

# Ban Ki-moon

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situation, especially the general election on December 18.

Foreign Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury said yesterday that the UN secretary general's visit would be in recognition of various achievements made by the country.

Describing his visit as very important and significant one, the adviser said various issues, including social and economic development, UN development projects and Bangladesh's role in UN peacekeeping, will figure prominently during official talks with the secretary general.

Asked if Ban Ki-moon's visit would lead to a positive development in domestic politics, the adviser replied, "A positive situation does prevail in the country."

"Had there been no positive environment in the country, the UN secretary general would not visit Bangladesh," Iftekhar Chowdhury said.

Ban is on a four-nation south east Asia tour to the Philippines, India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

According to UN officials, the secretary general arrives in Bangladesh tomorrow evening on board a special UN flight from Nepal.

UNDP officials in Dhaka said that Ban would be attending a state banquet to be hosted by Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed on Saturday evening. He is due to meet President Prof Iajuddin Ahmed, the Chief Adviser and Foreign Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury on Sunday.

Two separate delegations from BNP and Awami League are scheduled to meet the secretary general on Sunday when he is expected to make inquiries about the current

political situation in the country, UN officials added.

During his visit, he is scheduled to visit a micro-financing programme of Grameen Bank in Bogra and a UN funded disaster reduction and climate adaptation programme in Sirajganj.

Ban will also meet with the United Nations country team and staff and officials of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Dhaka.

Prior to leaving for New York, the UN secretary general will hold a press conference on Sunday evening.

The secretary general will be accompanied by his wife Madam Yoo (Ban) Soon-tae, and other senior UN officials, during his visit.

Ban Ki-moon of the Republic of Korea, the eighth Secretary General of the United Nations, brings to his post 37 years of service both in government and on the global stage.

Ban was his country's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. His long tenure with the ministry included postings in New Delhi, Washington D.C. and Vienna, and responsibility for a variety of portfolios, including Foreign Policy Adviser to the President, Chief National Security Adviser to the President, Deputy Minister for Policy Planning and Director-General of American Affairs.

He has long-standing ties with the UN, dating back to 1975, when he worked for the Foreign Ministry's United Nations Division.

Ban was born on 13 June 1944. He and his wife, Madam Yoo (Ban) Soon-tae, whom he met in high school in 1962, have one son and two daughters. In addition to Korean, Ban speaks English and French.

# Hospitals asked

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the hospitals due to the prolonged, and often unnecessary, stay of VIP prisoners, jail sources said.

Meanwhile, jail authorities on Wednesday seized a letter from the possession of former Barisal City Corporation (BCC) mayor Mujibur Rahman Sarwar detained in Dhaka Central Jail.

The letter, found on him soon after the visit of his wife, contained advice on how to 'fake' illnesses to get himself hospitalised.

Deputy Inspector General of Prisons (DIG-Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddique told The Daily Star, "We have written separate letters to the vice chancellor of the BSMMU and the director general of the BIRDEM asking them to take immediate measures to send back those prisoners who do not need to stay at the hospitals anymore."

He said due to the over stay of VIP prisoners, other prisoners are being deprived of valuable facilities despite serious illnesses.

Meanwhile, Inspector General of Prisons (IG-Prisons) Brig Gen Zakir Hassan told The Daily Star, "The letter seized from the former Barisal mayor contains some tips on how to 'fake' illnesses to be hospitalised."

He said the letter proves that many VIP prisoners are over staying in hospitals 'faking' illnesses.

Jail sources said at present 21 VIPs are staying at BSMMU while two others are at the BIRDEM.

# Hannan Shah

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League and is discourteous to BNP and a few other political parties," he said at an unscheduled press briefing at his DOHS residence in the city.

"During the 1970 election, the present chief election commissioner was the sub-divisional officer in Bagerhat where Awami League captured all seats," he said.

"It is now clear that a person like him, who favours some political parties and dislikes others, cannot hold a free, fair and neutral election," Hannan added.

Asked if his demand for the CEC's resignation is also a demand of the BNP, Hannan Shah said, "As the BNP chairperson's adviser I am making this demand and this is not only the demand of BNP but also the demand of people."

