

## Constituency writ

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challenge for us to complete all procedures accurately in the run up to the election," a top election official told The Daily Star yesterday, requesting anonymity.

He said the more the announcement of the schedule will be delayed the commission will face more challenges in finishing its remaining tasks on time, like scrutinising applications for candidacy in accordance with the new electoral law to spot corrupt practices, and loan and bill defaulters.

"We are now in a critical state," Huda said before leaving the commission secretary in his car yesterday afternoon, looking very disconcerted as he came out of his office through a different path than he usually takes.

The EC officials said it will take a long time to settle the redemarcation dispute if the court hears the petitions separately, and suggested that the court could hear only a few petitions to reach a judgment since all the petitions are the same.

But, Election Commissioner M Sakawat Hussain told The Daily Star yesterday, "It's not wise to comment now, as the matter is sub-judice."

He however reiterated the commission's resolve to hold the general election on December 18, even if the announcement of the detailed schedule is delayed.

The commission has two types of constituency wise voter lists ready, one based on the old delimitation of the constituencies and the other based on the latest redemarcation, so it could go ahead with the election, no matter what the court verdict is.

Meanwhile, the EC so far decided to register 13 parties, which are Awami League (AL), BNP, the Workers Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Sharmyabadi Dal, Jatiya Party (Ershad), Jatiya Party (Monju), Bikalpadhara Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu), National Awami Party (NAP), Gonotantri

## Ex-CEC MA Aziz

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would hurt the party's image. "Aziz is one of the persons who pushed BNP to its present crisis," said a member of the party's central executive committee.

Aziz had to resign on January 21 last year under pressure from the military-backed caretaker government. After 21 months of silence, he met the BNP chairperson on Tuesday at her carport residence residence apparently as a "courtesy call". Party sources said he expressed his interest in getting nomination from Barisal-1 constituency.

The former CEC's move has created a negative impact among BNP men in that constituency. Zahuruddin Swapan, former BNP lawmaker from Barisal-1, says, "The chairperson will not give party ticket to any controversial person who will be a burden to the party instead of bringing its victory."

Though a judge by profession, Aziz's role as the CEC clouded the country's politics, pushing the nation to a state of confrontation over the parliamentary election that eventually led to a change of the caretaker government last year.

Aziz assumed the office of CEC on May 23, 2005, during the BNP-led alliance government's tenure, while retaining his post of a judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. He appeared to be loyal to Khaleda Zia although he was oath-bound to carry out his job neutrally.

He had justified his biased actions as CEC saying, he attempted to perform his duties with "sincerity and dedication". "I have done my best to ensure the holding of free, fair and impartial elections in accordance with the constitution," he said in a statement released after his resignation.

Aziz fuelled widespread controversies by preparing a fresh voter list ignoring a higher court directive. Awami League and its allies alleged that he planted fake voters in the list to favour the BNP-led alliance in the January 22, 2007 election (stalled later).

The 2006 voter list prepared

## AL hopes

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emergency, he said so far as he knows the government has already made a decision on it. "The government will possibly lift the emergency rules in phases."

He said the Awami League wants to go to polls accepting the re-demarcation of constituencies for constitutional obligations, but added that they have no objection if the old boundaries were retained.

The AL leader said the government assured them old boundaries will be followed if the disputes arising from their re-demarcation is not settled in time or the Election Commission loses in the court.

He said they will finalise seat-sharing issue with alliance partners after AL President Sheikh Hasina comes back home, adding that the most electable candidates of the alliance will get ticket.

He said they will start the nomination process after a draft on it is approved by the central working committee of the party on November 6.

"We'll send the candidates' names to the areas concerned to take opinion from grass-root leaders. After receiving names of five possible candidates, the parliamentary board will sit and pick one of them," he said.

## Tac extends

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Jasas, also helped Harris accumulate Tk 41.03 lakh beyond known sources of income by using own bank account and buyingshares.

He also kept in his name Harris' shares worth Tk 21 lakh and bought shares worth Tk 21.03 lakh from National Tea Company following order from Harris, who kept the shares in his possession and took the profit.

Investigation sources say they have learned that Thakur always tried to keep Harris pleased to get nomination and give him money as demanded.

The Tac chairman said though the extension adds further pressure on their shoulder, they would work during holidays for the sake of the country to complete their task by January 2.

