

# BNP rights RPO wrongs

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The detailed poll schedule.  
The officials said there are about 60 applications missing basic information about the parties, or required documents like constitutions and receipts of office rent payments, or they are not accompanied with pay orders for the registration fee, and those applications should be rejected outright.

Verifying the information the applicants provide is a time-consuming work, they added.  
There are also some applicant parties who are only regional or based on religions. They will not get registration as they do not meet the basic requirements demanded by the amended Representative of the People Order (RPO), said the officials.  
Bangladesh Shonkhalghu Gomatantri Party, Quran O Sunnah Bastabayan Party, Islamic Front Bangladesh, and Bangladesh Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Democratic Party, and Parbatya Chhatragam Jana Sanghati Samity are some of the applicants that will not be considered for registration.

These parties will not be given the chance to argue their cases, said an EC official involved in scrutinising the applications, adding, "If they fail to meet the basic requirements like providing the constitutions or having required number of offices across the country, their applications will be rejected."

Getting registered with the EC has been made mandatory by the commission for political parties seeking to contest in the December 18 parliamentary election.

The EC has so far decided to register 13 parties, giving the first registration certificate to Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

The other parties that will get certificates soon are Awami League (AL), the Workers Party of Bangladesh, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Sammyabadi Dal, Jatiya Party (Ershad), Jatiya Party (Monju), Bikalpadhara Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu), National Awami Party (NAP), Gomatantri Party, Krishak Samik Janata League (KSJL), and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.

The EC decided to register Gomatantri Party yesterday while decisions about BNP, Islami Okiya Jote (IOJ), and JSD (Rab) are in the pipe line, the commission sources said.

The technical evaluation com-

## Toxic ship

**FROM PAGE 1**  
MT Enterprise at their yard in the coastal upazila of Sitakunda. The ship is blacklisted by Greenpeace for containing hazardous substances.

On October 17, Bela filed the writ petition accusing the importer of the ship for contempt of court.

According to sources, MT Enterprise, an oil tanker which was earlier named as Ocean Enterprise, Atlanta, Taiko, was tainted with asbestos and heavy toxic metals like lead, mercury, cadmium, copper and zinc.

Madina Enterprise started the process of bringing the ship to Bangladesh for scrapping in mid-July. The move raised concerns among environmentalists and others.

They later informed the ministry concerned about the ship and its possible threats to the coastal marine ecology. However, Madina Enterprise managed to get the no objection certificate (NOC) from the shipping ministry and brought the toxic ship to the outer anchorage of Chittagong Port early September.

Sources said the ministry later cancelled the NOC after environmentalists raised their voice against the move.

# Govt seeks

**FROM PAGE 1**  
M Anwarul Haq had a meeting yesterday with Foreign Adviser Iftakhar Chowdhury and Afghan Ambassador to Dhaka Ahmad Karim Nawabi where they requested all possible cooperation in rescuing the kidnapped Brac staffers.

The adviser assured them of all cooperation by his ministry. He also handed a letter for Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta to the Afghan ambassador in the meeting.

"A few months ago, we rescued Brac official Noor through our four-pronged approach... We hope we will be able to rescue them (Akhter and Shahjahan) too," the adviser told newsmen.

Brac official Noorul Islam was kidnapped September last year in Afghanistan. A few days before his abduction, another Brac official was shot dead in that country.

The Afghan ambassador said the Afghan authorities will make all possible efforts to rescue them. Asked whether the abduction stirred the decision to withdraw all Bangladeshi Brac officials from Afghanistan, Aminul Alam replied in the negative.

"We do not want to keep our staffs posted in a foreign country for over 10 years. So, we have started withdrawing our 392 staff one and a half years ago and it will be complete in five years," he told The Daily Star, adding that the time is required to build the capacity of Brac's Afghan staff.

"Brac's activities would continue there." The NGO has about 4,000 staff, including 160 Bangladeshis, in Afghanistan. It is also working in five African countries.

Aminul Alam and Director of Public Affairs and Communications

## Bibiyan power

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matter at this point. The IFC comparison of power tariffs of rental power projects, some of which operate on costly petroleum oil, versus a large conventional gas based power project also lacks level playing field.

The IFC also did not obtain the actual price data of the small power projects before advocating for Powertek's reduced price, the source noted.

