

Fight within alliances

FROM PAGE 1
suspended following the death of Gonatanti Party leader and grand alliance candidate Nurul Islam.

About candidates pitting themselves against those from their own folds in a good number of seats, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said the commission can do nothing in this regard.

Talking to reporters at his office yesterday, he also said, "The returning officers have allocated symbols to those who did not withdraw nominations. And their decisions are final."

Asked about the delay in publishing the candidates' list, the CEC said it was because most of the political parties did not submit the consolidated list of their picks.

"Only Jatiya Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) have given us lists."

Against the backdrop of rising confusion over allocation of electoral symbols to candidates from the same alliances, the EC yesterday met to examine the ROS' decisions with regard to symbols, said sources.

Finding that AL and JP still have candidates in several constituencies, the commission has sought clarification from AL over the issue, said the EC Secretariat officials.

ALVSP
According to the EC list, JP and AL candidates are in competition with each other in Rangpur-4 and -5, Gaibandha-4 and -5, Kushtia-4, Pirojpur-1, Munshiganj-3, Habiganj-2, Chittagong-9, Sirajganj-2 and Kurigram-4.

Though it was decided that the JP candidates would contest these seats on the alliance ticket, the AL men did not withdraw from the race.

Contacted by The Daily Star, AL presidium member Matia Chowdhury said, "Wait and see... we can still settle on a single candidate for each seat."

Sylhet-3, Khulna-3 and Nilphamari-4 are the constituencies earmarked for open contest.

BNPVS JAMAAT
Candidates of BNP and Jamaat will battle for Meherpur-1 and Barguna-2, as Jamaat nominated the upcoming polls.

Bendrabha College and Tebra playground in Manikganj, Rajbari Railway ground and Pangsang High School in Rajbari, Janipur Pilot High School ground in Khoksa upazila, Durgapur High school ground in Kumarkhali upazila and Kushtia Stadium in Kushtia were among the places where she held rallies.

She introduced to the voters alliance candidates Harunur Rashid Khan Monno for Manikganj-2, Afroza Khan Rita for Manikganj-2, Khandaker Delwar Hossain for Manikganj-1, Ali Newaz Khan for Rajbari-1, Nasirul Haq Sabu for Rajbari-2, Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rumi for Kushtia-4, Sohrab Uddin for Kushtia-3, Shahidul Islam for Kushtia-2, Altaf Hossain for Kushtia-1 and Amzad Hossain for Meherpur-2 among others.

Party candidates running in the December 29 elections brought in supporters to her rallies from their constituencies.

She also talked to several candidates in order to resolve internal disputes regarding nominations for the polls.

The former premier kicked off the party's campaign for the ninth parliament in Sylhet on December 13.

one respected like Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of the father of the nation.

He also complained that the perception about the case was flawed.

That was the first time Azam spoke in public about the matter since he sued Hasina and Selim on June 13 last year for receiving Tk 299 crore for winning the deal of setting up a 210-megawatt power plant at Siddhirganj in Narayanganj.

Azam's firm is the local agent of a Russian company that won the contract. He was nowhere to be seen for three days before showing up at the Gulshan Police Station to file the case that was first against a former prime minister under the present caretaker government.

Hasina was arrested at her Dhanmondi residence on extortion charges on July 16. Her detention followed Selim's.

Gulshan police submitted charge sheet in the case on July 24. Alongside the AL chief and Selim, they pressed charges against Rehana, who has long been settled in London.

The proceedings have been halted following a High Court order in response to a writ petition that the AL chief filed challenging the legality of the case and its trial.

Asked what he would do if Hasina sues for defamation, he said, "I'm confident she won't do anything like that. As the daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and a former prime minister, she is respectful to democracy."

Queried if he is pulling back under pressure from any quarters, he replied, "Long before now I had said I didn't file the case directly against Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana. They were implicated following Selim's statement."

Especially, he added, Rehana's name being on the charge sheet is still a mystery to him.

About the sums paid to Selim, AL presidium member and also former health minister, he said it was his remuneration as a consultant for his firm, and in no way an illegal payment.

He said he would oblige if retracting the case requires him to be at the court.

Talking to reporters on January 24, he asked why he would file a case against some-

nees there did not pull out.

Besides, Islami Oikya Joteis fighting against BNP candidate in Netrakona-3 and against Jamaat's candidate in Cox's Bazar-2.

As per the alliance decision, candidates of the parties are in free competition in Chhapinawabganj-3, Sirajganj-4, Rajshahi-3 and Jhenaidah-3.

POLLS TO NOAKHALI-1
According to the new schedule for the polls in Noakhali-1, December 21 is the last date for filing candidacy applications and December 27 for withdrawing nominations. The applications will be scrutinised on December 22.

CEC Huda said those whose nominations were declared valid earlier will not have to apply again.

CG conspiring
FROM PAGE 16
She hoped that the BNP-led four-party alliance would have a two-third majority in the parliament once a free and fair election is held.

"The December 29 elections are very important for Bangladesh as this would decide the fate of the country... whether democracy will be restored," she said urging people to vote for BNP.

She promised adequate supply of fertiliser, seeds and other agricultural inputs to farmers if the four-party wins the elections.

"We will take the initiative to build a bridge on the Padma and another bridge one on the Gorai once we have won the elections," she said in Kushtia.

Khaleda gave assurance of creating more employment opportunities, medical facilities and reducing prices of essentials if voted to power.

