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BNP leaders addressing thousands of supporters during yesterday's rally on the premises of a school in Faridpur. The activists managed to travel there even though the district was virtually cut off from the rest of the country in the run-up to the event.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Step down now, form caretaker govt

BNP asks Sheikh Hasina

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and SUZIT DAS from Faridpur

The ruling Awami League will no longer be allowed to play games with elections, said BNP leaders addressing a mammoth rally in Faridpur yesterday.

Even though the district was virtually cut off from the rest of the country ahead of the event, thousands of activists managed to get there.

"In the last two elections, you [the AL] played an election game and came to power by deceiving the public and telling them lies. But this time, we have turned around, and so have the people. This time, there will be no election unless a caretaker

government is formed," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told the rally on the premises of Komorpur Abdul Aziz

"Our back is against the wall because of the repression, torture and attacks. We will now forge ahead and won't back down."

Institution.

"Our back is against the wall because of the repression, torture and attacks. We will now forge ahead and won't back down."

He then asked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to step down from office, dissolve the parliament and hand over the power to a caretaker government that will hold an acceptable election under a new election commission.

A large number of law enforcers was present across Faridpur, considered a stronghold of the AL.

The rally started at 2:00pm, but thousands of activists started gathering at the venue, about six kilometres away from Faridpur town, early in the morning.

From 10:00am till the evening, the mobile internet service remained suspended in the town.

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FARDIN MURDER

No concrete clue yet

Say DB, Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The circumstances of Buet student Fardin Noor Parash's murder are not clear yet, and at this stage, it cannot be said he was killed trying to buy drugs in Chonpara area of Narayanganj, DB officials said yesterday.

"We are still not saying he was killed trying to buy drugs. We are also not saying Bushra [victim's friend and an accused in the murder case] has anything to do with his murder," Mohammad Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told the press at the DB headquarters in the capital's Minto Road.

"We are analysing different angles and clues, but we are yet to find anything concrete [including the motive for the murder]."

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Govt didn't waste a single penny from reserves: PM

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government spent all money in the best interests of the citizens.

"The Awami League government does not waste a single paisa of the country -- it spends every penny for the interest and welfare of the people," she said while inaugurating the construction work of the 24-kilometre-long Dhaka-Ashulia Elevated Expressway virtually from her official residence Ganabhaban.

Hasina's comment came after BNP leaders raised questions about the fast depletion of foreign currency reserves.



As of November 9, foreign currency reserves stand at \$34.3 billion, down 23.8 percent from a year earlier, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

"No paisa from the reserves is misappropriated. This fear is always in their (BNP's) mind -- BNP will say this. The reason for this is that their leader Tarique Zia has been convicted for seven years and fined Tk 20 crore in a money laundering case. He is now an absconding criminal."

Reserves are being used to pay for imports and Covid-19 vaccines and also for investment purposes, she said.

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England take on Pakistan in throwback final

REUTERS, Melbourne

A confident England will look to deny Pakistan a fairytale finish in Sunday's Twenty20 World Cup final and become the first nation to hold both global white-ball trophies - if Melbourne's fickle weather permits.

Heavy rain could disrupt the

PHOTO ON PAGE 12

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