

Babar, MK Alamgir

FROM PAGE 1
Besides, the RO cancelled nominations of four other candidates including independent candidate Laila Rahman (Khulna-2), wife of convicted former Khulna city mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman, for failing to fulfill the requisite terms and conditions.

In Bhola, the nomination paper of BNP leader Hafiz Ibrahim (Bhola-2) was cancelled while the RO in Chandpur cancelled the nomination papers of four candidates in three constituencies.

The nomination of former state minister and AL president member Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, who filed nomination as an AL candidate for Chandpur-1, was cancelled for being convicted in corruption cases.

The RO also cancelled the nomination of Jatiya Party (JP) leader and former Zilla Parishad Chairman Dr Shahidul Islam in the same constituency for defaulting on loans.

The nomination papers of BNP's rebel candidates Dr Jalal Uddin (Chandpur-2) and Sheikh Farid Ahmed Manik (Chandpur-3) were cancelled for giving wrong information.

In Chuadanga, the RO cancelled nominations of six candidates including Krishak Dal General Secretary Shamsuzzaman Duda, who filed nomination for Chuadanga-1.

The nomination papers of BNP leader Maj (ret) Akhtaruzaman, who filed nomination for Kishoreganj-2 as an independent candidate, had also been cancelled for defaulting on bank loans.

The nominations of four other candidates in Kishoreganj-1, 2 and 3 were also cancelled.

In Comilla, the nomination of Majeda Ahsan, wife of former lawmaker Manjurul Ahsan Munshi, was cancelled for defaulting on loans. The RO in the district also cancelled nominations of eight more aspirants in different constituencies.

The nomination paper of former finance minister Saifur Rahman's assistant personal secretary Abdul Quayum Chowdhury, who filed nomination as an independent candidate for Sylhet-3, was cancelled.

The RO found nomination papers of 15 aspirants including former lawmaker and AL's rebel candidate Syed Rafiqul Haque and former lawmaker Badruddoza Ahmed Suja of JP (Manjura) invalid in Sylhet and Sunamganj districts.

In Nilphamari, the nomination papers of Dimla Upazila Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Maulana Ishaq Ali and Islami Oikya Jote (IO) Central Committee Assistant Secretary General Maulana Monjurul Islam, who filed nominations for Nilphamari-1 as independent candidates, were cancelled for signature forgery.

The RO cancelled nominations of eight candidates including Gono Forum central leader and former AL whip Abdur Rouf, who filed nomination for Nilphamari-1.

In Rangpur, the nomination papers of five candidates including former AL lawmaker Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantu

and former lawmaker Mohammad Ali Sarker, who filed nominations as independent candidates, had been declared invalid.

In Pirojpur, the nomination paper of BNP's rebel candidate Shahidul Haque Jamal had been cancelled.

After scrutinising the nomination papers in Manikganj-1 and 2 constituencies, the RO cancelled nomination papers of four candidates including former AL lawmaker Samsuddin Ahmed and Zaker Party leader Aminul Haque Akbar.

In Khagrachhari, the nomination papers of AL's two rebel candidates and one BNP candidate were cancelled while in Bogra, nomination papers of two candidates were cancelled for defaulting on bank loans.

Nomination papers of seven candidates of different parties were cancelled in Pabna while nominations of five candidates including BNP candidate Rafiqul Islam Jamal were cancelled in Jhalakathi on various grounds.

The RO in Gazipur cancelled nominations of two candidates for defaulting on loans and giving wrong information.

The nomination papers of about 15 candidates in various constituencies in Chittagong were withheld.

They are independent candidate Abu Ahmad Jahurul Amin Khan (Chittagong-1), AL candidate Abul Kashem (Chittagong-3), BNP candidate Syed Wahidul Alam (Chittagong-4), BNP candidate Gias Uddin Quader Chowdhury (Chittagong-5), AL candidates Khorsheed Alam Sujan and MA Latif (Chittagong-10), Jatiya Party (JP) candidate Morshed Ibrahim (Chittagong-9), independent candidate Saifuzzaman Chowdhury (Chittagong-12), AL candidate Shamsul Hoque Chowdhury (Chittagong-11), Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) candidates M Yakub Ali and Oli Ahmad (Chittagong-11), JP candidates Sirajul Islam Chowdhury and Shamsul Alam, Chandra Shekhar Nath and Md Yusuf Chittagong-11.

Decisions on nominations in other districts including Bogra and Barisal will be made today.

Explosives
FROM PAGE 16
KP Raghuvashi said. The situation was "under control" and a bomb disposal unit had defused the devices, he told AFP.

The explosives were similar to others left by the militants elsewhere in the city during the attacks, reports said.

