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Two killed in polls violence

43, including 3 journos, hurt
in clashes in six dists;
campaign ends today

STAR REPORT

Two people were killed and at least 43 others injured as supporters of rival candidates clashed in six districts yesterday and on Wednesday night.

Since electioneering began on December 18, violent clashes were reported in at least 150 places. Campaigning for the January 7 election ends today at 8:00am.

In Cumilla's Chandina upazila, three journalists and 14 supporters of an independent candidate were injured in two attacks by the ruling party nominee's men yesterday.

In Munshiganj, Dalim Sarker, 35, a supporter of the Awami League candidate, was shot dead allegedly by the supporters of Mohammad Faisal, an AL leader who is running for parliament as an independent.

Witnesses said Dalim, a resident of Munshikandi area, was at a makeshift campaign office of AL nominee Mrinal Kanti Das early yesterday when Faisal's men stormed in and opened fire.

They assaulted an activist named Sohel Rana and shot Dalim, said Mrinal's supporter Hasibul Islam Shanto, adding that he was present at the scene.

Dalim was first taken to Munshiganj General Hospital and then to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). He was pronounced dead around 4:00am, said Assistant Sub-Inspector Mohammad Masud of the hospital's police outpost.

Mrinal said the deceased and the injured were his supporters, but refused to make further comments.

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Boatmen waiting for passengers on the bank of the Buriganga in Old Dhaka yesterday. During the dry season, the low water levels expose the river's dismal state owing to severe pollution, and people tend to keep off the murky and smelly waters.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

AL picks have Tk 7,561cr assets

Total wealth of all 1,945 candidates worth Tk 13,620cr,
says Shujan analysis on Jan 7 polls affidavits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 246 of the 265 Awami League-nominated candidates have wealth over Tk 1 crore and 177 of them have at least Tk 5 crore, according to an analysis by Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan).

The 265 AL picks have accumulated a wealth of Tk 7,561 crore, or Tk 28.53 crore on average each, according to its analysis based on their affidavits submitted to the Election Commission.

The total wealth of the 1,945 candidates whose affidavits Shujan

analysed is Tk 13,620 crore.

"It seems there is a connection between power and magic wands," said Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumder while unveiling the analysis at a virtual press conference yesterday.

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Be forgiving if we've made any mistake

Hasina says in address to the
nation ahead of polls

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday made an impassioned appeal to the people to keep her party in power for a straight fourth term.

"Today, I have appeared before you to seek vote for 'boat'," she said in a televised address to the nation, her final campaign speech before the polls on Sunday.

"The call has come, it's time to take the road," Hasina quoted poet Sunkanta Bhattacharya's poem, Udayachal (From the east), during her 24-minute speech.

The prime minister said she is seeking another five-year term in office to make developments sustainable, work for improving people's living standards and build a developed smart Bangladesh free from hunger and poverty.

"If I have made any mistakes along the way, I ask your forgiveness. If I can form the government again, I will get a chance to correct the mistakes. Give me an opportunity to serve you by voting for 'boat' in the January 7 election," she said.

Hasina requested the people to have confidence in her as she considers them her family.

"Let's all make this Bangladesh a smart Golden Bangla

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Ballots being sent to Barishal-4 (Hizla-Mehendiganj) from the Barishal returning officer's office in the city yesterday. With the national polls just a day away, the Election Commission has started dispatching ballots to respective constituencies.

PHOTO: STAR

BNP calls hartal on election day, the day before

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has called for a 48-hour nationwide hartal from tomorrow morning, which includes the voting day, in protest of the January 7 national election.

"The 48-hour hartal will begin at 6:00am on Saturday and end at 6:00am on Monday," said BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi at a virtual press briefing yesterday.

At another briefing earlier, Rizvi said the party will also take out processions and conduct mass contact across the country today.

The other like-minded parties will also hold similar programmes.

"Hartal, procession and mass contact will be held in support of the polls boycott and non-cooperation movement for the resignation of Awami League government and reinstatement of the neutral polls time caretaker government system," said Rizvi, adding that they would also demand the release of BNP leaders from prison in the programmes.

The BNP and some other political

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93pc centres to get ballots on vote day morning

EC says it'll ensure transparency, security

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission will send ballot papers to around 93 percent of the 42,025 polling centres on election day morning.

However, ballot for 2,964 centres in remote and hard-to-reach places, like in hilly areas, chars, haors and other wetlands, will be sent the day before the January 7 polls.

The EC selected the polling centers following reports of the returning officers on when the ballots papers should be sent. The decision to send ballots on the day of polling was made to improve transparency and security of the papers.

"Majority [39,061] of the [42,025] polling centres will get the ballots in the morning as election officials have said it's possible for them to do so," said

Election Commission Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath yesterday.

This would be the first time in Bangladesh that ballots would reach centres on voting day.

The EC in a letter to all returning officers (ROs) yesterday said it decided to send ballots on the morning of election day.

It also asked the ROs to ensure that law enforcers deployed as mobile and striking forces take necessary security measures for the transportation of the ballot papers on election day morning, EC officials said yesterday.

The letter also asked the polls officials to ensure the presence of sufficient print and electronic media personnel during the distribution of ballot papers on election day morning.

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