

## AL pledges

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December 12 in presence of representatives of different professionals including foreign diplomats and editors of different news media.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the manifesto, which says AL will deal five matters on an urgent basis including tackling price hike of essentials, resolving power crisis, continuing the drive against corruption, and thwarting terrorism and militancy with an iron hand.

AL also promises construction of hanging bridges on the Padma and Karnaphuli rivers, connecting Bangladesh with Asian Highway and railway, and building a deep-sea port. It also promises to take an initiative to formulate a comprehensive regional water policy with India, Nepal and Bhutan for regional water security.

The party says 100 percent net enrolment at primary-level education and supply of pure drinking water for all will be ensured by 2011.

Besides, the party pledges to make the country self-reliant in food, bring each house under hygienic sanitation, up annual growth rate to 8 percent, and generate 7,000 megawatt of electricity by 2013.

The manifesto says, "Total change will be in effect in the local government system by giving it primacy and the controlling authority in development work. With this end in view, district and upazila level local government will be made self-reliant and self-administered."

"Courtesy and tolerance in inter-party relations will be established and appropriate measures will be taken for practising democratic culture within political parties," says the manifesto. It also says the party will also ban the use of religion in politics, bring the war criminals to justice and ensure independence of judiciary.

**AL'S VISION**  
AL electoral manifesto also includes party's vision for 2020 and 2021, hundredth anniversary of the birth of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and golden jubilee of the country's independence respectively.

The vision includes hundred percent literacy rate and 10 percent annual growth rate by 2017.

"Our aim is not poverty reduction but poverty elimination. Present poverty rate will be reduced to 15 percent from 45 percent and unemployment to 15 percent from 40 percent and employment will be provided for 85 percent by 2021," says the manifesto.

Nutritional needs of 85 percent of the people will be met by 2021 and by this time housing for all will be ensured, it adds.

"We envision a Bangladesh where by 2020/2021 we will be able to reduce poverty drastically, where our citizens will be able to meet every basic human need and our economy as a middle-income country will be on the fast-track to development, with ever-increasing rates of growth," it says.

**AL REMOVES 'EXPULSION' OF LEADERS AND ACTIVISTS**

The Awami League (AL) Central Working Committee

## Mad rush

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clogged the streets.

Kamal, a garment factory employee of Mirpur, said, "It took me one and a half hours to reach the terminal from English Road, which usually takes half an hour."

Kamal paid Tk 200 for his trip to Patuakhali. Only a few days ago the fare was Tk 120.

Launches were seen carrying three to four times the number of passengers they are supposed to carry.

Employees of a triple-decker launch seeking anonymity said the launch has the carrying capacity of about 990 people but the day before yesterday it carried over 5,000 passengers.

Employees of launches said they charge the extra fare as they have to return to Dhaka with almost an empty launch.

Employees of bus services were charging more than the actual fare at Gabtoli, Mohakhali and Syedabbas bus terminals yesterday.

Omar Faruq, 24, getting on a bus heading for Bagerhat, said he had to pay Tk 300 for his trip even though the fare is Tk 180.

Kamal, an employee of the bus service, said, "We did not charge more as the government-fixed rate is Tk 397."

yesterday withdrew expulsion orders on over 500 AL leaders and activists who were earlier punished for various offences, including anti-party activities and violating party orders and directives since 2001.

The decision has come after a two-day meeting that began on Friday in AL's Dhanmondi office in the city.

AL President and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting.

The expulsion orders have been removed against those only who remained loyal after being expelled and later applied for withdrawal, meeting sources said, to bring dynamism in the party activities ahead of the parliamentary election and to give a chance to work as primary members of the AL.

Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Monayem Sarkar, Siddiqur Rouf Khan and Nurul Fazal Bulbul are among the leaders who were expelled.

The meeting also approved the party programmes to observe the Martyred Intellectuals Day on December 14 and the Victory Day on December 16.

## BNP draws

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International Airport from the city to a place near Jamuna Bridge.

Party insiders said a team of some close associates of the party chairperson drafted the manifesto, which was comprised of Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan, pro-BNP intellectuals, senior journalist Shafiq Rehman, and some former bureaucrats.

Shafiq Rehman last night however said he does not know anything regarding the BNP manifesto and he was not involved in the process of drafting it.

The draft is likely to be placed before the party standing committee today for approval, which is scheduled to meet in the chairperson's Gulshan office with her in the chair, the insiders said.

Asked about the manifesto last night, Nazrul Islam Khan said, "The draft manifesto will be placed before the standing committee for discussion and approval."

Some other senior leaders including a few standing committee members of the party yesterday however categorically said they do not have any knowledge about the process of drafting the manifesto.

MK Anwar, a former minister also a vice-president of the party, said public expectations and remedies for the country's present crises have been drafted in the manifesto, adding, "I'm not involved in the process."