Indian television quoted police sources saying that "improvised explosive devices" were found among baggage that belonged to victims gunned down when Islamist militants launched attacks across the city last Wednesday night.

They were similar to devices found outside the Taj Mahal and Oberoi/Trident hotels and Leopold's cafe, three of the main targets of the attacks that left 188 people dead and around 300 injured.

They appeared to have been left "in the hope that they would go off later," the television quoted police as saying.

Parties get more

FROM PAGE 1
They were supposed to settle on their nominees before the ROs began the scrutiny yesterday.

Interestingly, the letter issued yesterday afternoon cited the obligation for the political parties to opt for one candidate and inform election officials of their decisions before the scrutiny.

But then again, it asked them to arrange the names of their nominees for a seat according to precedence and tell the ROs officially about it during the scrutiny.

The latest EC decision meant more time for the political parties to resolve the issue of multiple contestants.

In its November 27 letter, the EC misinterpreted the electoral provision regarding nominees of an alliance. It asked the electoral alliances to serialise their nominees and inform the ROs before the scrutiny, whereas the electoral laws do not have any such stipulation, EC Secretariat officials said.

There was however nothing about alliance nominees in yesterday's letter.

Meanwhile, an AL delegation led by HT Imam yesterday requested the EC to extend the time limit for the political parties to finalise candidates till December 11.

The previous day BNP too discussed the matters with the commission, sources said.

Talking to reporters after meeting the AL team, Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain said it is not possible now to allow any extension of time.

Replying to a query yesterday afternoon, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said there is no scope for an independent candidate to change into a nominee of a registered political party.

About BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia claiming to be self-educated in affidavit attached to her nomination paper for Bogra-6, he said the ROs will decide on the issue.

AL pledges

FROM PAGE 1
money holders and users of muscle power.

Independence of the judiciary will be guaranteed and extrajudicial killings stopped.

AL President Sheikh Hasina will unveil the manifesto at a press conference on December 12.

In the draft, AL undertakes to pursue a vigorous programme to solve shortage of electricity. It aims to raise the country's power generation capacity to 5,000 megawatts by 2011 and 7,000 megawatts by 2013. It will implement the ongoing power projects on an urgent basis.

The party will introduce e-governance and a citizen's charter in every department in efforts to reduce corruption and increase quality in public services.

To strengthen the legislature and promote accountability of the government, it will arrange for the speaker of parliament to be elected from the majority party and deputy speaker from the opposition.

Its lawmakers will be allowed to differ with the party line on everything except a few subjects. The number of reserved seats for women will be raised to 100 from 45.

The manifesto stresses the need to encourage mutual respect and tolerance to do away with politics of confrontation. "Awami League will take an initiative to formulate a consensual and unanimous charter of political behaviour."

AL promises to keep the armed forces above all controversy, and frame a national defence policy in consultation with every stakeholder.

It will implement the Chittagong Hill Tracts peace accord for socio-economic development of the hill districts. The treaty was signed while the party was in power in 1997.

A team of experts led by AL advisory council members HT Imam and Abul Maal Abdul Muhit has drawn up the manifesto outlining a vision for the years 2020 and 2021, the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and golden jubilee of the country's independence.

The declaration of objectives have been based on views from sector-wise experts and academics of leading national and international universities, as well as the 31-point election reform programme of AL.

AL president, the highest policy-making body, has already given its nod of approval, said party sources.

Ganotantri Party

FROM PAGE 1
DMCH before losing consciousness, he said, "Unidentified persons were asking him over mobile phone to come to the path of Allah, and not to take part in the election."

Dr Shamanta Lal, head of DMCH burn unit, said about 40 per cent of Nurul Islam's body got burnt and his respiratory organ was affected.

Contacted, Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, DCP deputy commissioner (DMC of Tejgaon zone, said, "Until we get a report from the fire service, we cannot make any comment as to how the fire originated."

"Nurul Islam was rescued and his son's body was recovered by breaking open the doors of their rooms as those were closed from inside. The incident requires investigation to remove any confusion over it," he added.

Witnesses said the fire quickly engulfed the apartment. Nurul Islam's son, Tomohor Islam alias Puchi, 35, was burnt alive instantly. There was none else, except the father and son, in the house during the incident.

A three-member committee headed by Masudur Rahman, deputy assistant director of fire service, was formed to investigate the matter and submit its report within three days.

Only 13pc

FROM PAGE 1
48 have spent zero to 6 percent of the allocation.

The data of the revenue expenditure was available for two months (July and August). The revenue expenditure was spent Tk 5,683 crore, which is 9.6 percent of its total allocation, according to the Finance Division report.

