

## Scrutiny of nomination

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convicted under the Emergency Powers Rules (EPR), which prevents them from contesting the polls.

Bangladesh Bank has directed banks and financial institutions concerned to ask their local officials to be present during the scrutiny with documents on loan defaulters so that they could be disqualified from the race, sources in the EC Secretariat said.

The central bank in a circular issued earlier warned the banks and financial institutions concerned of punitive actions in case of negligence in discharging this duty.

The EC has also issued

circulars directing utility service providers to send their representatives with information on bill defaulters during the scrutiny, sources in the EC Secretariat said.

As per the directives, officials of utility-service providing organisations like telephone, water, power and others are supposed to be present during the scrutiny at the ROs offices across the country.

Officials in the EC Secretariat predict that the EC might receive a record number of appeals against the ROs' decisions as parliamentary aspirants are allowed to chal-

lenge the ROs' decision on any acceptance or rejection of nomination papers. In the past, aspirants were only allowed to challenge the ROs' rejection of their nomination papers.

The EC Secretariat yesterday in a press release said any parliamentary aspirant aggrieved by the decision of ROs can file an appeal with the EC between December 5 and December 7. The EC will start disposing of the appeals from December 6.

A total of 2,460 nominations were submitted for the parliamentary elections scheduled for December 29.

## Most parties

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Officials in the EC Secretariat expressed surprise over the strength of these political parties. Most of the parties' previous polls records were very poor and their security deposits were confiscated.

Of the total 39 political parties in the race only three parties—Awami League, BNP and Jatiya Party—nominated candidates in over 200 constituencies. Awami League nominated 333 candidates, BNP 310 and Jatiya Party 258.

Of the 11 Islamic political parties, the highest 183 nominations were filed by Islami Andolan Bangladesh, previously known as Islami Shashantantra Andolan. Jamaat-e-Islami gave nominations in 56 constituencies.

According to the EC's report, Bangladesh Jatiya Party fielded only one candidate, Jatiya Ganotantrik Party two, Khelafat Majlish three, Biplabi Workers Party five,

Freedom Party six, Bangladesh National Awami Party six, Jatiya Party (JP) seven, Muslim League eight, Jamiyate Ulamaye Islam Bangladesh 10, Ganatantri Party 12, Ganofront and Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish 16 each, Oikyaboddha Nagorik Andolan 17, Bangladesh Islami Front 20, Bangladesh Jatiya Party-BJP 21, National Awami Party 22, Workers Party 27, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal-JSD 29, Progatishil Ganotantrik Dal 35, National People's Party 37, Liberal Democratic Party 39, Communist Party of Bangladesh and Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan 41 each, Zaker Party 44, Bangladesh Kallyan Party 45, Krishak Sramik Janata League 52, Samajtantrik Dal 58, Gano Forum 61.

Moreover, 391 applications were filed seeking candidacy as independent candidates.

## Loan defaulters

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Mohammad Ali (Noakhali-6) and Moshtaque Ahmed Chowdhury (Cox's Bazar-3).

The 12 BNP candidates identified as loan defaulters are Abu Bakar Siddique Rahman (Mymensingh-10), Abdus Sobhan (Barisal-1), Shamsuzzoha Khan (Naogaon-2), Rumana Mahmud (Sirajganj-2), Golam Mawla Khan Babul (Sirajganj-5), Biswas Jahangir Alam (Narail-1), Nurun Nahar Parul (Rajshahi-5), Giasuddin Quader Chowdhury (Chittagong-5), Mostafa Kamal Pasha (Chittagong-16), Kazi Md Mofizur Rahman (Noakhali-2), Md Giasuddin (Narayanganj-4) and Mostafa Ali (Bogra-4).

Other prominent loan defaulters who are contesting the polls include Shahidul Haque Jamal, a BNP rebel who has submitted nomination papers from several constituencies in Barisal as an independent candidate, Jatiya Party's Mostafa Jamal Haider (Pirojpur-1), Joyanal Abedin Sarker (independent candidate from Lalmonirhat-1), and Awami League's rebel candidate Zafar Ahmed Chowdhury (Chittagong-14).

Those who have already got

## Writ petition

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Daily Star that the HC rejected the writ petition of Mirza Abbas since his appeal against the trial court judgement is pending with it.

The counsel said the HC had earlier granted ad-interim bail to his client in this case.

And since the former minister has got bail from the HC in all the cases against him, there is no legal bar to his release from jail.

During the hearing of the writ petition, Attorney General Salahuddin Ahmad opposed it.

He told the court that Mirza Abbas filed an appeal and a writ with the HC against his conviction, and two separate prayers concerning it were not maintainable.