The power secretary on several occasions said the easily installable rental power projects would be costlier than conventional large power projects.

The Bibiyana tender initially attracted pre-qualification bids from AES, Chevron, Powertek, Kepco, Summit and Malaysian YTL late last year. Summit was conditionally selected at first but then in January it was arbitrarily disqualified. YTL was also disqualified. Previously qualified for the Sirajganj 450MW power project, Summit repeatedly requested the Power Cell to reconsider but it was ignored.

## 4-party

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Over 600 leaders and workers of the four parties gathered in and outside the auditorium.

"Don't try to foil the ninth parliamentary election. The result won't be good," the BNP secretary general cautioned the government.

"We are always an election-oriented party and so are our allies. We want to participate in the election, but the caretaker government will have to work according to the agreements we reached at the last round of talks."

He however did not elaborate on the agreements.

Delwar said their coalition will continue to hold protest rallies until the government pledges there would be no obstacles to the BNP chief's participation in the polls.

Mohajid said there is no legal bar to Khaleda's competing in the polls. But the way the government is citing legal complexities over the matter reeks of conspiracy.

He said he is afraid plots are on to have Khaleda and Hasina convicted through mock trials and leave them out of the election.

Mohajid said those who want an election minus Khaleda Zia are in fact out to turn the country into a failed state.

## JP distributing

**FROM PAGE 16**  
of nomination forms.  
Ershad took nomination forms for Dhaka-17, Rangpur-3 and Habiganj-3 while his wife Rowshan Ershad for Mymensingh-4 and Gaibandha-5 constituencies. JP secretary general Ruhul Amin Hawlader also took two forms.

All JP leaders who are interested to contest the upcoming parliamentary election have been asked to collect nomination forms by October 30 and submit their forms by October 31.

The intending candidates for all constituencies of the country can collect nomination forms from Maj (retired) Mohammad Khaled Akber, treasurer of the party, from its Banani office.

The fee for each nomination form has been fixed at Tk 5,000. Sixty forms were sold on the opening day.

The HC order stayed the proceedings against her for three months and issued a rule upon the government and the ACC to explain as to why the proceedings should not be quashed.

## EPR convict

**FROM PAGE 1**  
parliamentary elections if his or her appeal against the conviction remains pending with the appellate court.

The petition also said the Rule 11(5) goes against Article 66 of the Constitution determining the qualifications and disqualifications of the people for contesting polls.

The lawyer said as per Article 66 of the Constitution, a person would be disqualified for parliamentary elections if he or she is convicted for a criminal offence involving moral turpitude or sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years unless a period of five years elapses since his release.

A special court set up on Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises sentenced Nazmul Huda to 12 years' imprisonment on April 3 this year on charges of concealing wealth information in his statement submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and amassing wealth illegally.

On August 27 last year, Huda was awarded seven years' rigorous imprisonment in a bribery case filed by the ACC while his wife Sigma Huda was sentenced to three years' simple imprisonment for abetting her husband.

ACC sources said at least 60 politicians, who were earlier expected to contest the parliamentary elections, have been convicted in cases filed under the EPR.

## Fuel prices

**FROM PAGE 1**  
For subsidising diesel and kerosene. Dr Tamim said Tk 1,400 crore has been spent so far for subsidising fuel in the first quarter of this fiscal year.

On transport fares, Tamim said Bangladesh Road and Transport Authority (BRTA) has already met the bus owners' association and the new bus fares will be announced today or tomorrow.

The present government has so far adjusted petroleum prices three times. Since independence fuel prices have been adjusted 30 times -- cut four times and upped 26 times.

In 1986, petrol price was reduced to Tk 12.14 from Tk 14.67, and diesel and kerosene to Tk 6.71 from Tk 7.22.

The price of petrol was reduced drastically to Tk 7.51 from Tk 12.88 in 1990. The price was readjusted to Tk 14 the same year. In 1992, price of petrol was again reduced to Tk 13.7.

Later in 1994, diesel and kerosene prices were reduced to Tk 12.7 from Tk 13.7.

# Toxic milk powder

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to FAO in Bangkok for investigation are expected to arrive in three to four days, an official handout said yesterday.

In another development, the Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) counsel Manzil Murshid yesterday sent a legal notice to the secretaries of the ministries of home, commerce, health and inspector general of police (IGP).

