



REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XVI NO. 330

DHAKA MONDAY DECEMBER 18, 2006

People's Right to Know www.thedailystar.net

Poush 4, 1413 BS

JILKAD 26, 1427 HURI

24 PAGES PRICE: TK 7.00

CURRENT ELECTION SCHEDULE

Doubts deepen over allparty poll participation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the political crisis deepening further, most advisers to the caretaker government are doubtful about holding of the next parliamentary election in line with the announced schedule with participation of all major political parties.

The advisers, who had on several occasions discussed ways to face possible problems in case the election is not held within the 90day tenure of the caretaker government, again started discussing the issue among themselves as their latest effort to resolve the crisis seems to have failed, sources said.

Advance EU

team in city

UNB, Dhaka

observers.

to watch polls

A nine-member advance team

from the European Union (EU)

arrived in Dhaka yesterday to

observe the general elections in

The team comprising experts in

law and politics arrived yesterday

morning while the team leader is

scheduled to arrive tomorrow, an

official in the Delegation of the

European Commission (EC) in

Dhaka told the news agency.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

link with al-Qaeda.

at 11:30am.

handed over a youth to Bangladesh

police, who was held at

Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba

for the last five years for his alleged

The youth, Mubarak Hossain,

A special US Air Force plane flew

30, son of Abul Hashem of Moin

Madhyapara in Brahmanbaria, was

arrested from Afghanistan in 2001.

Mubarak in Bangladesh and

handed him over to the Zia

International Airport Immigration

ities later transferred his custody to

The airport immigration author-

The EU will send a total of 150

Bangladesh slated for January 23.

Following a meeting of the council of advisers on Wednesday, Adviser Shafiqual Haque Chowdhury re-initiated moves to resolve the political deadlock through recasting the EC in line with the council's package proposal but could not come up with any result as of yesterday.

The issue may be raised again at a meeting of the council of advisers today. But a few advisers expressed frustration at the prevailing political situation following the resignation of four advisers.

The Awami League (AL) led 14party alliance, which has been demanding rescheduling of the

today its stance for deferring the election until an acceptable voter list is prepared and a level playing field is created.

"The next general election must be held after properly updating the voter list and changing the current election schedule," AL President Sheikh Hasina said yesterday. She will declare her alliance's stance from a grand rally in the capital

The Jatiya Party, Liberal Democratic Party, and a few small parties echoed the view of the 14-

tion will figure in the conditions to SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Ershad goes into hiding

POLLS PARTICIPATION

Hasina to set

5 conditions

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

from rally today

The Awami League (AL) led 14-

party combine at a grand rally in

the capital today will announce

that they will participate in election

but not according to current sched-

ule and under Chief Adviser and

Paltan Maidan, AL President

Sheikh Hasina will lay down five

conditions for her coalition's

the updated voter list, announce-

ment of fresh polls schedule, reconstitution of the Election

Commission (EC) in line with the

package proposals, and

depoliticisation of the administra-

Correction and publication of

Addressing the rally at historic

President lajuddin Ahmed.

participation in the election.

JP leaders tell of pressure from 4-party STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad was neither found at his home nor at any public place yesterday, fuelling the speculation further that he went into hiding amid tremendous pressure from the BNP-led four-party against forging alliance with 14-party.

Senior leaders were also in the dark about his whereabouts but they admitted that the former military ruler came under threat as soon as he desired to join the ALled alliance

However, a telephonic speech of Ershad was relayed through **VOTER LIST CORRECTION ENDS TODAY**

EC's men yet to visit most of city houses

Field level Election Commission (EC) staff have yet to visit most of the areas in the capital and elsewhere in the country on the last day of correcting the updated voter list

While many prospective voters have not yet been registered, EC Secretary Abdur Rashid Sarker yesterday said he sees no possibility of a decrease in the number of voters on the updated roll which reportedly contains 1.22 crore duplicate or excess voters. He said rather there is a possibility of an increase in the number of voters at the end of the correction process which began on December 8.

