

# Economy to get worse before it improves: Obama

AP, Washington

President-elect Barack Obama said the economy seems destined to get worse before it gets better and he pledged a recovery plan "that is equal to the task ahead."

Obama also said in an interview broadcast yesterday that the survival of the domestic car-making capacity is important, yet any bailout must be "conditioned on an auto industry emerging at the end of the process that actually works."

Less than six weeks before he takes office, Obama said that help for homeowners facing foreclosure is an option as part of his plan. He sidestepped a question about when he plans to raise taxes on wealthy Americans.

Obama's interview on NBC's "Meet the Press" was his most extensive since winning the White House more than a month ago.

In the intervening weeks, the economy has showed clear signs of worsening. Employers said they eliminated more than 500,000 jobs in November alone and retailers reported disappointing holiday-season sales.

## Nurul Islam

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on Thursday while his son was burnt alive.

He was laid to rest at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard at Mirpur on Friday evening.

Meanwhile, fire brigade's three-member inquiry team yesterday submitted final report to the director general of the Fire Service and Civil Defence citing electrical short circuit as the cause of the fire.

The party leaders said a section of the officials, who are investigating the incident, are not delving into the incident and giving their personal opinions.

They called upon the officials to be more careful about the investigation and demanded preservation of the pieces of evidence collected from Nurul Islam's residence.

Party's advisory committee member and former general secretary Mohammad Akbar was selected as the party acting president at the meeting.

Meanwhile, qulhwani of Nurul Islam and his son Tamohar Islam Puchi and a milad mahfil were held at the Dhaka University Central Mosque after the Asar prayers yesterday.

Leaders and activists of Ganotantri Party, politicians, teachers, journalists, and relatives and family members of Nurul Islam attended the milad mahfil.

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"The economy is going to get worse before it gets better," he said twice in the early moments of the interview, taped Saturday in Chicago.

The president-elect announced on Saturday he would call for the most massive spending on public works since the creation of the interstate highway system a half-century ago. In a word of caution to powerful lawmakers, he said the first priority would be "shovel-ready" projects those that could create jobs right away.

The days of just pork coming out of Congress as a strategy those days are over," he added.

Obama said repeatedly that his economic advisers are at work on an economic aid package, but he has largely stayed out of the public debate over bailout aid to the Detroit automakers. Congress and the Bush administration are at work on a plan for roughly \$15 billion for General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Co. and Chrysler LLC. Congressional leader hope to pass the measure this week.

## BNP asks EC

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manifesto for the upcoming election.

"Discussions will continue if the draft manifesto is not approved tonight."

Nazrul said Chairperson Khaleda Zia will not be able to visit every constituency due to time constraints.

Demanding withdrawal of the state of emergency, he said, "Otherwise, we'll not take part in the election."

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, RA Ghani, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and Moudud Ahmed, among others, were at the meeting with Khaleda in the chair.

Meanwhile, former foreign secretary Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury and former inspector general of police MA Qaiyum yesterday met Khaleda Zia and formally joined BNP.

Earlier, a group of intellectuals met the former prime minister and discussed the overall political situation.

Former chief election commissioner MA Rauf, former Dhaka University vice-chancellor Emajuddin Ahmed, Prof Mahbubullah, and journalists Reazuddin Ahmed, Sadeq Khan, Golam Tahabur and Amanullah Kabir, were among them.

"We must stand beside the underprivileged and that will make the Eid meaningful," she added.

Greeting the people, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia said, "We must rectify ourselves to uproot hatred and selfishness from the society and contribute to the welfare of the nation."

She will exchange greetings with foreign diplomats from 10:00am to 11:00am and with party leaders and activists and eminent citizens from 11:00am to 12:00noon at Dhaka Lady's Club auditorium in the capital's Eskaton.

## Bogra RO ignores

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A source in the election office said freedom fighter Anisuzzaman Mintu on December 3 submitted a written complaint to RO cum DC Humayun Kabir against BNP leader and candidate for Sariakandi-Sonatola constituency Shokrana.

Mintu said Shokrana in his affidavit provided some information about his involvement in crimes in the past but concealed that he served in jail when he was sentenced to life term imprisonment on charges of killing Mintu's brother Kibria.