"We are identifying the problems in administration, legal loopholes, and procedural mistakes following information extracted from the graft-accused heard so far. We'll make our final report incorporating recommendations regarding the findings," said former controller and auditor general Asif Ali, one of the three members of the commission.

Justice Habibur said Tac, which was initiated with a budget of around Tk 50 lakh, is also cost-effective, as it has already added about Tk 10.93 crore returned by 107 graft-accused to the national exchequer, while over Tk 12 crore is likely to be deposited.

He explained that the government pays salary only to the three members and the 45 staffs attached to the commission are paid by their respective departments.

Maj Gen (ret) Manzur Rashid, another member of the commission, said they are still working with corruption in BTCL, former BTBT, and found that the committee formed by the government also had problems.

He said the investigators in the government probe bodies were selected from lower ranks so that they could not do anything against top-level officials.

## 11 criminals held

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Ramzan, was arrested at Chanchra Roypara in the town.

In Benapole, the law enforcers arrested seven criminals with four firearms and three bullets.

The arrestees are Yusuf Ali, Jahangir Hossain, Alamgir Hossain, Akkas Ali, Alauddin, Ayub Ali and Sumon.

The officer-in-charge of Benapole Police Station said they launched a drive with the help of Sharsha police and arrested the criminals along with the firearms and bullets.

"They were wanted in a number of criminal cases," he said.

## Maradona

**FROM PAGE 16**  
president Julio Gronzona.

The 48-year-old -- who almost single-handedly led Argentina to the 1986 World Cup trophy -- won crucial support last week in his bid to become the next Argentina coach when the man charged with finding Alfio Basile's successor threw his weight behind the World Cup winning skipper.

"I'd like Maradona to be the next coach," said Noray Nakis, the president of the Argentina Football Association (AFA) selection commission.

Basile resigned a fortnight ago after a World Cup qualifying defeat to Chile.

Maradona faced competition for the job from Carlos Bianchi, the former coach of Boca Juniors, whom he led to four national league titles, San Lorenzo coach Miguel Angel Russo and Sergio Batista who took the Under-23 squad to Olympic gold in Beijing in August.

## Tame draw

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with the man-of-the-match and man-of-the-series awards with five wickets in the match and an overall 19 in the series.

Bangladesh declared their first innings at 169-9 and New Zealand, knowing that a series sweep was all but over, batted more than an hour and a half in the final session for 79-1 before the match finished in fading light.

Although Vettori's men clinched the two-Test series 1-0 thanks to the close three-wicket victory in the first match in Chittagong and had lifted the three-match one-day series 2-1, it was certainly a satisfying series for the Tigers even in defeat.

They not only have fought very hard but also created a situation of winning both the Test and one-day series.

Back in the final day's play, a fearless Mashrafe, tipped as future all-rounder of Bangladesh, struck seven boundaries and two sixes in a match-saving partnership with Shakib. The pair took the score to 122 before Shakib, who had a brilliant all-round show in the first Test with a seven-wicket haul and 71 runs, became Vettori's fifth victim after lunch, handing the New Zealand skipper his 17th five-wicket haul in Test cricket.

The left-hander fell when he tried to sweep a good length ball from Vettori only to be adjudged leg before.

Bangladesh now head to South Africa for a full series starting next month while New Zealand, who were expected to leave the city last night, will be up against their trans-Tasman rivals Australia in Australia also in November.

It was learnt that both the umpires reported to the match referee about spinner Abdur Razzak's action.

## Aug 21 case

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hurt), 324 (causing hurt), 109 (abetment), 34 (criminal liability), 120(B) (criminal conspiracy) and 302 (murder) of the Penal Code. Bomb blast charges were framed against them under sections 3, 4 and 6 of the Explosive Substances Act.

The court charged Pintu also with approving the plan of the grenade attack prepared by Hannan and his accomplices. The former BNP lawmaker was also charged with assisting the Hujji men with finances and administrative help and abetting them for killing and injuring the victims.

Pintu, Hannan and 12 others, who are now in jail custody, pleaded not guilty and demanded justice after the charges were read out to them. Eight accused have been absconding.

The 12 accused in jail are Hannan's brother Mohibullah alias Mafzur Rahman alias Ovi, Sharif Shahidul Islam alias Bipul, Maulana Abu Sayeed alias Dr Abu Zafar, Abdul Kalam Azad alias Bulbul, Jahangir Alam, Maulana Abu Taber, Shahadatullah Jewel, Hossain Ahmed Tamim, Mufti Moineddin Sheikh alias Abu Zandal alias Masum Billah, Arif Hasan Sumon, Rafiqul Islam Sabuj and Mohammad Ujjal alias Ratan.

