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BNP unveils charter for saving people, country

Pledges to amend caretaker system, scrap Special Powers Act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday announced her party's election manifesto on the slogan 'Save country, save people', and said they will reform the caretaker government system and scrap the special powers act if voted back to power.

She also pledged measures to contain price hike of essentials, curb corruption, restore law and order, combat terrorism, and allow the judiciary full independence.

The former prime minister said if

- Selecting deputy speaker from the opposition
- Speaker, dy speaker have to quit party post
- Independent secretariat under Supreme Court
- All-party JS body to appoint ACC, UGC chiefs
- Health insurance for poor, unemployment allowance
- Ensuring job for at least one youth from a family



BNP wins the December 29 election and forms government, it will make all representatives release their wealth accounts within 30 days of oath-

taking.

She read out the 36-point polls charter at a city hotel with a host of her party colleagues, diplomats and emi-

nent citizens in the audience.

The programme began at around 4:00pm with renditions of the national anthem and party song.

In the televised speech, Khaleda said they will strive to make parliament the centre of politics. "Speaker and deputy speaker will resign their party posts."

The deputy speaker will be nominated from the opposition, she added. Standing committees will be formed by the second session of parliament. Chairmen of the committees will

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UPAZILA POLLS 9,976 seek candidacy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 9,976 candidates have filed applications for contesting the January 22 Upazila Parishad elections in 481 upazilas of 64 districts across the country.

Yesterday was the last day for filing applications for candidature.

Of the total, 4,222 candidates are running for chairmanship, 3,543 for vice-chairmanship in the open positions while 2,211 filed applications for the same position reserved for female candidates.

One candidate each is seeking candidacy for vice-chairman (female) post in

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ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF AL'S POLLS MANIFESTO Mix of doable, pragmatic and lofty things

INAM AHMED and SHARIER KHAN

Politics had been uninspiring for quite some time. It made a turnaround when the Awami League unveiled its election manifesto Friday. More than a list of promises to lure voters, it is an economic document for development with clearly set goals, some achievable and some quite lofty, to hold the party accountable if it is elected to power. The problem with the manifesto, however, is elsewhere -- in the question of implementation and financing.

In setting short-term goals, the AL has obviously kept curbing of inflation as the number one task and it has laid down some economic mechanisms such as increasing domestic production (details of which has been elaborated to some extent later in the document),

making imports easier, market monitoring, dismantling monopoly business cartels, and setting up authorities to control prices. The party in power after the December election, whether it is AL or its archrival BNP, will definitely enjoy the blessings of global commodity price downturn to tame inflation. Oil price also looks set to remain low, which might even fall to \$25 a barrel. And that means, with the proposed mechanism and the global price level, tackling inflation should not be a tough task.

But more than that, the AL manifesto has been quick to come out of the domestic circuit to grab the global realities when it acknowledges the global financial meltdown as a prime concern. The realisation that an information depository is of utmost importance, is evidence

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Martyred Intellectuals Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation pays tribute to the martyred intellectuals today amid increasing demand for trial of war criminals who systematically killed prominent Bangladeshi intellectuals and professionals at the fag end of the Liberation War on this day in 1971.

On this day in 1971 renowned academics, doctors, engineers, journalists, teachers and other eminent personalities were dragged blind-folded out of their homes in the capital and killed in cold blood to intellectually cripple the newly-born

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

War crimes redden liberation ministry

Genocide, war crime issues ignored for years; it focuses on monument, controversial projects

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs symbolises the government's sheer political indifference to the War of Independence, the most important phase for any nation around the globe.

Formed in 2001 after the four-party alliance featuring BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami came to power, the ministry carefully ignored works on genocide and other crimes during the Liberation War, reveals an investigation by The Daily Star.

