

Elect honest candidates

Shujan urges voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Shushaner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) at a programme yesterday said people are the source of all power and they should elect honest and competent candidates for their own welfare.

Shujan brought the candidates of Dhaka-9 constituency in front of the people at the programme organised by Mirpur thana unit at Darussalam Eidgah Maidan.

Shujan President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad was present at the programme which was moderated by its Secretary Dr Badiul Alam Majumder.

Candidate gave their respective commitments to the local voters. Dr Muzaffer said people are the source of all power. So, they will have to elect competent representatives for the welfare of the country, adding that political tradition will have to be introduced through the time-befitting change of political culture.

Shujan secretary said people are the owner of the country. So, they will have to show their

attitude like an owner, adding that elected representatives are only the representatives of the people.

Bangladesh Kalyan Party nominee Salauddin Swapon said he will work to resist the price hike of essentials, for neglected people and make an arrangement of good governance involving all political parties if elected.

BNP candidate SA Khaleq said as a six-time elected representative of Mirpur, he can deserve all the credit for the development of the area and did not give any shelter to terrorists.

Syed Najibul Bashar Majbhandari of Bangladesh Tarikat Federation called on the people not to cast their votes only watching the pictures of the candidates and advised to cast "no vote" if they do not get competent candidate.

Ferdousi Sultana of Gono Forum vowed to implement the spirit of liberation war, economic development, reduce discrimination and form a strong local government.

Md Kaiser Hamid of Zaker Party said he would work together for the development in the area.

Reject Rajakars, black money holders in polls: CPB

UNB, Dhaka

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday urged the people to reject collaborators (Rajakars), autocrats, terrorists and black money holders in the December 29 parliamentary election.

The party also demanded trial of the war criminals.

In a televised election speech in the evening, CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan sought vote for the 37 candidates of his party and the left-leaning candidates in those constituencies where there is no candidate from the CPB.

"The leftists can play a balancing role in saving the country and the people from political criminalisation and vandalism," the CPB president said, adding that the communist party wants to

bring about a revolutionary change in the country.

He said there will be no fundamental change for the people if they are confined to the "two-party political cycle", as the collaborators, autocrats and looters, and who compromise with the imperialist powers, will never be able to change the fate of the people.

"The vote will be wasted if it goes to a looter and terrorist. The vote will be productive if it goes to a good candidate from a good political party," Khan said.

He dwelt on the party's election pledges, including bringing down the prices of essentials through rationing and mass distribution, attaining self-sufficiency in food, employment generation, industrialisation and re-commissioning of closed factories, increasing invest-

ment in the productive sectors of both private and public sectors, and flourishing human resources through making massive progress in the education, health and social sectors.

To make it all happen, he said, the free-market economy of looters' capitalism and the World Bank has to be avoided while the country has to be taken forward with the spirit of the Liberation War for the interest of the industrious and general people.

"A left-democratic alternative has to be established through mass movement against three enemies -- imperialism, looters' capitalism and communal militant groups -- for a fundamental change in the fate of the people," said the CPB president in his speech.



PHOTO: STAR

Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) and the Prothom Alo jointly organised a discussion on 'Female education: Achievement, discrimination and duties' at the newspaper's office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

Situation conducive to fair polls

Say 86 percent of respondents in EWG survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Working Group (EWG), a non-partisan network of 32 NGOs, yesterday released a pre-election survey, revealing that 86 percent respondents believe the prevailing law and order situation is conducive to a free and fair election.

The EWG interviewed 1536 respondents from December 1 to 3 in 64 districts with half of them from rural and half from urban area and half of them were men and half were women.

Respondents were so selected as to get similar types of citizens based on their social category and work background.

Abdul Awal, chief coordinator of NRDS, a component of EWG, who revealed the

survey at a press conference in the city, however, said the survey was not based on a scientifically drawn sample, rather it was perception-based.

Almost half of the respondents were ordinary people and half were elite, he added. The survey also revealed that 70 percent ordinary citizens and 80 percent elites consider it important to know about the candidates and their parties while deciding who to vote for.

The EWG will deploy 1.81 lakh election observers on the election day to watch the December 29 parliamentary

election. Addressing the press conference Mohsin Ali, executive director of Wave Foundation, another component of EWG, said there will be at least one observer in each polling booth to watch the entire process related to election.

Besides, the EWG observers will send back their observation reports about their polling booths to the headquarters and a combined result of their observations will be released for countrymen on January 3 of next year.

