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NEWS flakes

Hasina flies to UAE tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves here for United Arab Emirates tomorrow morning on a four-day official visit to attend the World Future Energy Summit (WFES) 2011.

The fourth WFES at Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre will be the world's largest conference and exhibition on renewable and future energy solutions, innovations, investments,

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Bhutan PM back home

UNB, Dhaka
Bhutan's Prime Minister and Saarc Chairperson Jigme Y Thinley left here for Thimphu yesterday concluding his four-day official visit to Bangladesh.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni saw him off at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 10:50am. Thinley came here on January 10 with economic and political cooperation on top of his agenda.

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WAR CRIMES TRIAL US to provide documentary assistance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said Stephen J Rapp, US ambassador-at-large on war crimes issues, has told him about giving documentary assistance in the war crimes trial.

The minister said this to journalists after the inaugural session of the two-day national convention of National Collation of Indigenous People

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Opposition chief whip hurt in crash

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Farroque was injured as a bus rear-ended his sport utility vehicle (SUV) in Feni yesterday afternoon.

His companion Moktar Hossain Patwari, 45, BNP president of Sabujbagh upazila in Noakhali, and their driver, Jahangir Hossain, 30, were also injured.

Witnesses said the vehicle ran into a tree

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A positive change in polls campaign

SHARIFUL ISLAM, back from Savar

The times of graffiti and posters or even loud campaigns and demonstrations on roads ahead of polls seem to be over, at least for Savar on the outskirts of the capital.

The polls for local government bodies in this municipality are on January 17, just two days away.

Whilst the campaign activities are as high as they get, the walls and buildings in Savar suffer from no electoral posters or graffiti with loud speakers kept low as expected, thanks to the mayoral and councillor candidates.

There are only black and white posters

hanging on strings on the poles or high across the roads.

"I have never seen such peaceful atmosphere and respect for the electoral code of conduct in any polls," observed Alam Zahur, 65-year-old voter from Genda.

He said the candidates have been so far showing utmost regards to the electoral rules.

Meanwhile, the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) candidates preparing for the exams starting from February 1 expressed satisfaction over the serene and quiet atmosphere ahead of the elections.

Junab Ali, 60, a voter from Ulail Karnapara, said they found a few posters

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As the country is in mood for municipal polls, posters are hung overhead but a wall is left untouched at Savar yesterday. The polls code prohibits campaigners from pasting posters on walls.

PHOTO: SHARIFUL ISLAM



Postmortem of municipal polls

Conflicts push Rajshahi AL to backseat

M ABUL KALAM AZAD and ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Selection of wrong candidates ignoring opinions of the grassroots, coupled with intra-party feuds led to ruling Awami League favourites' debacle in the municipal polls in Rajshahi division.

Both the ruling and opposition parties lost at least 13 mayoral posts, out of 49 in eight districts of the division, to their rebels and Jamaat-e-Islami.

AL-backed mayoral candidates won in only 14 municipalities while BNP favourites won in 22, BNP rebels in five, AL rebels in four, Jamaat in three and independent in one municipality.

AL lawmakers' role in selecting nominees and the acrimony between them and the grass-roots leaders are also responsible for its setback. BNP's central unit supported several candidates defying local leaders' choice.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

BNP ahead of AL in Rangpur despite feuds

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

Rebel mayor candidates of Awami League and BNP were the main obstacle to the party-backed contenders' success in Wednesday's municipal election in Rangpur division.

Leaders and workers of the two major parties in northern districts were split in nominating their candidates. In many municipalities, AL and its ally Jatiya Party failed to pick a single candidate and nominated their own candidates.

It helped BNP and independent candidates to win in more municipalities, locals said.

In Rangpur division, AL-backed mayor candidates won in seven municipalities and BNP-backed candidates in nine. Four independent candidates were victorious in the division while Jamaat-e-Islami and JP-backed candidates won in two and one municipalities.

