

Hafiz shown arrested in two cases

COURT CORRESPONDENT

BNP Vice-chairman Maj (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed was shown arrested in two cases yesterday, which were filed for "attempted murder of cops and creating violence in the capital" two months ago.

Police prayed for his 20-day remand in the two cases filed with Motijheel Police Station on September 24 and November 6.

Hafiz's name was not in the first information report (FIR) of the cases but police charged him with "instigating" his party men in the violence.

Metropolitan Magistrate Harun-ur Rashid fixed January 9 for hearing the remand prayer.

According to the cases, opposition leaders blasted crude bombs targeting law enforcers near Kamalapur Bazar on November 5,

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Stop tormenting people with blockades

Hasina urges Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged opposition leader Khaleda Zia not to torment the people by enforcing blockades and criticised her for commenting recently that the name of Gopalganj, the birthplace of Hasina, would be changed.

Addressing a programme of Dhaka's Gopalganj District Association at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Hasina also said continuation of democracy was needed for advancement of the country.

"We've taken the country forward in the last five years. Thus Bangladesh has become a role model of development for others. We want to turn the country into a developed nation by continuing the democratic process," the Awami League chief said.

Taking a swipe at the BNP chief, Hasina said she was fortunate to be born in Gopalganj where Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was born. She also said, "It is quite natural that she [Khaleda] won't like Gopalganj, as her birthplace is Shiliguri in India and she loves Pakistan."

The AL chief said she treated people of all districts equally. In this regard, she mentioned that her government's three important officials--principal staff officer of the Armed Forces Division, chiefs of the Directorate General of Forces

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OBSTRUCTING ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

2 candidates complain against rivals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two aspirants in the upcoming parliamentary election from Dhaka-4 and Gazipur-4 yesterday complained against their rival candidates for violating the electoral code of conduct and preventing them from conducting campaign.

They raised the allegations through two separate press conferences and demanded that the government and Election Commission take proper steps to ensure a free and fair election.

At the capital's Jatiya Press Club, MM Anowar Hossain, a candidate of Jatiya Party from Gazipur-4 (Kapasia), said the supporters of the Awami League candidate was threatening his followers not to campaign for him.

They are also tearing posters, banners and festoons at night, he said, adding that he had already lodged a complaint with the Election Commission in this regard.

At Dhaka Reporters Unity, Dr Md Awlad Hossain, independent candidate of Dhaka-4, complained that Dhaka-4 lawmaker Sanjida Khanam and Jatiya Party candidate Syed Abu Hossain Babla were using law enforcers to harass his campaigners.

Awlad, a former Awami League leader who failed to get party ticket and thus contesting independently, said lawmaker Sanjida was even saying the result would be announced in favour of JP candidates no matter who people voted for. Awlad said Sanjida's men had assaulted his female campaigners and torn posters in two areas recently.

He demanded deployment of the army and additional law enforcers in every voting centre of the constituency to ensure a free and fair election.

The Awami League has not nominated any candidate in this constituency apparently to ensure the Jatiya Party candidate's win.

JP faction announces election manifesto

Manju's JP does the same

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a call for changes in the political culture to restore "peace and stability" in the country, a faction of Jatiya Party, apparently led by Raushan Ershad, yesterday announced its election manifesto in which it pledged to uphold Islamic values and to divide the country into eight provinces.

JP Presidium Member Anisul Islam Mahmud unveiled the manifesto at a hotel in the capital yesterday, two days ahead of the 10th parliamentary polls on Sunday.

Anisul said their election slogan is "change for peace-Jatiya Party aims for change".

If voted to power, JP will include the phrase "Bismillah-Rahmanir-Rahim" in the preamble of the constitution, he added.

Besides, JP will also bring back the Grameen Bank to its original structure, he said.

Responding to a question, Anisul said the election manifesto was formulated by HJM Ershad.

He further said they are participating in the polls in a bid to continue the democratic process, adding that he did not resign from the interim government cabinet.

JP presidium members Kazi Firoz Rashid and Tazul Islam were present at the programme.

DEC 29 ATTACK ON PRO-OPOSITION LAWYERS

Arrest of attackers demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pro-BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami lawyers yesterday observed a token hunger strike on the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) premises in the capital, protesting the December 29 attack on some of their fellows.

The SCBA, which is currently dominated by pro-BNP lawyers, organised the three-and-a-half-hour strike beginning around 10:00am to demand arrest of the attackers and release of arrested lawyers and opposition political leaders.

Before wrapping up the programme, SCBA President AJ Mohammad Ali demanded start of the trial of the attackers within

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Overjoyed students of Lalkhan Bazar Government Primary School with new text books in their hands on the campus in Chittagong city yesterday, the second day of the New Year. The education ministry managed to distribute the books on time despite series of hartals and blockades.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Deferment of Jan 5 polls demanded

CITY DESK

A total of 1,001 pro-opposition journalists yesterday demanded that the government defer the January 5 parliamentary polls.

In a joint statement, signed by Abdul Hai Sikdar, the journalists said the country is at a political impasse over the 10th parliamentary polls, yet the government is desperate to hold the "one-sided farcical" election, according to our staff correspondent.

Already 153 candidates have been elected uncontested, while elections at the remaining 147 constituencies are apparently being held without a tight contest, said the statement.

Riazuddin Ahmed, Abul Asad, Alamgir Mahiuddin, Ruhul Amin Gazi, Shawkat Mahmud and Amanullah Kabir are among the signatories.

President of Gonoforum Dr Kamal Hossain and its General Secretary Mostafa Mohsin Montu also demanded postponement of the January 5 election.

In a statement issued yesterday, the two Gonoforum leaders urged all parties to hold dialogue among themselves and intellectuals to reach a consensus ending the political crises.

"The country's education, trade, commerce and economy will suffer further," it added.

Meanwhile, speakers at a roundtable at Rajshahi University also demanded deferment of the election, according to our RU correspondent.

Terming the election farcical, they said the country might face a civil war if it is held.

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