WEATHER TODAY

Light to moderate fog likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over northern, western and central part and over the river basins. Light to moderate fog may also occur elsewhere over the country during mid night till morning.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 29.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 13.2 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:16pm today and rises at 6:36am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	21.0	15.8	98	88
Chittagong	25.0	16.5	97	84
Rajshahi	18.7	14.2	100	92
Khulna	19.8	15.2	96	94
Barisal	19.4	14.6	100	96
Sylhet	28.3	13.9	66	65
Cox's Bazar	29.0	17.4	79	81

POLLS MANIFESTO

Gonotantri Party pledges to build corruption-free Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonotantri Party yesterday unveiled its election manifesto with a pledge to take measures to build a prosperous Bangladesh free from corruption and unemployment.

Acting party president Mohammad Afzol announced the manifesto at a press conference at the party office in the capital.

Earlier, the party leaders expressed dissatisfaction over the government's 'indifference' to conducting proper investigation into the fire incident that claimed the lives of party president Nurul Islam and his son.

The party in the manifesto pledged to reinstate the 1972 constitution, ban communal politics, try war criminals, root out militancy and corruption, bring down price of essentials and create jobs to build a prosperous Bangladesh within a time frame of five years.

Afzol said they will lay stress on the four basic points enshrined in the 1972 constitution to root out injustice in the society and ensure balanced distribution of state wealth.

They will also form a tribunal to try the war criminals under the International Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973 and the Collaborators Act, 1973.

Eco parking machine inaugurated

METRO DESK

Master General of Ordnance Major General Anup Kumar Chakma inaugurated 'Eco Parking Machine' at Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory (BMTF) commercial office in Tejgaon in the city yesterday, says an ISPR press release.

In the inaugural ceremony Anup Kumar said by making popular and proper utilization of the world-class double-decker parking machine known as 'Eco Parking Machine' will reduce problems in parking system.

Mentionable, under the supervision of Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory and Daiei International of Japan jointly produced the machine.

A section of media spreading propaganda against BNP

Says Nazrul Islam Khan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan yesterday alleged that a section of the media is not acting responsibly, saying that false propaganda is going on against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

"A section of the media is spreading propaganda against the BNP candidates either deliberately or under provocation," he told reporters at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

The BNP spokesperson, however, did not mention names of any media organisations.

Referring to a newspaper report that a grand alliance candidate in Rajshahi is distributing money among voters, Nazrul Islam said the Election Commission has not taken any action against that candidate even after publication of the report.

He also criticised the Awami League, saying that it is also spreading propaganda against BNP.

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable

Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Society, Pharmacy Graduates Association, CAB and Doctors for Health and Environment jointly organise a roundtable on expectation to coming government on health and drug sectors. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:30pm.

NFTE roundtable

National Front of Teachers and Employment (NFTE) organises a roundtable on reflection of education sector in electoral manifesto. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.



PHOTO: STAR

Participants observe one minute's silence at a citizens' condolence meeting at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday to pay respects to Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra President Md Nurul Islam.

TRIBUTE PAID TO NURUL ISLAM

Proper investigation into mysterious fire demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a condolence meeting yesterday paid tribute to the memory of late Md Nurul Islam, president of Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra, and also demanded proper investigation into the cause of mysterious fire that broke out at his residence on December 3, killing him and his son.

Nurul Islam, also a veteran politician, dedicated his life to establishing the right of workers and true democracy in the country. He had fought injustice throughout his life, they said, adding that those who were behind the fire incident are the enemies of society and humanity.

Educationists, politicians, journalists, writers, women's

rights activists, cultural workers and labour leaders attended the citizens' condolence meeting organised by Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parisad (Skop) at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid described the death of Nurul Islam as 'the fall of a star'. His ideology would be established in society one day, putting an end to such killings, he added.

Prof Anwar Hossain, general secretary of Dhaka University Teachers' Association, said the evil forces have killed many honest and progressive persons like Nurul Islam, but the killers went unpunished.

Poet Syed Shamsul Haq said, "When we are struggling to

build our society anew, his death came as a blow to this effort."

He called on the people to raise their voice against those who do not believe in the spirit of the Liberation War and use religion for political gains.

Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, said that Nurul Islam had always tried to promote honesty in politics and establish peace in society. "He is a role model for us all as he had fought for the rights of workers."

Poet Rubi Rahman, wife of Nurul Islam, women's rights activists Ayesha Khanam and Shirin Akhter and Prof Arefin Siddique also spoke at the meeting moderated by Dr Wazedul Islam Khan, coordinator of Skop.

Tinbigha corridor to remain open Dec 29 night

BSS, Rangpur

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Border Security Force (BSF) of India at a flag meeting yesterday agreed to keep the Tinbigha Corridor open at night on December 29 on the occasion of Jatiya Sangsad election.