On May 11 this year, the Third Special Court dealing with graft cases sentenced Mirza Abbas to eight years' imprisonment on charges of dodging tax and furnishing false information in his tax returns.

The court located on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban fined him Tk 54 lakh, in default of which he would have to be in jail for another year. It also ordered confiscation of his property worth over Tk 2.24 crore to the state.

Abbas, who was on the first list of 50 graft suspects, was arrested when he went to submit his wealth statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on February 25 last year.

He is facing a number of cases including 15 regarding illegal handover of 18 houses.

HC stay order on declaring them loan defaulters include BNP's Barkatullah Bulu, Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury, Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad and Maj (ret'd) Manzur Quader, Awami League leaders ABM Abul Quasem, Md Mujibul Huq and HN Ashique Rahman.

Sources said alongside Bangladesh Bank different local banks will provide information about loan defaulters on the list.

This time the EC will also disqualify defaulters of utility services bills and taxes from the December 29 parliamentary elections.

## Climate summit

**FROM PAGE 16**  
The Bangladesh delegation said climate change funding, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), must be in addition to the existing official development assistant (ODA) commitments of 0.7 percent of gross national product (GNP).

Bangladesh's proposal also stated that current arrangement of responsibility-based mechanism must be revised to make contributions of developed countries mandatory.

The Bangladesh delegation also asked for developing a mechanism, with the help of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to create an index on the vulnerability of people in each country to climate change.

Bangladesh demanded creation of an effective environment for climate-change adaptation, nationally, regionally and internationally with the support of appropriate institutions.

"We proposed the setting up of the head office of the International Adaptation Centre in Dhaka," said a government official representing Bangladesh. However, all parties attending the conference have to agree on this.

Bangladesh demanded a long-term global goal on the climate change issue. Its proposals also said the goal should be made according to the undertakings of developed countries on emission cuts, technology transfer, finance and capacity building.

Md Rezauddin, director technical of the department of environment, presented the proposal at the meeting.

Meanwhile, Oxfam International in a report yesterday estimated that more than \$50 billion could be raised each year if developed countries buy, in auction, the right to only 7.5 percent of their emission units. The money should be handed to a new multilateral adaptation-finance mechanism under the UNFCCC. Oxfam yesterday released the report called "Turning Carbon into Gold" which also suggested that other new finance mechanisms in the aviation and shipping sectors could generate another \$28 billion.

Around 9,000 participants including government officials, NGO workers, scientists, and journalists from 190 countries gathered in Poznan to attend the two-week-long conference.

## Ferry escapes disaster on Padma

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A ferry carrying over 300 people and 22 vehicles narrowly escaped a disaster as its hull developed a crack while in the middle of the Padma and water gushed into it.

The ferry—MV Raipura—left Kawrakandi for Maowa at about 5:30pm, and faced trouble around 10:30pm.

Sensing imminent danger, the master of the vessel quickly anchored it at a shoal and contacted officials of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC).

Firefighters, BIWTC personnel and Shariatpur district police rushed to the spot and pumped out water from inside the ferry, making it danger-free. Contacted, Sirajul Islam, BIWTC manager at Maowa ghat, said the ferry restarted for its destination in the early hours today after repair of its hull.

The vessel was carrying three buses with about 300 passengers, 14 trucks and five other vehicles.

## Jukta Front

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Bikalpadhara Bangladesh President Badruddoza Chowdhury accepted the PDP led by Ferdous Ahmed Qureshi as a component of their electoral alliance on Sunday despite opposition from Gono Forum President Dr Kamal, sources said.

"A gap has developed between Bikalpadhara and Gono Forum because Dr Kamal did not agree to allow PDP in the Jukta Front. That is why our leaders were absent at PDP's joining ceremony," said Gono Forum President member Pankaj Bhattacharya.

He said the Jukta Front was formed with Bikalpadhara, Gono Forum, Bangladesh Kalyan Party and a few other little-known parties on November 18 to bring a change in politics. "So, controversial or corrupt leaders should not be allowed in the alliance," Pankaj added.

Gono Forum leaders alleged that PDP Convenor Ferdous Ahmed Qureshi is a controversial political leader while his ideology does not also match the principles of the front.

They said the Krishak Sramik Janata League of Kader Siddiqui quit the alliance because of the same reason.

Gono Forum submitted nominations separately for 57 constituencies in the December 29 parliamentary election while Bikalpadhara will contest in 80 constituencies.

Dr Kamal and Bikalpadhara leader Mahi B Chowdhury are not contesting the election this year, party sources said.