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AL cashes in on feuding Barisal BNP

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barisal and SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Of the 19 municipalities that went to polls in Barisal division, pro-BNP mayoral candidate won in just one.

Confusion over party-backing, opposition from rebel BNP candidates, half-hearted campaign efforts, local lawmakers' "intervention" in the race, and division among BNP grassroots came up as reasons for pro-BNP candidates failing.

Awami League-backed, Awami League rebel and independent mayoral candidates capitalised on this and came through in the elections held on Thursday.

Pro-Awami League candidates won in 15 municipalities, its rebels won two and one municipality went to an independent candidate.

The results of Thursday's polls made up a lot for the ground the Awami League had lost in Rangpur and

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

Rebels hurt both parties in Khulna

RASHEDUL HASAN, AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah and AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Most mayor candidates supported by Awami League-led grand alliance and BNP-led four-party alliance lost in the municipal elections in Khulna division for picking up candidates neglecting grassroots' opinion.

The five southern districts where elections were held on Thursday in 21 municipalities are Jessore, Jhenidah, Kushtia, Meherpur and Chuadanga.

BNP-backed mayor candidates won in 10 while AL-backed contestants in seven. Of the rest, BNP rebels won in two, an AL rebel in one and an independent in the other.

Locals and both the winning and defeated candidates backed by AL and BNP yesterday told The Daily Star correspondents that intra-party feud and lack of coordination between the leaders also contributed to their defeat.

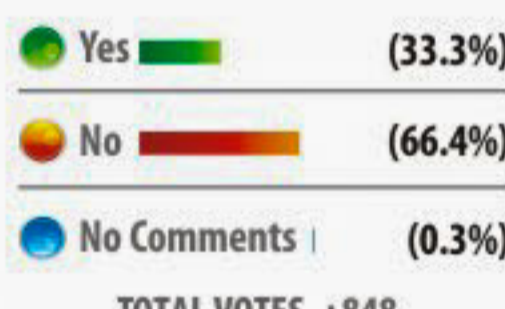
In Jhenidah, AL-backed mayor

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ONLINE POLL

Do you agree with Awami League General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam that BNP should join the house and place complaints against the government with evidence?



TOTAL VOTES : 848

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think BNP's win in the municipal polls in North Bengal shows it is regaining strength at the grassroots level?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

PRAYER TIMING January 15

Asan	Jamaat
Fajr 5-30	6-05
Zohr 12-45	1-15
Asr 4-00	4-15
Maghrib 5-36	5-40
Esha 7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Tunisia president steps down, PM to take over

Emergency declared

BBC NEWS

Tunisia's President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali has stepped down after 23 years in power, amid widespread protests on the streets of the capital Tunis.

In a televised address, Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi said he would be taking over.



Zine El Abidine Ben Ali

A state of emergency was declared earlier, as rumbling nationwide protests over economic woes snowballed into anti-government demonstrations.

Unconfirmed reports say Ben Ali has left the country.

Earlier, police fired tear gas as thousands of protesters gathered outside the interior ministry.

Doctors say that 13 people were killed in overnight clashes in Tunis, and there are unconfirmed reports that five people have been killed in protests yesterday outside the capital.

Troops have surrounded the country's main international airport, Tunis Carthage, and the country's air space has been closed.

Ghannouchi, 69, a former finance minister who has been prime minister since 1999, will serve as interim president.

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SCHOLASTICA ADMISSION FOR THE 2011-12 SESSION

Application Forms for Dhanmondi (Nur- KG-II), Gulshan (Nur- Class I), Uttara (Nursery to Class X) and Mirpur (Class I-VII) are available now at Fee Collection Booths and online at www.scholasticabd.com

As seats are very limited, admission is offered on a "first-come-first-served" basis

Forms due at Student Admissions, Khawaja Tower (13th floor), 95 Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka-1212 within Monday, 28 February 2011

For further queries please call 8815222-3, 8856019-20 & 9887277 or email admissions@scholasticabd.com



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