

BNP out to buy time

FROM PAGE 1
Party leaders said they hoped that the writ petition against delimitation of parliamentary constituencies will give them some wiggle room by delaying announcement of schedule for the general election.

To their utter dismay, the High Court turned down the petition on November 2. The Election Commission announced the schedule within hours.

The BNP-led four-party alliance is now demanding a string of demands, including complete lifting of the emergency rules and fresh election schedule.

"The election schedule was announced hastily, which is not conducive to a fair election," BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain told reporters after a Wednesday meeting which inked in the demands.

A former lawmaker of the party however told The Daily Star that they need more time to "prepare for the polls including finding out suitable candidates as about 23/24 former ministers and lawmakers have already been convicted in cases filed under the emergency power rules."

Lifting the emergency before the last date for nomination submission will give the convicted leaders the chance to contest the polls.

Party leaders said Khaleda herself is trying to strike a bargain with the government to earn the release of her party leaders who are behind bars on corruption charges.

Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman met the BNP chief at her cantonment residence Tuesday midnight. It was the second exclusive meeting between the two. However neither the adviser nor the BNP would say what they discussed.

Sources said the government gave Khaleda a list of accused BNP leaders, asking her not to give them party tickets.

The BNP chief however is trying to convince the government to release some of the arrested leaders including Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Moudud Ahmed, Mirza Abbas, Nasir Uddin Ahmed Pintu and Wadud Bhuiyan, so that they get the chance to participate in the elections, party insiders said.

Convicted former ministers

Falu's fake certificates

FROM PAGE 1
Aman on November 9.

Sources say the SC registrar issued a letter asking BSMMU ENT department Chairman Prof M Alauddin, orthopaedic surgery department Chairman Prof Serajuddin Ahammed, colorectal surgery department Chairman Prof AKM Fazlul Haque, neurology department chairman Prof AKM Anisul Haque, Prof Pran Gopal Datta of otolaryngology and neck surgery, Prof AKM Anwar Ullah of neurology department, associate professor of medicine Dr ABM Abdullah, associate professor of spinal surgery Dr M Idris Ali, associate professor of anaesthesia Dr Md Jonayed Shafiq, associate professor of cardiology Dr Chowdhury Meshkat Ahmed and Registrar Md Abdul Gafur to appear before the court on November 9.

ACC counsel Advocate Anisul Huq yesterday told the HC that questions have been raised on the medical reports submitted on behalf of some accused.

He prayed to the court to direct the authorities concerned to investigate the medical board and report of Aman and produce the report to the court.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastgir Husain and Justice Farid Ahmed asked the ACC lawyer to find out the report submitted by Aman and submit the finding to the court on November 9.

Anisul told The Daily Star he has already informed the HC directive to his client (ACC) who will scrutinise the medical board and its report on Aman's health.

He also said the authorities have already removed some high officials of BSMMU hospital including the vice-chancellor as punishment for giving false medical report in favour of Falu.

ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal yesterday told The Daily Star the commission would continue its legal battle. "A case cannot go unabated. It's our duty to defend the position of the state," he said.

Another ACC counsel Advocate MA Aziz Khan dealing with cases against Falu said the accused secured bail and stay orders in five graft cases by showing false and fabricated medical certificates.

"We'll file separate appeals with the Supreme Court to cancel the High Court orders in favour of him. We are about to complete the appeals," he said.

He said the Appellate Division on November 3 stayed the HC Order granting bail to Falu in a relief scam case on ground that he obtained bail by submitting a "fake" medical report.

It was discovered that Falu, who was admitted to BSMMU for treatment, left the hospital on March 23

and lawmakers: M Moshed Khan, barrister Aminul Haque, Amanullah Aman, Masaddek Ali Falu, Rashiduzzaman Milla, Naser Rahman, Mir Nasir, Nazmul Huda, Harris Chowdhury, Ali Asgar Lobi, Mirza Abbas, Lutfuzaman Babar, Shahjahan Siraj, Ziaul Haque Zia, Hafiz Ibrahim, Taimur Alam Khandaker, Manjmur Ahsan Munshi, Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, Salahuddin Ahmed, Wadud Bhuiyan, Shaheen Islam Tunin, Shahjahan Omar, Nurul Islam Mohi and Helal Uddin Talukder Lali.