Asked if BNP will participate in the election under the present CEC, he said time has not yet come to say anything on this matter.

Replying to another question, he said there is nothing wrong in former CEC MA Aziz's seeking nomination from the BNP. "He was impartial while in service," Hannan Shah added.

# No more doubts

FROM PAGE 1  
journalists after a meeting with visiting

Unctad Secretary General Supachai Panitchpakdi at the commerce ministry yesterday.

"We've been successful in resolving all the previous issues. We've gone through the uncertainty, but, finally, we've overcome. So, there should not be any apprehension about the election," he advised said.

He urged the political parties and leadership to create confidence in the people so that after election the country does not face any instability.

"We have created confidence in the political leaders and their parties about the election... We have taken measures to address their concerns like ensuring security," he said.

"Now they have the responsibility to create confidence in the people and bring about a qualitative change in politics."

The Unctad secretary said he had discussion on the economic issues of the day.

He observed Bangladesh has made a lot of progress in its economic sector. But it has to diversify its export products.

# Onus of democracy

FROM PAGE 1  
political society," said the former Dhaka University vice-chancellor.

Termining the 1/11 political changeover "educative" for many, Prof Emajuddin said the effect of the lessons might become visible in a few areas quite distinctly when a new elected government comes to power.

Blaming the caretaker government for taking too much time for holding the parliamentary election, he said this government, by transgressing its area of work, seems to have posed as a kind of "philosopher king" for the society and tried to handle each and every branch of socio-political activities.

Noting that election under the state of emergency may appear as a "veritable slur" and damage national reputation, Prof Emajuddin described a peaceful and credible general election and the emergency provisions as "strange bedfellows".

A credible election demands open environment, which is never generated under emergency even if a few provisions are withdrawn, he said.

On the "minus-two" theory, he said the government now seems convinced that the ill-conceived theory has no room in Bangladesh.

# Graft charges

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lawmaker Alhaj Shah Alam and Surat Zaman, deputy secretary at the Chittagong Hill Tracts affairs ministry and former PS to ex-minister Khurshid Jahan Haque, directing them to submit wealth statements to the commission.

The ACC has also given the nod to file six cases against six people including former lawmaker Shah Shahid Sarwar.

ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal yesterday told a routine press briefing that the commission made the decisions in the past three days from October 27.

Shafiqur Rahman will be accused on charges of hiding Tk 1.22 crore from the commission and amassing Tk 13.84 crore beyond his known sources of income.

Advocate Nadim Mostafa will be charged with concealing Tk 2.52 crore in his wealth statement to the commission and with accumulating Tk 2.85 crore through illegal means.

Former BRTC chairman and BNP leader advocate Taimur Alam Khandaker will be charged for not submitting wealth statement to the ACC.

The other charge sheet will be submitted against one Shahid Mia on charges of trying to give a Rab official Tk 49,400 in bribe to get a phensydid businessman released.

The ACC will file a case against ex-lawmaker Shah Shahid Sarwar for allegedly hiding information from the commission and amassing wealth worth about Tk 20.51 lakh beyond his known sources of income.

# 10 new HC judges

FROM PAGE 1  
Commission members Law Adviser AF Hassan Arif, Appellate Division judges Justice Md Tafazzal Islam and Justice Md Joyul Abedin, High Court judge Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman, Attorney General Salauddin Ahmed and Supreme Court Bar Association President barrister Shafique Ahmed attended the meeting.

Barrister Shafique Ahmed told newsmen that the commission chairman and members discussed all necessary issues about the appointment of the people eligible for the posts of HC judges.

He said the Supreme Judicial Commission's next meeting would be held on November 2 where the names of the new judges will be placed.

Shafique Ahmed also said all the commission members are entitled to place names for the post of the HC judges at the meeting.

Earlier on October 17, the commission recommended four senior-most judges of the High Court division of the SC to the president for appointment as judges of the Appellate Division.

The HC judges are justices Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman, Md Abdul Qudus, Md Abdul Aziz and Bijan Kumar Das.

