

## Admin officials hit

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to have 15 years' experience to be the chief judicial magistrate or chief metropolitan magistrate while a judicial cadre will need only 10 years' experience.

An administration cadre needs to have 12 and eight years' experience for being appointed as additional chief judicial magistrate and senior judicial magistrate or metropolitan magistrate while a judicial cadre will need only seven or four years' experience, Abul Hossain mentioned.

Abdul Muveed Chowdhury, former secretary and adviser to the caretaker government said, "Bringing the magistracy under the law ministry is not separation of the judiciary." To ensure true separation of the judiciary, the magistracy needs to be brought under a separate secretariat under the Supreme Court, he added.

Demanding scrapping of the law for contempt of court, Magistrate Rokon-Ud-Doula said, "The media is writing about the corruption of ministers and bureaucrats, but it cannot write anything about the judges' corruption in fear of contempt of court."

Pointing out that an administration cadre has to retire from job at the age of 57 while the judges retire at 67, he said, "This discrimination cannot go on."

Rokon called for suspending all activities at the secretariat and district and upazila offices if he is sued or arrested for saying this.

He urged all magistrates to come to Dhaka after withdrawal of the state of emergency to force the government to scrap the contempt of court law.

Columist Farhad Mazhar said he will oppose the separation unless an elected government implements it.

"As if the court has become an NGO - we will not accept the court if it takes a single penny from the foreign donors," he said, hinting at

a capacity building project for the judiciary funded by the World Bank.

The speakers welcomed separation of the judiciary from the executive but said the government did not consult all parties concerned before fixing November 1 for implementing the separation.

They said the separation will only shift the control of the judiciary from the establishment to the law ministry - it will not make the judiciary independent.

The magistrates said after returning to their stations they will recommend how to address the "anomalies" resulting out of the hurried implementation of separation of the judiciary.

The BCS Admin Cadre Association will accumulate the recommendations and send for the government's consideration.

Former deputy commissioner of Dhaka Abdul Mobarak, Bangladesh Biman Airlines Ltd, Managing Director MA Momen and BIAM Director General Mohammad Sadique also addressed the seminar.

## ID cards

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voting in different elections and participating in insurance schemes, admission to educational institutions, marriage registration, purchasing vehicles, connection of gas, electricity, water, telephone, mobile phone, internet and cable for satellite TV channels, government facilities like subsidy and assistance, filing of cases, appeal or petition with the court, applying for share and opening of BO account and other services and facilities.

The draft ordinance has also proposed a provision authorising the government to relax the stringent conditions for the use of the national ID cards.

## AL meet today

FROM PAGE 1  
office of detained party chief Sheikh Hasina at Dhanmondi with Zillur Rahman, acting president of the party, in the chair.

Earlier, on Friday, Awami League (AL) received the EC's formal invitation to the dialogue. The EC in its invitation sought 10 names who would represent the AL at the dialogue.

The 10 AL leaders who are to represent the AL at the dialogue are likely to be nominated from the following: presidium members Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta and Motia Chowdhury, advisory council members Abdul Mal Abdul Muhith, Advocate Rahmat Ali, Acting General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam, Joint General Secretary Mukul Bose, organising secretaries Sabir Hossain Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan, Mahmudur Rahman Manna and Akhtaruzzaman, said sources.

To thoroughly review the EC's draft proposal for electoral reforms, the ALCWC will also form a separate powerful committee today comprising the party's presidium members, members of the advisory council, the joint general secretary and the organising secretaries. After its formation, the committee will have to place its recommendation within a week.

Highly placed sources in the AL told The Daily Star that either Tofail or Muhith might head the committee.

On the eve of today's ALCWC meeting, a number of senior AL leaders last night held a meeting with Zillur Rahman, the acting party chief, at his Gulshan residence, the sources said.

Sources attending the meetings told The Daily Star that the issues they discussed with Zillur were primarily over the dialogue with the EC and the ways to get release of the detained party leaders including its chief Hasina.