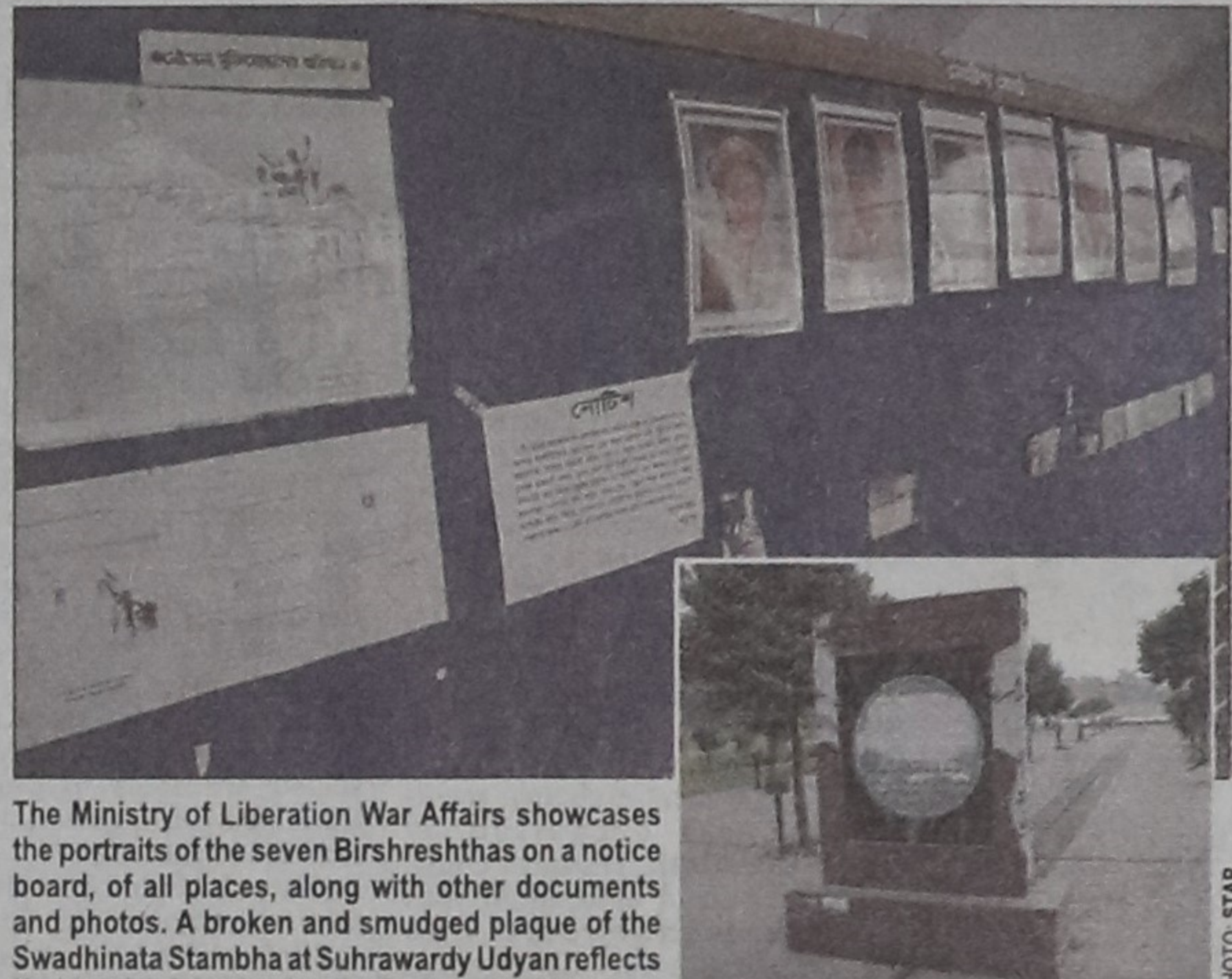
Many of its officials deemed the issue "very sensitive matter" and thought it best to turn a deaf ear to the ever-increasing demand for the trial of war criminals.

The ministry has no plan as yet to work on war crimes but it shows no lack of interest in annual rituals like the Independence Day on March 26, Victory Day on December 16 and Martyred Intellectuals Day on December 14 and also in some controversial projects.

The ministry has literally puffed away around Tk 600 crore from the revenue budget in seven years for trivial ceremonies and projects tainted with controversies.

Its ongoing and upcoming projects include building monuments for martyrs, finding killing grounds, battlefields and setting up establishments for the Muktijoddha Sangsad.

