

# BNP for immediate deployment of armed forces

Alleges police, admin working against party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday demanded immediate deployment of armed forces members, alleging that the government did not want the party to stay in the polls race and police were acting as its opposition.

"The administration and law enforcers are working together against BNP candidates and activists," said BNP Vice-chairperson Selima Rahman.

She made the comment while talking to reporters after she lodged a complaint with the chief election commissioner's office at the Nirbachan Bhaban in Agargaon.

The EC has turned into a "puppet" and police and the administration are not paying heed to the Election Commission's directives, Selima said.

"With its back against the wall, the BNP is yet to resist any attacks. If the army is not deployed immediately, we will put up resistance. We don't want any kind of violence during electioneering," she added.

The EC has decided that members of armed forces will be deployed on

December 24 and they will work till January 2. The 11th parliamentary polls will be held on December 30.

Attacks were made on BNP leaders and activists, including Mirza Abbas and Mahbub Uddin Khokon, across the country. Khokon was injured in police firing, Selima said, adding, "We are facing obstacles to conducting our election campaign in Dhaka and other places."

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda has said there is a level playing field but the reality is different. There is no level playing field across the country at this moment. One party is campaigning countrywide, while another cannot even hang posters, she said.

"We would like to know the CEC's definition of a level playing field."

Under such circumstances, the EC should issue an order for stopping attacks by the law enforcers and Awami League on the BNP men to hold a fair and credible general election, the letters said.

Meanwhile, the Jatiya Oikyafront, an alliance of the BNP and some other

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Abdul Latif Siddiqui, independent candidate of Tangail-4, along with his supporters, has been holding a sit-in protest in front of the district's Returning Officer's office, demanding peaceful environment for electioneering since 2:15pm yesterday. *Inset*, Siddiqui sleeps outside the office premises. The former AL leader launched the protest alleging supporters of AL candidate Hasan Imam Khan Sohel Hazari attacked his motorcade at Gohaliabari in Kalihati upazila when Siddiqui had gone there for electioneering.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL



## Memories of martyrs

FROM PAGE 1

different national level programmes. The day started with the 31-gun salute.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing floral wreaths at the National Mausoleum at Savar at dawn.

The president first placed the wreath at the altar of the National Memorial with the rising of the sun. He was followed by the PM.

They then stood in solemn silence for some time as a mark of profound respect to the martyrs.

A smartly turned out contingent drawn from Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Air Force presented state salute on the occasion when bugles played the last post.

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon, AL Joint General Secretaries Advocate Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Abdur Rahman, Organizing Secretaries BM Mozammel Haque, AFM Bahauddin Nasim and AKM Enamul Haque Shamim, Office Secretary Dr Abdus Sobhan Golap, Forest and Environment Secretary Delowar Hossain and Deputy Office Secretary Barrister Biplob Barua were present.

Along with them, Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda, members of the cabinet, advisers to the prime minister, parliament members, the chiefs of the three services, diplomats and high civil and military officials were also present.

Flanked by senior leaders of the party, Sheikh Hasina, also the Awami League president, laid another wreath at the National Memorial as the party chief.

Later, Syed Mahmud Hossain, KM Nurul Huda, Mayor Sayeed Khokon and leaders of other political and socio-cultural organisations placed wreaths at the National Memorial.

They were followed by freedom fighters and their family members, foreign diplomats, leaders of the AL and other different political and social organizations, and people from all walks of life.

Other political and socio-cultural organisations such as Central 14-party, BNP, Gono Forum, Jatiya Oikyafront, Jukto Front, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Workers Party of Bangladesh, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), along with other organisational fronts and professional bodies were present.

Sheikh Hasina also paid tribute to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing wreaths at the portrait of his in front of Bangabandhu Bhaban at the historic Dhanmondi road 32 in the city.

The AL and its associate bodies, different educational institutes and socio-cultural and professional organisations also paid homage to the supreme leader by placing garlands at his portrait.

On the day, a public holiday, the national flag was hoisted atop government, semi-government and private offices as well as offices of autonomous bodies across the country.

The president and PM issued separate messages on the occasion and national dailies across the country brought out special supplements.