## Khaleda's bail

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Khaleda's counsel AHM Mizanur Rahman, an HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui also extended the court's earlier order, staying the proceedings of the case until disposal of the rule issued in this connection.

On September 9, upon a petition filed by Khaleda Zia, the HC vacation bench of Justice Mirza Hussain Haider and Justice Mamnoon Rahman granted bail for three months to her (Khaleda) and directed the ACC and the government to explain why the petitioner should not be granted regular bail in Gatco corruption case.

On another petition filed by Khaleda Zia for quashing the case in July, another HC bench comprising Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam stayed for two months the proceedings of the case and issued a rule asking the government and ACC to explain why the proceedings against her should not be quashed.

The HC later extended its stay order until December 9. The ACC filed the case on September 2 last year on the charges of corruption in awarding Global Agro Trade (Pvt) Co Ltd (Gatco) a contract for container handling at Dhaka and Chittagong inland depots.

## BNP reviews

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain and Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan were also present in the discussions at the former prime minister's Gulshan office.

Nothing could be known about the meeting outcome immediately.

Meanwhile, supporters of those denied nominations were continuing demonstrations in front of the office.

Some of them were on a hunger strike demanding changes to the party's panel of candidates.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday afternoon, Nazrul Islam Khan said, "We are still examining the list which will hopefully be settled tonight."

Asked about controversial candidates, he said they kept the names as 'alternatives' and those are not final.

A number of BNP leaders alleged that vested interests and some close aides to the party chief had played a key role in selection of individuals with dubious records.

Even findings of the country-wide surveys conducted by professional researchers and the party's organisational teams have been ignored in choosing candidates.

"The chairperson is working on the matter after being briefed on reactions of the rank and file," one of her aides told The Daily Star yesterday. "And you'll see some positive changes by tomorrow [Wednesday]."

BNP carried out the surveys to find out competent contestants for the upcoming polls. Party leaders on several occasions said the nominations would be given in line with the survey recommendations.

Many who aspired to be BNP candidates alleged that a coterie of senior leaders was involved in 'nomination trade', and that answers why so many dodgy characters are on the party ticket.

Of the questionable nominations, those of Kabir Ahmed Bhuiyan (Laxmipur-2), Khandaker Abdul Hamid Dablu (Dhaka-19) and Anwar Hossain Bulu (Naogaon-6) have angered the party men most.

Kabir is brother of Amin Ahmed Bhuiyan, who filed a case against Khaleda Zia's elder son Tarique Rahman following imposition of the state of emergency.

Dablu, son of BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, was allegedly involved in criminal activities during the four-party alliance rule.

Bulu is the brother of former state minister Alamgir Kabir who

is accused of patronising Islamist militants in Rajshahi region.

On the other hand, many of those who worked hard for the organisation during its rough patch in the last two years were denied nominations, causing resentment among the ranks.

"My nomination has been sold to a businessman," a former student leader, who sought nomination for Tangail-4, told The Daily Star.

Businessman Lutfur Rahman Matin has been chosen for the seat.

Chowdhury Motahar Hossain, who vied to run for Naogaon-6 on BNP ticket, yesterday said, "My nomination has been sold to Alamgir Kabir's brother, though madam had promised me the party nod."

A group led by Khandaker Delwar had all along been pressing Khaleda Zia to leave the pro-reform leaders off the nominee list and include controversial former lawmakers like Mirza Abbas, Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu, Abdus Salam Pintu, Salauddin Ahmed and their relatives.

Delwar walked out of the parliamentary board meeting on Thursday night following a difference of opinion with the chairperson over picking some 'reformist' leaders as candidates.

Though Khaleda sent some leaders to Delwar's house to bring him back, he did not return that night.

Hundreds of workers and leaders who were in front of the chairperson's Gulshan office Thursday and Friday night expressed annoyance when they heard names of controversial persons as candidates.

## McCain

**FROM PAGE 1**  
By Senator Joseph Lieberman and Senator Lindsey Graham.

Foreign Adviser Iftikhar Ahmed Chowdhury received them at the airport.

He told journalists that McCain would call on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed this morning. "They are expected to discuss Bangladesh's parliamentary election," he added.

The senator will hold a press briefing at the airport at 8:00am today before leaving for Delhi at 9:00am.

McCain, who ran against Barack Obama in a historic battle of ballot for the White House, was first elected to US Senate from Arizona in 1986. He has an adopted daughter of Bangladeshi origin.

## AL for S Asian

**FROM PAGE 1**  
out terrorism and establish peace in the region," Hasina told a faction of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) leaders when they met her at her office.

