

No hut in country if AL voted to power

Hasina tells Pirganj rally

UNB, Rangpur

Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday termed the January 5 general election very important for the continuation of democracy in the country.

The AL chief said if her party is voted to power it would provide electricity to each house and there will be no hut in the country. Each house will be turned into tin-roofed one, she added.

She was addressing a rally at Tarakmouja High School in Pirganj of Rangpur as part of her election campaign.

Hasina is contesting the election from this constituency (Rangpur-6), the hometown of her husband eminent nuclear scientist Dr M Wajed Miah.

Criticising the opposition alliance for its destructive politics, the AL chief said it seemed to her that opposition leader Khaleda Zia waged a war against the poor.

"They (opposition) are simply creating obstacles to the livelihoods of the poor in the name of hartal and blockade programmes," she said.

The AL president said she had tried a lot to bring the opposition leader (Khaleda) to the negotiation table. "Whatever I had tried to bring her to the path of compromise, she

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses a rally at Tarakmouja High School in Pirganj of Rangpur yesterday. She is contesting the election from this constituency, Rangpur-6, which is also the hometown of her husband late nuclear scientist Dr M Wajed Miah.

PHOTO: PID



Textbook distribution for students starts tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is set to start free distribution of nearly 30 crore copies of new textbooks among about four crore students of primary and secondary level tomorrow amid opposition's blockade.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will begin the distribution symbolically through giving textbooks to some students of different grades at Gono Bhaban in the capital at 11:00am today.

The education ministry will hold the much-awaited "Textbook Festival Day" tomorrow, as schools and madrasas will remain shut today on the occasion of Akhri Chaha Shamba. Usually the festival is held on the first day of a year.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid will inaugurate the festival at

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REMARK ABOUT GOPALGANJ

Case against Khaleda dismissed

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday dismissed a case hours after it was filed against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for her remark on Gopalganj that created quite a stir.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Asaduzzaman Nur dismissed the case saying that a magistrate court has no jurisdiction to try a person accused of violating the constitution which was brought in the case.

"Besides, the allegation of erasing the name of a district from the geography of a country is regarded as 'civil nature' and is also out of the court's jurisdiction," the magistrate stated while passing order on the case.

Bangladesh Jananetri Parishad, a pro-Awami League organisation, filed the case.

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Dhaka march 'failure' frustrates Khaleda

RASHIDUL HASAN

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has been greatly infuriated and frustrated, as the party's senior leaders have failed to make the December 29 "march for democracy" programme in the capital a success, according to BNP insiders.

A disappointed Khaleda is now concerned over the fate of the opposition's ongoing movement to thwart the January 5 "farical and one-sided" election, they said.

A section of BNP mid-level leaders, however, think the government's "unprecedented obstacles" including barring Khaleda Zia from coming out of her residence will galvanise grassroots leaders into waging opposition's final round of movement—the non-stop countrywide blockade on roads, rails and waterways beginning this morning.

Sources close to Khaleda yesterday told The Daily Star that in spite of the BNP chief's strong instruction to ensure their presence at the BNP's Nayapaltan central office on Sunday morning, no senior leaders braved to arrive there, the centre point of the march

programme.

"Senior leaders' inactiveness has greatly frustrated madam [Khaleda]. She had telephoned twenty leaders of Dhaka's twenty constituencies to ensure their presence in the march. But none finally showed up, which is another reason of her frustration," said a mid-ranking BNP leader.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of mid-level and grassroots BNP leaders said Khaleda Zia had put "incompetent and inexperienced" leaders in charge of party's Dhaka city and in the secretary general post.

Appreciating their "brave activities" during the recent blockade programmes since November 26, Khaleda has phoned the district leaders to be more active in the fresh blockade, sources said.

BNP insiders said most of the Dhaka city leaders who were in "hideouts" told the BNP high-ups that fearing forced disappearance and arrest, they could not attend the march. The senior leaders also conveyed the same message to the BNP chief, they said.

Against this backdrop, BNP high-ups fear whether the opposition will be able to wage tougher movement in the capital or not.

Hartal observed protesting visit of Hasina in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

The dawn-to-dusk hartal in Rangpur enforced by the district unit of BNP protesting the prime minister's visit there ended peacefully yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Pirganj constituency in the district yesterday for electioneering ahead of the parliamentary polls.

Earlier on Monday, Shamsuzzaman Shamu, a joint convener of the district unit BNP, announced the daylong shutdown during a press briefing at a local hotel in the city.

