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Parties have to decide on poll participation of convicts

Says US envoy
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador to Bangladesh James F Moriarty yesterday suggested that political parties themselves can decide on convicted party men taking part in elections by enforcing provisions in their constitution that ensures a bad-reputed person cannot hold an important post in the party.

"I think some of the parties actually have clauses in constitution saying the people of bad reputation will not be allowed to hold position of importance in the party. And that to me sounds like very sensible regulation," said Moriarty.

"And it is up to the party to enforce its own regulation," Moriarty added while replying to a

Baby dates with destiny

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

It's difficult to notice that two-month old Ahnaf Imtiaz, lying in a bed at the Burn and Plastic Surgery unit of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, is breathing.

Only his face remains uncovered, the rest of his tiny, burnt body is swathed in bandages.

He is injured so severely that doctors doubt if he will survive the ordeal.

Ahnaf is supposed to have his entire life ahead of him. Yet he is forced to fight for his life at this tender age because of the callousness in implementation of the Acid Control Act in the country and its monitoring.

Four days ago, a truck carrying acid rammed into a passen-



Two-month-old Ahnaf struggles to survive at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. He sustained acid burns a few days ago when a bus and an acid-laden truck collided in Comilla. PHOTO: STAR

ger bus coming from the opposite direction, resulting in eleven people dying from severe burns from the acid spillage.

Thirty people were seriously hurt in the accident.

Ahnaf's parents were on that bus. His father was taking Ahnaf and his mother to Chittagong to join him there, shortly ahead of his first wedding anniversary.

Instead of reaching their destination, they landed up at DMCH with multiple burns, along with six others injured the same day.

The carrier truck in question had a licence to carry acid but other cautions required while carrying such a toxic chemical was evidently absent as the accident has shown.

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Poll aspirants rush to banks to reschedule loans by Nov 13

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MOHAMMAD YOUSUF

Parliamentary aspirants are rushing to banks to reschedule their debt after the government okayed an amendment to the electoral laws and the Election Commission (EC) extended the deadline for filing nominations.

Approved by the council of advisers Sunday, the amendment to the Representation of People Order (RPO) says payments of loans and utility bills can be rescheduled till seven days before submission of nominations. Earlier, it was 15 days.

According to the fresh timetable, the closing date for submitting nominations is November 20, changed from 13.

It means the candidates will now be able to reschedule their debt until November 13, Humayun Kabir, secretary to the EC Secretariat, told reporters.

A senior official of state-owned Sonali Bank told The Daily Star that leaders from both Awami League (AL) and BNP have contacted them in the last two days. Some have already submitted applications for rescheduling.

Another official of the same bank said a good number of aspiring candidates have already rescheduled their loans sensing the change in the RPO.

Officials at state-owned Janata Bank and Agrani Bank said many have called to enquire about the matter. They said they would

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Govt expects all parties to act with responsibility

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education and Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday called upon all quarters to play a responsible role so that the interim administration can complete its task.

"We expect all quarters to play responsible roles and have a rational approach through which we can reach our desired destination," Zillur told reporters at the Secretariat yesterday.

He was talking to newsmen after a meeting with three other key advisers at the Ministry of Public Works.

Law Adviser AF Hassan Ariff, Communication Adviser Ghulam Quader and LGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal attended the meeting.

When asked about what the

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Good news for Net users

Bandwidth charges slashed up to 60pc
UNB, Dhaka

In an effort to provide internet services in the country's rural areas, the government has reduced the bandwidth charges up to 60 percent with effect from December 1.

In a press release yesterday, Bangladesh Telecommunications and Regulatory Commission (BTRC) said the bandwidth charges have been reduced for the second time in five months to provide internet services in the country's remote areas.

The BTRC has already sent a

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Parties must register with EC by Nov 20 to contest polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has decided to continue registering political parties whose applications are already in, while only those registered by November 20 will be allowed to contest in the December 18 parliamentary poll.

The commission has not been accepting any new application since October 20, the deadline for submissions.

The number of political parties

contesting in the upcoming poll might drop significantly compared to the previous elections due to the strict registration system.

Although 96 political parties contested in the 2001 parliamentary poll, the number might not exceed 35 this time around, officials in the EC Secretariat forecast.

According to the EC's earlier decision, the process of registering political parties was supposed to be over yesterday, but on Sunday

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AL to finalise nominations by Nov 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) has completed the task of collecting recommendations from its grassroots level committees to finalise the names of its candidates for the next parliamentary elections by November 15.