Other party insiders said the draft manifesto also emphasises spread of IT facilities, empowerment of women, rule of law, curbing of corruption, reducing prices of essentials, and boosting of rural economy.

They also said economic advancement and increasing local and foreign investments will get top priority for poverty reduction through employment generation.

The manifesto also promises effective measures for bringing qualitative changes to the political culture, the insiders added.

## Hasina, Khaleda

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it could not yet be confirmed whether she will address any rally there.

AL-led grand alliance and BNP-led four-party combine will announce details of their tours once they finalise their lists of candidates by December 11, the closing date for withdrawing nominations.

AL sources said the party president this time may not tour elaborately, as there is a growing concern about her security. She will however speak to party ranks and electors through teleconference.

Khaleda Zia too may not visit many places because of physical constraints, said BNP insiders.

To make up for the absence of the two, senior leaders of the alliances would be assigned to address public meetings across the country.

Meanwhile, a press release of BNP yesterday said the party chairperson will exchange Eid greetings with diplomats from 10:30am to 11:00am and representatives of professional bodies, party leaders and workers and common people from 11:00am to noon on Eid day at Ladies Club in the city's Eskaton area.

The AL president will host an Eid reception for diplomats, party colleagues and people from all walks of life at her Dhanmondi residence.

## SQ Chy

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for writing down achievements.

In section-1 of the affidavit, where information on educational qualification is required, Salaudinn said he has no educational background and wrote "no" in the specified box.

Salaudinn also provided questionable information about his earnings. He claimed he is the chairman of QC Holdings Ltd and director of QC Navigation Ltd, Focus Multimedia Company Ltd (which owned the now-closed CSB TV channel) and Mercury Air Ltd. His affidavit also said his annual income of only Tk 17 lakh is from salaries only, not from any profit from the businesses.

## 3 killed

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Sabujbagh and adjacent areas.

Acting on a tip-off that a gang of criminals were holding a secret meeting, a team of Rab-10 conducted a raid at Kamalapur in Sabujbagh area at about 3:45am.

Sensing the presence of the elite force, the criminals opened fire on them, forcing Rab personnel to fire back.

Sources said the criminals finally retreated after a 20-minute gun battle. Rab members later found the bullet-riddled bodies of Abdus Salam and Selim Miah on the spot of the fighting but other criminals managed to flee, said a Rab press release.

Rab members also retrieved two foreign-made pistols, a revolver and 126 rounds of bullet from the spot. Salam was wanted in eight criminal cases while Selim in two cases.

Family members of the deceased claimed that Rab arrested Salam and his friend Selim from Maniknagar area in Sabujbagh on November 29, nine days after Salam returned from Italy. Salam was a citizen of Italy, they said.

Both Salam and Selim had connections with Nasir group in the past but the duo left the gang a couple of years ago, they claimed.

They also alleged that there is no criminal case against them and Nasir having a good link with Rab members used the force to kill both Salam and Selim.

Meanwhile, another team of Rab-10 raided Ainta in South Keraniganj at about 3:15am after receiving information that Rafiqul Islam, a business partner of Nasir, and his cohorts were holding a clandestine meeting there.

Sensing the presence of the elite force, the criminals fired bullets on them forcing Rab to fire back.

The body of Rafiqul was found on the spot following the gun battle.

Rab claimed that Rafiqul was a resident of RK Mission road in the capital. He was wanted in six criminal cases.

The force also recovered a pistol and 12 bullets from the scene.

## Indian airports

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militants targeted multiple locations in India's western financial capital, killing 163 people including 26 foreigners. Nine militants were killed.

Security is traditionally tight across India on the anniversary of the demolition of the Babri mosque.

Hindu zealots tore down the 16th-century structure in the town of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh state, igniting deadly Hindu-Muslim riots across the country.

Report from Kolkata add: Indian police have arrested two men for allegedly supplying mobile phone cards to militants who staged the deadly Mumbai attacks, police said yesterday.

The men were arrested late Friday in the eastern city of Kolkata "for allegedly providing SIM cards to the terrorists in the Mumbai attacks," senior police official Javed Shamim told reporters.

The arrests are believed to be the first in connection with the attacks, other than the capture of one of the militants during the 60-hour siege of India's financial hub.

Shamim identified the two men as Tausif Rahaman and Sheikh Muktar.

Tausif, who was living in the central part of the city, bought about 40 SIM cards from the city, two of which are believed to have been given to the terrorists," Shamim said.

He said that the other man was from revolt-hit Indian Kashmir, where Islamic militants have been waging a nearly two-decade battle against New Delhi's rule.

The attack by 10 gunmen against multiple targets in Mumbai, including the landmark Taj Mahal hotel, killed 163 people including 26 foreigners. Nine militants were killed.

