

containing two parts -- Programmatic Commitment for the next five years, and the Vision 2021.

"We believe successful implementation of this work programme and Vision-2021 depends on our young generations' active participation and involvement in the process," said the AL president adding, "We've formulated our election manifesto and the work programme for them."

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Poll symbol allocation in a shambles

Lack of guidelines, poor EC-RO coordination blamed

SHAKHAWAT LITON and SHARIFUL ISLAM

A lack of appropriate guidelines and coordination between the Election Commission (EC) and returning officers (RO) yesterday created confusions over allocating election symbols to the candidates of the ensuing parliamentary polls.

ROs of a few constituencies refused to allocate the symbols agreed by the components of the two major electoral alliances to their candidates even after the candidates showed letters from the alliance chiefs that allowed them to use those symbols.

The problem was detected when ROs found it difficult to identify alliance candidates as neither the Awami League (AL)

nor the BNP did provide the EC with lists of their candidates to get the alliances' electoral symbols.

Leaders of the components of the two alliances rushed to the EC and officials at the EC Secretariat had to contact the ROs over phone to resolve the confusion.

In the late afternoon, the EC issued a circular amending a previous one and asking ROs to allocate symbols to those who submit letters of permission for using electoral symbols of parties that lead the alliances.

A candidate of a political party will not get the party's electoral symbol if the party requests the ROs to allocate its symbol to the candidate nominated by its alliance partners, says the circular hurriedly faxed to the ROs.

Before that the ROs acted as per the previous circular issued Thursday night and allocated electoral symbols to candidates of both the AL and BNP and their alliance partners in the same constituencies.

Electoral symbol boat, for example, was allocated to AL-nominated candidate Monwar Hossain Chowdhury of AL and plough to Ali Mahubub Talukder of Jatiya Party (JP) in Gaibandha-4 constituency although the two parties agreed that the JP nominee would contest from the parliamentary seat as alliance candidate.

Party symbols were also allocated to both AL and JP nominees in Habiganj-2, Munshiganj-3, Gaibandha-5, Kurigram-4, Rangpur-4 and 5 and Sirajganj-2.

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BNP unveils electoral manifesto today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia is to unveil her party's election manifesto in the capital today.

Sources said the manifesto unveiling programme could be held around 4:00pm at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Leaders of the party and its allies, diplomats, representatives of donor agencies, business leaders, professionals, member of civil society and journalists are likely to attend the programme, party insiders said.

The BNP standing committee already approved the manifesto which was pre

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Country in deep crisis

Khaleda says nationalist-Islamist forces can solve the problem; offers prayers at 3 Sylhet shrines, kicks off poll campaign

RASHIDUL HASAN from Sylhet

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday inaugurated her party's campaign for the ninth parliamentary elections from Sylhet, urging voters to give the BNP-led four-party alliance another chance to complete the unfinished development tasks of its rule.

"Independence and sovereignty of the country is safe in BNP's hand and only the BNP-led alliance can solve the present crises of the country," Khaleda told a public meeting at Lalabazar ground of Dakkhin Surma in Sylhet.

The BNP chairperson offered special prayers at three shrines in Sylhet before formally starting her electioneering.

Hundreds of party supporters standing by the city streets leading to the shrines held colourful banners and festoons and party symbol sheaf of paddy and chanted slogans to welcome Khaleda.

The BNP chief entered the shrine of Hazrat Shah Jalal at 2:10pm amid tight security and spent there about 15 minutes to offer prayer

before visiting the shrines of Shah Paran and Burhanuddin Shah.

Leaving her cantonment residence at 8:30am, her motorcade reached Sylhet Circuit House at about 12:15pm. She addressed at least eight rallies in Sylhet.

BNP leaders, activists and supporters attended the Lalabazar public rally yesterday, the first day of the restrictions on rallies and processions being relaxed. In processions they started gathering at Dakkhin Surma, about 2kms from Sylhet town, from the morning, chanting slogans in support of the BNP chief.

Party candidates for the December 29 election from different constituencies brought supporters in large numbers. Many of them carried placards demanding release of their leaders still in detention.

In her address, the former premier vowed to provide employment and medical facilities including health insurance and reduce prices of essentials if voted to power.

"The country is in deep crisis and the

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PHOTO: STAR

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia waves to the crowd gathering in front of the shrine of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) in Sylhet yesterday after offering fatha there.