In the affidavit he also hid the information that he was a charge-sheeted accused in the freedom fighter Anwarul Kadir Anu murder case. He also did not disclose the information that he was convicted under the Arms Act and in connection with illegal earning.

District election officials claim that Mintu in his allegation regarding six cases against Shokrana filed between 1974 and 1975 did not provide necessary papers, but Mintu trashes the claim.

"I have submitted all papers required to prove my allegations," he said.

Shokrana however revealed the concealed criminal records in a supplementary affidavit that he submitted on December 1 - one day after the deadline for nomination filing expired.

Such additional affidavit is not supposed to be accepted by the RO unless it is accompanied by the court order. Shokrana did not provide any court order but had explained to the RO that he "forgot" to mention these facts.

An election official admitted the supplementary affidavit proves that Shokrana had concealed information in his affidavit.

A source in police said many necessary papers regarding cases about which Shokrana concealed information were collected from record room and sent to the returning officer.

## Jukta Front

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165 of them for 160 seats considering their qualifications and popularity," said Major (ret) Abdul Mannan, secretary general of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB), at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city.

The candidates of the alliance comprised of five political parties will use three separate electoral symbols 'Kula' (winnowing fan) of BDB, 'rising sun' of Gano Forum and 'wristwatch' of Bangladesh Kalyan Party. Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) and Bangladesh Forward Party--two other components of the front--will use the symbols of BDB and Gano Forum.

Badruddoza Chowdhury-led BDB, Dr Kamal Hossain-led Gono Forum, Maj Gen (ret) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim-led Bangladesh Kalyan Party, Ferdous Ahmed Qureshi-led PDP and Mostafa Amin-led Bangladesh Forward Party formed the front.

The BDB secretary general said a joint manifesto of the alliance would be announced on December 11 or 12.

"We have fielded more than one candidate for seven parliamentary seats while Badruddoza Chowdhury, Major Ibrahim and I will contest the election from three constituencies each," Mannan said.

Gano Forum Acting Secretary Advocate Subrata Chowdhury and Presidium Member Pankaj Bhattacharya, Kalyan Party Secretary General Sadek Khan and PDP Vice Chairman Delwar Hossain, among others, were present at the press conference.

## Falu

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three blankets and utensils as allotted for a prisoner", the jail official said.

# Build economy

FROM PAGE 1  
companies and banks go bankrupt. This is the result of ignoring Allah's rules. Muslims must abide by Allah's rules, and build their economies accordingly," Sheikh told the faithful.

Banks operating under Islamic Sharia rules avoid charging interest on loans, seen as usury by many Muslims. Instead they preferred shared ownership and splitting of profits.

Sheikh also called for the Muslim world to unite in the face of terrorism to preserve stability.

"The world must criminalise terrorism... we must be cautious of terrorism and fight hostile criminal gangs that destroy countries and people," he said.

For the second day of the hajj, which lasts four days or more, the male pilgrims wore two pieces of unstitched cloth, serving as a shroud, while the women were entirely covered apart from face and hands.

Closely monitored by security forces, the crowd chanted the phrases: "Here I am in answer to Thy call, Lord, here I am. There is no other Allah but Thee. Praise be unto Thee."

"This is a day of great joy," one man said before breaking down in tears on his arrival at Arafat, overwhelmed with happiness on taking part in the hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam which the Quran says Muslims must carry out at least once in their lives if they are well enough and can afford it.

Just as emotional, Sud Dasuqi, a 50-year-old Egyptian woman, called for "the victory of Islam and a tightening of the ranks of Muslims," praising the hajj for uniting the faithful of different races and colours, and from all continents.

As the vast crowd edged along, sometimes delayed by the awkward movement of hundreds of buses carrying pilgrims, the faithful were offered meals and drinks, handed out free by volunteers.

## Fuel price review

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Tamin told the journalists.

"We are observing the situation. If prices of oil continue to dip on the international market, we will take a decision regarding further price reduction," he said.

International price of crude oil plummeted to \$39.74 a barrel on Saturday. Even in neighbouring India the prices are lower than that of Bangladesh.

Tamin observed that the next government should not backtrack from providing funds to Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company (Bapex) for transforming it into an exploration and production company of international standard.

"For our country's energy need, the next government should provide funds to Bapex, so it may become a self sufficient company in seven years and doesn't need any support from the government anymore," he said.