Those under trial: Saifur Rahman, Moudud Ahmed, M Shamsul Islam, MK Anwar, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Ruhul Qudus Talukder Dulu, Salauddin Ahmed, Nasir Uddin Ahmed Pintu, MAH Selim, Fazlur Rahman Patal, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, Mohammad Giasuddin, Mujibur Rahman Sarwar, Tariqul Islam, Ataf Hossain Chowdhury, Barkat Ullah Bulu, Harunur Rashid, Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, Kazi Salimul Haque, AKM Mosharraf Hossain and Mizanur Rahman Minu are under trial.

Many of them are in jail.

BNP leaders who left the party are former standing committee member Col (ret) OI Ahmed, Jahanara Begum, Alamgir Kabir, Moni Swapan Dewan, Anwarul Kabir Talukder, former Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali, Redwan Ahmed, Ziaur Rahman Khan, Syed Manjur Hossain, Ali Qadar, Kabir Hossain, Abu Hena and MA Jinnah.

He said two lakh taxpayers submitted their income tax returns yesterday.

The deadline for submitting individual income tax return was September 30, but it was extended to October 31 due to Ramadan and Durga Puja and then again to November 6.

The government extended the deadline twice up to Nov 30 last year.

He said the newly appointed VC, Pro VCs and treasurer of BSMMU belong to one particular political party, the protesters said while the caretaker government was trying to hold a free and fair election in the country, these new appointments were tarnishing the government's image.

BSMMU Teachers Association, however, hailed the newly appointed administration team and criticised the activities of the Dab group which they said was hampering the services of the hospital.

The teachers' association said that the newly appointed VC Prof Nazrul Islam, Pro VCs Chowdhury Ali Kawser and Mohammad Kamal and Treasurer Prof Ruhul Amin Mia all have reputations of being neutral and they don't have any affiliation with the Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad.

The newly appointed administrative officials meanwhile entered their offices around 11:30 am and worked till 2:30 pm.

Earlier they met with the health adviser and secretary at 9:30 in the morning seeking financial and administrative support from the government to run the university smoothly.

"We want cooperation from everyone to make this university better and provide the best possible services to its patients," VC Prof Nazrul Islam said.

He added that one of the first things he would do would be to boost the outdoor service of the hospital.

Registrar of BSMMU Muhammad Abdul Gafur on November 2 submitted a letter to the SC saying BSMMU formed a medical board of five physicians on February 5 and finalised a report on Falu's health the same day.

He also said BSMMU authorities were not aware of any medical board of 11 physicians being formed for Falu.

On October 23, during hearing of an appeal filed by Falu, the HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastgir Husain and Justice Farid Ahmed granted Falu three months' bail in the relief scam case.

Earlier on June 2, a special court sentenced Falu to five years' rigorous imprisonment in the same case. Falu has filed an appeal with the HC against the verdict.

He was arrested at his Cantonment residence in the capital on charge of corruption on February 6 last year.

Poll expenditure

FROM PAGE 16
constituencies, Dhaka-19 is the largest constituency with 602,386 voters while Jhalakathi-1 is the smallest with 137,092 voters. Each candidate from Jhalakathi-1 will be allowed to spend maximum Tk 685,460 for election campaigning.

The candidates in 81 constituencies will be able to spend Tk 15 lakh each as the number of voters there are over three lakh.

Contestants from Panchagarh-1, the first parliamentary constituency with 291,095 voters, will be allowed to spend maximum Tk 145,475 each while the contestants from Bandarban, the 300th parliamentary constituency with 195,995 voters, will be able to spend Tk 97,975 each.

In previous parliamentary elections, candidates from major political parties had spent huge amounts of money in a bid to influence voters.

The amended RPO will prevent the candidates from doing it again in the election slated for December 18, EC officials said.

They hoped that the new rules would curb the use of both black money and muscle power in the upcoming election.

Delwar trotted out that the four-party alliance wants to contest the election but "we want such election where results would not be skewed".

He said the alliance will go to the polls if their seven-point demand is fulfilled.

Earlier the BNP secretary general held a meeting with city unit BNP

BSMMU high-ups take charge amid protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly appointed administrative officials of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) took up their duties at the hospital yesterday amid strong opposition from BNP backed doctors, nurses and employees.

BSMMU employees involved with the BNP affiliated Doctors Association of Bangladesh (Dab) continued their opposition to the new appointments, holding meetings and processions and chanting slogans demanding removal of the administrative team.