The notice said that despite the wide media publicity of the High Court ban, the government has not taken any effective steps to comply with the order. The notice further said that a charge of contempt of court would be filed against the respondents if they fail to take steps to comply with the court order immediately.

The HC issued the order in response to a petition filed by HRPB after toxic melamine was found to be present in eight commercial powdered milk brands -- Nido fortified instant, Red Cow, Yashili 1, Yashili 2, Sweet Baby, Diploma, Anlene and Danu.

The government has, meanwhile, decided to conduct tests to check for the presence of melamine in food products other than milk.

The government departments concerned, including BSTI, will take necessary measures in this regard.

The ministry meeting has also decided to strengthen campaigns in the country for breastfeeding children up to six months of age.

Mahbub Jamil, special assistant to the adviser for industries, Health Secretary AMM Nasruddin, Home Secretary Abdul Karim, Industries Secretary Sheikh Enayet Ullah,

Inspector General of Prisons (IG-Prisons) Brig Gen Zakir Hassan told The Daily Star that they received the letter from the home ministry at about 8:00pm.

When asked, the IG-Prisons said, "Due to sickness, Babar will stay at the prisons cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) hospital until the doctors release him."

Jail sources said the detention order against Babar was issued by a deputy secretary of the home ministry. The detention order used three cases filed with Ramna police and a general diary filed with Gulshan police as references.

Police sources said the GD (no-2377) filed on Saturday night with Gulshan police mentioned that as Babar is a godfather of terrorists and a smuggler, he should be kept inside jail otherwise criminal activities might be increased.

According to jail sources, Babar has been staying at the prison cell of BSMMU hospital for 16 out of almost 17 months of his detention, which is the longest stay of any high-profile corruption suspects at the prison cell during the last two years.

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) had filed the case in connection with corruption in awarding a Chinese company the coalmine job.

The same HC bench on October 14 felt embarrassed to entertain a petition filed by BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to quash proceedings against her in the same case.

Meanwhile, Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice MA Matin referred an appeal filed by the ACC against an HC order, which stayed proceedings against Khaleda Zia in the case, to the full bench of the Supreme Court for hearing tomorrow.

The HC order stayed the proceedings against her for three months and issued a rule upon the government and the ACC to explain as to why the proceedings should not be quashed.

## Barapukuria

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The HC bench comprised of Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Huq and Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury sent the five petitioners to Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin for a decision in this regard.

As Abdur Razzak, one of the petitioners' counsels, placed a petition before the HC bench yesterday for hearing, the bench felt embarrassed. Razzak told the court that there were five similar petitions pending with the court.

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## AL okays

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Ashraf said ALWCW will finally define which unit would be treated as grassroots and what would be the process of giving nomination.

If there are more than five candidates in each constituency, open votes will be held to elect five and AL central parliamentary board would finalise the nomination, meeting sources said.

Ashraf said nomination aspirants will have to buy nomination form at Tk 5,000 from the central committee and submit it to the grassroots level committee.

He added they would give nomination based on the recommendations from the grassroots to give party tickets to competent candidates.

The Awami League wants to select candidates based on one-member-one-vote theory like US presidential candidate nomination process," he added.

The meeting chaired by Zillur observed that there is no bar in accordance with the existing laws to Sheikh Hasina's participation in the poll.

"She'll return to Bangladesh in the first week of next month and under her leadership Awami League will take part in the election. There is no confusion about it," it observed.

Ashraf said, "The government has no jurisdiction to decide who will be able to be candidate or not."

The meeting reiterated its demand that the EC should hold the upazila election after a reasonable time gap.

"If held within a week gap, both the national and upazila elections could be held," he said, urging the government and EC to be "logical".

Even 58 days within the election, neither candidates nor voters know their constituency, the AL leader said. He asked EC to resolve the complexities centring re-demarcation of the electoral constituencies before November 2.

He said if the court gives judgement in favour of the re-demarcation, they would welcome it.

Health Ministry Additional Secretary Abul Kalam Azad, BSTI Director General Azmal Hossain, health directorate's Director General Prof Dr MA Fayed also were present at the meeting.

The affected companies have decided to not take up a legal battle regarding the ban.

"We have discussed the situation. Our lawyers have advised us to wait for the test results from Bangkok," SA Mallick, managing director of New Zealand Dairy Products Bangladesh Ltd, said.