AL leaders Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury, Syed Ashraf Islam and Sabir Hossain Chowdhury attended the meetings among others.

On the other hand, the dissident reformist leaders of the AL last night held a meeting at the party's Organising Secretary Mahmudur Rahman Manna's Gulshan residence. Among others, Joint General Secretary Mukul Bose, Abdul Mannan, Akhtaruzzaman, KM Jahangir, Mostofa Jalal Mohiuddin, Nazma Rahman, Ali Ashraf and Habibur Rahman were present at the meeting.

The ALCWC meeting today will be the second one without its party chief after the partial lifting of ban on indoor politics. The first ALCWC meeting after the ban was lifted was held on September 12 when four senior AL leaders -- then acting general secretary Mukul Bose, Organising Secretary Abdul Mannan, Prof Abu Sayeed and AKM Jahangir Hossain -- were manhandled by some rowdy and ordinary activists of the party.

Syed Ashraf, acting general secretary of the party, warned of severe organisational actions against any member of the party causing any trouble during today's ALCWC meeting. Assistance from Dhaka Metropolitan Police has also been sought to ensure law and order during the meeting, he added.

Meanwhile, AL Presidium Member Suranjit Sengupta, while talking to reporters at his Jigata residence in the capital, yesterday said the ALCWC meeting will discuss the dialogue agendas with the EC. He hoped that the meeting would take a decision that would be appropriate and worthwhile.

Over the idea of holding national dialogues with the caretaker government, he said a politics-friendly atmosphere is needed in the country first before holding such a discussion.

## ACC launches

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The 35 graft suspects also include 11 former BNP legislators, five former AL lawmakers, a former Jatiya Party MP and five bureaucrats.

The names on the list of 35 are derived from another list of 80 graft suspects that was made available to the media and published on September 27.

With the publication of the fourth list, the number of alleged high-profile graft suspects stands at 177.

Earlier, names of 142 graft suspects were published by the ACC in three phases. The first list of 50 graft suspects was published on February 18.

According to the watchdog's rules, on receipt of ACC notices a graft suspect will have seven working days to submit his or her wealth statement. Anyone can apply for extra seven days, if they feel the need to do so.

The commission will go for legal actions or file a case against a suspect if he or she does not submit the wealth statement within the stipulated time.

He noted that the forum should be formed as soon as possible as the present economic situation warrants some urgent policy decisions.

He said the new platform should be business-oriented. A strong representation of the business community there would enable them better explain their position and the barriers they face in running businesses.

Proposed to be a high profile public-private body of over 40 members, the forum would be run through a secretariat, said sources.

Its chairperson will sit twice a year with the members while the finance adviser who will be the executive chairperson will sit in every two months, according to the draft proposal.

## Unity call louder

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secretary general Ashraf Hossain said they will take into consideration any amendment to the draft reform proposal, adding that the proposals were meant for making the party acceptable and democratic.

He, however, again claimed Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan to be the lawful secretary general of the party and hoped that the Election Commission would invite them to its dialogue on electoral reforms.

Meantime, Khandaker Delwar Hossain is rapidly notching up support of senior party leaders and front organisations, seemingly boosting the pro-Khaleda faction.

Some senior leaders, who earlier lurched towards reform initiatives of Mannan Bhuiyan, are now budging from their position due to the changed circumstances, sources said.

The big chunk of party leaders, however, believe that the expulsion of Bhuiyan and Ashraf should be lifted to make the party united and strong because, in their view, the former secretary general is crucial to organising the party in the present situation.

Standing committee member M Shamsul Islam and Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal General Secretary Moazzem Hossain Alal, who both sided with Bhuiyan before, met Delwar yesterday at his apartment where Brig Gen (ret'd) Hannan Shah, the BNP chairperson's adviser, was also present.

Earlier another standing committee member Dr RA Gani and Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan expressed their support to Delwar.

Leaders and workers of Narsingdi proper and Belabo unit BNP, Mymensingh unit BNP and some front organisations of the party yesterday pledged their support for the new secretary general.