Until August 2008, a total of 18 percent was spent on interest payment and 11.5 percent on pay and allowances.

Mosque roof

FROM PAGE 16
Four others -- Raju Ahmed, 42, Sukkur Alam, 40, Dulal Prodhan, 32, and Milon Khan, 43, -- were feared trapped in the rubble.

Witnesses said the single-storey building remained half-done for last three years and workers started works on its roof without changing those old beams.

The roof collapsed while I was working on it. Before understanding anything, I was trapped under the debris," said Palash, 20, of Jamalpur.

Another worker, Masud, said, "I was working beside the mosque building. After hearing a sound, I rushed to the spot and found the people trapped under the debris."

"We tried to pull out the trapped persons and later sent them to hospitals," he said.

Mannan Sikder, sub-contractor of the work, said a total of 86 workers were engaged in the construction of the mosque.

He said four of their workers are feared trapped under the debris and over 60 people, including the workers, carried out the rescue operation.

Fire service officials said four of their units conducted rescue operation till 2:00pm and they later left the scene.

McCain hopes

FROM PAGE 1
accompanied him.

McCain thanked the caretaker government and the army for 'strengthening' the foundation of democracy, and urged all political parties to accept polls results and work together for the cause of the country.

"In fact, we talked to officials of your government about the need for coordinated action to fight terrorism in the region. A democratic and prosperous Bangladesh is important for the region and the world," McCain said at a news briefing at Zia International Airport prior to his departure for New Delhi.

On his early morning meeting with 'members of the government and the military', he said, "We also understand the importance of the upcoming elections."

The senator went on, "We show our appreciation to the caretaker government and the army for the job they have done, and the peaceful transition of power to an elected government."

He however said the work is not yet done, and it is now time for an elected successor to continue the reform process already started and to build democracy and enhance prosperity for the people of Bangladesh.

Political parties in Bangladesh should follow the examples in the US and accept the polls results for ensuring close cooperation between the ruling and opposition parties for the sake of the country, McCain said.

"I would like to repeat what my colleagues said -- it is

important for everybody to respect outcome of the election and come together as citizens of this great country when the election is over."

The Republican senator, who ran against Barack Obama in the November 4 presidential race, said his party is now in the opposition but 'we work and we will work very closely with president as the United States faces grievous economic crises.'

"I hope after the elections, here in Bangladesh, that will also be the case with the opposition party that loses," he said. "It seems to me that with the incredible registering of 80 million people (in Bangladesh), this (election) has the possibility of being one of the fairest ones, perhaps in the entire world."

Asked about climate change, the senator said he understands the issue and how vital it is for the future of this country.

"Climate change is actually taking place and that the United States has to act and have to play leadership role. The issue complicated somewhat by our economic difficulties, but I am still guardedly optimistic we will pass legislation addressing climate change and we will endeavour to join into international agreements to address a global problem globally."

McCain, who has an adopted daughter of Bangladeshi origin, said he would be coming here again in future.

Foreign adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury saw them off at the airport at 9:00am.

Chief adviser

FROM PAGE 1
and guidance," he said while inaugurating a function marking the International Disabled Day 2008 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city.

The theme of this year's disabled day is "United Nations Charter regarding Rights of Person with Disabilities: Dignity and fair Justice for All."

Social Welfare Secretary Dewan Zakir Hossain, Managing Director of Jatiya Protibandhi Unnayan Foundation (national foundation for development of the disabled) Mansur Ahmed Chowdhury and senior vice-president of the National Disabled Forum Farida Yasmin also spoke at the function.

The chief adviser also released a commemorative postal stamp at the function to mark the day.

Addressing the function, the CA said the present government attaches special attention to the welfare of the disabled and recently adopted a Tk 155 crore project in this regard.

Nearly 200,000 disabled persons will directly benefit from the five-year project, he said, adding that this fund will be given as grant to Jatiya Protibandhi Unnayan Foundation which was reconstituted last year.

BCL-Shibir

FROM PAGE 16
Sumon Pramanik, Ekramul Haque, Abdur Rashid and Abdul-Al-Mamun were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

BCL leaders and activists alleged that the policemen remained inactive when the Shibir cadres attacked the BCL activists the second time at the hostel.

Around 200 BCL leaders and activists met RMC Principal Prof Fazul Rahman at his office in the morning and submitted a memorandum demanding exemplary punishment of the Shibir cadres involved in the attack.

When contacted, RMC unit president of BCL Dewan Mehedi Hassan Tomal said Shibir activists ransacked over 10 rooms of BCL activists keeping the hostel's collapsible gate locked.