She said Islam is a religion of peace and there is no room for terrorism in Islam. Those who are tainting Bangladesh and other Muslim countries by committing terrorist activities in the name of Islam must be stopped, she added.

"Bangladesh must recover its identity as a secular democratic state," she observed.

She added the Muslim world has to take steps to curb terrorism in the name of Islam.

The former premier, against who several plots were hatched mostly by Islamist militants, said she might be targeted again for making such comments. She said 19 such attempts to assassinate her have already been made but she is not scared.

Hasina also said if voted to power she would take steps to modernise both general and madrasa education system as proper education is needed to fight terrorism and remove unemployment problems.

She also pledged that her prime task as a premier would be to bring prices of essentials within the reach of the common people. She reiterated her pledge to ensure education, health,

shelter and employment of the commoners.

About attacks on 'Balaka' sculpture and 'Lalon' sculptures by Islamist militants, Hasina said, "I don't understand why those people desecrated a beautiful sculpture. Many Islamic countries have such sculptures."

She also said while she was in jail, authorities had offered to punish any rivals within her party who had slighted her in the past.

Mentioning her life under detention, she said, "The authorities asked me to name anyone who had let us down in the past at any stage of our political careers. The authorities assured me that they would punish the offenders. I said Allah will take care of all injustices."

"Upon their insistence on eliciting names of offenders, my neighbour gave names and they were arrested straightaway," she said in an indirect reference to her political rival BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who had been detained in another special jail at the same parliament complex.

IOJ Chairman Misbahur Rahman Chowdhury, Vice-chairman Nurul Islam Khan and Secretary General Muniruzzaman Rabbani and AL leaders Motia Chowdhury, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir were present.

## Media totally free

**FROM PAGE 1**  
of office on January 12, 2007, he asked the authorities concerned that "there should be no restrictions on the press" and restrictions under the emergency power rules on the press were lifted thereafter.

The head of the caretaker government made the observations when a delegation of the International Press Institute (IPI) led by its Director David Dudge made a courtesy call on him at the CA's office.

The state of press freedom in Bangladesh was discussed during the meeting.

IPI, the global network of editors, media executives and leading journalists, is dedicated to furtherance and safeguarding of press freedom, promotion of free flow of information and improving practices of journalism.

The CA said constructive criticism by the press helps the government and, in many cases, the present government benefited from the press.

He expressed his firm belief in press freedom and said press

establishes link between the government and the people.

He urged the delegation to undertake a training programme for Bangladeshi journalists to further improve their professional excellence.

IPI Director David Dudge agreed that Bangladesh has press freedom as he also learnt during meetings with different important personalities and institutions in the country.

He thanked the chief adviser for making the Right to Information Ordinance, saying that "the biggest thing" has been done by the interim government.

Dudge said the journalists would have to be very responsible for their duties.

The members of the delegation include Owais Alam Ali, secretary general of Pakistan Press Foundation, and Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, local coordinator of the IPI in Bangladesh.

After the meeting, CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim briefed newsmen.

## Khaleda, Hasina

**FROM PAGE 1**  
alliance chief AL President Sheikh Hasina would be the first since restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1990.

On November 21, the two top political leaders of the country met and exchanged greetings after a long time at the Armed Forces Day reception at Senakunja in Dhaka Cantonment. The incident showed high hopes for their holding talks in the future to bring an end to the country's confrontational politics.

Earlier, eminent jurist and counsel of both the leaders Rafiq-ul-Haque initiated steps to bring them to the table to discuss crucial national issues. But the move did not materialise.

Asked who will be invited to the debates, Sakawat said they are planning to hold three-four sessions with senior political leaders. "We plan to bring the top leaders in the last episode of the programme," he added.

But the chiefs of all 39 registered parties might not be invited to the debate as most of these parties have joined the two electoral alliances led by BNP and AL. Instead, top leaders of the alliances would get the invitation, commission sources said.

Meeting sources said if possible the programme would be broadcast on BTV in between December 20 and 26.

The EC will communicate with political parties for their opinions at appropriate time and seek their participants' names.

The EC had organised an electoral debate before the August 4 polls to four city corporations with participation of the mayoral contenders. The programme was lauded by all quarters.

During the electoral reform talks between the EC and political parties, a few leaders came up with the suggestion of holding electoral debates.

## Bomb blast

**FROM PAGE 16**  
about 200 miles (300 km) south of Gauhati, the capital of Assam state, said District Magistrate MC Sahu.

The train was heading from Lumding in central Assam to the eastern commercial hub of Tinsukhia, Sahu said.

Tuesday's blast comes just days after suspected Muslim militants attacked targets across Mumbai, killing at least 172 people and injuring 239. Tuesday's blast was not seen as related to the Mumbai attacks.

