

Ensure human rights in first 100 days

ASK urges next govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain O Shalish Kendra (ASK) yesterday said the Awami League-led grand alliance government must demonstrate its real commitment to human rights in its first hundred days.

Barrister Sara Hossain at a press conference said it is important to take necessary steps to try war criminals within the first hundred days and should formulate an investigation commission.

The government should ask for assistance of the United Nations in this regard, she added.

The programme was organised to launch the report titled 'Human rights in Bangladesh 2008: Dashed hopes, receding horizons, new frontiers' by ASK at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city.

The report highlighted the situation of civil and political rights last year, minority rights, religion, art and the



PHOTO STAR

ASK Executive Director Sultana Kamal speaks at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the city yesterday. On her left is Barrister Sara Hossain.

cultural politics of women rights and economic and social rights.

Presenting a summery report on human rights, she highlighted the positive and negative activities of the caretaker government and also placed some recommendations to the next government.

The government should start the implementation of CHT Peace Treaty and Vested Property Return Act within the period, she added.

The report called for ensuring adequate and impartial investigation of allegations of extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations that

include arbitrary arrest, detention and torture by law enforcers and prosecution of those responsible and reparation for victims must also be high on the new government's agenda.

It revealed that militarisation of the bureaucracy and administration continued in 2008, while the caretaker government's failure to carry through with prosecutions raised serious questions about the justice delivery process.

The report also criticised the government's highly publicised anti-corruption drive launched in 2007.

Apart from questioning its selectivity and aggressiveness, it also highlighted how the government appeared to backtrack and intervene in 'high profile' cases involving politicians so that cases which were fasttracked suddenly began to dwindle to a virtual halt.

ASK Executive Director Sultana Kamal, Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Faustina Pariera and Khushi Kabir also spoke at the programme.