Led by Dab's BSMMU unit President Dr Saiful Islam Selim, the protesters submitted a memorandum to the chief adviser's office at around 10:30 am yesterday demanding cancellation of the new appointment order issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

They also demanded that neutral and non-partisan people are recruited for the administration and that the 'disputed' health adviser Dr AMM Shawkat Ali is removed from his post.

Dab claimed that Dr Shawkat Ali has been trying to appoint people 'loyal to him' to BSMMU's administration department with the help of his brother Prof Monjur Hossain of Dhaka Shishu Hospital. His brother, they said, is involved with the Awami League backed Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad.

In order to do so, Dr Shawkat Ali has been involved in creating an adverse public opinion about BSMMU and secretly hiring people belonging to the parishad, they claimed.

Claiming that the newly appointed VC, Pro VCs and treasurer of BSMMU belong to one particular political party, the protesters said while the caretaker government was trying to hold a free and fair election in the country, these new appointments were tarnishing the government's image.

BSMMU Teachers Association, however, hailed the newly appointed administration team and criticised the activities of the Dab group which they said was hampering the services of the hospital.

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Polls on Dec 18

FROM PAGE 1
Hasina, who went to the US for treatment a day after being freed on parole on June 11, returned to the country yesterday amidst a rapturous reception accorded by thousands of party workers. She had been detained for nearly 11 months since July 16 last year.

Most part of the road from ZIA to Hasina's Sudha Sadan residence in Dhanmondi seemingly turned into a human sea as tens of thousands of party men gathered on both sides of the road to welcome their party chief.

At the briefing Hasina emphatically said she is ready to do anything necessary for the welfare of the country, its politics and the people. She said the people have long been waiting to exercise their democratic and constitutional right to voting on December 18 and establish an elected government.

The country is passing through crises and the people are spending hard days without food and jobs, she said, adding that the people have to be saved and it is proven true that such crises cannot be solved without an elected government.

"Unity, cooperation and conciliation are a must to save the nation from crises and bad time and for this all will have to forget personal interests and get united to find out solutions to the crises," Hasina said.

About her counsel barrister Rafique-ul-Huq's proposed dialogue between her and Khaleda, Hasina said she would do all possible things for the welfare of the country and its people.

Asked if the AL has any plan to bring qualitative changes in the country's politics, the former premier said her party had already placed 31-point reforms proposal for bringing such changes.

About formation of the electoral grand alliance and its principles and goal, the AL chief said, "The grand alliance will be formed on the basis of principles of establishing people's constitutional rights, strengthening the country's democracy and economic base and freeing Bangladesh from poverty."

Asked about her earlier statement that they would ratify all activities of the caretaker government, she said, "Government activities is a continuous process. The issue will be settled in parliament as ordinances have to be transformed into laws. Parliament members and the standing committee will decide on that."

Hasina said, "I think it would be a big challenge for any elected government to control and reduce the prices of essentials including rice, pulses, salt and oil and bring the prices within people's reach."

"If voted to power, insha Allah we will be able to do that and save the people," she said.

Hasina said people have been passing days in fear for the last seven years—five years of the BNP-Jamaat coalition government and two years of the caretaker government.

"We do not want apprehension, fear, crises and sufferings to prevail anymore," she said, adding that the AL does not believe in the politics of

Khaleda, Hasina

FROM PAGE 16
wealth through illegal means," said ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal at a routine press briefing yesterday.

The ACC took this decision after a year-long enquiry.

The commission yesterday also decided to forward to the government for disposal the allegation against ACC chief Hasan Mashhudi Chowdhury of laundering Tk 20.41 crore from Trust Bank.

Former executive chairman of the Board of Investment Mahmudur Rahman had earlier made the allegation.

Moreover, the ACC sent a list of 53 graft-accused to the Truth and Accountability Commission (Tac) yesterday as the accused had applied to it (ACC) offering to make voluntary disclosures about their wealth to Tac. Former BNP state minister Maj (ret) Kamrul Islam is on the list.

Meanwhile, Khaleda submitted her wealth statement to the ACC on August 6 last year, showing properties worth Tk 3.54 crore while Hasina submitted her statement mentioning that she owns wealth worth around Tk 3 crore.

ACC Deputy Director SM Sabir Hasan submitted his enquiry report on Hasina's wealth in August this year. And ACC Deputy Director Golam Shahriar Chowdhury submitted his probe report on Khaleda's wealth last year, ACC sources said.

