

Vote judiciously

B Chy, Dr Kamal urge people

UNB, Dhaka

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday urged all to vote judiciously on December 29 to elect those who stood against corruption and muscle power to bring about the change everyone dreams of.

"You're all intelligent enough and I'm sure you'll choose worthy candidates to bring about the desired change for the betterment of the nation," he said.

He was addressing a public meeting organised by Jatiya Jukta Front at the city's Moghbazar in the evening in favour of its candidate Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan from Dhaka-11.

Accusing both the previous ruling and opposition parties of plundering state wealth, B Chowdhury said they do politics for serving the people and urged the voters to boycott the

culprits who brought miseries to public life after being elected.

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain, chairman of Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) Dr Ferdous Ahmed Qureshi, key coordinator of Jatiya Jukta Front and secretary general of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan addressed the rally.

Addressing the rally, Dr Kamal said people are eagerly waiting to see an election in which black money holders and corrupt people will get defeated by the dedicated, patriotic and honest people.

"We don't want to go back to those horrific days (before 1/11)... we want to see a bright future where educational institutions will be turned into nation-building tools to ensure a knowledge-based society," Dr Kamal told the rally.

He said, "People want a change through this election, we need fair persons to build a fair nation."

Outlaw killed in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A member of underground Purbo Banglar Communist Party was killed in "crossfire" during a shootout between police and his accomplices at Talgharia village of Bagmara upazila in Rajshahi early yesterday.

The police identified the victim as Mansur Rahman, also known as killer Mansur of Bajekola village of Jogpara union of Bagmara upazila.

According to police, Mansur was arrested at his home on Sunday afternoon.

Following his confession, police took him to Talgharia to retrieve hidden firearms. As they reached the village, the accomplices of Mansur opened fire on the police, prompting them to retaliate.

Mansur received bullets and was rushed to the Bagmara Health Complex where doctors on duty declared him.

Two bullets, a knife and two machetes were retrieved from the spot.

Police said Mansur was accused in more than one murder case and also blamed for extortions and terrorist activities.

Adopt modern tech to ensure food autarky: Gen Moeen

BSS, Sunamganj

Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday underscored the need for ensuring food autarky by adopting modern technologies in the agriculture sector.

"We have to produce our own food grains. If we use the modern technologies in the agriculture sector, we will be able to make our food production double," he said this while visiting a 'floating vegetables cultivation project' in the district.

The project is being run under the management of the Bangladesh Army in cooperation with the upazila administration at Mollikpur in the district.

General Officer Commanding of 33rd Infantry Division Major General M Abul Kalam Azad, members of Mollikpur Vegetables Growers Cooperatives Society and local elites were present.

KIBRIA KILLING CASE Accused allege torture in jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The accused of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria killing case yesterday demanded of the authorities concerned to give exemplary punishment to the police officials who had pressed 'false' charge sheet against them and had 'mercilessly tortured' them in the custody in connection with this case.

AKM Abdull Kaiyum and nine other accused of this case, who were released from jail in July this year on bail after three years in the prison, urged the government to exempt them from the charges of the case.

At a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) auditorium, they alleged that then ASP of CID Munshi Atiqur Rahman (now retired), then additional DIG of Sylhet Range AKM Mahfuzul Haque (now rector of Police Staff College), then sub inspectors (SIs) of DB Zubayer (now on duty in Sylhet) and Zahir (now on duty at Beanibazar) had physically tortured them on remand for realising confessional statements.

Seven other accused- Joyanal Abedin Jalal, Shahed Ali, Joyanal Abedin Mumin, Ayat Ali, Salim Ahmed, Jamir Ali and Tajul Islam were also present at the press conference.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia introduces four candidates -- (from left) Shafi Chowdhury, Dildar Hossain Selim, M Ilyas Ali and M Safur Rahman -- of the four-party alliance at an electoral meeting at Sylhet Alia Madrasa ground yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

Stop eviction of Korail slum dwellers

Human rights activists urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human rights activists yesterday called on the government to stop the process of evicting about 1.2 lakh dwellers from Korail slum in the city.

The move might be a part of conspiracy as such an initiative was taken at the fag end of the caretaker government's tenure, they said at a press

Navy new entry sailors' parade held

UNB, Dhaka

The passing out parade marking the induction of a batch of new entry sailors of Bangladesh Navy was held at BNS Shaheed Moazzam parade ground in Kaptai yesterday.

A total of 261 new entry sailors were inducted in this batch in different trade groups of Navy, which included seaman, engineering, electrical engineering and radio electrical engineering.

Meanwhile, new entry sailors successfully completed their primary training at BNS Titumir in Khulna.