## Over 2m head for Arafat

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It began early yesterday as pilgrims arrived on foot or by bus in Mina, a dusty valley 10 kilometres (six miles) from the holy city of Makkah.

Dozens of first aid stations lined the route, SPA reported.

Devotees are spending the day in prayer and contemplation in the valley, transformed into a city of fireproof tents.

At dawn on Sunday, they will head for the top of nearby Mount Arafat. Their time at the summit symbolises the wait for the last judgment and is the high point of the hajj.

Next, the pilgrims return to Mina to sacrifice an animal, usually a sheep, to commemorate the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son on God's orders. This marks the start of the Eid al-Adha, the feast of the sacrifice.

They will spend another two days in Mina for the final rite, the stoning of Satan. Each pilgrim throws 21 pebbles at each of three pillars symbolising the devil.

## CA asks govt officials

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the first one held in Khulna city on December 1 as part of the move to gear up the administration for the crucial polls.

Fakhruddin urged the field-level officers, particularly those tasked for dealing with the upcoming polls, to carry out their election duties maintaining complete neutrality, honesty and sincerity.

"Any kind of partiality to anybody, any antipathy or an iota of laxity and negligence in performing responsibilities will not be tolerated at all," he told the DCs, SPs, UNOs, senior government officials and officials engaged in polling activities.

The chief adviser hoped that the government with combined efforts of all and cooperation from the people would be able to deliver on the desired objectives through handover of power to an elected government after holding the election properly.

He provided a package of guidelines and decisions for the pre-and post-election periods, which are all impor-

tant for holding a peaceful and fair election.

Referring to previous activities of different extremist outfits, including JMB, in the northern region, particularly in Rajshahi, Naogaon, Natore, Pabna and Sirajganj, he asked the agencies concerned to keep strong vigilance so that those elements could not raise their heads through the hiatus of hustings for the polls.

"Carry out nonstop drive so that terrorists and identified miscreants cannot create chaos as the election aspirants will start massive campaigns soon," he said.

Home Adviser Major General (ret'd) MA Matin, Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman, Home Secretary Abdul Karim and Cabinet Secretary M Abdul Aziz, among others, spoke at the meeting held at the RDRS auditorium.

A number of UNOs, SPs and DCs and the DIG of Rajshahi range also took part in the opinion-sharing meeting.

Apart from deploying the armed forces, mobile teams

and strike-on-order force will also be deployed at the polling centres on the election day to ensure a three-tier security bulwark, the chief adviser informed the officials.

He asked for ensuring foolproof security and maintaining law and order in each area so that voters can cast their vote without fear and in a festive mood.

Fakhruddin directed the officials to completely comply with the directives of the Election Commission, saying that all of their responsibilities and activities would be controlled and conducted by rules and regulations and the directives of the Election Commission.

He also asked the law-enforcers to ensure cent-percent neutrality, transparency, and credibility in the whole election process, vote counting and publishing results.

The chief adviser asked for paying attention to and ensuring security and comfort for women voters, religious minorities, tribal, disabled, weak and elderly people.

## Pressure heaps on Zimbabwe's Mugabe amid cholera crisis

**AFP, Harare**

Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe came under fresh international pressure yesterday over his country's economic collapse as his government announced plans to introduce a 200 million dollar bill.

The country's political deadlock, soaring inflation and a cholera outbreak that has killed nearly 600 prompted British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to urge world powers to pile pressure on Mugabe saying "enough is enough".

Brown said the crisis in Zimbabwe was now "international" and that he hoped the United Nations Security Council would meet urgently to consider the situation.

Zimbabwe's situation has continued to deteriorate in nine months of political limbo since elections in March, and declared a cholera outbreak a national emergency this week as rampant inflation hampers the daily lives of citizens.

Government announced in its gazette Saturday that it would put a 200 million dollar note into circulation, just days after a 100 million dollar note was released -- which is worth only about 14 US dollars.

Brown's comments came amid mounting pressure from around the world with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice saying it was "well past time for Robert Mugabe to leave" and British Foreign Secretary David Miliband calling the Zimbabwean government a "rogue" regime.

"This is now an international rather than a national emergency," Brown said in a statement released by his Downing Street office.

"International because disease crosses borders. International because the systems of government in Zimbabwe are now broken. There is no state capable or willing of protecting its people."

"International because -- not least in the week of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights -- we must stand together to defend human rights and democracy, to say firmly to Mugabe that enough is enough."

In its latest bulletin, the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said the outbreak had now claimed 575 lives. The capital Harare is the worst-hit district with 179 deaths and 6,448 cases as of December 4.

The disease has spread to surrounding countries with deaths recorded in Botswana and South Africa where the influx of Zimbabweans across the border seeking help has grown.

South Africa -- which will send a team into Zimbabwe on Monday to probe how it can

President-elect Barack Obama said yesterday he's asked his economic team for a recovery plan that saves or creates more than 2 million jobs, makes public buildings more energy-efficient and invests in the country's roads and schools.