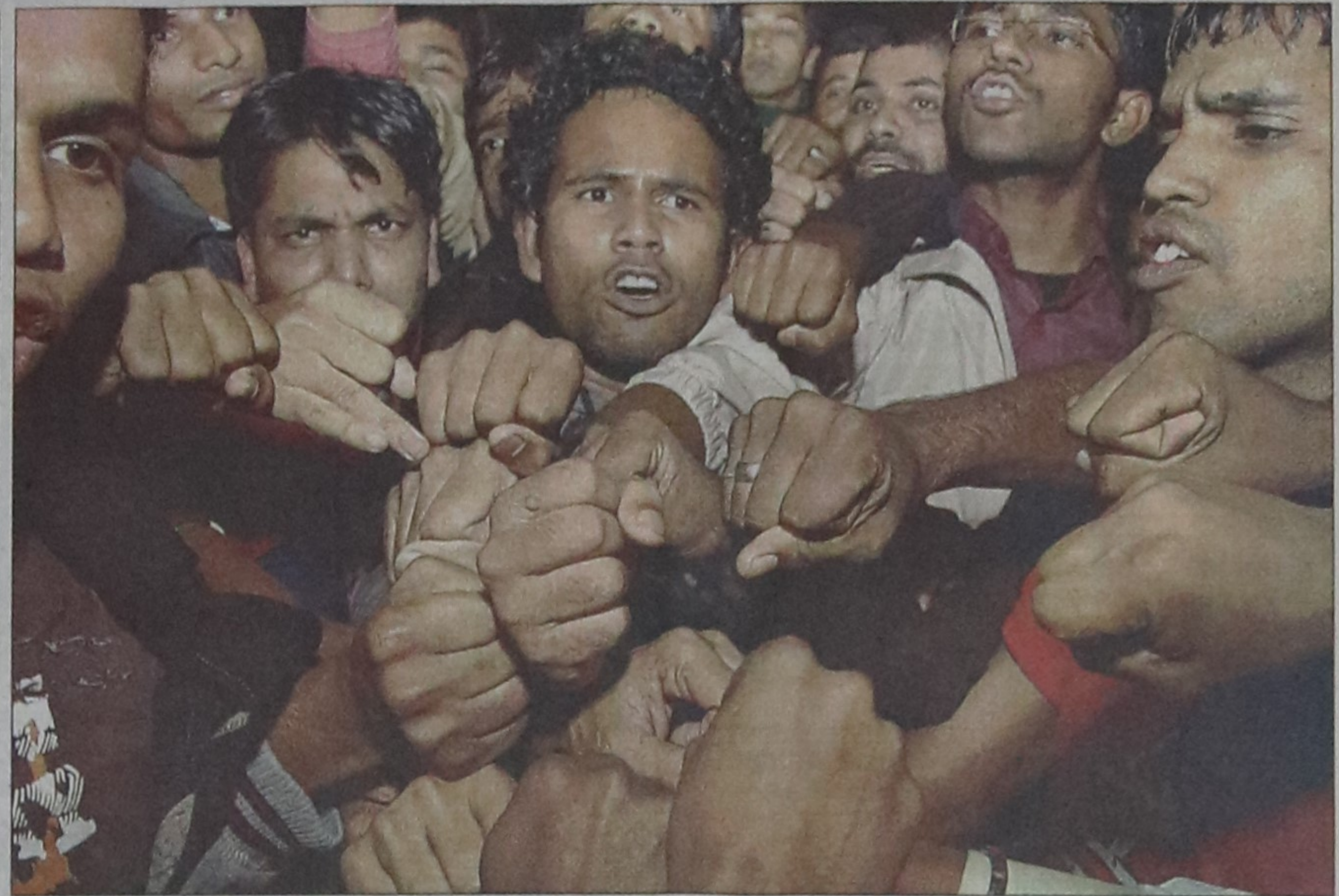


PHOTO STAR

Dhaka University students put their fists together at a New Year celebration in front of the Teacher-Student Centre shortly after midnight on Wednesday pledging to build a better Bangladesh.

Sri Lankan president greets Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse has congratulated Awami League President Sheikh Hasina on the landslide victory of her grand alliance in Monday's national election.

In a phone call to Hasina Thursday, the Sri Lankan leader expressed his hope that the friendly relations between the two countries would be strengthened further during the tenure of her new government.

Mahinda also wished her success, good health and long life. Hasina thanked the Sri Lankan leader for greeting her.

Russia lauds JS election

UNB, Dhaka

Russia appreciated Monday's parliamentary elections in which the Awami League-led grand alliance won a landslide victory.

"Russia wants to see Bangladesh as a stable, democratic and successfully progressing country," said a message from the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Bangladesh.

It said, "We're confident that the new government of Bangladesh will pursue the good tradition of cooperation with Russia in the interest of the people of our countries."

Khaleda visits injured BNP lawmaker Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday visited seriously injured Hasina Ahmed, a newly elected BNP lawmaker from Cox's Bazar-1 constituency, at Square Hospital in the city.

The former premier spent some time beside her and enquired the doctors about her treatment.

Hasina Ahmed, wife of former state minister for communications Salahuddin Ahmed, was injured and her driver killed in a road accident at Chhunui under Lohagara Police Station in Chittagong on Wednesday.

A Pajero jeep carrying her fell into a roadside ditch on Cox's Bazar-Chittagong highway when her driver lost his control over the steering.

Hasina was rushed to a private hospital at Chokoria upazila and was later shifted to Square Hospital.

BOU HSC exams begins today

METRO DESK

The first and second year final examinations 2008 of Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) under Bangladesh Open University (BOU) will commence today.

A total of 86,784 learners will appear at the examinations in its 254 examination centres across the country.

The authorities have taken necessary steps to hold a copy-free examination, says a press release.

Election results verdict against misgovernance

Say CPB leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) leaders in a statement yesterday said the results of the 9th parliamentary elections are the reflection of people's verdict against bad governance, says a press release.

The results reflected the repression of BNP and its key alliance anti-liberation force Jamaat for its collaboration during the liberation war, they added.

They said this at the meeting at the party's Purana Palatan office in the city with CPB President Manzurul Ahsan Khan in the chair.

CPB leaders said the interim government could not execute its commitment to conducting a corruption and muscle power-free ideal election, rather its bad governance and self-contradiction created the desires in people's minds for an elected government.

The results also proved that democratic and pro-liberation forces do not need

making any alliance with autocratic, communal or fundamentalist forces, they added.

The desires of the countrymen include reducing price hike, trial of war criminals, re-establishing the basic foundation of 1972 constitution, uprooting the political and economic bases of religious fanatics and saving the country's sovereignty and

resources from the foreign hegemony.

They said, "The necessity of time to the new government is to fulfil the expectations of the people."

The meeting was attended by Secretary General Mujahidul Islam Selim and presidium members Shahidullah Chowdhury, Syed Abu Zafar, Md Shah Alam, Shahadat Hossain and Sheikh Moniruzzaman.

Hotel boy killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A hotel boy was allegedly killed by his colleague in the city's Green Road area early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Badsha Mia, 22, of Dinajpur who was working at Hotel Shahjalal in the area.

