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Khaleda apologises for mistakes, if any

Launches bitter attack on AL, but asks Hasina to work together for development

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a speech scathing about Awami League (AL) and its President Sheikh Hasina, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon her archrival to shun 'politics of vengeance' and work together for the country.

Addressing a mammoth election rally at the city's historic Paltan Maidan, she said she is sorry for mistakes if any made during her rule in 2001-2006.

"I express my regrets for those, and ask for your forgiveness," she added.

The former prime minister, who is leading the four-party alliance to the ninth parliamentary polls tomorrow, promised to learn from the past if voted to power.

Pleading for another chance to form government, SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia speaks during the BNP grand rally at Paltan Maidan in the capital yesterday.

Paltan packed for second day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The final showdown of BNP-led alliance turned Paltan Maidan and its adjacent areas into a human sea as tens of thousands of people joined the rally in the capital yesterday, on the last day of election campaign before the polls.

A festive mood gripped the venue area of the rally when leaders and workers of the SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

2 lakh to observe JS polls

500 foreign observers now in country
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over two lakh local and more than 500 foreign observers will monitor the December 29 parliamentary election across the country.

The Election Commission Secretariat sources said they have already given approval to 96 local non-government voluntary organisations for observation of the election all over the country.

However, exact figure of the number of local observers are yet to be ascertained as offices of the returning officers concerned are still issuing identity cards to the observers.

Of the total observers, 1.78 lakh will be alone of Election Working Group, a conglomerate of 32 NGOs. SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Shokrana guilty of hiding past

Judicial probe body asks EC for legal action, recommends steps against RO, SP

SHAKHAWAT LITON

A judicial probe body has asked the Election Commission (EC) to take legal action against BNP candidate Mohammad Shokrana of Bogra-1 constituency for concealing criminal records in the affidavit attached to his nomination papers.

The probe body comprising a joint district judge and an assistant district judge also recommended actions against the returning officer (RO) and the superintendent of police (SP) for neglect in duty, sources say.

As per the provisions of the Representation of the People Order (RPO), a person will be disqualified for election as or for being a member [of parliament] if they conceal information in affidavits. It means Shokrana has become disqualified for the election SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Fear of old ghosts' return to politics

SOHEL PARVEZ

Only the posters dangling from ropes in a sprinkled manner over the roads are the visual signs that an election is in the offing. Other things -- a busy weekend, buzz of hangout SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Curtain falls on polls campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia spent the final hours canvassing frantically to woo voters before the deadline for electioneering expired last midnight.

Khaleda wrapped up her election campaign addressing a number of street rallies at various places in the capital. Hasina also addressed a few rallies through videoconference after flying back to the capital from Chittagong.

The BNP chief began electioneering from Bhashantek at 6:00pm and talked to people on her way to Mirpur-11, where she addressed her last campaign rally just before midnight.

Earlier, Khaleda addressed a grand rally in the capital and SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Bid to become PM again defended Hasina, Khaleda respond to Al Jazeera STAR REPORT

Qatar-based television channel Al Jazeera published exclusive interviews of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia on Friday. Al Jazeera asked the two leaders the same questions.

Why should the people of Bangladesh elect you again? Sheikh Hasina: "Last time I was in power I ensured their SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

End to vengeance Hasina on political culture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sheikh Hasina last night made a fervent call for all political parties to do away with politics of confrontation and develop a healthy political culture for building a prosperous country.

"Ahead of the parliamentary election, I call upon all political parties believing in democratic values to put an end to politics of conflict and vengeance in the greater interest of the nation," the Awami League (AL) president said in an address to the nation over Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar.

She said, "Let us build a new clean political culture through united efforts of the government and opposition political parties, save democracy, and let people live in peace."

"Come, let us have a common main agenda for building a developed and secure Bangladesh for the new generation. Let the whole nation join hands and move forward in the struggle to SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

No revenge

Khaleda assures armed forces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night said if voted to power, her party will not seek revenge for her "sufferings during the emergency rule".

She also said they are ready to accept people's verdict in the general election.

"Propaganda is on that if we form government, members of the armed forces might be subjected to reprisals for their 'special role' during the state of emergency. I want to say unequivocally that we don't believe in taking revenge."

In a pre-election address to the nation broadcast over Bangladesh Television and Betar, the former prime minister also said she considers the defence personnel to be an extension of her family.

Urging all to vote the BNP-led four-party alliance to ensure SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Watch election results

LIVE!

@

www.thedailystar.net

For the first time, The Daily Star is going to put up constituency-wise LIVE election results on its website. Our team will be on the watch for the latest updates both in results and news. Every minute, it is going to be a different experience with our team. Keep our site open and get the latest.

Modern Bangladesh Pledges Hasina at Ctg; deep sea port, hanging bridge on Karnaphuli if AL elected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday reiterated her pledge to transform Bangladesh into a modern, science and technology-based developed country free of bribery, corruption and terrorism, if the grand alliance is voted power.

The AL chief was addressing the grand electoral alliance's last campaign rally before the national polls at Laldighi Maidan in Chittagong where thousands of people gathered, spilling onto the adjacent roads and alleyways.

"We want to create a good life for you that will be free of the curse of unemployment, we want to ensure education and healthcare for all," said the former premier.

Hasina for the first time introduced grand alliance nominees for different Chittagong seats at the rally chaired by Chittagong SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Honour the will of people UN secy general urges political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon yesterday urged all political parties to demonstrate responsibility and honour the will of the people during the national elections.

He also encouraged the government and the Election Commission (EC) to continue their efforts to ensure a free and fair election.

Francesca Vendrell, a former UN assistant secretary general and the head of the UN Panel, read out the UN secretary general's statement during a news briefing at a hotel in the capital. SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

No ban on private cars in metro cities



In the metropolitan areas of Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal, the Election Commission has imposed restriction on movement of taxicabs, minibuses, jeeps and pick-up vans from midnight today until December 29 midnight. SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

POLLS GUIDELINES

Polling hour: from 8:00am to 4:00pm without any break

If you are already in the queue inside the boundary of the polling station, you are allowed to cast vote regardless of the timeframe National Identity card SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Announcement

Our today's issue includes a 40-page tabloid supplement containing election fact sheets of all the constituencies.



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SME

সার্ভিস সেন্টার-এর

শুভ উদ্বোধন

২৮ ডিসেম্বর ২০০৮, রবিবার

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