"Detained Khaleda Zia is the most popular leader whose leadership has made the party stronger. We have to remain alert so that the party does not plunge into confusion. The BNP's unity must remain intact," Delwar said while addressing them.

Stopping short of mentioning the names of the expelled leaders, he said, "Those who are isolated from the people and from the mind of the party leaders and workers will be thrown into the dustbin of history."

People who said the BNP will split into several factions are now trying to unite under Khaleda's leadership, he added.

The BNP secretary general once again urged the government to let them open the party's central office now that indoor politics is open.

Brig Gen (ret'd) Hannan Shah criticised the Bhuiyan-led faction, claiming that his leadership has proved futile.

"Blessed by the unseen forces, they wanted to harm the BNP but they failed and retreated," he said adding that their dream will not come true.

## Mainul

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officials, the law adviser said, "We are also capable of having laws to strengthen the executive branch. It is our responsibility and we will do so."

## Durga Puja ends

FROM PAGE 16  
near Dhakeswari National Temple with 58 trucks carrying idols of Durga.

The procession ended at Bahadur Shah Park after parading through different streets of the capital. In the evening, the idols were immersed in the Buriganga amid sadness and tears.

The government took tight security measures as members of different law enforcement agencies escorted the processions until immersion of the idols. A huge number of law enforcers including Rapid Action Battalion stood guard over the puja mandaps.

Nirmal Chatterjee, organising secretary of Mahanagar Sarbajanan Puja Committee, said idols from around 58 Puja Mandaps were gathered at Dhakeswari Temple for the procession.

Hindu community leader CR Dutta, among others, attended the immersion ceremony at Walgahat.

Idols from around 50 Puja Mandaps were gathered at Shankhari Bazar Puja Mandap and immersed in the Buriganga at Ganakuti. This year 165 mandaps were established in Dhaka to celebrate the festival.

Durga Puja is the worship of 'Shakti' or divine power embodied in Devi Durga. It symbolises the

battle between good and evil where the dark forces eventually succumb to the divine.

Yesterday was a public holiday marking the occasion. President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed met the leaders of the Hindu community.

On the occasion, President Prof Dr Iajuddin Ahmed and his wife Prof Dr Anwara Begum hosted a reception to the Hindus at Bangabhaban yesterday.

The state-run and private television channels and radios aired special programmes while newspapers published special supplements on the great religious festival.

CHITTAGONG  
Devout Hindus immersed the idols in the Bay of Bengal along the Patenga sea beach in the port city amid a security cordon effected by Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) and Rab, reports Our Correspondent in Chittagong.

Mahanagar Puja Ujjapan Parishad organised the immersion ceremony in association with Chittagong City Corporation (CCC).

Thousands of devotees from all corners of the city, carrying the idols gathered since morning along the beach and immersed the Durga idols in a mood of gloom.

## Better Business

FROM PAGE 1  
on that in Cambodia.

But a number of business leaders have told The Daily Star that they do not prefer the Cambodian model as the situation in the Southeast Asian country and Bangladesh is not the same.

Mahbubur Rahman, president of International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh (ICC-B), welcomed the government move and said a consultative body of this kind is needed for proper formulation and implementation of the government policies.

President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Mir Nasir Hossain said the proposed committee will help the business community take out policies conducive to expanding their businesses.

He said the business community have long felt the necessity for such a body as they need quick decisions from the government side on issues like investment and business operations in the country.

Nasir said he hopes the BBBF will help them avoid bureaucratic tangles in seeking government approvals for different private ventures.

He noted that the forum should be formed as soon as possible as the present economic situation warrants some urgent policy decisions.

He said the new platform should be business-oriented. A strong representation of the business community there would enable them better explain their position and the barriers they face in running businesses.

Proposed to be a high profile public-private body of over 40 members, the forum would be run through a secretariat, said sources.

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## Polls meaningless

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gained independence over three decades ago, it is not economically independent yet. He urged everyone to unite as "one nation, one flag and one people" and fight for the country.