The president will appoint two of them as judges of the Appellate Division, as two posts at the division have been lying vacant since July 2.

The HC now has 61 judges. In 2004, 19 judges had been appointed, raising the number of the HC judges to 72. But 11 of them have either retired or been promoted to the Appellate Division.

# Mamun

FROM PAGE 16  
Mamun from his Gulshan residence on March 26 last year. He was later remanded for possessing illegal firearms at his residence.

He was last placed on a five-day remand on June 6 last year in a cheating case. After completion of his five-day remand, he was sent to jail. He had earlier been remanded for 56 days in different cases.

Since his arrest in March last year, extortion, arms and graft cases were filed against him.

In all the extortion cases, Mamun has named Turique Rahman as his business partner. He has given confessional statements to magistrates in this regard implicating Turique's name with different extortion charges.

Selim Proddhan, chairman of Japan Bangladesh Group, filed the case with Gulshan Police Station against Mamun and his two associates on May 31 for swindling Tk 8.4 crore out of him between December 8, 2001 and December 20, 2006.

The two other accused Rajib Siraj Apu -- son of former BNP lawmaker Shahjahan Siraj -- and Kawsar Zaman Bappi are on the run.

CONVICTION OF THREE CASES  
A special court on June 7 last year jailed Mamun, who was on the first list of 50 graft suspects published by ACC last year, for three years in connection with a case filed by ACC on April 5 for not submitting his wealth statement.

On July 3 the same year, he was sentenced to 10 years rigorous imprisonment for possessing illegal firearms in his residence.

Mamun was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment on March 27 this year for amassing wealth worth Tk 111.1 crore illegally and concealing wealth information from the ACC.

# AL sees

FROM PAGE 1  
Uncertainty over holding the elections on December 18," he told journalists at his Gulshan residence after a meeting with leaders of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP).

He said if the election is not held on December 18, the present political crisis will not end.

Asked whether the Supreme Court's denial of bail yesterday to AL President Sheikh Hasina will create any uncertainty over her return, Zillur said there is no uncertainty about the former premier's returning home.

Expressing frustration over the court decision, the AL leader said, "The denial of bail is unfortunate and it came as a shock to us."

He also said Hasina will return home any day between November 1 and 7. However, Tofail Ahmed said Hasina will return home by November 10.

Zillur said Hasina had been denied bail at a time when everybody thought that she would be able to contest the elections.

AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed who was present at the briefing said there is no alternative to elections and it must be held on December 18.

"If the elections are not held on December 18, there will be serious political and economic crises in the country," he said.

Tofail said the caretaker government has to remove all barriers to holding the elections on December 18.

If needed the government should hold elections as per the old electoral boundaries of constituencies, he said.

The attorney general opposed Hasina's bail prayer strongly, but they did not oppose BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's bail prayer, Tofail added.

# Dhaka to vie

FROM PAGE 16  
Besides, they discussed various aspects of bilateral relations, including trade and technical cooperation between the two countries.

In reply to a question, the Canadian high commissioner said he hoped for a free and fair election in Bangladesh on December 18. On Tuesday, the envoy handed over translucent ballot boxes to CEC Shamsul Huda.

Asked about credibility of election under the state of emergency, the Canadian envoy said, "It is your country, your democracy and your election."

# WB okays \$130m

FROM PAGE 16  
employment-guarantee scheme to help people in poor areas, and increasing the country's strategic food reserves.

The bank is also providing ongoing assistance to strengthen Bangladesh's social safety-net programme, including a new 100-day employment-guarantee scheme that started on September 15 this year.

Vinaya Swaroop, World Bank economist and project task team leader, said it is critically important to help Bangladesh cope with this crisis. In the absence of concessional financing resources, the government would need to curtail development spending or other pro-poor programs in order to sustain its increased social spending.

Swaroop said this credit would help the government respond to immediate crisis-related needs while protecting other programmes to promote growth and poverty reduction.

Bangladesh's progress in strengthening its own institutional arrangements for public expenditure, financial management and procurement is reflected in its improved rating under the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA).