The ongoing drive is the fourth of such attempts preceding the upcoming election, which has also been mired with allegations of irregularities.

According to Awami League-led 14-party coalition there are over 1.5 crore 'fake voters' on the updated voter roll.

The EC staff have yet to visit most of the houses in Dhanmondi

while the scenario is even worse in Ashulia and Wazpur, outskirts of the capital, where many residents told The Daily Star yesterday that no EC staff visited their houses till yesterday for correcting the voter

Residents of Sved Nazrul Islam Road in Mohammadpur said enumerators visited their houses alright but they did not register any new name although most of the names of prospective voters in the area either had been dropped from



Around 100-year-old Rahimun Bibi of Basila in the capital claimed no Election Commission field workers came to her house to correct the updated voter list.

Iajuddin sees closing gap between two alliances

UNB, Dhaka

President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday hoped that all political parties would join the next general elections as differences between the two major alliances are now 'narrowed down.

"An ideal election atmosphere is now prevailing in the country due to the steps taken by the government," lajuddin told British High SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

POLLS EXPENDITURE

Tk 58cr to be released in a day or two

UNB, Dhaka

Finance Adviser Dr Shoeb Ahmed yesterday said his ministry will release Tk 58 crore in a day or two to meet election expenditures, including the spending on correction of the updated voter list.

Earlier, the ministry released Tk 12 crore in this regard.

"We'll make more funds

CG has not always worked neutrally

Butenis observes, says Iajuddin must play neutral role in push to end political row

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador in Dhaka Patricia A Butenis yesterday said the caretaker government (CG) of President Iajuddin Ahmed has not always worked neutrally, meaning sufferings to the nation.

She stressed that the chief adviser (CA) to the CG must listen to his advisers and lead them as a team through the elections.

Calling on the political parties to open new talks to bridge the gap

the Airport Police where he

remained under detention till last

or receive his son after waiting at the

Bangladeshi back home

after 5 years of horror

at Guantanamo prison

The US authorities yesterday night. His father was unable to meet

him either.

militant either.

between them, Butenis said CA Iajuddin must play a direct and neutral role in this effort.

She was delivering a keynote speech at a seminar on 'Democ-

Bangladesh Association for American Studies (BAAS) organised the seminar in cooperation with the American Centre in Dhaka. Held at the Cirdap auditorium in the capital, it was chaired by BAAS President

Dr AKM Nurun Nab Hasina puts voter list

Only then polls to be rescheduled, she says

correction first

police station for several hours. Awami League (AL) President Police did not allow journalists Sheikh Hasina yesterday once to take his photograph or talk to again reiterated her demand for rescheduling the election following Police intends to place Mubarak corrections on the voter list and before the court some time in the publication of it

business is all about

enterprising spirit...

morning today. Mubarak's father Abul Hashem, an imam at the Graphic Arts Institute mosque, claimed that his son was innocent. "He never had any links with al-Qaeda or Talibans or Mujahideen and he wasn't a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

accept a premature election in the name of following a constitutional the capital. provision of holding it within 90 days of dissolution of the last par-"The people have to know

whether their names are regis-

She also said the people will not

assure that the constitutional binding of holding the election within the stipulated 90 days must not be used as an excuse," the AL chief said while addressing a programme on the occasion of some former lawmakers and retired army officers joining her party at its Dhanmondi office in

Former minister and Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP-Matin) Secretary General ABM SEE PAGE 2 COL 5







36th Branch Opens today

Arzoo Mansion, Naya Bazar (Tanti Bazar Square), Dhaka

The following Branches will be opened soon

Savar Bazar Branch A-38, Savar Bazar Road Savar, Dhaka

Gazipur Chowrasta Branch Reaz Tower, Gazipur Chowrasta

Imamgonj Branch Roy Iswar Chadra Shil Bahadur Street 41 Imamgonj, Dhaka



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