The two border forces have also agreed to keep strong vigilance along the common international borders with a view to resisting possible trespasses of the absconding Bangladeshi criminals on the eve of the election, BDR source said.

The meeting was held at Kuchlibari police station in India opposite to Tinbigha Corridor under Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat.

Rangpur Sector Commander of BDR Colonel Aftabul Islam led the seven-member delegation while Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Jalpaiguri BSF Sector SK Burma led the Indian delegation at the meeting.

BARAPUKURIA COAL MINE CASE

HC extends Khaleda's bail for 3 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday extended for three months its earlier order granting bail to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in the Barapukuria coal mine corruption case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Upon a prayer moved by Barrister Mahbubuddin Khokon for Khaleda, an HC bench of Justice Sheikh Rezwana Ali and Justice Md Rais Uddin passed the order.

Earlier on August 28, responding to a petition filed by Khaleda, an HC bench comprising Justice Sharif Uddin Chaklader and Justice Md Emdadul Haque Azad granted her four months' ad interim bail and issued a rule upon the government, asking it to explain why she should not be granted regular bail in the case.

On February 26, the ACC filed this case against Khaleda and 15 others including 10 former ministers from BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami for graft in awarding Barapukuria coal mine operation contract to a Chinese company.

In the case, 16 were accused of causing a loss of over Tk 158.71 crore to the public exchequer by awarding the production, management and maintenance contract through abuse of power.

Commodore Farid promoted to Rear Admiral

METRO DESK

Commodore M Farid Habib, (ND), ndc, psc, BN has been promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral, says an ISPR press release yesterday.

Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam congratulated Commodore M Farid Habib on his promotion to the rank of Rear Admiral.

Preserve environment

Bapa urges political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) at a press conference yesterday placed their 26-point proposal to the political parties to reserve environment, including raising a demand to reduce generation of carbon by the developed countries.

They also called for a compensation package from international and Saarc funds as an affected country.

Bapa President Prof Dr Muzaffer Ahmad spoke at the conference at its solar room, while Bapa General Secretary Dr Md Abdul Matin also read out a written statement.

Other proposals include ensuring ward-based public trial before finalising detailed area plan (DAP), achieving expert advice about river water, fuel and other environmental

issues in international discussions and involving private and foreign experts, imposing green taxes against manufacturing and using products which pollute the environment, resisting administrative corruption to protect natural resources and nature, recovering all the rivers from encroachers, emergency excavation, especially in southern region to improve waterlogging situation and stopping wrong river training guidelines of water development board.

They also proposed to increase the use of bio-fertiliser-reducing chemical fertiliser and insecticide in agriculture, stop hill cutting and natural trees in the name of artificial forestation and ensuring sewerage and pure drinking water supply.

PBCP leader killed by party rivals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A regional leader of outlawed Janajudha, a faction of PBCP (Purba Banglar Communist Party), was killed by party rivals in a remote village of the district in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim was identified as Md Alauddin Alal, 28, son of Md Azam Ali of Demra Charpara village under Faridpur upazila.

Locals said the extremists chopped him to death near his residence.

Being informed police recovered the body and sent it to Pabna General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police said the rivals might have killed him over previous enmity.

Md Golam Faruk, officer-in-charge of Faridpur Police Station, said Alauddin was an accused in several cases including six for murder.

Obituary

METRO DESK



Obaidur Rahman, deputy secretary of Ministry of Establishment and freedom fighter, passed away due to cardiac arrest at his residence on December 16 at the age of 56, says a press release.

He left behind his wife and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried with full state honour at his village home at Kashiani in Gopalganj.

His quikhwani will be held at his residence in Mohammadpur in the city after Asr prayers today.

Death anniversary

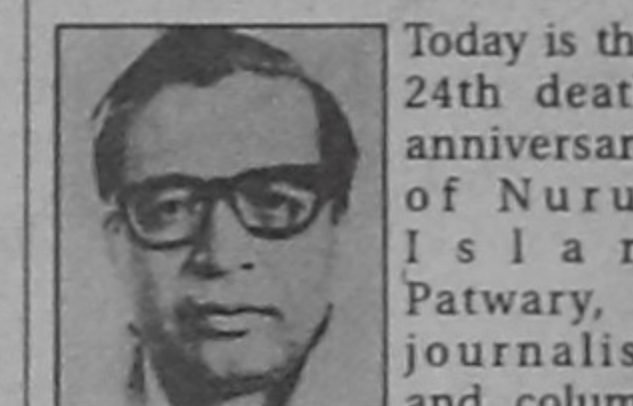
METRO DESK

Today is the 24th death anniversary of poet Abdul Quadir, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held after Maghrib prayers at the residence of his third daughter (House-179, Road-2, DOHS Baridhara) in the city.

