#### JP won't take part in polls if boycotted by any major party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad yesterday said his party would not participate in the elections scheduled for January 23 if any large party or alliance boycotts the elections.

However, JP started its preparations for the elections as its parliamentary board led by Ershad yesterday began taking interviews of people seeking party tickets.

"If one or more major parties do not participate, we will not participate in the general elections," the SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

#### lajuddin should have resigned before taking new advisers

Says B Chowdhury

BSS, Dhaka

President of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday President Prof lajuddin Ahmed should have resigned from the post of chief adviser (CA) to the caretaker government before appointing new advisers

"The chief adviser should have resigned before appointing new SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

### EC keeps eye on Bangladesh development

**UNB**, Dhaka

The European Commission (EC) is very closely following the events in the run-up to the parliamentary elections in Bangladesh, including the changes in the composition of the caretaker government, army deployment and the steps taken to improve the accuracy of the voter

"We'll encourage every endeavour to be made by the caretaker government and the Election Commission to ensure that the expectations of the people of

Prayer Timing		
December 13		
	Azan	
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

# Suicide bomber kills 60 in Baghdad

#### Bush to review Iraq policy

REUTERS, Baghdad

A suicide bomber targeting poor labourers killed 60 people in Baghdad yesterday hours before President George W Bush was to review his unpopular Iraq policy in a video teleconference with US military commanders in Iraq.

Interior Ministry sources said 221 people were wounded in the blast after the bomber lured a crowd of day labourers to his vehicle with the promise of work.

The 7 am (0400 GMT) attack took place in Tayaran Square, a popular gathering point for carpenters, plumbers, bricklayers, painters and other workers who frequent

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan

took a sharp farewell swipe at US

foreign policy Monday, implying

America had ditched core princi-

ples in its zeal to battle global terror-

before he retires, Annan made a

plea for "far-sighted" US leader-

ship, saying global institutions could get little done if the United

In a striking speech three weeks

the cafes and street vendors while waiting for the chance of some work. Many of the workers who gather at Tayran Square are poor

"A driver with a pickup truck stopped and asked for labourers. When they gathered around the car it exploded," said a witness, who was helping a stumbling survivor with a blood-stained bandage covering his head.

"They were poor labourers looking for work. The poor are supposed to be protected by the

Calling the attack a "horrible massacre," Shia Prime Minister

Annan chose the symbolic

venue of the Independence,

Missouri, library of late president

Harry S Truman, whom he lionized

as a "master-builder" of the United

Nations, to highlight recent US

law are vital to global security and

prosperity," said Annan, noting past

US leadership in the global human

Human rights and the rule of

which rocked the world

Annan raps US in

farewell speech

Hussein sympathizers and Sunni Islamist al-Qaeda.

"These terrorist groups are trying to spread chaos by killing and fuelling sectarian strife," he said in a statement

The explosion, which sent a cloud of black smoke into the sky. set many cars on fire. Gunfire sounded after the blast.

Iraq is gripped by tit-for-tat sectarian killings between majority Shias and Sunni Arabs dominant under Saddam but now the backbone of the insurgency. Thousands have been killed in violence many Iraqis fear is pitching the country toward all-out civil war

"But that lead can only be main-

"When it appears to abandon its

"The US has given the world an

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

example of a democracy in which

tained if America remains true to its

principles -- including in the strug-

gle against terrorism," said Annan.

own ideals and objectives, its

friends abroad are naturally trou-

oled and confused," he added.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

#### Efforts to create level playing field for fair polls failed

Sami reasons his resignation

UNB, Dhaka

Adviser CM Shafi Sami, who resigned Monday, yesterday said he quit the caretaker government, as their efforts to create a level playing field for a clean and participatory election had been unsuc-

"We tried to create a level playing field for a free, fair and participatory election that will be accepted by all...The election that is not accepted in the country will not be accepted internationally. Holding an election casually is like cheating," he told reporters at his residence in the afternoon.

"The package proposal to the politicians failed in the final phase, SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Plot to hold farcical polls to be foiled

#### 14-party leaders say

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Awami League (AL) led 14-party coalition yesterday said they will seek to resist what they said was President and Chief Adviser lajuddin Ahmed's plan to hold a stage-managed election.

