Double celebration for Awami League

Party holds rally marking Bangabandhu's Homecoming Day, election victory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League's win on January 7 transformed yesterday's rally commemorating Bangabandhu's Homecoming Day, into a double celebration for party leaders and activists.

Thousands of supporters of AL and its affiliated groups gathered at Suhrawardy Udyan, turning the rally into a festival.

Shahriar Hasan, an AL activist of Naraynganj, said, "This year's Homecoming Day celebration couldn't be more perfect."

As soon as the entryways opened at 1:30pm, the AL men started entering the Suhrawardy Udyan, carrying colourful placards and donning vibrant dresses.

"Braving all the odds, Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League came out victorious in the January 7 election," Mahbub Hasan, a Jubo League activist who came from Savar, told The Daily Star.

Many of these activists carried cut-outs and portraits of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Sheikh Hasina.

Many were also seen holding the replica of AL's electoral symbol "boat".

AL supporters and activists created a lively atmosphere with drums, loudspeakers, and other musical instruments, while some danced and sang.

AL president Sheikh Hasina, the chief guest, arrived at the Suhrawardy Udyan around 4:00pm.

As she went up to the stage, the crowd welcomed her by waving the national and party flags. The AL supremo also waved back at them.

The elderly people were also seen in the rally that was mainly dominated by young activists.

Take the case of 65-year-old Nurul Mia who came from Gazipur.

"I have supported Awami League throughout my life. I have aged, but I never miss any party programme," he said.

At the rally, AL presidium member Quamrul Islam said, "Apart from celebrating the Homecoming Day of Bangabandhu, we are celebrating our victory in the election. Let us advance forward unitedly to build a 'Smart Bangladesh' as outlined by the prime minister."

Awami League leaders and activists thronged the Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital yesterday to take part in a rally marking the Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This photo was taken in Dhaka University area. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

RATES OF ADS

DFP warns of list with false info

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Films and Publications yesterday said that a DFP list containing false information on circulation and advertisement rates of the listed media has drawn its attention.

They sent a press release to the media in this regard yesterday.

The press release was signed by Mohammad Fakhrul Islam, director (advertisement and audit) at the DFP.

The release added that the DFP is taking legal action against the dissemination of misinformation through social media using this list.

According to the government policy, the DFP regularly updates and publishes the media list on its official website, www.dfp.gov.bd, stated the release.

"The list is not published on any online or social media platforms other than the official Department of Films and Publications website," the release said.

The press release also urged everyone to exercise caution regarding such lists.

Danger lurks at every corner for govt: Rizvi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has said danger is coming from all directions for the government.

"There is nothing to be excited about by holding a farce election. Look around and you'll see danger lurking," said BNP senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi at a press conference yesterday.

"They (Awami League) held elections by detaining the leaders of the opposition. Sheikh Hasina hopes to keep her position of power for life through these types of elections," said Rizvi.

"The government thinks they won't fall. They are desperately trying to suppress the opposition parties because of this," he added.

The BNP leader criticised the "voter-less election" on January 7, saying "the world did not applaud it".

"Many people did not cast ballots because they supported the opposition movement," said Rizvi.

He also said law enforcers arrested more than 27,460 leaders and activists in 1,172 cases across the country from October 28 until yesterday afternoon.

BNP also claimed that 40 party leaders and activists were detained and two cases were filed against 135 named and many unidentified party activists in the 24 hours preceding yesterday afternoon.

Time to move on to a new game: Quader

BSS, *Dhaka*

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said as the game of elections is over now, a new game will start against communalism, militancy, arson terrorism, and corruption.

He came up with the warning while speaking at a public rally at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital.

Awami League arranged the rally marking the Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

AL President Sheikh Hasina presided over the rally.

Claiming BNP's future is only dark because of its political mistakes, Quader said, "The game of polls ended on January 7. BNP is a fake party. Its programmes, leaders and one-point movement are fake... their (BNP) future is only dark."

Remembering Bangabandhu's homecoming on January 10, 1972, Quader said Bangladesh's independence resulted from his sacrifice.

Bangabandhu placed Bangladesh on the world map, Quader also said.

He said Sheikh Hasina is the architect of Bangladesh's transformation and carrier of Bangabandhu's dream.

"She is the sun of the east and our beacon of hope. She is the symbol of our extreme courage and bravery," Quader said.

349 teen gang members held last year: Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion claimed to have arrested 349 teenagers and members associated with teen gangs, for various offenses across the country over the past year.

Teen gangs in the capital first made headlines in 2017, after 14-year-old school student Adnan Kabir was beaten to death in Uttara, by boys his age.

Since then, Rab arrested a total of 1,126 teen gang members in the last six years. 40 of them were handed over to their families, according to a Rab press release yesterday.

From petty crimes to murder, stalking, rape, mugging and drug abuse -- teen gangs have been making headlines for years now.

Media reports suggest these gangs are often backed by a section of ruling party leaders, who act as influential "elder brothers".

Media reports suggest these gangs are often backed by a section of ruling party leaders, who act as influential "elder brothers".

Most gang members sell and abuse drugs. They often carry illegal firearms and local weapon, to engage in turf-wars with other groups.

Rab arrested eight members of "BDSK" gang from Adabor area in the capital on January 28, 2023. The next day, they arrested 16 teenagers from South Keraniganj, Shyampur and Kadmatoli areas of the capital.

On February 6, Rab arrested 20 gang members from Adabor, Mohammadpur and Hazaribagh areas.

PASSPORT INDEX 2024

Bangladesh in bottom 10, shares 97th spot with N Korea

UNB, *Dhaka*

The 2024 edition of Henley Passport Index -- the most widely-accepted rating of global travel documents -- places the Bangladeshi passport at 97th position, down one place from the last quarter of 2023.

The latest edition of the Passport Index, published on Tuesday, features a total of 104 spots with some countries' passports sharing the same ranking.

Bangladesh ranked 97th on the index, sharing the spot with North Korea. The ranking is based on the number of destinations passport holders can access without a prior visa.

According to the index, a Bangladeshi passport entitles visa-free travel to 42 destinations.

In South Asia, the Bangladeshi passport fared better compared to that of Nepal (98), Pakistan (101) and Afghanistan (104).

Maldives' passport ranked at 58, becoming the strongest in South Asia with visa-free access to 94 countries. India, Bhutan and Sri Lanka's passports ranked at 80th, 87th and 96th respectively.

An unprecedented six countries share the top spot for the most desirable travel documents in 2024.

Citizens of France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore, and Spain now have access to visa-free or visa-on-arrival entry to 194 destinations worldwide.

Apart from those six countries who share the top spot, other countries sharing the top 5

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An unfit bus, with many dents and a panel of its body missing, carrying passengers in the capital's Agargaon yesterday afternoon. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

NATIONAL POLLS

Democracy won: Momen

UNB, *Dhaka*

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said they have proven that Bangladesh is a democratic country that ensures human rights and justice.

"It is a victory for democracy and people of the country," he said while speaking at a discussion marking Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Homecoming Day.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam and Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen also spoke on the occasion.

"We fight for justice and human rights. We upheld these values," the minister said.

At the event, speakers called upon all to work towards the implementation of Vision 2041.