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Supporters at yesterday's BNP rally, left, at Collectorate Eidgah in Rangpur. Leaders and activists at the triennial council of Dhaka Zilla Awami League, right, in the capital's She-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

**SEOUL HALLOWEEN STAMPEDE**

**146 killed, 150 injured**

**Death toll may rise; investigation on to know the exact cause**

AGENCIES

At least 146 people were killed in a stampede when a huge crowd celebrating Halloween crammed into an alley in a night life area of the South Korean capital Seoul yesterday night, emergency officials said.

A further 150 people were injured in the crush in Seoul's Itaewon district, Choi Sung-beom, head of the Yongsan Fire Station, said in a briefing at the scene.

"As of 04:00 am, 146 have been killed and 150 have been injured," Choi told reporters.

Many of the injured were in serious condition and receiving emergency treatment, the officials said. Many of the party-goers were wearing masks and Halloween costumes.

The incident took place at about 10:20 pm (1320 GMT).

"A number of people fell during a Halloween festival, and we have a large number of casualties," Choi said. Many of those killed were near a nightclub, he said.

Many of the victims were women in their twenties, Choi said.

Witnesses described chaotic scenes moments before

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**No polls under AL government**

**BNP leaders tell mammoth Rangpur rally, hint at resignation of party MPs**

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and KONGKON KARMAKAR FROM RANGPUR

The BNP yesterday said its lawmakers were ready to resign from the House and the parliament must be dissolved before the election.

The power has to be handed over to a caretaker government to oversee the next election, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told yesterday's mammoth rally at Collectorate Eidgah in Rangpur.

"The government must step down. Our MPs are ready to resign from parliament anytime. Our MPs ... Rumeen, Harun, Zahid ... are here. They will resign whenever the party asks them to," he said.

The BNP has seven lawmakers in parliament, including one elected to a reserved seat for women.

There will not be another election like the ones held in 2014 and 2018, Fakhrul said.



**"... This government has swallowed everything, nothing is left. It has become omnivorous. It eats everything and anything."**  
Mirza Fakhrul

"There will be no election in the country unless a caretaker government is in place."

Fakhrul opened his speech asking the crowds, in a thick Rangpur accent, "How are you doing?"

As they replied "not good", he said the economy was in ruins because of the government's plundering and looting.

"... This government has swallowed everything, nothing is left. It has become omnivorous. It eats everything and anything."

Referring to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent comments about a possible famine, the BNP leader said, "What have you [the PM] done in the last 15 years? You said the country had been turned into Singapore, Malaysia, and Canada. What has happened that you are talking about a famine?"

He then asked how people would

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**Unite to resist BNP-Jamaat**

**AL leaders ask party activists at rally organised for Dhaka dist council**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League leaders yesterday vowed to resist the BNP and Jamaat, and urged the party activists to unite in order to bring the AL to power in the next parliamentary election.

The ruling party leaders were speaking at a huge rally organised on the occasion of the triennial council for Dhaka district AL, held in the city's Sher-E-Bangla Nagar area.

Obaidul Quader, AL general secretary and the chief guest at the event, said, "You will work for the party. Remember, no matter how many rallies they [BNP] hold, no one can defeat a united Awami League."

Although it was meant for the triennial council, the gathering apparently turned out to be one to counter the ongoing series of rallies by the BNP.

Thousands of people filled up the venue in a bid to flaunt AL's power and popularity at a time when the BNP has



**"Get rid of the ghost of the caretaker government from your head. The High Court has sent it to the museum..."**  
Obaidul Quader

been alleging that the government has no acceptance among the people.

Carrying banners and festoons, and donning colourful T-shirts and caps, the AL activists came in droves from five Dhaka upazilas -- Savar, Dhamrai, Dohar, Nawabganj, and Keraniganj.

The event took on a special significance as Quader on Friday said the BNP would understand on Saturday "what a public gathering actually means".

The activists started gathering around the stage shaped like a boat -- AL's electoral symbol -- since morning.

A huge number of buses were seen parked on the roads surrounding the venue.

Earlier on Friday, the AL at a meeting of its central working committee decided to remain on the streets. It decided to hold six to seven mammoth rallies

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**3 ZILLA PARISHAD POLLS**

**2 ministers, 3 MPs blamed for defeat**

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Two ministers, three MPs and an Awami League central committee member have been accused of backing party rebels in the zilla parishad polls, which led to the defeat of three AL-sponsored chairman candidates.

The names of the two lawmakers and a minister came up in the organisational report for Dhaka division, placed before the AL Central Working Committee meeting on Friday, said sources.

Party President Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting at the Gono Bhaban.

Mirza Azam, organising secretary for Dhaka division AL, placed the report that held three MPs and one minister responsible for the party-backed candidates' defeat in Narsingdi and Faridpur, meeting sources confirmed to The Daily Star.

According to the report, Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun, also lawmaker from Narsingdi-4; Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju, MP of Narsingdi-5; and Muhammad Nazrul Islam, MP from Narsingdi-1, were responsible for the defeat of Abdul Matin Bhuiyan in the Narsingdi zilla parishad polls, said sources.

Meanwhile, the defeat of the AL candidates in Sunamganj and Faridpur also came up at the meeting.

Planning Minister MA Mannan was held responsible for backing party dissident Nurul Huda Mukut, while AL central committee member Azizus Samad Azad Don was

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**ARSA behind the recent murders in Rohingya camps**

**Say police after arresting 41 Rohingyas**

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT, COX'S BAZAR

Amid the armed conflicts along the border over the last two months, gang members living in the no-man's-land entered Bangladesh and engaged in criminal activities, including murders, at the refugee camps, police and locals said.

Most of them entered through the borders in Dhosori and Tambru areas in Bandarban's Naikkhangchhari upazila, they added.

As law enforcers launched an operation near midnight on Friday, officers said they had information that members of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) were behind most of the crimes.

At least 41 Rohingyas, including six accused in murder cases, were arrested in the seven-hour raid that went on until yesterday morning.

APBn-8, APBn-14, APBn-16 and Cox's Bazar district police conducted the first raid of "Operation Root Out", said Faruk Ahmed, assistant superintendent of APBn-8.

Armed Police Battalion (APBn) officers said at least seven people were killed this month.

Amir Zafar, commanding officer of APBn-8, said the combined operation would continue.

"There were some criminal gangs in the no-man's-land that entered Bangladesh," said Zafar, also an additional deputy inspector general of police.

The suspects probably belong to groups like ARSA, RSO and Islamic Mahaj, he said. "But we are mostly hearing the name of ARSA as being involved in the crimes. These

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New Zealand's Glenn Phillips jumps in the air after reaching a century against Sri Lanka in their Super 12 fixture of the T20 World Cup at the Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday. Phillips scored 104 off 64 deliveries as Kiwis won the match by 65 runs. Story on Page 11.

PHOTO: AFP

**CII will not obstruct journalism**

**Says ICT Division**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The declaration of 29 key government institutions as critical information infrastructures (CII) will not obstruct journalism in any way, the ICT Division has said.

In a statement issued yesterday, it said, "There is no hindrance in disclosing information about any weakness, mismanagement, etc, by the media under declaration of CII by ICT

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