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The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs showcases the portraits of the seven Birshreshthas on a notice board, of all places, along with other documents and photos. A broken and smudged plaque of the Swadhinata Stambha at Suhrawardy Udyan reflects the utter negligence of authorities concerned.

PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka sees delectably different polls race

WASIM BIN HABIB and NAJMUL ALAM NOBIN

Residents of the capital are witnessing significant changes in this year's election campaign with no graffiti and poster on city walls and no decorated campaign gate on roads, thanks to the new electoral code of conduct.

Although electioneering officially started on Friday with the lifting of restrictions on processions and rallies, the festive election atmosphere the city is used to, is yet to be discernible.

Candidates of the major electoral alliances yesterday brought out processions, held rallies and hung posters from ropes at different spots. They also started going from door to door seeking votes in the 15 constituencies of the city.

A total of 144 candidates are contesting in

the 15 constituencies this year. In the last parliamentary election, the number of constituencies in the city was eight.

Use of loudspeakers is prohibited before 2:00pm and after 8:00pm this year, which is welcomed by the city residents as a relief from the usual electoral noise pollution.

Candidates also started setting up their election offices in respective constituencies, although this year only one election office is allowed in a ward per candidate. Many of those are however yet to be set.

According to the new electoral code of conduct the candidates are also not allowed to bring out campaign motorcades or any other vehicular procession for the purpose.

Awami League (AL) started its formal campaign with the announcement of its election

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Vote 4-party to foil 'anti-state plots'

Urges Khaleda Zia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday urged people to vote for the BNP-led four-party alliance to foil the conspiracy to make the country a 'failed and subservient' state.

"A political alliance has been conspiring to make the country a failed and subservient state."

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No anti-Islamic law if AL voted to power Says Matia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) will not formulate any anti-Islamic law if voted to power since the party is committed to restoring the image of Islam as a religion of peace and equality, said AL presidium member Matia Chowdhury yesterday.

"Awami League and its allies do not want to use Islam as a political tool in the elections," Matia said while speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the AL Media Centre in the capital's Dhanmondi.

The media centre has been launched to facilitate work of professional journalists

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Ershad sees landslide win for alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

