

## Saifur, Nizami

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Power Rules (EPR), there is no scope for granting them bail.  
It fixed November 12 for next hearing.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case on February 26 this year against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and 15 others including 10 former ministers from BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

The charge is causing a loss of Tk 159 crore to the state exchequer by awarding the contract for Barapukuria coalmine operation to a Chinese company through abuse of a Chinese.

Nizami, also former industries minister, was the first to enter the courtroom at 9:45am. He was followed by Mojahid at 10:00am and Saifur Rahman at 11:30am. Saifur was taken there in a wheelchair.

Later, former state minister for energy and mineral resources AKM Mosharruf Hossain who surrendered in the Barapukuria case Sunday was produced before the court.

Thousands of Jamaat leaders and workers gathered at the north gate of the parliament building complex. They chanted slogans demanding release of their top leaders.

Special security measures were taken to avert untoward situation. Jamaat activists blocked the road between Khamarbari and Bijoy Sarani intersections. They brought out processions, causing a huge traffic on the adjacent roads.

Saifur, Nizami and Mojahid were taken out of the court for Dhaka Central Jail at around 2:30pm.

After the court sat at 12:40pm, counsels for the accused prayed for time and continuation of their clients' bail. They argued the case proceedings should be adjourned until the HC rules on their petitions for quashing of the case.

As the judge asked Saifur's lawyer whether the former finance minister had obtained bail from higher court, he replied in the negative.

Abdur Razzak, counsel for Nizami, appealed the court to uphold the bail, and said a prayer has already been submitted to the HC for bail extension.

Prosecution lawyer Mosharruf Hossain Kajaal said the accused were not even on bail. The High Court on November 4 and 5 asked them to surrender to the trial court.

He said operation of the HC directives not to harass or arrest till submission of the police report has expired, and in the meantime the three did not seek fresh bail.

Moreover, he said, the EPR does not provide for granting bail to accused.

Mojahid's lawyers appealed for time saying that their quashment petition will be heard tomorrow.

In response, the prosecution lawyer said he (Mojahid) is a law-breaker. He did not surrender to the trial court even after he was directed by the HC to do so.

After yesterday's proceedings, Nizami said if being a member of the purchase committee lands someone among the accused, no-one will want to be part of it (purchase committee).

The accused former ministers from BNP are Saifur Rahman, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain, M Shamsul Islam, MK Anwar, Aminul Haque, Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, and AKM

## Govt expects

**FROM PAGE 16**  
government intended to do regarding BNP's demands for the national election, Zillur avoided a direct answer, saying, "The government is observing the overall situation of the country. We expect a responsible role from all quarters."

Generally known to a spokesman for the government, Zillur would not confirm if the government had any plans to hold talks with BNP to bring them to the election.

All the political parties, excepting BNP and its allies, have agreed to contest the poll. The BNP-led alliance has been pressing for seven-point demands.

## Jamaat protesters

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) officials admitted that the electoral code of conduct had been violated.

Banaj Kumar Majumder, deputy commissioner (north) of CMP, said that the procession was brought out so suddenly they couldn't do anything about it.

A police report is being sent to higher authorities in this connection. Chittagong University unit Shibir brought out a similar procession on their campus in the afternoon.

In Rangpur, district Jamaat and Shibir leaders brought out a procession, in clear violation of EPR, protesting the arrest of their leaders.

Police walked ahead of the procession but did not stop it, eyewitnesses said.

In Sylhet, city BNP and Jamaat brought out separate processions and held rallies last night.

City BNP held a brief rally at the Central Shahid Minar before bringing out a procession.

They said the government should not do anything to create uncertainty in the country. Jamaat brought out a procession from the court point area ending at Chouhatta point in the evening to demand the release of their leaders.

## Tension lessens

**FROM PAGE 1**  
reports that although Myanmar withdrew its warships and the rig from Bangladesh waters, it continued to mobilise its troops on the frontiers with Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) members along with army personnel are keeping round-the-clock vigil on the borders.

Our correspondent from Bandarban reports: BDR Director General Maj Gen Sakil Ahamed visited various border outposts in Naikkhanchhari of Bandarban yesterday. Later, he also held a meeting with security officials.

Meanwhile, BDR on Sunday evening held three Myanmar citizens at Reju of Naikkhanchhari upazilla for intruding into Bangladesh territory.

The detainees are Mung Buk Yee, 26, U Ching Ku, 25 and Mung Ching, 23. They were handed over to the police.

Local people also held two Myanmar citizens -- Azizul Haque and Nur Mohammad -- at Amtoli on Friday. They were produced before a court that sent them to jail.