Two train passengers were killed on the spot and one of the 30 wounded later died in a hospital, said Bhaskar Mahanta, a police official. Two of the wounded were in critical condition.

The bomb was a timed device, left in a bag on an overhead rack of the train coach and it blew off a part of the roof, said another police official, KK Sharma.

While no one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, Sharma said an ethnic insurgent group, Karbi Longri National Liberation Front, fighting for wide autonomy in the state for the past five years, was suspected.

The front is one of the three groups active in the region; the other two groups have reached cease-fire accords with the government.

Separately, suspected insurgents shot and killed two migrant workers in the same district on Tuesday, Mahanta told The Associated Press.

The two petty traders from northern India were pulled out from their homes in Dolamara, a village, and fatally shot, he said, blaming the same insurgent group, Karbi Longri National Liberation Front.

Suspected separatists have killed nearly 300 migrants over the past three years in Assam state. They have been targeting thousands of Hindi-speaking migrants from northern states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh who they claim usurp the local population's job opportunities.

In October, the state witnessed 13 coordinated bomb attacks, which killed 89 people and wounded more than 800 in four towns.

Several insurgents groups are battling for power, for ethnic pride and for control of drug routes in India's northeast, an isolated collection of seven states and hundreds of ethnic groups and subgroups. They fight the government and they fight each other in a region crippled by poverty and political chaos.

## India asks Pakistan

**FROM PAGE 1**  
warned India in October that hotels and business centres in Mumbai would be targeted by attackers coming from the sea, as happened in last week's dramatic assault.

One US intelligence official had even named the Taj Mahal hotel, one of 10 sites hit in the 60-hour siege by gunmen, as a specific target, ABC television said.

It said Indian intelligence officials intercepted a phone call on November 18 to an address in Pakistan used by the head of the militant Lashkar-e-Taiba, revealing a possible attack from there.

About 10 gunmen landed in rubber dinghies in Mumbai on Wednesday and wreaked havoc with automatic weapons and hand grenades, in an assault that killed 188 and injured more than 300. The dead included 22 foreign nationals.

India's security and intelligence agencies have come under intense criticism over their handling of the incident, including allegations that not enough was done to prevent such an attack.

"Such comprehensive failure was held up to the world's view during 60 hours of unprecedented trauma, featuring 10 heavily armed terrorists who sailed into Mumbai from Pakistan and penetrated Indian defences as if it was child's play," The Hindu newspaper said on Tuesday.

Pakistan formally banned Lashkar-e-Taiba, which has fought Indian rule in divided Kashmir and was blamed for the 2001 attack on the Indian parliament which almost led the two nations to war in 2002.

But Indian officials allege that Pakistan has not fully enforced that ban, allowing the group to continue operating, and India says all the dead gunmen and the lone man arrested in the attack were all from Pakistan.

India formally demanded "the arrest and hand-over of those persons who are settled in Pakistan and are fugitives of Indian law," Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee said. "We will await the response of Pakistan."

The names come from a list of suspects originally put together by India after the 2001 parliament attack. It includes Hafiz Saeed, the founder of Lashkar-e-Taiba.

Others include Maulana Masood Azhar, chief of the Jaish-e-Mohammed rebel group, and Dawood Ibrahim,

## Ershad earns

**FROM PAGE 16**  
mention his profession but said he is the proprietor and chairman of a limited company. The statement also shows he had bank and other loans of about Tk 6.79 crore.

Besides, his wife Rawshan Ershad owns about Tk 4.58 crore in the form of bank deposit, bond, stock exchange, company share, motor vehicles, gold, postal savings and capital investment for trade.

Moreover, she owns wealth worth about Tk 6.07 crore in the form of buildings, apartments and miscellaneous.

## Thai govt dissolved

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Power Party (PPP), therefore the leader of the party and party executives must be banned from politics for five years," said Chat Chonlaworn, head of the nine-judge court panel.

"The court had no other option," he said.

Hours after the verdict, the PAD and airport authorities said they had reached an agreement to resume flights from Suvarnabhumi, although there was no mention of the blockade at the older Don Mueang domestic airport.

The airport seizure has stranded 350,000 passengers and caused massive economic losses to the kingdom.

"As of this moment the PAD has allowed flights to take off and land immediately, both passenger and cargo flights," senior PAD member Somkiat Pongpaiboon told reporters at the airport.

Vudhichai, chairman of the board of Airports of Thailand, said flights may be able to resume within 24 hours if there were no "technical problems".

"They're going to leave now," he told AFP-TV.