Vehicles, except rickshaws and auto-rickshaws, stayed off the roads. Shops were closed but rail communications was normal.

Schools, colleges, banks and offices were operating as per normal schedule.

ACC sues ex-BNP minister Morshed Khan, his wife, son

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday sued former foreign minister M Morshed Khan, his wife and their son over siphoning off US dollar 3.95 crore and Hong Kong dollar 1.36 crore to Hong Kong.

ACC Deputy Director Moniruzzaman Khan lodged the case with Gulshan Police Station against Morshed, also a BNP leader; his wife Nasrin Khan and son Faisal Morshed Khan.

They siphoned off the money through their accounts with Standard Chartered Bank, Hong Kong Ltd in 2004, he said.

Moniruzzaman told The Daily Star that with the help of the attorney general they sent a Mutual Legal Assistance Request (MLAR) to the authorities concerned in Hong Kong in 2009, seeking documents regarding the money.

The authorities recently sent the documents to the attorney general of Bangladesh giving the details over the issue, he said.

Moniruzzaman added that violating the foreign exchange rule the accused opened 11 accounts with the bank against their business entity, Far East Telecommunications Ltd.

Quoting the rule, he said any citizen needed Bangladesh Bank's permission to open an account with any bank abroad but the accused did not do so.

Pro-AL teachers sweep Duta election

DU CORRESPONDENT

Pro-Awami League Blue Panel teachers swept the Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) election yesterday.

The Blue Panel teachers bagged nine posts of the 15-member executive committee while its contestant, pro-BNP-Jamaat White Panel, got the remaining posts.

Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed and Prof ASM Maksud Kamal from Blue Panel were elected president and general secretary defeating Prof Tajmeri Selima Akhter Islam and Prof Mamun Ahmed from White Panel respectively.

From Blue Panel, Prof Shibli Rubayat ul Islam was elected as treasurer defeating his rival Prof Anisur Rahman.

Pro-AL Prof Ziaur Rahman won the post of joint secretary defeating Prof Dwilip Kumar Barua.

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US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan W Mozena meets BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in her Gulshan residence in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: BNP

India offers scholarships to Bangladeshis

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government of India has offered scholarships to meritorious Bangladeshi nationals under different scholarship schemes for the academic session 2014-15 to pursue courses in India at under-graduate, post-graduate and PhD levels.

The scholarships schemes are: Bangladesh Scholarship Scheme, Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme, and India Scholarship Scheme.

Candidates are required to have proficiency in English and should have secured minimum 60 per cent marks or GPA-3 out of GPA-5 in the qualifying examination, said an Indian high commission press release yesterday.

The application forms for these scholarships

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WORKING CHILDREN IN SAVAR 22.7pc forced into child labour: Study

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

At least 22.7 percent of the working children in Savar upazila of Dhaka have been forced into child labour chiefly because of family problems and penury, according to a survey.

In addition, 61.1 percent of the child labourers work seven days a week, 83.8 percent work during government holidays, and 84.1 percent work 10 hours a day.

The Village Education Resource Center (Verc), a non-government organisation, conducted the study between January 2012 and November this year on 2,005 working children in the upazila.

The results of the survey, "Exploitation in child labour: Case of Savar upazila", were revealed through a press conference at Savar Press Club yesterday.

Ten focus groups collected the information by talking to child workers, their parents, guardians, employers, locals and others, said Verc Deputy Executive Director Yakub Hossain.

He claimed that though the survey was based in Savar, it represented the entire child labour scenario in Bangladesh. In 2003, approximately 7.4 million children between the ages of five and 15 were economically active in Bangladesh, of which 3.2 million were engaged in employment and considered child labourers, said Yakub, citing the National Child Labour Survey 2002-2003.

Verc demanded immediate implementation of "National

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Jamaat 'defector'

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Awami Jubo League organised the election campaign in Housing area of the district town for Hanif, joint general secretary of the AL and a candidate from Kushtia-3 constituency (Sadar upazila). Nawsher presented Hanif with a bouquet and shook hand with him there.

When asked, Hanif told The Daily Star over the phone, "If Jamaat leaders who were not involved in war crimes leave the party, Awami League will cleanse them and show them the right path." But he declined to answer when asked about Nawsher's joining AL.

Nawsher told The Daily Star, "I have left Jamaat but had not joined any party."

This correspondent tried to contact top Jamaat leaders in the district but found their mobile phones switched off.

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