The enquiry into Hasina's wealth started in September last year and was postponed several times due to High Court (HC) stay orders. The HC orders followed Hasina's petition challenging legality of the ACC notice asking her to submit wealth statement.

The ACC sent the notice to Hasina on July 17 last year through the authorities of the sub-jail on the Jatija Sangsad Bhavan premises where she had been detained. The commission also issued the notice to Khaleda the same day.

The ACC decided to forward the allegation against its chief in accordance with the ACC act, 2004. The act provides that the commission has to forward to the government issues regarding which there is no specification of action in it.

The act does not say what should be done in case the ACC chief is an accused, commission sources noted.

confrontation, violence and clash.

Termining poverty the main enemy of the people of Bangladesh, Hasina said people would have to be saved from poverty through united struggle.

After landing at the ZIA by an Emirates flight, Hasina first exchanged greetings with the members of the party's Central Working Committee. She reached Sudha Sadan at about 12:15pm and talked to some senior party leaders there.

In the afternoon, Hasina went to Dhanmondi road-32 to pay tributes to her father and family members who were killed on August 15, 1975 in a military coup. She placed floral wreaths at the portrait of her father Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and offered prayer before heading to Sudha Sadan.

Acting Jatija Party Chairman barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud and presidium member Ziauddin Babu and Hasina's special aide Abdus Sobhan Golap accompanied her from London to Dhaka.

HASINA'S RECEPTION
Tens of thousands of workers of the AL and its associate organisations stood at different points on both sides of the road from the airport to Sudha Sadan to welcome Hasina. People also gathered at points including the airport roundabout, Khilkhet, Banani, Kakoli, Mohakhali and Bijoy Sarani and between Manik Miah Avenue and Dhanmondi road-32.

They were holding colourful banners, festoons and posters welcoming Hasina's return. Bands were seen at places beating drums.

The enthusiasm of AL workers turned the gatherings into the electoral campaign of the party as they chanted slogans for the AL electoral symbol boat and seeking votes.

Several hundred party men on motorbikes and other vehicles escorted Hasina from the airport to her Dhanmondi residence in a bulletproof jeep with windows closed for security reasons.

Earlier, after her arrival at the airport, members of the Special Security Force took charge of her security. A large number of Rapid Action Battalion and police personnel were also deployed to maintain law and order.

Hasina's special personal aide Dr Hasan Mahmud told reporters yesterday that the AL Central Working Committee meets today at 4:00pm at Hasina's political office in Dhanmondi with her in the chair. Before that US Ambassador James F Moriarty will meet the AL chief at Sudha Sadan at 3:30pm.

AL nomination
FROM PAGE 16
Three forms were collected for her on the first day.

According to the revised Representation of the People Order (RPO), a candidate can contest for highest three seats.

Selling of forms, which started on Wednesday, will be closed today.

Of the yesterday's 949 forms, 426 were sold for different constituencies of Dhaka division, 150 for Chittagong, 167 for Rajshahi, 63 for Barisal, 53 for Sylhet, and 90 for Khulna division.

A total of 975 forms were sold on the first day for six divisions.

AL presidium members Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Tofiqul Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, AL leaders Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Obaidul Quader are among the significant leaders who collected forms on the second day of selling forms.

BNP to observe
FROM PAGE 1
associate organisations have taken elaborate programmes this time under a changed political scenario.

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia will formally inaugurate the day's programme on behalf of her party by placing wreaths at the grave of late president and founder of BNP Ziaur Rahman at 6:30am.

The BNP chief will also address a rally in the port city of Chittagong in the afternoon to mark the day, her first address to any public rally since 1/11.

Party sources said decision regarding participation of BNP-led four-party alliance in the December 18 election and the party's policy and strategy relating to the polls may come from the rally to be held at Lalghiri Maidan.

Khaleda Zia will address several street rallies at different places, including in Feni and Chandina, on her way to Chittagong by road, party sources said.

The other BNP programmes include hoisting of party flag atop party head office and a discussion in the afternoon at city's Engineers Institute.

The BNP chairperson and party secretary general also delivered separate messages on the occasion.

On November 28, 2007, the present caretaker government scrapped November 7 as public holiday that comes into effect from this year.

November 7 had been observed as public holiday since 1976 but the Awami League government in 1996 halted the practice.