Nurul Islam Patwary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

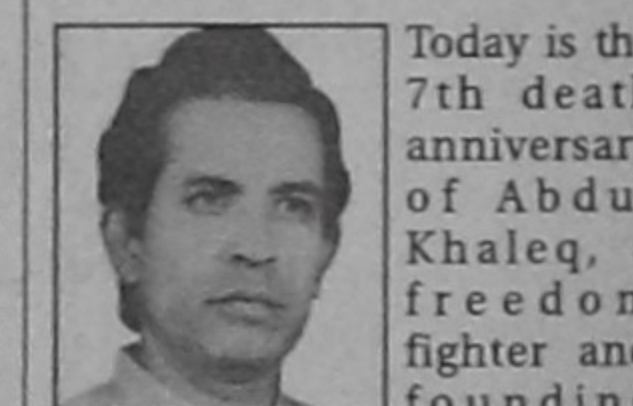


Today is the 24th death anniversary of Nurul Islam Patwary, a journalist and columnist, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his residence (1133/A, Bitul Aman Housing Society at Shyamoli) in the city after Asr prayers.

Abdul Khaleq

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

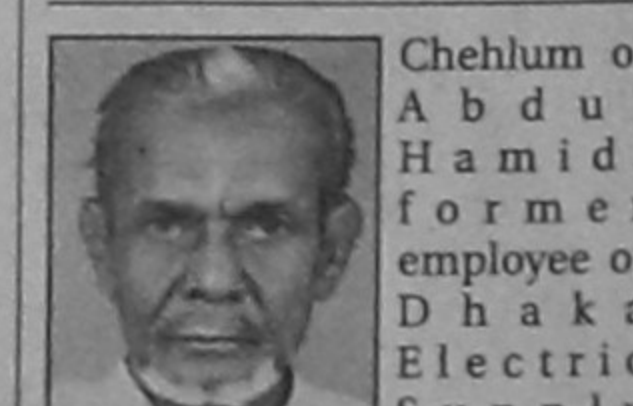


Today is the 7th death anniversary of Abdul Khaleq, a freedom fighter and founding president of Agrani Bank Employees Union, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his residence (64/3, Manik Nagar) in the city after Asr prayers. A memorial meeting will also be held at Agrani Bank building-2 at Motijheel at 5.30pm.

Chehlum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Chehlum of Abdul Hamid, former employee of Dhaka Electric Supply Company, will be held today, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his residence in old Dhaka after Juma prayers.

Prof Mujibur Rahaman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Chehlum of Prof Mujibur Rahaman, former chairman of Computer Engineering Department of Gano Bishwabidyalay, will be held today, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his village home in Brahmanbaria after Juma prayers.

Attack on Kumudini complex

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of unruly people attacked on Tuesday night an Ansar camp set up inside the complex of Kumudini Welfare Trust of Bengal at Shitalakhya in Narayanganj for its security.

The attackers entered the premises of the complex after breaking open the main gate and then vandalised doors, windows and furniture of the Ansar camp at around 9:30pm, said the Trust officials.

The attackers, however, fled the scene before the policemen reached the spot.

None was arrested in this connection. Narayanganj police said they launched a manhunt for the attackers.

Expats for credible JS polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expatriate Bangladeshis yesterday called on the government to ensure a free, fair and transparent election which should be credible nationally and internationally.

They made the call at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city.

The speakers raised the issue of banning the use of cellphone in polling centres as it is widely used as a communication tool and can help people in case of any accident or unexpected occurrence.

Presenting a keynote, Dr AK Abdul Momen, former chairman of Federation of Bangladeshi Associations in North America (Fobana)

placed a total of six recommendations on different issues regarding the next general election.

He said, "Non-use of cellphones might open the path of a rigged election as the common people will remain disconnected and thus vulnerable."

Momen also recommended publishing the results of a particular polling centre immediately after counting the ballots which would decrease the probability of result manipulation.

If a polling centre is captured by local goons, the particular centre should be suspended immediately as resumption of such polling centres would result in ballot manipulation, he added.

Other recommendations

include exclusion of armed forces to patrol the poll centres as it might create panic among the locals and minorities and, thus, instigate them not to cast their votes, rather deploying law enforcers at nearby places.

"The government should mark all the vulnerable polling centres and should reveal the information before the public and take pre-cautionary measures. It should take initiatives to preserve the human rights before and after the polls and ensure a non-violent election," said Counsellor Mostak

Quarshi, on behalf of the expatriates, who is now in the country to observe the election voluntarily.

Dr Siddiqur Rahman and health professional living in the UK Selina Momen also spoke at the programme.