"Though the past government created the Anti-corruption Commission, it was corrupt itself. But the present caretaker government made the commission independent as soon as it came to power," he said, adding, "Those who have not committed a crime do not need to be afraid."

"There is nothing we can do if an arrested corruption suspect is proved innocent at court. But no one will be spared if they are proven guilty," he stated.

Meanwhile, over 100 Awami League (AL) supporters demonstrated outside the venue demanding the release of all "political prisoners", including AL chief Sheikh Hasina, and the withdrawal of all sorts of ban on political activities.

Citing an October 13 article published in the Washington Post, titled "A Silent War Against Corruption," Moeen said this is a testament to the nine months of work by the caretaker government and it has improved Bangladesh's image abroad.

Moeen also said, "It is our shame that we are still arguing about the Father of the Nation and who proclaimed independence. But they are our national heroes. Bangabandhu is the Father of the Nation and Ziaur Rahman declared independence. There is no doubt about this."

The army chief urged non-resident Bangladeshis to invest in the country as the investment climate is currently at its best. He called on them to come forward in the interest of the nation.

## BDR to press

FROM PAGE 1  
BSF to install pillars there and hand over the lands to Bangladesh.

The Indian authority's installation of structures, roads and wire fencing in zero to 150 yards off the border, BSF's obstruction to cultivation in Uttarakhand-Amalshid area of Sylhet and to Bangladesh's development work including setting up of structures and road repairs will also be raised at the meeting.

BDR sources said they will ask the Indian authorities to stop releasing industrial garbage from Agartala into Bangladesh through a canal near border pillar 2023/6.

In the meeting, the Bangladesh team is also going to raise the incidents of firings on Bangladeshis as well as kidnap and arrest of them by the BSF men and Indian citizens, and exchange and release of the dead, captured and arrested.

BDR sources said the BSF killed 37, injured over 150 and abducted 70 on south-western borders from January 1 to October 7.

Of the abducted, about 45 are still in different Indian jails. At least 50 incidents of exchange of fire between BDR and BSF took place on the aforesaid borders.

The Bangladesh team will raise the issue of coordinated propaganda in Indian media against Bangladesh and BDR. It will also emphasise the need for strengthening mutual understanding.

Other issues to be discussed in the meeting include trespassing and attempts of pushing in of Bangla-speaking people into Bangladesh by BSF personnel and Indian citizens, BSF's non-response to flag meeting calls, joint patrolling and pillar inspection and Bangladeshis criminals operating from India.

## BB won't

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loan even before the IMF suggestion by declaring a loan as default if it becomes overdue for three months.

However, the government high-ups did not approve the idea, taking into account the negative impacts on banking and business sectors.

Finance ministry sources said the government is concerned at the present state of the country's economy when business is witnessing a sluggish growth. "If the government redefines the default loan it will increase total volume of default loans and at the same time businessmen will suffer, thus businesses will be hampered," a source said.

## WB assures

FROM PAGE 16  
He also reaffirmed the government's intention to transfer power to an elected government by the end of 2008, highlighted the major policy and institutional reforms such as the reconstitution of the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Election Commission and the Public Service Commission.

World Bank Alternate Executive Director Zakir Ahmed Khan, ERD Secretary M Aminul Islam Bhuiyan, Finance Secretary Dr Mohammad Tareque, Bangladesh Ambassador in the US Humayun Kabir and Economic Minister in Washington D.C. Mahfuzul Haque were present at the meeting.

## Benazir for help

FROM PAGE 16  
visited a Karachi hospital to offer support to some of those wounded in a deadly suicide attack on her homecoming parade, an AFP correspondent said.

About 100 supporters cheered Benazir Bhutto -- who was making her first public appearance in the streets of Karachi since Thursday night's bombings that killed 139 people -- as she left Jinnah Hospital here.

Flanked by heavy security carrying automatic weapons, Benazir Bhutto waved to supporters before getting into a four-wheel drive vehicle at the entrance of the hospital, where many of the badly wounded were taken after the blasts.