Commodore Commanding Chittagong Commodore M Nasir reviewed the smartly turned out parade and took salute of the impressive march past. He also distributed awards among the outstanding new entry sailors.

Z Hossain, OD/UT was adjudged the best all round new entry sailor and awarded the coveted Cup of the Chief of Naval Staff. He also claimed the Admiral Mahubub Cup securing the top position in the seaman branch.

Meanwhile, MA Islam ME-2/UT was awarded the Shaheed Moazzam cup while MS Rahman, REN-2/UT Admiral Sultan Cup for their proficiency in the engineering, electrical and radio electrical branch respectively.

Presenting a keynote paper, Executive Director of Ain O Salish Kendra Sultana Kamal said about 25 to 30 lakh people reside in different slums in Dhaka city. Of them, 10 lakh are garments workers and the remaining work as rickshawpuller, domestic help and as day labourer.

The caretaker government had earlier conducted slum eviction drives in different areas without taking any rehabilitation measures, she said, adding that the representatives of human rights organisations then met the housing and public works adviser who assured them of not carrying out further eviction without rehabilitating the slum dwellers.

But the housing and public works department on November 16 issued a notice on the Korail slum dwellers to evacuate immediately, Sultana Kamal said, adding that the slum dwellers have been residing there for around 35 years.

She said a writ petition was also filed with the High Court on behalf of the slum dwellers recently, and the court issued a rule upon the government to explain why the government's order to evacuate Korail slum should not be declared illegal.

The court also asked the government to maintain status quo regarding eviction of the slum until January 5, she added. Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP), Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association (BELA) and Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) organised the press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium. BLAST Director ANM Mahmud, CUP Executive Director Mostofa Qayum Khan, Salma A Shafi of CUS, Taslima Islam of BELA and Dr Hameeda Hossain of ASK also spoke.

Poll process going well

Diplomatic corps dean sees no obstruction

UNB, Dhaka

Dean of the diplomatic corps in Dhaka and Swiss Ambassador Dora Rapold yesterday said they don't see any reason that might obstruct the December 29 general elections.

"The (election) process is going well--everything is prepared. We can understand the process has advanced," she told reporters after Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury held a meeting with heads of diplomatic missions and International Organisations at the foreign ministry.

Asked if they perceive any factors that might obstruct the polls, Rapold said, "I don't see any reason why the election should not take place on December 29."

She, however, said it is up to the Bangladeshis to decide about dealing with any room for adversities of such kind.

Iftekhar, who briefed the diplomats on the election matters as well as reforms undertaken by the caretaker government, said Bangladesh is now recognised as a responsible international active player and "we hope this identity will be maintained in the future."

He said several hundred foreign observers will be observing the December 29 elections and the government will extend cooperation to them.

Ex-BNP MP Lalu freed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Former BNP lawmaker Helaluzzaman Talukder Lalu was released from Bogra district jail on bail yesterday after being detained for about two years on corruption charges.

BNP leaders and workers greeted him with wreaths at the jail gate and took out a procession in the town.

Lalu had been arrested from Champamahal at Satrapur in the town on February 13 last year.

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Qulkhwani of ASM Nurunnabi, former deputy secretary, will be held at his

Dhanmondi residence in the city after Maghrib prayers today, says a press release.

He passed away due to old-age complications at a city hospital on Saturday at the age of 80.

He left behind his one son, one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend his qulkhwani and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

He was a regular contributor to The Daily Star, the Bangladesh Observer and the Holiday.

CA exchanges pleasantries with editors

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday exchanged pleasantries with editors, managing directors, heads and senior journalists of different dailies, weeklies, news agencies, radios and television channels.

The chief adviser, whose caretaker government is to make its exit through holding the upcoming general election, invited them to a tea at the International Conference Center (ICC) at the CA's office complex.

About 50 editors, managing directors, heads and senior journalists of print and electronic media attended the function.

CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim, Information Secretary Jamil Osman and Principal Information Officer Iftekhar Husain were also present on the occasion.

RETURN TO DEMOCRACY Australia optimistic about peaceful transition

UNB, Dhaka

Australia is cautiously optimistic that parliament polls in Bangladesh next week will return the country to democracy, despite years of delays and a history of violence.

Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance Bob McMullan will be part of a large contingent of international observers, reports ABC Radio Australia.

He says it is a good sign that both major parties are taking part in the poll. But McMullan said that with 90 million registered voters, conducting the poll and ensuring its legitimacy are huge tasks.

"That's the key issue that we'll be looking at - has the legitimacy of the election been such that it will actually be a transition, the basis for a peaceful transition back to democracy," he said.