The company markets Anlene, Red Cow and Diploma.

Mallick also said that they have already stopped distribution of the products and directed the retailers to remove the banned products from shelves.

## Babar

**FROM PAGE 1**  
while other cases are under trial.  
Deputy Inspector General of Prisons (DIG-Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiquee last night confirmed that they received the detention order.

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## Rafique-ul Huq

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which is now the office of the chief adviser.

"It will be wrong if it is said that all the steps of this government are bad. We must give the government credit for the good work it has done," said Rafique-ul Huq, counsel for both Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and BNP chief Khaleda Zia.

He, however, criticised the government for formulating "so many" ordinances and termed it a "government of ordinances", saying it has issued at least 91 ordinances.

He also criticised the government as a "government of destruction", saying, "This government has damaged almost all business houses by throwing their entrepreneurs in jails... It demolished houses, roads and establishments."

About holding of the December 18 parliamentary election under the state of emergency, barrister Rafique said, "Emergency is not required to protect voters. It is rather used to scare them."

Talking on the "minus-two" formula, he said this was a wrong idea and the government could later realise it. "The government is now trying to make a 'plus-two' plan," he quipped.

Barrister Rafique expressed his optimism about bringing the AL and BNP chiefs to the discussion table.

## Foreign observers

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ATM Shamsul Huda, two election commissioners, M Sohul Hussain and Brig Gen (Retd) M Sakawat Hossain, were present at the meeting.

After the meeting Election Commissioner M Sohul Hussain told reporters that the foreign organisations apprised the Commission of problems in visa processing.

He said EC would soon send letters to both foreign and home ministries to take steps so that the foreign observers do not face any hassle in getting visa for monitoring the election.

Replying to a question, Sohul said the two leaders, Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, would not face problems in contesting the election if they are not convicted by any court.

"We've told earlier that nobody will have to face problems unless anybody is convicted by the courts," he said.

Asked whether the election schedule might be deferred due to the court hearing on the delimitation issues, Election Commissioner Sakawat Hossain said the EC has been observing the court proceedings, expecting the resolution of the cases soon.

"Let's wait until November 2 and it can then be said whether the schedule will be deferred or not," he said in reply to a question.

## SQ Chy

**FROM PAGE 16**  
recorded the statement of the complainant, took it into cognisance, and issued an arrest warrant against the accused. The court also fixed October 29 for next hearing of the case.

The judge said he passed the order as the charges brought against Salauddin under the Income Tax Ordinance 1984 were found to be true. In his complaint, Mamun mentioned that Salauddin has evaded paying tax on a total of income Tk 3.08 crore over the mentioned years.

Salauddin repeatedly gave false information to the income tax department about his real income and expenditure, the complainant stated.

On February 4 last year, the joint forces arrested Salauddin on charges of anti-state activities, sabotage, corruption and endangering public safety.

Later, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed a case against him on June 13 last year on charge of concealing information about wealth worth over Tk 1.17 crore in his wealth statement submitted to the commission on February 25.

After an investigation, the ACC pressed charges against Salauddin on October 1 last year for committing the offences. The trial of the case began at a Special Judge Court set up on the Sangsad Bhaban premises.

Salauddin was also charged in extortion cases filed against him in his locality. He was released on bail by the High Court in all cases including the graft and extortion cases against him.

## Delimitation

**FROM PAGE 16**  
challenging the gazette notification on the delimitation could not continue.

Advocate ABM Nurul Islam, a senior lawyer of the SC who filed one of the writ petitions, told the HC bench that the EC's gazette notification on delimitation was not issued under Article 124 of the Constitution.

He also said this gazette notification was not consistent with the Election Commission's rules and should be cancelled.

Barrister Rafique Islam Mia, counsel for Abdul Mannan who filed the other writ petition, yesterday told the court that the EC had postponed the parliamentary elections scheduled to be held on January 22, 2007, but had not cancelled or declared illegal the gazette notification on the delimitation of the parliamentary constituencies completed for the postponed election of January 22, 2007.

He said the EC should consider the earlier gazette notification on the delimitation.

Rafique Islam Mia also said there were three caretaker governments in the country in the past, but they did not interfere in the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies.

He opposed the submissions made by Attorney General Salauddin Ahmed before this court on October 23 saying that the attorney general could not make any submission to the court beyond the law.