Our Cox's Bazar correspondent reports: Myanmar has mobilised its forces along the border with Bangladesh.

However, referring to various official sources, Superintendent of Police of Cox's Bazar Imam Hossain, said they received information that Myanmar started withdrawing its troops from the frontier at about 12:00noon yesterday.

Meanwhile, it has been reported in Myanmarese media that Myanmar withdrew its warships, exploration rig and vessels as the South Korean company conducting the exploration work had completed its seismic survey and shifted to another place, reports Bloomberg.

"The necessary survey was completed," the state-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar said yesterday.

"Continued tasks will be undertaken according to the work programme," the dailysaid.

Bangladesh and Myanmar has so far held three rounds of talks to settle the maritime boundary dispute while the fourth round of talks is expected to be held in Dhaka next week, foreign ministry officials said.

Meanwhile, BDR in a report based on press publications said India has signed an agreement with Myanmar on a project to build a multi-modal transit-cum-transport system in the coastal region of Myanmar.

Under the India-funded Rs-548 crore project, two roads and a seaport in the estuary of Kaladan river about 250 kilometres off India's Mizoram province will be built within three years.

India is also interested to explore oil and gas in these areas. But some of the exploration blocks may overlap with Bangladesh's maritime economic zone.

The demarcation of maritime boundary through mutual discussion with Myanmar needs to be completed to avert dispute.

The report recommended that Bangladesh Navy and Coast Guard should stay alert so that no 'Indian oil company' could enter Bangladesh's economic zone for oil and gas exploration.

## 28 killed

**FROM PAGE 16**  
followed by an unknown explosion. The Medical City hospital received 37 wounded people, including several women and children and two Iraqi soldiers, a medic said.

Suicide attacks are usually the hallmark of al-Qaeda in Iraq, which continues to have a small presence in Baghdad despite major setbacks after repeated Iraqi and American military sweeps.

Raihana Shams, a housewife and a resident of Lalmatia in the capital, yesterday told The Daily Star, "I can't take any risk with my only son's health. I'm not feeding him powdered milk products until we get clear instructions."

"In fact, I'm avoiding milk altogether after getting reports from the media about melamine in milk products. I'm also advising my friends and relatives to avoid dairy products," she added.

But many parents are still too confused to be decisive like Raihana. "I'm really confused about what to feed my three-year old daughter. Over the years she has become totally dependent on powdered milk. What am I to feed

## 'Sick' Pintu

**FROM PAGE 1**  
failed to produce Pintu before the court.

In March, the jail authorities had cancelled Pintu's division status for around two weeks in connection with using a cell phone inside the jail, which is a violation of the jail code.

Meanwhile, discrepancies were discovered in Pintu's medical documents.

Independent specialists who examined the documents said it seemed the papers were prepared to be used at court to Pintu's advantage.

Pintu was moved to the Coronary Care Unit (CCU) of BSMU after he complained of severe chest pain 10 days ago. Before that he was undergoing treatment at the general prison ward for eye problems.

The joint force recently launched a probe into his current state of health.

## Khaleda tells

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Rahman were, among others, present.

"We want a free and fair election in this country," Palestinian Ambassador Shaher Mohammad told reporters after the meeting.

## Aman, Mufti Shahidul get HC bail

### 'No orders' on ACC petitions for staying 8 bigwigs' bail

Staff Correspondent

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted bail for three months to former BNP state minister Aman Ullah Aman and former Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) lawmaker Mufti Shahidul Islam in two cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on charges of amassing illegal wealth and concealing information about it.

Two special courts had earlier sentenced them to imprisonment for different terms in the cases. Both are now in jail.

After hearing two separate appeals filed by Aman and Shahidul against their conviction, an HC bench comprising Justice Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Farid Ahmed granted them bail.

Meanwhile, Chamber Judge of the Supreme Court Justice MA Matin yesterday passed 'no orders' on the petitions filed by the ACC and government seeking stay on the HC orders granting bail to eight political leaders including former BNP ministers Moudud Ahmed, Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain and Altaf Hossain Chowdhury in separate corruption cases against them.

The other five are former Awami League state minister Obaidul Quader, former BNP state minister Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, lawmakers Mosaddek Ali Falu and Salauddin Ahmed, and former mayor of Barisal City Corporation (BCC) Mojibur Rahamn Sarwar, also from BNP.

Lawyers concerned said the SC chamber judge's 'no orders' implied that the HC bail order would remain valid.

The chamber judge also asked the ACC and government to file regular leave to appeal with the SC

against the HC orders, said the lawyers.

Moreover, an HC bench yesterday ordered the government not to harass or arrest AFM Bahauddin Nasim, president of Awami Swechhasebak League, and Alauddin Ahmed Chowdhury, former APS to the then leader of the opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina, without due process of law.