The eight absconding accused are Pintu's brothers Maulana Tajuddin and Maulana Liton, Anisul Mursalin and his brother Mahibul Muttakin, Iqbal, Maulana Abu Bakar alias Selim Howlader, Jahangir Alam Badar and Khalilur Rahman.

Charges were framed against them in absentia and their trial will be continued in their absence.

During the investigation of the

## Govt blamed

**FROM PAGE 1**  
international journals," Prof Nahar said at a discussion organised by the daily Ittefaq at the Jatiya Press Club.

DU chemistry department found excessive melamine in all the eight brands of powdered milk--Dano, Red Cow, Diploma, Nido fortified instant, Anlene, Yashili 1, Yashili 2 and Sweet Baby 2. Confusions arose when Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) said tests at its laboratory and that of Plasma Plus found the toxic element only in Yashili 1.

Prof Nahar said she has been working in the laboratory for 22 years and that the machines have been installed recently. They held a press conference and explained their test methods and the BSTI should also have done the same, she added, questioning the standards of the BSTI tests.

"We had no part in collecting the samples of the eight brands. The BSTI collected them for us," she said.

Dr SK Roy, senior scientist of International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B), said, "I have conducted research at the Dhaka University chemistry department laboratory which is very sophisticated. The government could have accepted the test results [of DU chemistry department] without any confusion."

Dr Abdun Noor Tushar asked why the BSTI and Plasma Plus laboratories tested just four brands. He said he has serious doubts if the BSTI even verified the batches and country origins of the samples tested in the three different laboratories.

"BSTI is the sole authority to verify standards but now it appears that BSTI itself does not believe in itself," said Dr Tushar, adding that such inefficiency is a disgrace to the government, Dhaka University and the country's economy.

He also said names of brands should not be made public until and unless those are proved to be contaminated.

Fatema Parveen Chowdhury, director of Institute of Public Health and Nutrition, said it is not correct that the government rejected the test results of DU chemistry department.

"The government decided to send the samples for further tests at two laboratories at home and one abroad for reconfirmation," she said.

## Barring convicts

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polls, and will participate in it if it is held in a free and fair manner.

The BNP leader however said confusion in public mind over holding of the election in time will persist if writ petitions against the Election Commission's (EC) re-demarcation of parliamentary constituencies are not disposed of within a short time.

"Everyone has the right appeal in higher courts once he or she is convicted by a lower or special court," Nazrul said.

"We have nothing to say if a higher court upholds the verdict of a lower or special court," he added.

The BNP joint secretary general, who heads the party's Dhaka division organising team-B, earlier held a meeting with leaders and activists of party units in Jamalpur, Sherpur, Netrokona, Tangail and other areas.

cases, Hannan, Bipul, Ovi, Abu Sayeed, Bulbul, Arif Hossain, Jahangir and Sabuj gave statements under section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) confessing their involvement in the grenade attack.

Special Public Prosecutor Firoz Kamrul Hassan and advocates Syed Rezaur Rahman, M Sajwar Hossain and Saharar Khatun appeared for the state during yesterday's hearing.

**THE CASE**  
The police filed the two cases with Motijheel Police Station a day after the grenade attack.

On June 5 last year, Badar Aziz Uddin of Cox's Bazar filed another case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, charging former premier Khaleda Zia, her son Tarique Rahman, Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami and 25 others with murder.

However, the investigation officer of the case, Criminal Investigation Department Assistant Superintendent Fazul Kabir, did not find any links of them to the incident.

On June 11 this year, the investigation officer of the two cases submitted the charge sheets, accusing the 22 persons in each case.

The charge sheets contain 42 pages each while the case dockets have more than 3,000 pages. A total of 408 persons, including Hasina and other top AL leaders, have been made prosecution witnesses in the cases.

Besides, 69 types of evidence including Hasina's sports utility vehicle, the truck used as the makeshift podium at the rally, grenade splinters and blood stained clothes were submitted.

## Ctg mayor vexed at govt role

*Flies to Bangkok for treatment*

UNB, Ctg

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury yesterday said he will take a strong stand if the government does not allow him to resume his duties as city mayor peacefully.

The CCC mayor, who has been suffering from diabetes and heart ailment, flew to Bangkok yesterday for treatment.