At the symposium energy experts and academics also recommended providing sufficient funds to Bapex for turning it into a company of global standard.

"Our exploration activities have remained minimal due to a lack of funds. Bapex can't support itself with only its own profit," said the company's Managing Director

## 35pc aspirants

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the 865 is small. Most of them belong to small political parties or are independent candidates.

However, the NBR official said from a moral viewpoint it is not acceptable that an aspirant lawmaker shall not submit income tax return.

According to the present Election Commission rules having TIN for a lawmaker is not mandatory. The Election Commission should make a law in future to the effect that a person standing in the election must have TIN, the NBR high officials said.

## 5 killed

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spot and injuring 15 others.

The deceased were Jahangir Hossain, 22, son of Poran Ali of Itakunda village, Shamer Uddin, 25, son of Mohammad Ali of Shaheer Alga village, Kafil Uddin, 18, son of Shamed Uddin of Shantir Char village, Hamed Ali, 20, son of Abdul Khaleq, and Abdur Rashid, 25, of Char Kajaikata village in Raumarri upazila.

Local sources said the workers went to Tangail for jobs from different villages of Raumarri upazila some days ago and they were returning home ahead of the Eid festival when they met the tragic accident.

The injured were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Raumarri thana Officer-in-Charge Akbar Hossain told the Daily Star that sand under the road at a place was washed away during the flood and the driver of the truck unwittingly drove along, causing the accident.

## 2 more milk

FROM PAGE 16  
The accused include Md Saidur Rahman of Brac milk collection centre at Nakalia, Md Kabir Hossain of Akiz Food Ltd at Panchakola village and milk supplier Md Helal Uddin of the same village.

Earlier four cases were filed with the same court against the Brac and Pran milk collection centres and two milk suppliers on December 4 on the same charge.

The complainant said the test on the samples, collected from the Brac and Akiz milk collection centres and the milk supplier, at Public Health Laboratory in the capital confirmed that the milk did not have the required proportion of fat.

"At least 10 percent of fat needs to be there in milk. The test reports said the collected milk samples contain only 3 to 3.5 percent fat," said District Sanitary Inspector Md Nazrul Islam.

## Govt appeals

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"I will present arguments on behalf of the government against the HC verdict during the hearing of the appeal," Salahuddin said.

However, he refused to make any comment on the HC verdict since he has not received any copy of the judgment.

Upon a writ petition, the HC on December 4 declared its decision on Emergency Power Ordinance (EPO) and EPR. These deny a number of rights to the accused including obtaining bail.

## Appeals of rivals

FROM PAGE 1  
nominee Dr Enamul Haq in Rajshahi-1 constituency, alleging that three years have yet to elapse since Haq's retirement from government service.

Acceptance by the EC of BNP's nominations of Abdul Hannan in Chandpur-4, Nurul Huda in Chandpur-2, Shafiq Ahmed Chowdhury in Sylhet-3, Abul Khayer Bhuiyan in Laxmipur-2, Motiar Rahman in Laxmipur-4, Borghana-1, Mozahar Ali Prodan in Joypurhat-1, Mizanur Rahman Mintu in Rajshahi-2, Abul Hossain Khan in Barisal-6, Barrister Ziaur Rahman in Dhaka-20, and of Hasina Ahmed in Cox's Bazar-1 were also challenged.

Complaints were also lodged against the acceptance of AL nominations of Imran Ahmed in Sylhet-4, Maj (ret) Jasimuddin in Bhola-3, Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury in Sylhet-2, Nilufar Zafrullah in Faridpur-4, Khaja Shamsul Alam in Joypurhat-1, Nuruzzaman Ahmed in Lalmonirhat-2, and of Abu Syed AL Mahmud in Joypurhat-2.

Ershad-led Jatiya Party's nominations of Zafar Iqbal Siddiqui in Nilphamari-1, Fakir Ashraf in Netrakona-2, Mostafa Jamal Haider in Pirojpur-1, and of AKM Mohiul Islam in Kurigram-3, which had been accepted by the EC, were also challenged by rival candidates.

Meanwhile, the commission heard the appeals of disqualified applicants in the last two days to settle the disputes regarding a total of 557 rejections. The hearings will continue till December 10.