The bench comprised of Justice Tariq ul Hakim and Justice Farah Mahubb.

On June 21 last year, a special court dealing with graft cases sentenced Amanullah Aman to 10 years' rigorous and three years' simple imprisonment and fined him Tk 10 lakh in the case filed by the ACC.

Another special court on March 19 this year sentenced Mufti Shahidul Islam to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment in the ACC case.

The convicts later appealed to the HC against their conviction.

Bahauddin Nasim and Alauddin Ahmed yesterday filed separate writ petitions with the HC stating that they apprehend law enforcers may harass and arrest them anytime.

Advocate Motahar Hossain Sazu, a counsel for the petitioners, said the HC bench issued the order in this regard and disposed of their writ petitions.

Earlier on Sunday, the same HC bench had asked Bahauddin, Awami Jubo League President Jahangir Kabir Nanak and former president of Chhatra League Liaqat Shikder, facing criminal cases, to surrender to lower court within 10 weeks.

It had also directed police to refrain from arresting or harassing them during this period.

The HC orders followed their surrender to seeking bails.

## Nadim Mostafa

**FROM PAGE 1**  
information of wealth around Tk 2,52,53,205 in his statement submitted to the commission.

However, the IO dropped the name of Nadim's wife Nurunnahar Parul from the charge sheet and appealed to the court to discharge her as charges brought in the first information report (FIR) were not proved.

The ACC assistant director also prayed for issuance of arrest warrant against Nadim and orders to attach his properties as he has been absconding since the case was filed.

Earlier, Nadim's mother-in-law Jahannara Begum and Rajshahi University Assistant Registrar Shamsunnahar had given judicial statements to magistrates on different dates in connection with the case. However, details of the statements were not revealed.

ACC Assistant Director Ali Akbar filed the case with Ramna Police Station against Nadim and his wife Parul on December 12 last year.

## US envoy

**FROM PAGE 16**  
question whether there will be any change in politics if convicted politicians are allowed to participate in the election as demanded by major political parties.

Moriarty made the comments coming out of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) headquarters after making a courtesy call on the corruption watchdog's Chairman Lt Gen (retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury.

Stressing the importance of an independent corruption watchdog in any country, he said, "People have to be assured that there is an independent body that is trying to fight corruption and hold politicians and hold officials and hold business people accountable."

Moriarty said the US tried to support the work of the ACC in the past and hopes to continue that support in future.

ACC boss Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury said he talked about ACC activities with the ambassador.

Replying to a question on whether ACC sent a list of convicted politicians to the government, he said, "The government has a list of people convicted so far. The ACC, however, sent a list of the people convicted in ACC-filed cases to cabinet division."

## 2 beaten

**FROM PAGE 16**  
shot and wounded by two gunmen at about 7:30am. He was admitted to DMCH in a critical condition.

Razzak told reporters at DMCH that the armed men first looked for the general manager of the factory. As the GM was not there the gang then fired several bullets at him, he said.

Gulshan police said protection money might be the reason behind the attack.

## Says Jamaat

**FROM PAGE 1**  
demonstrations and protest rallies across the country from today till Thursday and offering 'Doa' (prayers) on Friday. And on November 16, the party will submit memorandum to the Chief Adviser's Office in Dhaka and deputy commissioners' offices in districts.

Nizami, Mojahid and former finance minister Saifur Rahman were sent to jail when they turned up in court in connection with Barapukuria coalmine corruption case.

The action showed there is a conspiracy to keep the four-party out of the polls race, Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Mohammad Kamaruzzaman said at an impromptu press conference at the party central office at the city's Moghbazar.

"Although the charge sheet against the top leader of a political party has been withdrawn, Khaleda Zia (BNP chief) and nine others are being harassed in Barapukuria case," he said.

"This proves the government is favouring a certain political party, and is behaving like step-mother with another party. And today's (yesterday's) incident clearly showed it (government) wants to install a particular party in power."

The Jamaat leader said it now appears that the government is not sincere about holding the December 18 election.

BNP CONDEMNS  
BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain last night condemned sending BNP and Jamaat leaders to jail and said it was intended to keep the four-party away from elections.

He announced a countrywide programme of holding rallies to realise the party's seven-point demand and to get the alliance leaders freed.

Delwar was briefing reporters following a meeting of the four-party at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

Chaired by Khaleda Zia the meeting was attended by, among others, alliance leaders Andaleeb Rahman Partha, Shamim Al M a m u n , M o h a m m a d K a m a r u z z a m , A T M A z h a r u l I s l a m , A b d u l L a t i f N e z a m i a n d A T M I s h a q .