Officer-in-Charge Md Lutfor Rahman of Tejgaon Police Station said Badsha's colleague, who used an assumed name, killed him at

the hotel early yesterday. After killing Badsha, the killer fled the scene leaving his body inside the hotel, he added.

Police said Badsha and his colleague used to stay in the hotel at nights as part of their duties.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy. A murder case was filed with the police station in this regard.



PHOTO STAR

Standing on the first floor of her residence at Dhanmondi in the city, Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addresses her party supporters and activists who gathered outside Sudha Sadan yesterday to exchange New Year's greetings with her.

New year to bring happiness

Says Hasina

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and winner of the last week's parliamentary elections was greeted by hundreds of party supporters and people on the occasion of the English New Year's Day yesterday.

Reciprocating their feelings, the majority party leader in parliament said let the dawn of the new year's day bring peace and happiness for all.

Waving at the cheering people from the balcony of her Sudha Sadan residence, she said, "Happy New Year," adding, "Let the new year bring happiness and prosperity with new hopes and aspirations."

"With the rise of the sun at the beginning of 2009, let's hope that we will overcome the crises that darkened our lives during the last few years," she said, adding, "Let our lives become as bright as the sunshine that warms the world."

Hundreds of people from all walks of life, carrying flowers and replicas of boat, election symbol of the party, thronged the prime minister-elect's Dhanmondi residence from the early morning.

The AL chief called on the people to pray to almighty Allah so that her party could ensure socio-economic development and fulfil their expectations for a peaceful and prosperous country.

This was the first appearance of Sheikh Hasina before the people, including her party leaders and workers, gathered there to greet her on the occasion.

908 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 908 people on various charges from different parts of the country in 24 hours as of 6:00am yesterday.

Nine firearms and 32 bullets were also recovered during the countrywide drive, said a handout.

Besides, 152 motorcycles without valid documents were seized during the drives and 141 cases filed in this connection.

BCL factions clash at DU

10 bombs recovered

DU CORRESPONDENT

The police recovered ten hand-made bombs from the rooftop of Ziaur Rahman Hall at Dhaka University in a raid following a clash between two groups of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists in the hall yesterday.

Three BCL activists -- Salman, a student of English department, Jasim of Bangla and Towhid of linguistics -- were injured in the clash that erupted at around 12:15pm over the control of several rooms of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists who left the hall on the night of December 29 sensing the defeat of four-party alliance in the national elections.

Although the clash erupted at Ziaur Rahman Hall, the BCL activists in nearby Kobi Jasim Uddin Hall got involved in it later.

Later, the police, hall authorities and top leaders of BCL stepped in to bring the situation under control.

The injured BCL men were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The police raided Ziaur Rahman Hall at around 2:30pm and recovered the bombs in a shoe box under a water tank on the roof.

A bomb disposal unit of the detective branch of police defused the bombs and handed them over to Shabbagh police.

Officer-in-charge of

Shabbagh Police Station Rezaul Karim told reporters that they could not arrest anybody in this connection.

Meanwhile, DU BCL President Sohel Rana Tipu and General Secretary Sazzad Sakib Badsha submitted a list of six BCL men -- Arafat, Baki, Hasan, Miithu, Zia and Zahid -- to the hall provost and urged him to take administrative action against them for their involvement in violence.

Hall Provost Prof Dr Borhan Uddin Khan told reporters that the BCL leaders had cooperated with them in handling the situation.

He also said they have already urged the police to take steps to avoid any kind of untoward incidents.



PHOTO STAR

A member of bomb disposal unit of DB police defuses bombs found on the rooftop of Ziaur Rahman Hall at Dhaka University yesterday.

WORKPLACE-RELATED ACCIDENTS

1793 killed, 2684 injured last yr

Reveals OSHE survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 1,793 workers were killed and 2,684 others injured in different workplace-related accidents and violence last year across the country, says a survey report yesterday.

The human rights organisation revealed the statistics after monitoring 16 newspaper reports during the one-year period.

The report was prepared by Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment

(OSHE) Foundation.

It said that at least 312 workers were killed and 479 others injured at workplaces by accidental fall from height, electrocution, fire and explosion, while 950 workers were killed and 571 others injured in road accidents.

A total of 412 were killed and 1,606 injured in torture by employers, hijacking or robbery, baton charge or firing by police, while 119 were killed and 28 others injured in other incidents such as animal attacks and in deep sea.

Know Bangladesh Better

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Father Rigon: A Life in Bangladesh