However, RMC unit president of ICS Abu Talha denied the allegation of attacking the BCL activists.

He said the BCL men attacked the Shibir activists first.

The RMC principal said they formed a three-member probe committee headed by Prof Dr Towhidul Alam to investigate the incident.

12 protesters
FROM PAGE 16
phase results.

After submission of bail petition by their lawyer Tariqul Islam, Metropolitan Magistrate Saifur Rahman Siddique passed the order upon a bond of Tk 10,000 each with two guarantors.

The arrestees are M o h a m m a d Sayem, Mohammad Selim Sardar, Kalam Uddin, Nazim Rahman Bablu, Mohammad Idris Ali, Mamun Khan, Rashidul Islam, TH Khan alias Apu, Mir Arif Hossain, Anwar Sadat Sayem, Kamal Hossain, Maksud Morshed Hossain, Ariful Islam, Naim Khan, Mohammad Nayan, Abdullah Al Rizvi, and Enamul Haque.

Police arrested them from the spot after they put the main gate of PSC under lock and key and vandalised the windowpanes of the building, leaving the staffers stranded inside the building.

Following the incidents, Mohammad Ashraful Islam, assistant secretary (administration-2) of Public Service Commission Secretariat, filed the case accusing 30 to 40 unknown people in this connection.

The arrestees were sent to jail on the same day after being produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka.

2 outlaws
FROM PAGE 16
Sensing the presence of Rab and policemen, the gang opened fire on the law enforcers forcing them to fire back, said Shahabuddin Khalifa, officer-in-charge of Bagmara police station.

The two PBCP-Lal Potaka men were found fatally wounded following the gunfire and other outlaws managed to flee from the scene, said the OC.

They were later taken to local health complex where doctors declared them dead.

Police recovered two shutter guns, five bullets, two knives and PBCP booklets from the spot.

Two policemen -- the OC and sub inspector Feroz -- were also injured in the gunfight, police sources said.

Rice presses

FROM PAGE 16
wake of growing criticism about slack security, missed warnings, and a bungled response to the Mumbai attacks.

In a stunning new example of botched security, police on Wednesday found explosives hidden in a bag in Mumbai's main train station, which they said were left over from last week's attacks.

The bomb squad defused the two four-kilogram (8-pound) bombs, said Assistant Commissioner of Police Babu Domre, but it was not immediately clear why the bombs hadn't been found earlier.

Defence Minister AK Antony told his military chiefs that they needed to improve intelligence coordination so that security forces can act on all credible threats, according to a ministry statement.

The statement said Antony discussed beefing up maritime security and "reviewed in detail the preparedness against any possible terror threats from air."

Defence Ministry spokesman Sitanshu Kars said the moves were a precaution and not based on concrete intelligence.

An Indian government source told AFP that Rice will be handed evidence of a Pakistan link to the attack on a Thursday.

100 countries

FROM PAGE 16
the bomblets for toys or tin cans.

"The world is a safer place today," Richard Moyes of the Cluster Munitions Coalition, an umbrella group that comprises some 300 non-governmental organisations, told AFP as the signing of Wednesday's treaty began.

"This is the biggest humanitarian treaty of the last decade."

Laos, the country most affected by cluster bombs, was the second nation to sign Wednesday's treaty at Oslo city hall.

Between 1964 and 1973, the US Air Force dropped 260 million cluster bombs on Laos, or the equivalent of a fully-loaded B-52 bomber's payload dropped every eight minutes for nine years.

Over two days, around 100 countries -- including Britain, Canada, France and Germany -- are to sign the treaty that was finalised in Dublin in May, with the final number of signatory states only to be known at the end of the ceremony on Thursday.

Renewable

FROM PAGE 1
Fakhruddin Ahmed in the chair approved the renewable energy policy at a time when there have been suggestions for reducing dependence on traditional sources of energy.

As per provision of the policy, both government and private investors in renewable energy projects will get relief from corporate income tax for five years.

The main renewable energy sources are solar energy, wind energy, biomass, biogas and hydropower.

It has been predicted that 5 percent demand for electricity would be met by 2015 through utilising renewable energy while 10 percent demand by the year 2020.

A board of SEDA will be formed with businessmen, stakeholders, NGOs and others concerned.

The meeting also approved in principle the Trademark Ordinance 2008 amending two sections of the existing ordinance.

Following the amendment, Patent, Design and Trademark Directorate will provide registration certificate for patents, designs and trademarks to an applicant in 150 days subject to fulfilling all preconditions.

More changes
FROM PAGE 1
key component of the BNP-led four-party alliance, by giving the party 34 seats. BNP is also thinking of leaving Dhaka-8 seat for Jamaat.