Wearing a bright yellow tunic, matching trousers and a white headscarf, Benazir Bhutto waved again on the step of the car before she was whisked away without making any public statement.

About 10 paramilitary officers also stood guard.

A suicide blast ripped through Benazir Bhutto's homecoming parade Thursday on the streets of Karachi where hundreds of thousands of supporters had gathered to cheer her return from eight years in self-imposed exile.

Some 400 people were injured by the shrapnel-packed bomb that caused devastation over a wide area. A grenade was thrown into the crowd seconds before the larger blast.

Benazir Bhutto has since held a press conference at which she pledged to stay in Pakistan to combat militancy and fight general elections in January, seen as a key step to returning the country to some 160 million people to civilian rule.

But her hospital visit Sunday was her first appearance outside of her heavily guarded home since the blast.

The attack on her motorcade has cast doubt over her previous plans to tour the country to whip up support ahead of the polls.

The explosions on Thursday came hours after Bhutto shrugged off

militant threats to set foot on Pakistani soil for the first time since 1999.

Benazir Bhutto had returned from self-imposed exile after President Pervez Musharraf dropped corruption charges against her in the hope her popularity could shore up his grip on power.

She had mostly worked out a power-sharing deal with him, but his re-election as president earlier this month is now being challenged in the courts, as is the graft amnesty.

## 3 hill dists

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Circuit House.

Since there is no district judge in the three districts, the deputy commissioners concerned perform the duty of "civil judge" and an additional divisional commissioner of Chittagong carries out the function of sessions judge as per a law enacted in 1900.

Justice Kamrul Islam Siddiqui, leader of the special team formed to monitor the preparation of introducing an independent judiciary, said they felt the necessity of introducing judge's court in the three hill districts during their visit as the local people submitted memorandums to them in favour of it.

At present, the government and the Supreme Court are concentrating on the separation of judiciary from the executive, he said.

Justice Kamrul hoped that steps would be taken to introduce judge's court and specialised courts right after the separation of judiciary.

He, however, did not comment on when the court would be introduced in the three hill districts.

Bandarban Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Abu Saleh Mohammad Ruhul Imran and Bar Association President Advocate Mohiuddin Ahmad, among others, were present.

## US raid on Sadr City

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of any innocent civilians being killed as a result of this operation," the military said in the updated statement.

Meanwhile, two Iraqi Catholic priests abducted more than a week ago in the northern city of Mosul were released alive and well on Sunday, church negotiators said.

Fathers Pius Affas and Mazen Ishoa, who were kidnapped last Saturday after being threatened by an unknown group, were now back at their church in Mosul, the negotiators told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"The two priests were left this morning by the kidnappers on a street in the middle of Mosul," they said.

"The priests then took a taxi and went to their church, which is now looking after them and won't let anyone speak to them."

The kidnappers had demanded that a ransom of one million dollars, a bishop told AFP earlier in the week, but it was not immediately clear if any money had been handed over to ensure the priests' freedom.

Father Affas, who is in his 60s, and Father Ishoa, in his 30s, were sent a letter two months ago warning of an attack if they did not leave the city, according to Rome-based mission agency Middle East Concern.

Father Affas is originally from Mosul, a bastion of the Sunni insurgency, and has been a priest for more than 40 years, while Father Ishoa is from a Christian village south of the city, the agency said.

Syro-Catholic Archbishop Basile Georges Cassmoussa was in charge of the negotiations to free the priests, Middle East Concern said.

One week ago, the day after the priests were abducted, Pope Benedict XVI issued a plea from the Vatican for their release.

"I learned today that two priests from the archdiocese of Mosul were kidnapped and threatened with death," he said. "I call on the abductors to rapidly liberate the two clerics and I reiterate that violence does not resolve tensions."

Middle East Concern said earlier in the week that the kidnappers had withdrawn an agreement for their release and demanded a larger ransom.