"To assume that's going to be the case would be a courageous assumption but I'm hopeful."

4 BNP teams to assist its candidates in polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP formed four teams yesterday to assist its candidates and keep eyes on election activities across the country.

Central Coordinating Committee of the party requested all the party candidates to inform the respective divisional teams about their queries relating to the election process, problems of respective constituency and complaints.

Available telephone and fax numbers of the teams are: Dhaka Division Fax number 02-9887813 and phone numbers 02-8810909, 02-8833203 and 02-8833044, Chittagong and Sylhet Divisions Fax number 02-9894670 and phone numbers 02-8812600, 02-8833244 and 02-8829998, Rajshahi Division Fax number 02-9882625 and phone numbers 02-8833266 and 02-882934 and Khulna Division Fax number 02-9882637 and phone number 02-8833040.

Countrymen my kith and kin

Hasina tells videoconference with local people in Bhola

UNB, Bhola

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said she looks upon the countrymen as her kith and kin and wants to make Bangladesh a modern and prosperous country for their well-being.

"Traditional relatives are not my only relations. But also those who believe in the ideology of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, vote for Boat -- the symbol of prosperity -- are my kith and kin," she said during video electioneering.

The Awami League chief made the remarks while addressing a videoconference with Sudha Sadan in Dhaka with the local people on the Bangla School premises in Bhola at 6:00pm.

District AL leader Azam Khan asked the AL chief if she would show any indulgence to two sons of her cousin who are contesting the parliamentary polls from Bhola-1 and Bhola-

2 constituencies as candidates of the BNP-led four-party alliance.

In reply, Hasina said those who believe in the ideology of Bangabandhu are her relatives.

Advocate Yusuf Hossain Humayun, the grand alliance candidate for Bhola-1, district Awami League general secretary Abdul Momin Tulu and several other persons posed various questions to the AL president.

Hasina said AL would build the coastal district headquarters of Bhola as an industrial city and take steps to save the region from erosion, if voted to power.

Hasina also addressed another videoconference with the people of Purbadhala upazila in Netrakona.

Two more videoconferences with the people of Borhanuddin upazila in Bhola and of Durgapur in Netrakona will be held today.

ELECTION MANIFESTOES Political empowerment of women stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the political parties to fulfill their commitments of the election manifestoes for political empowerment of women in order to establish good governance and democracy.

Equal rights and participation of the women are recognised in the Constitution and in different policies of the state, but the women are still not treated as second-class citizens of the country, they said.

They were speaking at a discussion on 'Good governance and women's rights in the electoral manifestoes' organised by Karmojibi Nari (KN) at National Press Club yesterday.

Former adviser Advocate Sultana Kamal said the main political parties except Jamaat-e-Islami had adopted their election manifestoes with commitments of ensuring women empow-

erment if they are voted to power.

She said the political parties will have to be strongly monitored whether and how they will implement their electoral pledges for the empowerment and development of the women after assuming the power.

Presided over by KN President Shirin Akter, the meeting was addressed by women leaders Hamida Hossain, Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, Dilara Chowdhury and Monwara Monu.

KN Director Mahmuda Imam read out a written statement on the occasion.

They demanded the government ensures all-out security for all the candidates, including Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, for holding of a free and fair election.

They also demanded punishment to the killers of Gonotri Party President Nurul Islam.

WEATHER TODAY Dry weather likely UNB, Dhaka Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today. Prevailing moderate to thick fog over the country may continue during mid night till morning. Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said. Highest temperature 27.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 13.6 degree Celsius at Ishwardi. The sun sets in the capital at 5:17pm today and rises at 6:38am tomorrow. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were: City/Town Temperature in Celsius Humidity in percentage Morning Evening Dhaka 23.3 15.5 94 72 Chittagong 23.8 17.5 96 82 Rajshahi 21.8 15.5 89 86 Khulna 23.5 16.0 87 83 Barisal 24.0 14.0 98 88 Sylhet 25.1 17.9 96 84 Cox's Bazar 27.0 17.5 84 80

DHAKA TODAY Symposium United Nations Association of Bangladesh organises a symposium marking the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 4:30pm. Roundtable A roundtable will be held on expectation to the government on developing urban transport system. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am. Book launching The launching ceremony of the book 'Terrorism in the 21st Century: Perspectives from Bangladesh' edited by Dr Imtiaz Ahmed will be held. Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) organised the event. Venue: BEI conference room. Time: 4:30pm. Health workers diary The launching ceremony of the health workers diary prepared by Director General of Health Services will be held. Venue: Sasakawa conference room, ICDDR,B. Time: 4:00pm.