"We won't just throw money at the problem," Obama said in his weekly radio address and Internet video. "We'll measure progress by the reforms we make and the results we achieve by the jobs we create, by the energy we save, by whether America is more competitive in the world."

Obama's remarks come after the Labor Department announced Friday that employers cut 533,000 jobs in November, the most in 34 years.

Obama said his plan would put millions of people to work by "making the single largest new investment in our national infrastructure since the creation of the federal highway system in the 1950s."

He also wants to install energy-saving light bulbs and replace old heating systems in federal buildings to cut costs and create jobs.

School buildings would get an upgrade, too. "Because to help our children compete in a 21st century economy, we need to send them to 21st century schools," Obama said.

As a part of the plan, Obama said he wants to expand Internet access in communities. Hospitals also should be connected to each other online.

"Here, in the country that invented the Internet, every child should have the chance to get online," he said.

Obama said he would announce other details of the economic recovery plan in the coming weeks. He said he'd work with Congress to pass the initiative when lawmakers reconvene in January.

## Troops

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deployed across the country in aid of the civil administration after the declaration of state of emergency in January last year. The troops were back to barracks after the election process started anew.

Gen Moen said army will ensure security so that the voters could cast their votes peacefully. The troops will be posted 200 yards away from the polling centres.

The army chief opened the golf tournament and planted a sapling on the occasion.

assist with food and humanitarian aid -- said it hoped the cholera outbreak would spur political leaders to urgently resolve their issues.

Brown said he had been "in close contact with African leaders to press for stronger action to give the Zimbabwean people the government they deserve".

Mugabe and rival Morgan Tsvangirai, and a smaller political party are deadlocked in discussions over a stalled political agreement in which they agreed to share power three months ago.

The deal has yet to be implemented as parties fail to agree on who should control key ministries.

As his country flounders, Mugabe, who has ruled since independence from Britain in 1980, on Friday brandished the threat of fresh elections in the next year or two if the power sharing deal did not work.

"We agreed to give them (the MDC) 13 ministries while we share the ministry of home affairs, but if the arrangement fails to work in the next one-and-a-half to two years, then we would go for elections," Mugabe was quoted as saying by government newspaper, The Herald.

## Nomination

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Master Ansar Uddin in Barisal-3, and Bangladesh Kalyan Party's Tapan Kumar Mitra in Pirojpur-1 and Shafiqur Rahman in Dhaka-4.

The candidates are independent contenders Mahe Alam contesting in Jhalakathi-1, Kazi Sirajul Islam in Faridpur-1, Sajjat Jumma in Jhenidah-3, Muhibur Rahman in Sylhet-2 and Yunus Ali in Gaibandha-3.

The appeals pending include those by AL candidates Sarfuddin Ahmed in Rangpur-1, Fazle Rabbi in Gaibandha-5 and Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir in Chandpur-1.

MA H A S H E M and Sahabuddin Ahmed, both of whom filed nomination as BNP candidates in Dhaka-11, are among those awaiting verdict from the commission.

The ROs scrutinised the nomination papers on December 3 and 4. They cancelled 557 applications on charges of defaulting on loans and utility service bills and forgery of signatures.

At least eight BNP and five AL nominees were declared unfit to contest the polls.

Jatiya Party (JP), a component of the AL-led grand alliance, saw three of its candidates disqualified.

## CPB to focus

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increase investment in government and private sectors of the country.

Addressing a press conference at its office, CPB general secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim declared the party's manifesto for the national polls scheduled for December 29.

The 24-point manifesto includes prevention of corruption and terrorism, alleviation of poverty and creation of new jobs, trial of war criminals, fixing Tk 4,500 as minimum wage for labourers, reinstallation of the basic pillars of the constitution of 1972, establishing a pro-people education and medical system and formation of an independent commission to prevent child-labour and child repression.

Ensuring equal rights for women at all strata of life, providing constitutional identity fully to the indigenous people, implementing a national regulation for the disabled, ensuring access for all to information technology, establishing state and social control over mineral resources, introducing a full-fledged water regulation and preparing an independent and active foreign policy are also the major aspects of the manifesto.

CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan, party central committee members Ruhin Hossain Prince, Lina Chakrabarti, advocate Montu Chandra Ghosh, Zia Haider Dipti and Dr Sazedul Haq Rubel, among others, were present at the press conference.

Selim also called upon the people to vote for CPB candidates in the next polls so that the manifesto could be implemented.

He said the fundamental democratic rights of the people of the country would be not established unless an alternative left-force comes to state power.

CPB will contest from 38 constituencies in the next polls with its party symbol Kaste (sickle).

In his brief speech, Manjurul Ahsan Khan stressed the need for establishing an alternative left-democratic force to address the present crisis.