The HC began the hearings on the writ petitions on October 22.

## Commonwealth

**FROM PAGE 16**  
elections to be held on December 18 for restoring representative governance in the country as well as progress in reforming the democratic institutions.

He will also deliver a lecture at the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute on 'The Commonwealth - current priorities, future directions'.

Sharma will hold a pre-departure press conference at Sonargaon Hotel Monday evening.

Major General Tariq Khan, head of the paramilitary Frontier Corps force, told reporters in Khar on Saturday that security forces backed by helicopter gunships had driven insurgents out of Loisam, a strategic town in Bajaur, which is at a crossroads of extremist supply routes.

Islamabad has previously hailed its operation in Bajaur as proof that it is responding to US and Afghan demands to take action against extremists in Pakistan's seven semi-autonomous tribal areas.

US officials have praised the two-month offensive in Bajaur, a tribally governed region considered a possible hiding place for Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda No 2 Ayman al-Zawahiri.

Pakistan's army launched the offensive after officials declared it a "mega-sanctuary" for Taliban and al-Qaeda militants who had set up a virtual mini-state and were funneling fighters over the mountainous border into Afghanistan.

On Saturday, the military escorted reporters to Loi Sam, a strategic town captured earlier in the week from militants.

The town sits on the intersection of roads linking Bajaur with the Afghan border and several neighbouring areas of Pakistan. Military commanders say its fall will severely disrupt militant operations.

The operation has caused severe hardship for residents in the already impoverished region. Almost 200,000 people have fled the fighting, many to rough camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Loi Sam and villages along the road from the main town of Khar have been devastated by fighting and army shelling. Crops have been left to rot in the fields.

Despite the civilian exodus, the

# Opinion poll tilted

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shared Republican philosophy he had frequently gone against the party on issues like Iraq, spending and climate change.

When shown a clip from a 2005 interview where he stated he had "agreed with (Bush)" far more than "I've disagreed", McCain replied: "I know how it is on this show, and you show various segments and comments that we make thousands of and I understand that, but the fact is I am not George Bush."

"Do we share a common philosophy of the Republican Party? Of course, but I've stood up against my party and I've got the scars to prove it. I could go down a list of issues with you."

**OBAMA PROMISES ROSY DAYS, MCCAIN DISPUTES HIS ABILITY**  
Buoyed by a huge fund-raising advantage and a steady lead in national polls, Democrat Barack Obama began his closing arguments for the presidency with an optimistic message that his economic policies would bring better days for hard-pressed middle-class Americans.

Republican John McCain sought to raise doubts about his rival's tax policies and readiness to be commander in chief as he fought desperately to stem losses in traditionally Republican-leaning states on the next-to-last weekend of the testy presidential race.

Both campaigns focused on western states on Saturday. Once reliable Republican territory, much of the West has seen its politics and demographics shift over the last decade as the Hispanic population, which tends to favour Democrats, has grown. Three states considered still in play to varying degrees -- Nevada, Colorado and New Mexico -- could be vital if the electoral math gets tight.

But time is running out for McCain who acknowledges that he is trailing in the polls and needs to mount a comeback.

A Newsweek poll of registered voters showed Obama with 53 per cent to McCain's 40 per cent. The poll found Obama leading in every age group and among men as well as women, and even holding a slim 46-to-44 per cent edge among working-class whites.

The telephone poll, conducted from Oct 22-23 with a margin of error of 3.6 percentage points, also found that 62 per cent of those surveyed had a favourable view of Obama.

Obama resumed his campaign in Nevada on Saturday with rallies in Reno and Las Vegas before heading one night in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and plans to head to Colorado on Sunday. The Democrat put aside political events on Thursday night and Friday to spend time with his grandmother in Hawaii, whom he described as gravely ill.

Obama's emphasis is on getting supporters to vote early -- locking in votes that might not materialise if people get busy or stay home because of bad weather on election day.

McCain, after his three stops in Colorado on Friday pushed hard in New Mexico on Saturday. He held rallies in Albuquerque and in Mesilla.

The Republican candidate heads to Iowa on Sunday, looking to make up for some lost ground in a Midwestern state his campaign aides argue is closer than the public polling shows. His running mate, Alaska Gov Sarah Palin, was in Iowa on Saturday.

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