State-owned and private television channels and radios broadcasted month-long special programmes highlighting the Liberation War. Different organisations held discussions where Liberation War related documentaries were played.

Receptions were held for freedom fighters and the family members of martyrs at city, district and upazila levels.

The AL, led by Presidium Member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, also paid tribute to the mazar of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara in Gopalganj.

Bangladesh Police also paid its respects to martyred members by placing wreaths at the Razarbagh Mausoleum, where Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, Inspector General of Police Dr Javed Patwari and Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Md Asaduzzaman, among others, were present.

Special prayers were offered in mosques and other places of worship, seeking eternal peace for the souls of the martyrs, and peace, progress and prosperity for the country.

To mark the day, Baitul Mukarram National Mosque organised a Quran khwani, milad and dua mahfil at 10:00am under the initiative of Islamic Foundation.

Improved diets were served in jails, hospitals, orphanages and vagrant homes across the country.

Destitute children had gotten the opportunity to visit children's parks and other recreational centres across the country free of cost.

Celebrating victory, Bangladesh missions abroad observed the day with various programmes.

dren at school.

Clad in burqas, their faces were covered and they were wearing gloves. Several other women were accompanying them.

"Bokul is my brother of the neighbourhood. So, I am distributing leaflets for him," she said.

Tanzila alleged that the AL did not give the BNP and other political parties any space for political activities. "Is the country only for the AL?" she asked.

On Friday night, these correspondents visited WAPDA Slum in Rupsha Stand Road and talked to 10 women voters who said female activists were visiting their home every day.

## Women the key force

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He alleged that female AL activists were visiting the homes of women who got benefit under VGF and VGD programmes.

BNP activist Zorina Khatun said, "Our male members are on the run to avoid police harassment. They cannot run their businesses and are even forced to shut their business establishments. We are campaigning to get out of this anarchy."

The 23-year-old along with similarly aged Tanzila sheikh were distributing leaflets of Rokibul Islam Bokul, the BNP candidate for Khulna-3 (Khalishpur, Daulatpur and Khanjahan Ali), at Boikali in the morning after dropping off their chil-

## Violence just won't let up

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Besides, AL supporters allegedly attacked campaigns and motorcades of 26 BNP and Oikyafront candidates in the last seven days.

Police have detained around 250 BNP men since December 10.

Yesterday, at least 50 BNP men were wounded when the motorcade of Moyeen, BNP candidate for Narsingdi-2, was attacked during electioneering in Narsingdi's Palash upazila.

Carrying firearms, AL men launched the attack at Pachdona Bazar on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway around 12:30pm, alleged Moyeen, also a BNP standing committee member.

The attackers opened fire on the BNP men and vandalised a car, he claimed while talking to The Daily Star.

Contacted, Anwarul Ashraf Khan, president of Palash upazila AL, said he was not aware of any such incident.

It could be a rumour, said Anwarul, also AL candidate for the same constituency.

Asked, Shariar Alam, additional superintendent of police in Narsingdi (Sadar and Palash circle), said he heard that chase and counter-chase took place between supporters of the two parties.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, he added.

In Noakhali, three BNP men suffered wounds and five vehicles were vandalised during an attack on a local BNP office in Senbagh upazila yesterday morning.

Zainul Abidin Farooque, BNP candidate for Noakhali-2, was inside the party office at that time. He was unhurt.

Witnesses said BNP men gathered at the party office around 9:00pm to attend a Victory Day programme. Later, ruling party men swooped on them.

Local BNP leader and Senbagh Upazila Parishad Chairman Abul Kalam Azad was among the injured.

Contacted, M Morshed Alam, convener of Senbagh upazila AL and the party's candidate for Noakhali-2, denied the allegation and said the incident might have resulted from an intra-party feud.

Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of

### FROM NOV 10 TILL YESTERDAY

BNP's MP aspirants sent to jail -- 2
Opposition MP candidates injured -- 13
MP candidates' motorcades/processions attacked -- 26
BNP men injured -- 875
AL men dead -- 2
AL men injured -- 75

Senbagh Police Station, said on information that chase and counter-chase were taking place between AL and BNP supporters, they went to the spot and brought the situation under control.

The OC said the claim of attacks on the BNP office was not true.