# 61 killed

FROM PAGE 1  
one of the targeted markets.

The blasts, including one in front of the Guwahati District Magistrate's Court, were powerful enough to reduce nearby vehicles to a heap of twisted metal.

"Some of the bodies were charred beyond recognition," Deputy Inspector General of Assam Police GP Singh said.

Thirty-one people were killed in Guwahati, with 19 dead in the Assam's western district of Kokrajhar and 11 in nearby Barpeta town, officials said.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said every effort would be made to bring the bombers to justice.

"Such barbaric acts targeting innocent men, women and children only highlight the desperation and cowardice of those responsible," Singh said.

Assam's Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the government's main spokesman, said preliminary investigations showed some of the bombs had been strapped to bicycles and packed with incendiary material to trigger fires.

"The needle of suspicion is on the Ulfa," Sarma told reporters. "Most of the bombs were planted in crowded places like markets and office complexes. So it shows that the perpetrators wanted high casualties."

The explosions in Guwahati injured more than 150 people and the city's hospitals were overwhelmed by the influx of casualties.

The attacks came six weeks after the Indian capital New Delhi was hit by a series of bombs in crowded markets that left more than 20 dead. Those blasts were claimed by a group calling itself the Indian Mujahadeen.

In the past two decades, more than 10,000 people have lost their lives to insurgency in Assam, which is known for its tea, timber and oil reserves.

Public support for the Ulfa has been declining since the 2006 insurgency. The attacks came six weeks after the Indian capital New Delhi was hit by a series of bombs in crowded markets that left more than 20 dead. Those blasts were claimed by a group calling itself the Indian Mujahadeen.

Some 16.1 million US voters have already cast ballots ahead of the November 4 presidential election, according to early voting figures compiled Wednesday by George Mason University.

Republicans have traditionally voted early in larger numbers than Democrats. But a concerted campaign to drive Democratic turnout seems to be working, at least in states, which have reported early voting tallies.

Some 2.3 million people have voted in California, about 2.4 million in Texas and about 1.5 million in Georgia, according to George Mason.

In the critical battleground of Florida more than 2.6 million people had already voted by Wednesday, with 45 percent being Democrats and 39 percent registered Republicans, according to the study.

In North Carolina, also seen as a key swing state, 1.5 million people have voted with registered Democrats outnumbering Republicans by a margin of 35 percentage points in early voting.

BB officials however suggested that the government should strengthen its market monitoring system to reap the benefit of global price fall of commodities.

In September, inflation rate in rural areas was 10.62 percent compared to 10.51 percent in August. The rate in urban areas was 9.12 percent in September against 9.11 percent in the previous month.

For food items, inflation rate was 12.13 percent in September and 12.34 percent in August in rural areas. And in urban areas, the rate was 11.93 percent in September and 12.40 percent in August.

# Pricey non-food

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# Obama

FROM PAGE 16  
The future of our country is at stake," Cecil Johnson, 72, told AFP as he shuffled from one chair to another in a line that stretched the length of the county courthouse in Gary, Indiana.

The last eight years have been a disaster and I think we have the right candidate that is perhaps capable of rescuing us," said Johnson, who voted for Obama.

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# Hajj flights

FROM PAGE 16  
including 7,474 under government management and 41,087 under private management, will go to Saudi Arabia to perform hajj this year, said a Biman press release yesterday.

Biman will operate 42 dedicated hajj flights to carry some 29,000 pilgrims, it said.

Two of the dedicated flights will be operated from Sylhet Osmani International Airport while one from Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport. The remaining flights will be operated from ZIA, the press release said, adding the flights will continue until December 2.

The post-hajj flights will start on December 11 and continue through January 12, 2009.

# Road accident

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hour and damaged vehicles stranded on the road. Many vehicles started to run indiscriminately creating panic in the area.

Later Tejgaon police brought the situation under their control.

The police said they could not detain the driver of the pickup van.

# Abbas

FROM PAGE 1  
from the home ministry in the afternoon.