In 2001, the BNP-led four-party government re-introduced November 7 as public holiday.

The rally to be held in the afternoon also has a great significance for many reasons, said the party sources.

JSD will organise a discussion meeting at city's Col Taher Auditorium at 4:00pm to mark the 'Civil Military Uprising Day'.

6 Huji members

FROM PAGE 16
the charge sheet before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court, Sylhet dropping the names of seven others.

The charge-sheeted accused are Mufti Abdul Hannan, his brother Muhibullah alias Mofizul Islam Ovi, Mainuddin alias Abu Zandal, Sharif Shahedul Alam Bipul, Delwar Hossain Ripon and Humayun Kabir Himu.

All of them except Himu are in jail.

Another accused Fakhrul Islam Fahim was not charged since his whereabouts could not be ascertained, the investigation officer mentioned in the charge sheet. He said on receiving information about his whereabouts Fahim would be charged through a supplementary charge sheet.

On December 2, 2005, criminals hurled a grenade at the mayor around 10:00pm as he was inaugurating a Badminton tournament in Sylhet's Tilagarh area. The grenade fell five feet short of the mayor and failed to explode.

Emergency

FROM PAGE 1
Hunger Project-Bangladesh alleged that the Election Commission has shown negligence in scrutinising candidates' information and enforcing electoral rules in the local election.

He also criticised the commission for unnecessarily lengthening the dialogue process with political parties over changes in the Representation of the People Order.

Linking the 1/11 changeover to the failure of political parties, Badiul said Bangladesh's democracy is an "ineffective election-only system," which has turned into "loutocracy".

"I have not seen any instance of soul-searching or real repentance [by politicians] for mistakes," he said, expressing scepticism that political parties would practise the changes they recently brought in their constitutions.

He believes it is not easy to convict all the plunderers because people dealing with corruption cases do not have the expertise required to unearth sufficient evidence. The task also became unmanageable because of so many arrests.

"We do not have a civil society as such. What we have is partisan intelligentsia who reap benefit from political parties and speak for them," Badiul said, noting that the number of people with independent mind has declined to an alarming level.

Pintu down

FROM PAGE 1
submitted papers explaining the reason for his absence.

The former lawmaker from Lalbagh-Kamrangichar was produced before the court on November 4. His counsels said his condition is so bad that he could barely speak. He has problems in his eyes and ears.

They argued the case proceedings should be adjourned on medical grounds, but could not produce any certificate issued by a medical board.

Apparently not satisfied with the papers submitted, the judge said he would order an investigation into the matter.

Against this backdrop, BSMMU doctors are planning to send him back to regular bed.

The BNP leader's CCU file shows he was taken there at 5:00pm on October 27. His blood pressure (110 / 70) and pulse (78) were normal the following day.

It however does not contain any report of ECG (electrocardiogram) that could be done immediately before or after transfer to CCU. It even lacks any cardiologist's advice.

Graph of his last ECG (October 19) shows his heart was working normally.

A cardiac specialist who has gone through Pintu's medical papers said his heartbeat is regular and this is unusual for a patient of atrial fibrillation (abnormal heart rhythm) or unstable angina (bumpy and fast heartbeat).

"Names of the medicines he needs are written on a plain sheet of paper instead of the prescribed form," said a doctor at the BSMMU.

"To Whom It May Concern" is written on top of the papers where Dr DMM Faruk Osmani suggests that the patient be taken to court with an oxygen mask on. He also recommends a medical officer to accompany Pintu.

The cardiologist who spoke to The Daily Star in return for anonymity said, "Only a specialist doctor can issue such papers, not a mere medical officer (Farukh). The documents are meant to help Pintu at court."

He also pointed out that for a patient of unstable heartbeat the doctor concerned should mention the quantity of oxygen.

"From all this, we can say that his condition is not that serious."

Contacted, Dr Osmani yesterday said, "Pintu bhai was indeed severely sick. He is doing better now, and he may be sent back to normal bed today."

The former student leader was sent to Dhaka Central Jail on February 12 last year after he surrendered to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court in connection with an attempted murder case.

Bhutan king

FROM PAGE 1
the world's youngest reigning monarch.

In an ancient Buddhist ritual in the white-walled palace overlooking the picturesque Thimphu valley, Wangchuck was handed Bhutan's Raven Crown by his father who stepped aside two years ago to make way for a new face.