Addressing a rally at the city's Muktangan, they said resignation of the four advisers portends that it will not be possible to hold a free

and fair election if the president

continues as the chief of the caretaker government.

The leaders threatened to go for even tougher agitation programmes with one-point demand for lajuddin to stand down as the chief adviser if the 'package of proposals' drawn up by the interim government is not implemented immediately.

It is now clear to all that lajuddin is out to implement the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



Troops stand guard yesterday behind a barbed wire fence around Naya Paltan Community Centre in the capital they now use as a temporary camp.

#### Israel has atom bomb: Olmert

Media calls it a 'nuclear slip' of tongue

REUTERS, AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert Monday appeared to list his country for the first time among states, which have the nuclear bomb, before his official spokesman issued a denial.

Israel, widely considered the Middle East's sole nuclear power, has for decades refused to admit or deny whether it possesses the atomic bomb.

Israeli media are calling it a SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

#### Election mood absent in people's mind

EC Saiful says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed Election Commissioner Saiful Alam yesterday said even though the poll schedule has been declared, as they are more intrigued to know whether the two election commissioners would go on leave.

Saiful made the remark while talking to journalists at his office yesterday.

When asked about the resignation of four advisers and its impact on holding the upcoming elections. Saiful said the uncertainty could be overcome within a short while.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Demonstrators of 14-party alliance yesterday burn a photo of President lajuddin Ahmed at Muktangon in the capital demanding his resignation from the post of chief adviser to the caretaker government.

### BB for legal steps to prevent loan defaulters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The central bank has asked all the commercial banks to take strong legal steps to prevent the loan defaulters from exploiting various legal loopholes for contesting the upcoming elections.

In a circular issued vesterday the Bangladesh Bank (BB) observed that a number of loan defaulters have used a High Court stay order to cross out their names from the BB's Central Information Bureau (CIB) list.

In doing so, they are enjoying numerous banking facilities, including loans from commercial banks. the circular stated. Besides, they also become eligible to contest the

If loan defaulters have their names in the CIB, then they are barred from running for the parliament.

A BB source said that this step has also been taken to prevent a number of identified loan defaulters who, before every elections, are known to get a stay order from the High Court to strike out their names

The BB circular also requests the culprits to their privilege.

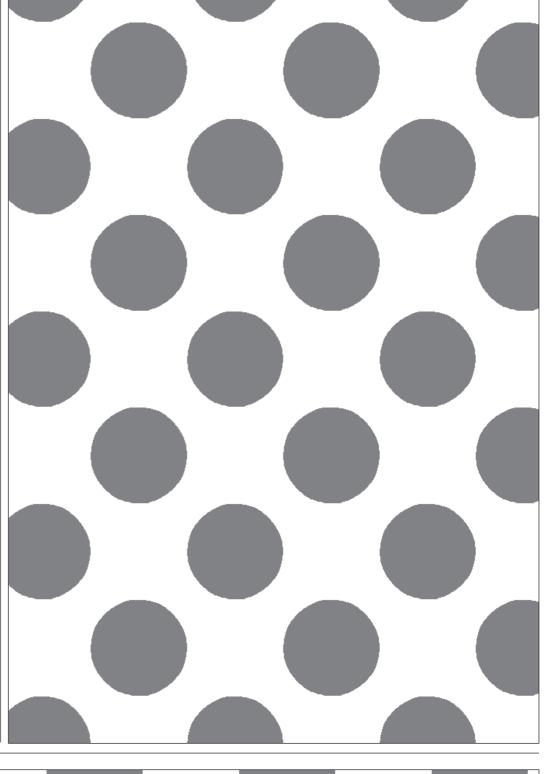
The commercial banks will be responsible for any delay or mistakes in taking legal steps, the

### Military must stay neutral in poll campaign

Says HR Watch

The Bangladeshi military, deployed on December 9 to "ensure security" in the run-up to national elections, must avoid partisan sympathies and respect human rights, Human Rights Watch said yesterday.

President lajuddin Ahmed ordered the deployment late on Saturday, after weeks of sometimes violent protests prior to elections due in January. He said the deployment SEE PAGE 2 COL 5





## POLL CANDIDATURE

from the CIB list.

commercial banks to hire 'senior and skilled lawyers' to 'vacate' the stay orders,' that are being used by the

circular added.