After receiving the order, the jail authorities informed Abbas, now in prisons cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital, about it.

The home ministry issued the detention order following a general diary filed by a Special Superintendent of the Special Branch (SB) of police.

The detention order referred to a SB report that said if Abbas is released from jail, law and order situation might deteriorate.

# Barapukuria case

FROM PAGE 16  
The HC bench comprised of Justice Md Muzammel Hossain and Justice Afzal Hossain will continue hearing on the petitions on November 2.

Abdur Razzak, counsel for Mojahid, yesterday told newsmen that since the HC accepted his client's petition for hearing, the matter has become sub judice and his client would not have to surrender before the trial court on November 2, the date for their appearance before the trial court.

Following a petition filed by Mojahid, an HC bench on October 19 ordered him to surrender within two weeks before the trial court that had earlier issued an arrest warrant against him in this case.

The HC had also directed the government not to harass or arrest Mojahid within that period.

On October 7, another HC bench asked Saifur to appear before the trial court within four weeks. The court also directed the government not to harass or arrest him during this period.

The main accused in the case former prime minister Khaleda Zia is on bail. The Supreme Court on October 29 upheld the HC order staying proceedings against her in the case.

# EC withholds

FROM PAGE 1  
The chief adviser advised the election commissioner to wait for the court verdict.

In reply to a question, CEC Huda told reporters that they would have to wait for the court verdict on the re-demarcation issue. He, however, expressed hope that the court decision would come on Sunday.

The EC filed a petition with the Supreme Court (SC) to vacate the High Court (HC) order that stayed the commission's re-demarcation of parliamentary constituencies.

Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice MA Matin yesterday sent the petition to the full bench of the Appellate Division for hearing on November 2.

Also yesterday, the HC fixed November 2 for delivering the judgment on the writ petitions filed by several individuals challenging re-demarcation of the constituencies.

Following the petitions, the HC on August 7 stayed for three months the EC gazette notification on finalising of the re-demarcation of constituencies.

The CEC told reporters that they would get a "small" gap between the date of schedule announcement and the election date.

On party registration, he said the EC is working so that all eligible political parties can take part in the election. On missing the deadline for registering parties, he said the EC wanted to complete the process by October 30.

Huda blamed a few political parties for delaying in filing their applications.

Major political parties that applied for registration already got clearance, he said, adding, "Verification of applications of smaller parties is underway."

A total of 107 parties, including 22 religious parties, applied for registration with the EC, mandating

# Hasina's bail

FROM PAGE 1  
when she'll be back. She can always go to courts if any curbs are slapped on her political activities," he said.

During hearing, Rafique-ul-Huq, senior counsel for the AL president, said she should be allowed bail for her ill health.

Attorney General Salauddin Ahmed said the court cannot consider giving her bail for political reasons mentioned in the original prayer.

On September 29, an HC vacation bench turned down the bail prayer citing that the petitioner must be in the country to ask for bail.

Besides, it said, the line of reasoning that she should be given bail to organise her party for the election is not worth considering in legal terms.

The leave-to-appeal petition against that order was filed on October 26.

On June 13 last year, Noor Ali, managing director of Unique Group of Companies, filed the extortion case with Tejgaon Police Station. He accused Hasina of taking Tk 5 crore from him to win his firm a power plant deal in 1997.

tory for contesting the upcoming poll under the new electoral law.

The CEC and his two commissioners -- Muhammed Sohul Hussain and M Sakawat Hussain -- met Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office yesterday afternoon to update him about the latest development regarding declaration of polls schedule.

"We informed the chief adviser that we will not be able to announce the schedule on our previously set date since the court is yet to give judgment on the re-demarcation issue," Sohul Hussain told The Daily Star last night.

The election commissioners also told Fakhruddin that the EC has filed a petition with the SC to vacate the HC stay on re-demarcation of constituencies.

"The chief adviser listened to us and advised us to wait for the court verdict," Sohul said, expressing hope that the judgment would come in favour of the EC.

Commerce and Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman, Law Adviser AF Hassan Arif, LGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal and Communications Adviser