He was not allowed to resume his office after his release from jail on bail. Mohiuddin also castigated the caretaker government for not allowing him to go to Saudi Arabia to perform Omrah.

"I am observing the situation at present," the mayor told reporters prior to his departure for the Thai capital.

Mohiuddin Chowdhury, also an Awami League leader, forecasts that his party will win all the parliamentary seats in Chittagong if the national elections are held fairly.

The mayor said he has already given instructions to the CCC officials to set up two complaint boxes in the office to receive complaints about irregularities and corruption in the local government body.

Mohiuddin was arrested at his Chashma Hill residence in the city on March 7, 2007 under an anti-graft campaign by the military-backed interim government. He was released on bail on October 8 from the prisons cell of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital.

## Police show SQ Chy as fugitive

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The police in a report to a Dhaka court yesterday said they failed to arrest Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, parliamentary affairs adviser to former premier Khaleda Zia, in connection with a tax evasion case as he had gone into hiding.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Dhanmndi Police Station Syed Mohsinul Haq told the court that they failed to arrest Salauddin's residence on Road no 12/A at Dhanmndi following an arrest warrant issued against him earlier. But they could not find Salauddin there as he went into hiding.

The court directed the authorities concerned to publish an advertisement in two national Bangla dailies asking Salauddin to appear before the court by November 4.

National Board of Revenue (NBR) Deputy Tax Commissioner Iktihar Uddin Mohammad Mamun filed the case with the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court on October 26 against the former BNP lawmaker on charges of evading tax upon his income of Tk 3.08 crore from 2002 to 2008.

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

The joint forces arrested Salauddin on February 4 last year 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 wealth information from the commission.

Salauddin was released after he secured bail from the High Court in all cases filed against him.

## Undecided voters

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toss-up states, where the race is tight.

In Florida, Obama's edge over McCain is just 1.9 percent, 47.7 to 45.8 percent, according to RealClearPolitics. Whoever wins Florida reaps 27 of the 270 electoral college votes needed to win the White House.

In Indiana, with it 11 votes on the Electoral College which will ultimately pick the next president, Obama is ahead in polls by a razor thin 0.3 percent.

But unknown variables have been introduced in the electoral calculus this year, with Obama an historic choice to become the first African American in the White House.

The stated indecision of voters could be masking ambivalence about Obama's race, according to a theory called the Bradley Effect, after an African American who lost a race for California governor in 1982 after leading in the polls.

According to the Bradley Effect, voters could tell pollsters they are undecided or even that they support Obama, so as not to appear racist, then cast a vote for the white candidate in the privacy of the voting booth.

"There are an undetermined numbers of people in America who (will) vote against Obama because of his race," Gans said. "We don't know the size of the iceberg under the surface."

But David Bositis of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington think tank, discounted the theory.

"There's not some secret racist majority out there lying to pollsters," he said. At the same time, Obama will be getting '95 to 96 percent' of black votes, he said.

## Maldives president

**FROM PAGE 16**  
of the Indian Ocean atoll nation after he collected 54.21 percent of the poll to 45.79 percent for incumbent leader Maumoon Abdul Gayoom.

"I don't think we should go for a witch hunt," Nasheed said at a joint press conference with Gayoom, whom he has accused of repeatedly torturing him in custody.

"That will not happen because it will not help democracy."

Nasheed, 41, said he wanted to move quickly to assure the international community that he would introduce more reforms, including media freedom, in the run-up to parliamentary elections due by February.

Conceding defeat after Tuesday's elections, Gayoom said he would give his "full support and cooperation" to Nasheed taking power.

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Fathimath Niusha, a 27-year-old school teacher, said she was thrilled with the change of leadership.

"I want to see how it will be under a new president," Niusha said. "All my life, it had been under Gayoom."

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The Maldives, a liberal Sunni Muslim nation of 1,192 coral islands and some 300,000 people, has never held multi-party elections before.

Gayoom, 71, ruled the tourist paradise islands unchallenged since 1978 and over a period of six years repeatedly jailed Nasheed, a former Amnesty International "prisoner of conscience".

Until a few years ago, anyone declaring an intention to seek high office would be banished to an uninhabited island.

Thousands of Nasheed supporters drove around Male and embraced each other at a beachfront promenade where young people had camped for days to drum up support for his campaign.

"This is spontaneous joy," said one, Aishath Niusha.

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