In Chattogram, eight BNP men were injured as a Victory Day procession, led by BNP Vice-chairman Abdullah Al Noman, came under attack in Noyabazar area.

Locals said BNP men brought out the procession around 12:30pm. Suddenly, a group of men carrying sticks and machetes attacked the procession.

At a press conference after the incident, Noman, also BNP candidate for Chattogram-10, alleged that AL men carried out the attack while police played the role of spectators.

Contacted, SM Obaidul Haque, OC of Halishahar Police Station, said no such incident took place in the area.

When two processions of the AL and the BNP came face to face there, police diverted those to separate ways, he mentioned.

In Tangail, 10 people were hurt and four cars were vandalised during an attack on the motorcade of Abdul Latif Siddiqui, an independent candidate for Tangail-4, in Kalihati upazila's Gohaliabari.

Talking to reporters, Latif alleged that 20 to 25 supporters of AL candidate for the constituency Hasan Imam Khan Sohel Hazari threw brick chips at his motorcade.

He claimed that when they took

shelter in a nearby house, the attackers swooped on them.

Latif and his supporters began a sit-in in front of the returning officer's office in Tangail at 2:15pm, demanding withdrawal of Kalihati Police Station OC Mir Mosharruf Hossain and arrest of the attackers.

Later, he submitted a complaint to Returning Officer Md Shaidul Islam, who asked the electoral enquiry committee to investigate it.

Contacted, Sanjit Kumar Roy, superintendent of police in Tangail, said on information, police went to the scene and brought the situation under control.

Talking to this newspaper, Sohel Hazari, incumbent lawmaker and AL candidate for Tangail-4, refuted the allegation that his supporters were involved in the incident.

Angry locals might have pelted the motorcade with stones, he said.

Ruling party men allegedly attacked a procession led by BNP candidate for Natore-2 Sabina Yasmin Chhabbi in Natore town's Station Bazar area around 11:00am yesterday. Four of her supporters were injured.

Contacted, Shafiqul Islam Shimul, AL candidate for the same constituency, claimed that no AL activist was involved in the attack.

Natore SP Saifullah Al Mamun told this newspaper, "We have heard about the attack and are looking into it."

He said action would be taken if they find proof of the attack.

In Bagerhat, seven BNP men were injured as AL men allegedly attacked the motorcade of BNP candidate for Bagerhat-2 MA Salam in Jatrapur area.

However, Sheikh Kamruzzaman Tuku, general secretary of AL district unit, denied involvement of party men in the attack.

Bagerhat SP Pankaj Chandra Roy said, "The [BNP] candidate informed me about the incident over the phone. He has not yet lodged any complaint. If we get a complaint, we will probe and take action."

The motorcade of BNP candidate for Sylhet-4 Dildar Hossain Salim also came

under attack in Sylhet's Noagaon village yesterday evening.

"My car's windshield was broken as brick chips were hurled at it," Salim told The Daily Star.

Police said the incident might have stemmed from an intra-party feud in the BNP's local unit.

In Rangamati, 22 supporters of both the AL and the BNP were injured in a clash between the two sides in Poura Bhaban area of Baghaichhari upazila yesterday morning.

Later around 7:00pm, activists of the two parties clashed in Rangamati town's Bhebdhedhi area. About 20 supporters of the BNP and four from the AL were injured.

At separate press conferences, the two sides blamed each other for the incident.

Ruling party men fought with BNP activists at Borhanuddin in Bhola's Tobgi union, leaving around 50 supporters of both parties wounded.

In Chandpur, at least 20 people, including a policeman, were hurt in a clash between AL and BNP supporters at Puran Bazar.

Besides, the BNP alleged that 12 supporters of the party were wounded in attacks allegedly by AL men in Patuakhal's Bauphal upazila on Saturday evening.

However, local AL leaders denied the allegation and said no party activist was involved in the attack.

In Moulvibazar, BNP men allegedly vandalised an AL office in Kulaura upazila's Dhulipara around 8:30pm yesterday.

Local BNP leaders claimed that the allegation might have been brought as part of a plot to harass party activists.

**NAZRUL ARRESTED**  
Jamaat leader Nazrul and three other party leaders were arrested from his house at Ismailpur village.