Next JS must review all ordinances

Observes HR body Odhikar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The next parliament must not grant blanket indemnity to the state of emergency provisions, declarations or decisions made during the 23-month tenure of the caretaker government, human rights body Odhikar said yesterday.

"The parliament must review all ordinances and other measures taken during the state of emergency and approve only those that fall within constitutional remits of the caretaker government," said Odhikar's Human Rights Report titled "23 months of the state of emergency in Bangladesh."

The organisation urged the

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3 'criminals' killed in crossfire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three suspected criminals were killed in separate incidents of 'crossfire' between their accomplices and law enforcers in Gazipur, Narayanganj and Rajshahi early yesterday.

They were identified as Mohammad Selim, 28, a suspected ringleader of Choura village in Kaliganj upazila of Gazipur, Mohammad Ali, 45, a top terror of Ruppang upazila in Narayanganj, and Shahjahan alias Tiger, 42, a leader of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Lal Potaka) of Jhikra Barulpura in Bagmara upazila of Rajshahi.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Thursday arrested

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Record candidates vie for upazila posts

Nomination filing ends today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The deadline for filing applications for candidacy in the long overdue Upazila Parishad elections slated for January 22 expires today.

A large number of aspirants have sought candidacy since the announcement of the election schedule on November 2. However, uncertainty over the polls still remains as it is supposed to be held under the next political government.

Election Commission (EC) Secretariat officials said a record number of aspirants would file applications for candidacy in three posts -- one of chairman and two of vice chairman -- in 481 Upazila Parishads.

They said field-level election officials have informed them that a large number of aspirants had filed applications with the Returning Officers (ROs) and many will file applications with

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4 constituencies miss candidates of 2 alliances

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led four-party alliance has no candidates in at least three constituencies while its rival the Awami League (AL)-led grand alliance lost its candidate in one constituency.

The Election Commission (EC) cancelled the candidature of BNP lawmaker aspirant Eng Abdus Sobhan in Barisal-1 constituency after one of his rival candidates filed an appeal against the returning officer's decision to declare him fit for polls.

BNP sources said the party

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MUMBAI ATTACKS

Pakistan turns screw on charity in question

Dozens of Jamaat-ud-Dawa members detained, assets frozen

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan yesterday tightened the screw on an Islamic charity linked to militants behind the Mumbai massacre, arresting dozens of members and placing a local leader under house arrest.

Amid intense international pressure to crack down on militant organisations on its soil in the wake of last month's deadly attacks, Islamabad has stepped up its actions against Jamaat-ud-Dawa.

Pakistan Thursday ordered the assets of the charity frozen after it was listed by the United Nations as a terror group in the wake of the attacks, which left 172 people dead, including nine gunmen.

Police in Pakistani Kashmir, where the charity is particularly active, said Friday its local leader was now under house arrest and four workers had been detained.

In southern Sindh province authorities have arrested more than 40 people and sealed more

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CPB says no to war criminals, corrupts

Launches poll manifesto

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday launched its election campaign with a call for not casting vote for any war criminal or corrupt politician in the upcoming parliamentary election.

CPB leaders started the campaign placing floral wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital.

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PHOTO: STAR

A section of Rampura Canal is being filled with earth for construction of structures, significantly narrowing down the canal.

Fresh onslaught on Rampura Canal

PINAKI ROY

The authorities of Aftabnagar housing project have once again started narrowing Rampura Canal in the name of levelling its bank for building a walkway behind the studio of Bangladesh Television opposite Banasree Housing Project.

The housing development company is also claiming new lands by filling up new areas of the canal. But, AKM Rezaul Karim, general manager of Eastern Housing, the developer of Aftabnagar, said, "The bank of the canal eroded, so we are repairing it."

The same housing company had filled up entire Badda Canal nearby and built a road over it for their housing project there.

The government however recovered the canal and is now reclaiming it spending Tk 2.2 crore under Dhaka Circular Waterway project.

Rampura Canal is the only drainage for storm water in the mid-city area of the capital.

Storm water in the city is drained out to the Balu River through Hatirjheel and Rampura canals.

Rajdhani Unnayan Katrapakkha (Rajuk) and some other government agencies have also been working on Hatirjheel Project.

While visiting Aftabnagar recently, The Daily Star correspondent saw 10 to 12 workers working on the bank of the canal. The workers said they had already dumped more than 100 trucks of soil on the bank.

When asked, how much of the canal they were going to fill up,

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