Following the directive of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC), party's grassroots level units in 300 constituencies have already sent lists of potential candidates to the AL Parliamentary Board (ALPB) headed by party President Sheikh Hasina.

The deadline for sending the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Obama may reverse Bush decisions

AFP, Washington

Barack Obama is looking to reverse executive orders on oil drilling and stem cell research implemented by President George W Bush, the president-elect's transition team said.

The move could signal a swift change of course after eight years under the Bush administration, even as top aides stressed Obama's bipartisan aims and predicted the new cabinet could contain familiar faces, particularly at the Pentagon.

Both the incoming Democrats

and outgoing Republicans have largely struck a tone of civility, with economic woes and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan high on the list of priorities ahead of Obama's inauguration on January 20.

But as Obama prepared for handover talks at the White House Monday, his transition chief John Podesta signalled that Obama could wipe away some hallmarks of the Bush years, including a ban on embryonic stem cell research and moves to open new lands to oil drilling.

"I think across the board, on

stem cell research, on a number of areas, you see the Bush administration, even today, moving aggressively to do things that I think are probably not in the interest of the country," Podesta told Fox.

"We're looking at -- again, in virtually every agency to see where we can move forward, whether that's on energy transformation, on improving health care, on stem cell research," he said.

Podesta, who also served as White House chief of staff under president Bill Clinton, said he

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Fire kills 3 Bangladeshis in Bahrain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fire killed three Bangladeshi workers and injured seven others at a labour camp at Manama in Bahrain last Friday.

The dead are Tota Mia alias

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Prayer Timing		
November 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-35
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-22	5-25
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



Thousands of Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, activists and followers take to the street and block part of Rokeya Sarani from Khamarbari to Bijoy Sarani forcing traffic into a grinding halt yesterday after two top leaders of the party were sent to jail by a special court. Story on page 1. PHOTO: STAR

2 beaten to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people, including a teenage factory worker, were beaten to death in separate incidents while another person was shot and injured by unidentified criminals in the city yesterday.

One of the deceased was Ashraf Hossain, 14, a factory worker of Kamrangirchar, but the identity of a young man could not be known immediately.

Police said Ashraf's friends beat him to death on the spot following a quarrel over playing marble at West Nabinagar of Kamrangirchar

at about 2:00pm. Police detained a 14-year-old boy in this connection.

Mohammadpur police said they recovered the body of the unidentified youth from Sher Shah Suri road early morning and sent it to Dhaka Medical College morgue.

The youth was beaten and strangled to death by criminals in the early hours, police and medical sources said.

Police, however, could not tell the motive behind the murder.

Besides, Abdur Razzak, 50, a security guard of a garment factory of Mohakhali Wireless Gate, was

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28 killed in Baghdad market bombings

AFP, Baghdad

At least 28 people were killed, including women and children, and dozens wounded in a double bombing in a Baghdad market on Monday, the deadliest attack to rock the Iraqi capital in months, security officials said.

The attackers first detonated a car bomb in the Sunni district of Adhamiyah, then minutes later a suicide bomber ran into the resulting melee and blew up, according to defence and interior ministry officials.

An interior ministry official said at least 68 were wounded in the rush-hour attack, the deadliest to hit Baghdad since June 17 when 51 people were killed and 75 wounded in a car bombing in the Al-Hurriya district.

Witnesses said the attack took place at about 8 am (0500 GMT) on a street lined with restaurants and coffee shops popular for breakfast with Iraqi security forces, as a bus carrying young girls to school drove past.

"There was a huge explosion

and before I went out to look another bomb went off," said Fadel Hussein, a waiter at a tea house on Kasra Street, scene of the bombings.

"Heavy smoke was everywhere. There were so many bloody victims on the ground, we helped to evacuate those people to ambulances," Hussein told AFP.

The US and Iraqi military cordoned off the area that was littered with glass and scorched cars as sobbing parents desperately searched for their sons and daughters.

One woman in her 40s and wearing a black abaya, the traditional black Arabic dress, sat on the ground crying uncontrollably.

"I'm waiting for my husband who is inside the area looking for my son. I hope he is still alive," she sobbed.

Among those killed were three policemen, three women and five children, police said.

The US military said in a statement two improvised explosive devices had been detonated

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