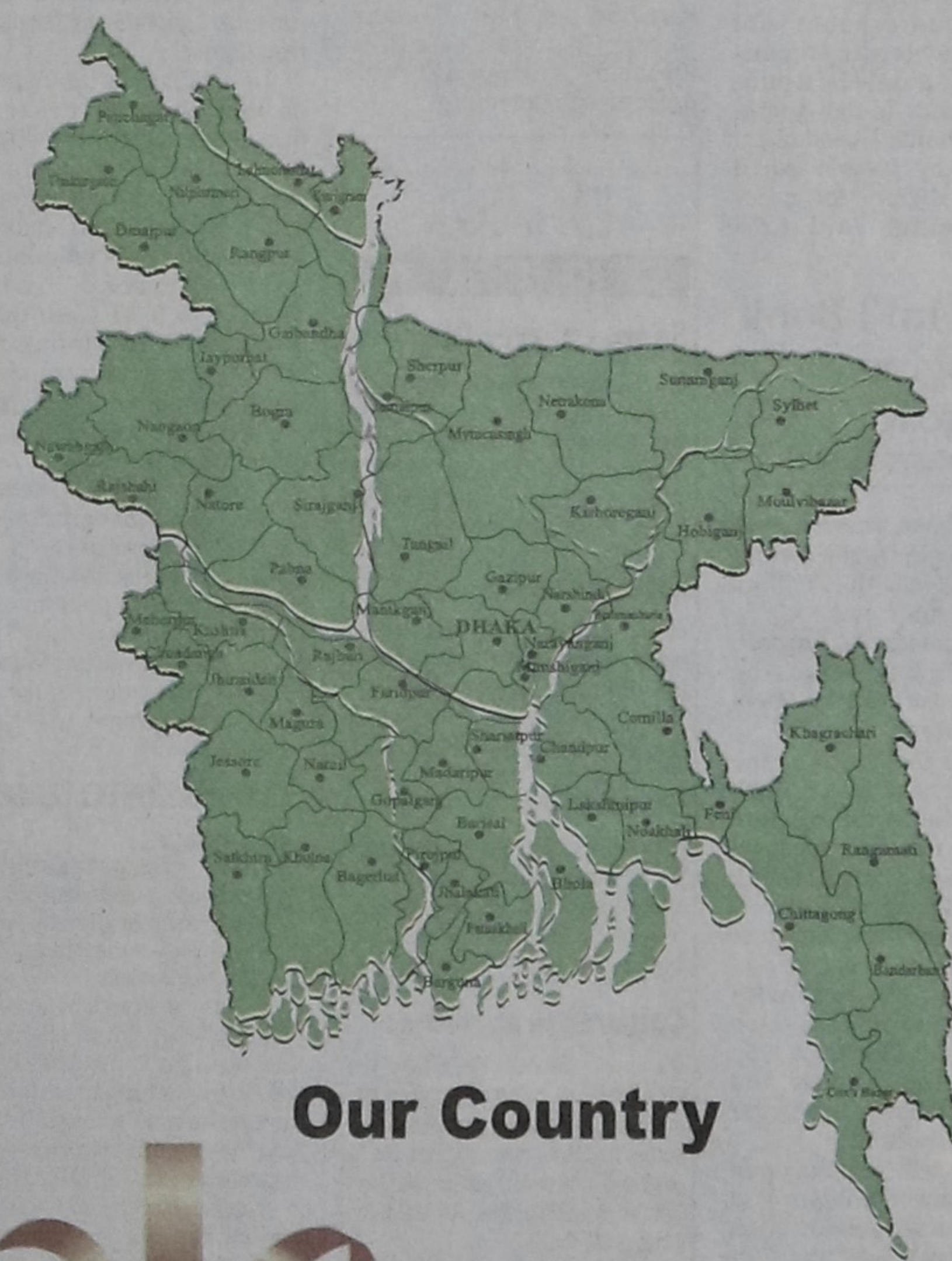
Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad yesterday said the grand alliance would secure a 'landslide victory' in the upcoming parliamentary election as people want a change in real sense.

"The Awami League and JP will work together in every constituency to ensure a huge

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Announcement

Today's edition of The Daily Star includes a four-page supplement on the Martyred Intellectuals Day.



Our Country



Our Bank

DBBL'S

63rd Branch Opens today

11/A, R. N. Road, Jessore

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231, Senpara Parbata
Section-10, Mirpur
Dhaka-1216



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The Daily Star 10TH 'O' & 'A' LEVEL AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY, 2007-2008

Announcement for 'O' & 'A' Level Private Candidates and Schools

Private Candidates

Private candidates who fulfill the criteria described below are requested to register their names at The Daily Star Office for inclusion as awardees. The criteria to be fulfilled are as follows:

Criteria for 'O' Level

Minimum 6 (six) 'A' grades in two consecutive sittings within May/June 2007 to May/June 2008

Criteria for 'A' Level

Minimum 3 (three) 'A' grades within 1 academic year (May/June 2007 to May/June 2008)

Eligible candidates are requested to contact Mr. Risalat Khan at The Daily Star office with their original Results Certificates along with a photocopy and 2 (two) passport-size photographs in person on December 20, 21, 22 & 23 between 11:00 am and 2:30 pm.

Schools

Any school that has students meeting the criteria above but has not been contacted by The Daily Star (i.e. has not been informed of the first scheduled meeting through regular post, email or phone) is requested to contact Mr. Risalat Khan at The Daily Star office at the aforementioned dates and times or email him at coordinator_dailystaraward@yahoo.com by December 24 with:

- The name of the school, phone number of a responsible representative (who will attend the meetings) and a valid email address that is checked regularly

The schools are also requested to promptly prepare a list of the candidates meeting the above criteria, the number of 'A' grades achieved by each candidate, and photocopies of results certificates for each candidate.

NOTE: If you know of any private candidate(s) or school(s) that may be unaware of this, please communicate the above information to them so that we may include them in this ceremony as well.