Foreign and Expatriates' Welfare Adviser Iftikhar Ahmed Chowdhury condoled the deaths. He prayed for the departed souls and expressed sympathy for the bereaved family members.

The adviser has asked the Bangladesh embassy in Bahrain to immediately send the bodies home and take measures to realise compensations from the employer.

## Fire kills

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Faruk, 40, and his brother Kadar Mia, 32 of Jagannathpur village under Kamalganj upazilla of Moulvibazar, and Masud of Dhopatilla village of the upazilla, says an official handout of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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## Parties must register

**FROM PAGE 16**  
afternoon it had decided to keep the process open for parties whose applications are already with the commission.

"Political parties might get registrations after November 20, but those might not be able to contest in the upcoming parliamentary election since November 20 is the last date for filing nominations," NI Khan, chief of the EC's technical committee for scrutinising the applications, told reporters yesterday.

Asked whether the EC has been discriminating towards the applicant parties, NI Khan, who is also the joint secretary of EC Secretariat, dismissed the notion outright saying, "The parties that had applied for registration meeting the criteria, got registered quite quickly."

"Those who will not get registered before the upcoming parliamentary poll, will not be registered because of their own failures to meet the criteria. Not because of our failure," he added.

A total of 107 political parties applied for registration, and till yesterday the EC registered 19 of them while a process is on to register another 13.

It already denied registrations to 50 for not meeting the criteria, while the technical committee is still scrutinising the applications of 25 others.

In a media briefing in the secretariat conference room, EC Secretary Humayun Kabir said his guess is that around 30 political parties will be registered for the upcoming parliamentary poll, while Joint Secretary NI Khan predicted that the number will be between 30 and 35.

Participation of such a large number of political parties makes election management very difficult for poll officials.

Only 14 parties contested in the first general election in 1973, but in

the second election, which was held under a military rule in 1979, the number dramatically climbed to 29.

And in the third parliamentary election in 1986, which was also held under a military rule and boycotted by a BNP-led alliance, 28 parties contested.

Despite boycotts by major opposition parties -- Awami League, Jamaat-e-Islami, a left alliance, and others -- 43 parties contested in the sixth parliamentary election on February 15, 1996.

But the sixth parliament was dissolved after only 11 working days, leading to the introduction of the constitutional caretaker government system.

The first caretaker government was formed in March of that year, and the seventh parliamentary election was held on June 12 with 81 parties contesting.

In previous parliamentary elections, political parties that exist only on papers, failed to win any seat in the house with the paltry votes they managed to bag.

It has been reported many a time that such parties often sell their polling agents to major political parties during elections.

It is also widely suspected that some people have the penchant for heading those parties because that is some kind of a status symbol for them.

## Good news

**FROM PAGE 16**  
circular to the internet service providers in this regard, the release said.

"It's necessary to provide internet services in rural areas to alleviate poverty by accelerating development activities. The reduced bandwidth charges will facilitate the use of internet and broadband penetration," BTRC Chairman Major General (retd) Manzurul Alam said.

## Poll aspirants rush

**FROM PAGE 16**  
regularise the loans on applications as per the rules.

Officials of private banks said they too have been contacted by prospective candidates defaulting on loans.

A Pubali Bank official said so far three persons have applied for rescheduling.

The Daily Star has collected names of some parliamentary hopefuls defaulting on loans. Some of them have applied to reschedule the debts to bid successfully for candidacy in the December 18 election.

ASM Firoz, who seeks AL nomination, has been defaulting on a Tk 8 crore loan from Sonali Bank. He took the money for Patuakhali Jute Mills.

A bank source said Firoz has applied for rearranging the payments.

Major (retd) Manjur Quader, a former BNP lawmaker, took out around Tk 32 crore from Sonali Bank. Trial of a case involving the loan is pending with the High Court.

Another former BNP lawmaker, Major (retd) Akhteruzzaman, took approximately Tk 35 crore from Agrani Bank for Gachihata Aquaculture Farms Ltd.

Salman F Rahman, vice-chairman of Beximco Group, who had earlier run on AL ticket, has been defaulting on Tk 40 crore he borrowed for Beximco Denim and Beximco Fashion.

Besides, he has been in default in payment of his over Tk 100 crore loans from Sonali Bank and Shilpa Bank. The money was meant for Beximco Textile.

## Obama may reverse

**FROM PAGE 16**  
would not "preview decisions that he (Obama) has yet to make."

However he pointed out that "as a candidate, Senator Obama said that he wanted all the Bush executive orders reviewed, and decide which ones should be kept, and which ones should be repealed, and which ones should be amended."

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