Iraq's Christians, a tiny minority, have been the target of sectarian cleansing, killings and kidnappings at the hands of both Sunni and Shia Islamists, as well as criminal gangs.

Their churches have been bombed and homes confiscated. Without their own militia to defend them, the community is believed to have shrunk to half its previous size, with more people joining the exodus each day.

PKK's leaders are in Kurdistan's rugged mountains. The Turkish military with its mightiness could not annihilate them or arrest them, so how could we arrest them and hand them to Turkey?" he asked.

Handing over Kurdish leaders is a dream which would not come true."

The president of the northern Kurdish region Massud Barzani, who also addressed the conference along with Talabani, warned that the regional administration will defend itself against any attack by neighbouring countries.

"We will defend our land," he said, referring to the Turkish parliament's authorisation on Wednesday of an incursion into northern Iraq to attack Kurdish rebel camps.

Iran urged Turkey Ankara to opt for diplomatic means to resolve the dispute.

"Diplomatic means should be used and dialogue should continue between Iraq and Turkey," foreign ministry spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini told reporters in Tehran.

Ankara says some 3,500 PKK fighters are in bases in northern Iraq, which they use as a springboard for attacks on Turkish territory.

It says the rebels are supported by Iraqi Kurdish leaders, a charge the Iraqi Kurdish administration strongly denies.

Last week, Erdogan called for urgent action by Washington and Baghdad to crack down on PKK bases, saying that Ankara had no more time to lose with "empty words".

But he also said that his talks with US President George W. Bush next month in Washington would be crucial in determining Ankara's course of action concerning a cross-border operation.

Baghdad and Washington both oppose unilateral Turkish military action in northern Iraq.

Authorities from the autonomous Kurdish government in the region have said they will rebuff any Turkish attack on their territory.

Faced with rising rebel violence, Turkey says it is running out of options other than military action as neither the United States nor Iraq have done enough to stamp out the rebel bases.

## Holiday market

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frame, place curtains or place any structure at the spots.

There would be no money or rent charged. Only registered hawkers will be allowed to sit there and their spots would be selected through lottery, the press release said. The hawkers will not be allowed to sell, exchange or lease their spots.

The 20 new specified spots are: 1. The open space and roadside places near Alam Market at Zurain Postagola, 2. In front of Samad Super Market in Jatrabari, on both sides of the road from Shaheed Faruk Sarak to Khanka Sharif and on the northern pavements of Jatrabari Road, 3. Open space on the northern side of Bangladesh Bank in Motijheel and two open spaces adjacent to the roads on the western side of Sonali Bank main branch, 4. Bangabandhu Avenue Link Road in Gulistan, on the pavement on Bangabandhu Avenue and on the Baitul Mukarram Link Road and Muktagong area, 5. On the pavement on the northern side of

the Shahbagh Police Station, 6. On the pavement on the western side of Dowel Chatter, 7. On the pavement on the eastern side of New Market, open space on the western side of Gawsia Market, on the eastern side of Mirpur Road from Gawsia Market, 8. On the pavement on Indira Road near Farmgate, 9. The space adjacent to the Met Office on Rokeya Sarani and 10. Specified place at Mirpur-10 area, 11. In front of Purbali Cinema Hall in Mirpur-11, 12. The open space adjacent to Mirpur Stadium, 13. On the pavement in front of Mirpur Shah Ali Market, 14. On the pavement in front of Mukti Jodha Market in Mirpur-1, 15. On the pavement in front of Shah Ali Market in Mirpur-116. On the pavement in front of Mirpur Islami Bank, 17. The space adjacent to Gabtoli Bus Terminal 18. The open space of Roads and Highways Department at Amtoli in Mohakhali, 19. The space near the DCC market in Gulshan-1 (flower market), 20. The space on the Uttara Rajuk playground.

## Judicial service

FROM PAGE 1  
for November 1, he observed.

He also blamed a section of bureaucrats for delaying the implementation of the SC's 12-point directives in this regard.

He mentioned that some of the problems the BCS body is raising now are not only objectionable but also baseless.