Nazrul, BNP candidate for Satkhira-4 was holding a meeting with the three at his house around 1:30pm, said Azizur Rahman, publicity secretary of Satkhira district Jamaat unit.

Abul Kalam, OC of Shyamnagar Police Station, said arrest warrants had been issued against Nazrul in 12 cases.

## Where is BNP?

FROM PAGE 1

nominated Zahir Uddin Swapan, who has not been in the area for many years, leaving him disconnected with both party activists and voters, they added.

But, BNP leaders allege they cannot carry out campaigning openly due to "rowdy activities" of the AL men and "inaction of police". "We cannot even move freely. How can we set up an electoral office?" Gazi Abu Bakar Siddique, joint convener of Gournadi upazila unit BNP, said.

In the last five general elections after restoration of democracy in early 90s, Hasanat was elected as lawmaker from Barishal-1 thrice. Another AL leader, Talukder Md Yunus, won in the 2008 election. Swapan was elected in this seat in 2001. Being a reformist leader, he did not get nomination in 2008.

Gournadi is considered as a stronghold of BNP, while minority-dominated Agailjhara is an AL stronghold.

The Daily Star correspondents on Saturday visited several areas of the constituency and talked with more than 25 people including leaders and activists of both parties.

While entering Gournadi upazila through the Dhaka-Barishal Highway, the correspondents saw a few posters of Swapan in Mahilara and Batajore areas.

"We saw some posters in our Ashokathi [next bus stop of Batajore] area after Swapan Saheb entered the constituency on Tuesday with a large number of people. Now we do not see him any longer and the posters have also disappeared," said an auto-rickshaw driver.

At Gournadi bus stand, around 25 leaders and activists were found at AL upazila office seeking votes through loudspeakers. No BNP office was seen there.

"The opposition leader [Swapan] has come to the area and held some programmes. But, he has failed to draw public attention and thus refrained from campaigning," Mizanur Rahman, a former central leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League, said at the office.

However, Abu Bakar alleged that they could not conduct campaigning due to pressures from the AL men, who have already attacked the houses of some BNP men in Mahilara.

He claimed they wanted to hold a meeting at Nalchira on Friday, but the AL men gathered there and forced them to call off their programme. They tried to hold the meeting again on Saturday, but the AL men held a counter programme there, he added.

"So, we did not hold our programme to avert a clash. Our leader [Swapan]

talked with the OC, who did not take any action," the BNP leaders said.

"We are now holding house meetings and giving necessary directives to our leaders and activists. The situation is not favourable for open campaigning now," he added.

Earlier on December 3, Swapan sent a letter to the Election Commission seeking security for his family and party activists under the Representation of the People Order (RPO).

He claimed he was afraid of attacks as Gournadi upazila unit AL General Secretary Harisur Rahman was delivering provocative speeches against him at rallies and meetings.

The BNP candidate on Friday told The Daily Star that at least 35 activists were injured in attacks and they were prevented from campaigning.

"Actually, they have kept me virtually confined to my house," Swapan claimed.

Swapan called a press conference today at 10:00am at his Shorikul residence in Gournadi upazila to discuss these issues.

Harisur denied the allegations straightaway.

Swapan, who was not seen in the area in last 10 years, was making false allegations finding no other issues to draw public support for, he claimed. "We

don't need to prevent him. Development works [done by Hasanat] are enough to win public support."

On allegations of forcing BNP leaders to join AL ahead of the election, Harisur said, "No, they are willingly joining Awami League after seeing the development works."

Around 500 BNP men from Batajore union joined AL on Saturday, he informed.

On BNP's poor campaigning in Agailjhara, a local AL leader said the party was not organisationally strong in the upazila.

"Besides, an untold repression was carried out against the minority community in Agailjhara and Gournadi after the 2001 election when Swapan was elected. So, BNP has no moral ground to seek votes here," the leader told The Daily Star asking not to be named.

SM Afzal Hossain, general secretary of Agailjhara upazila BNP, who is now in Dhaka, said they would hang posters within a day or two.

Hinting at internal feud behind poor campaigning, he said either Abdus Sobhan or Akand Kuddus was supposed to get the nomination, but the party had chosen him (Swapan).

"We have to obey the party decision," he observed.