Besides, BNP last night agreed to give its ally Islami Oikya Jote (IO) another seat (Madaripur-1) raising the number of seats given to the party to four.

Dewan Salahuddin has been given party ticket in place of Khandaker Abdul Hamid Dablu (Dhaka-19) while Dr Matur Rahman got party ticket in place of Sabera Aman (Dhaka-2).

Sahabuddin has been brought back to contest for Dhaka-11. Earlier, MA Hashem had given nomination for that constituency. Barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan has also been brought back to contest for Dhaka-20.

Those who were given party ticket include Prof Rezaul Karim for Narayanganj-2, Shah Alam for Narayanganj-5, Mushfiqur Rahman for Brahmanbaria-4, Abul Khayer Bhuiyan for Laxmipur-1, Masud Arun for Meherpur-1, Abdul Gafur Bhuiyan for Comilla-10, Joydul Abedin for Noakhali-2, Kazi Anwar Hossain for Brahmanbaria-5, Abdul Qaiyum Mandal for Rangpur-3, Engineer Monirul Haq for Chandpur-5 and Lion Hannan for Chandpur-4.

string of targets in India's economic capital including two luxury hotels, a Jewish centre, a popular cafe, a railway station and a hospital.

The attack was carried out by 10 gunmen, some of whom arrived by boat. The official toll stands at 188 dead and more than 300 wounded. Those killed included 22 foreign nationals.

"We will put on the table information so far gathered. We plan to share transcripts of satellite phone conversations that link the terrorists to their Pakistani handlers," the senior government source said on condition he not be named.

"We have evidence of numbers recovered from phones (that show) where the calls came from or were made to," he added.

India says the only gunman captured has confirmed under interrogation that all the militants were from Pakistan and received their training there.

Electoral laws

FROM PAGE 16
secured stay orders from the High Court. But, we want to know whether allowing the loan defaulters through stay orders is justice or encouraging the criminals," he said.

The EC has not raised its voice over the violation of electoral rules, which does not go with the rule of law, said Dr Badiul Alam Majumder adding that any one can issue counter affidavit if he or she finds any candidate who has failed to provide correct information or kept any information secret in the nomination paper.

"The question of morality of the politicians is very important. The EC, therefore, should not consider the issue negligibly because it will again allow the culture of impunity," said former caretaker government adviser ASM Shahjahan.

He said sometimes morality cannot be judged by the law but a standard could be fixed. "If the politicians win the polls even after violating the rules, they would not care the rules in future as well."

M Hafizuddin Khan, another former adviser to a caretaker government, said, "We see some light of hope as a major party started nominating candidates on the basis of the opinions of their grassroots leaders. This process will be stronger if citizens and media continue to raise their voice."

UK envoy
FROM PAGE 16
facing violence and intimidation.

"All, including the parties, have a role to play in creating the consensus to make this possible," the envoy said, adding: "If the provisions of the state of emergency can be visibly rendered unnecessary, then it becomes easier for them to be lifted."

He urged all parties to take part in the election and meet the expectation of the people as he said British interests in this country are served by a stable and democratic Bangladesh.

The envoy said Bangladesh needs a firm political foundation, with transparency and good governance, and parliament must provide the primary forum for political debate. "There can be no place for political violence or politically-inspired harts," the envoy noted.

"These elections will set the tone," he said, "failure to engage now could set back Bangladesh's economic development by years and, in a globalised world, that is in no one's interest."

He said general desire is that parties will put up clean candidates in the elections and losing party accept the result if election is free and fair.

Evans said Britain will continue to work whatever party forms the next government.

DCAB President Masud Karim and General Secretary Raheed Ezaj took part in the discussion.

13 accused
FROM PAGE 1
Of them, nine are now in jail while the rest have been absconding since the filing of the case. Judge Rabiul Hassan of the Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal also passed an order to release the nine if they are not accused in any other cases.

But the same court on July 30 this year sentenced seven of the 13 to life imprisonment for their involvement in bomb explosions in front of Barisal Central Jail on the day they are Abu Yusuf, Abdus Sobhan, Giasuddin, Sarwar, Abdur Rahim, Zahid Babu and Ziaur Rahman.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Mosharrif Hossain of Barisal Kotwali Police Station filed the case in connection with the serial blasts on August 17, 2005.

Sub-Inspector Bhoran Reza of the Detective Branch (DB) submitted the charge sheet of the case accusing the 13 on December 25 this year.

Special Public Prosecutor Kazi Munir Hussein told The Daily Star that all the 13 were acquitted, as the charges brought against them could not be proved.