Till late last night the commission adjudicated 170 appeals against the rejections out of a total of 391 appeals. Thirty seven of the rejected applicants were reinstated as candidates through the hearings.

The reinstated candidates among party nominees are Advocate Fazle Rabbi in Gaibandha-5, ASM Firoz in Potuakhali-2, and Harunur Rashid in Laxmipur-2 of AL, Mobashsher Alam Bhuiyan in Comilla-10 of BNP, Shakil Ahmed in Dhaka-2, Tajul Islam in Hobiganj-4, Tofazal Hossain in Naogaon-2, Abdul Mannan Talukder in Sunamganj-1, Quayum Uddin in Naogaon-1, Abu Lel Hossain Jewel in Naogaon-6, and Kazi Shaheen in Gopalganj-1 of Jatiya Party, Omar Farooque Liton in Munshiganj-3, Mohiuddin Majhi in Munshiganj-1, Al-Amin in Comilla-1, Abdul Karim in Hobiganj-3, and ATM Hemayet Uddin in Dhaka-5 of Bangladesh Islami Andolon, Liaqat Ali Khan in Munshiganj-3 of Islamic Front, Sultan Mamonur Rashid of Bikalpadhara in Naogaon-3, Golam Mostafa Sentu of Tarikat Federation in Munshiganj-1, AHM Zahir Hossain Hakim and Enamul Haque Enam of National Peoples Party in Laxmipur-2 and Chittagong-8 respectively, Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Janata League's Mohammad Shafiuallah in Sherpur-1 and Dr Md Hassan Ali Talukder in Sirajganj-5, Kalyan Party's SM Afzal Hossain in Gopalganj-3, Waliullah of Khelafat Majlis in Comilla-7, Oikabaddha Nagonik Andolon's Amir Khan in Dhaka-4, Zaker Party's Molla Giasuddin Ahmed in Shariatpur-1 and Bimal Kumar Mitra in Natore-4.

Independent applicants whose candidacies were

okayed upon appeals are Ushatan Talukder in Rangamati, Jalaluddin in Chandpur-2, Abdul Aziz Molla in Jaipurhat-1, Masudur Rahman (Mohon Raihan) in Sirajganj-2, Syed Rafiqul Haque in Sunamganj-1, KS Ong in Bandarban, Abdul Kader in Dhaka-15, Nazimuddin Al Azad in Jessore-4, and Zayedul Islam Zahid in Kurigram-4.

The commission will also meet today to decide the fate of BNP nominee Sadeque Hossain Khoka who filed for candidacy in Dhaka-6, and of AL nominee in Jhenaidah-3, Shafiqul Azam Khan.

The EC had accepted their nominations, but the High Court later declared them disqualified, as Khoka is holding the post of Dhaka mayor while Azam is an elected municipality chairman.

Meanwhile, the EC decided to start hearing from today the appeals of applicants disqualified on grounds of loan and bill defaults, and criminal convictions by courts.

A total of 2,460 applications for candidacy were filed with the EC for the upcoming parliamentary election, a record low since the 1991 national election, according to commission sources.

## UN climate

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sideration for discussion.

"The parties could not settle the agenda... that does not mean it has been cancelled, it will be discussed at the minister-level meeting later on at the last part of the conference," said Nasiruddin, a member of Bangladesh delegation, adding "international migration issue" will also be discussed.

Meanwhile, International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED) arranged a seminar on "Community-Based Adaptation" at the Sheraton Hotel in Poznan.

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The same court also cancelled the provisions empowering the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to transfer the cases filed under EPR to other courts.

Sources, however, said the hearing of the government appeal may be held on December 11.

## Abul Ahsan

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The back-and-forth over the call, while appearing farcical, underscores the dangers of the poor communication and deep mistrust between the nuclear-armed rivals.

India's investigation into the attacks was running into similar theatrics, with security officials demanding the release of one of only two men arrested so far, saying he was actually a counterintelligence police officer who may have been on an undercover mission.

Indian authorities believe the banned Pakistani-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba, which has links to the disputed Kashmir region, trained the gunman and plotted the attacks that left 171 people dead after a three-day rampage through Mumbai that began Nov. 26.

"I had made no such telephone call," Mukherjee said in a statement Sunday, reacting for the first time to the reports.