Escorted by Special Security Force's and other law enforcement agency personnel, Khaleda's motorcade started from her cantonment home around 8:30am.

Party supporters stood by roads at several places like Savar, Manikganj, Rajbari and Kushtia holding colourful banners, festoons and BNP's electoral symbol sheaf of paddy. They chanted slogans in support of their four-party alliance candidates contesting the upcoming polls.

The spirit of the Liberation War in which millions of people sacrificed their blood has been negated through frequent changes in the country's constitution that the father of the nation presented to them, Hasinasaid.

The discussion held amid tight security was also joined by AL spokesman Syed Ashraful Islam and grand alliance candidates from different constituencies in Dhaka, including Rashed Khan Menon, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Advocate Shahara Khatun, Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Barrister Fazle Nur Tapash and Kamal Ahmed Majumder.

Jamaat boycotts
FROM PAGE 1
meeting from the four-party alliance and even did not get any direction from the centre.

Maqbul Ahmed, central Nayeb-e-Ameer of Jamaat, alleged that his party withdrew the candidature of Samiruddin but he could not withdraw it as Shibir cadres locked him in a room on the day of withdrawing nomination paper.

Both the candidates are now conducting election campaign for their own. Some small fractions of BNP, however, are working for the Jamaat candidate instead of the party nominee, sources said.

Advisers okay
FROM PAGE 1
the state of emergency.

In the meantime, the caretaker government has repealed section-3 of the emergency power rules and thereby lifted restrictions on meetings and rallies to facilitate electioneering by the political parties.

The meeting gave final approval to another major legal instrument-the Judicial Service Secretariat Ordinance 2008-for establishing an independent secretariat for carrying out secretarial activities of the judicial service.

According to the background of the ordinance if a secretariat is set up under the Supreme Court keeping the structure of Registrar office in place, "effective control and supervision of the Supreme Court over lower courts and tribunals would be easy."

After the meeting, CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Mumaim told newsmen that the council also approved the Chartered Secretaries (Amendment) Ordinance 2008.

The meeting also gave final approval to Bangladesh Telecommunications (Amendment) Ordinance 2008.

Book selling
FROM PAGE 16
the ninth parliamentary election from the Panchagarh-1 constituency with BNP ticket, is a barrister. But he has not mentioned his profession and said he is serving as the Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad.

Parliament sources say Sircar wrote 12 books, which include "The Laws of the Sea," "Glimpses of International Laws," "Stronger United Nations for Peaceful Welfare World," "Austom Jatiya Sangsader Speaker" (speaker of the eighth national parliament), "Laws of the International Rivers" and "Londone Shiksha Jibon" [academic life in London].

About his movable assets, Sircar says he has about Tk 27.06 lakh in cash but no foreign currency. Besides, he has deposits of about Tk 2.8 lakh in his name and his wife has about Tk 2.92 lakh in different banks and financial institutions.

He also has 1,200 tolas of gold besides electronics and furniture worth Tk 50,000.

The Speaker reveals that he and his wife together have savings instruments and fixed deposits in different institutions which amount to about Tk 34 lakh. Sircar owns a Toyota Corolla car worth about Tk 12.67 lakh.

Of the immovable property, he has 12.09 acres of land, while his wife has 3.32 acres.

The Speaker said he would spend Tk 14 lakh as election expenditure from his own sources of income.

Hasina
FROM PAGE 1
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's grave at Tungipara in Gopalganj on December 17 in connection with the Victory Day.

In her five-minute speech at yesterday's discussion meeting, the AL chief appealed to people to vote for the grand alliance candidates in the December 29 polls to ensure their rights to food, education and employment, and to build a prosperous Bangladesh.

Describing the upcoming elections as an opportunity for people to get back freedom, Hasina hoped they would avail themselves of this opportunity.

Remain neutral

FROM PAGE 1
He firmly expects that the secretaries will achieve 100 percent success in the tough test and will extend all out cooperation to the Election Commission (EC) in holding the 9th parliamentary election scheduled for December 29.

Fakhruddin warned that no negligence in duty neither any partiality will be tolerated.

"Holding the election is now the principal priority of this government. Your main focus should be the election," the CA told the secretaries asking them to remain alert so no interference can take place.

He asked the secretaries to follow the instructions of the EC. "Ensure that the field level administrations also follow the instructions with full neutrality and efficiency," he said.

The CA hoped that democracy and good governance will become stronger through the upcoming election. "The election will create a new positive history and take the nation forward united."

He thanked the secretaries for extending cooperation during his two-year tenure, asking them to carry on the reform initiatives and all other 'good works' for the interest and welfare of the public. He also appreciated their 'impartial role'.

"I hope that you will continue to perform in the same fashion in future," he said, advising them to give utmost importance to delivery of services to the people.

He told the civil bureaucrats to maintain and strengthen the citizens' charter or client charter services in government offices, which has already benefited the people.

Referring to the key objec-

AL, BNP bank

FROM PAGE 1
show in some seats because their candidates are not much known to the constituents.

The BNP hired former lawmakers of Munshiganj Abdul Hye for Dhaka-4 and Hamidullah Khan for Dhaka-15, Rafiqul Islam Mia of Comilla for Dhaka-16, Hannan Shah of Gazipur for Dhaka-17 and Moazzem Hossain Alal of Barisal for Dhaka-13.

Habibunnabi Khan Soheli who contested the 2001 election from Rangpur is now contesting from Dhaka-8 while Azizul Bari Helal who got nomination in the stalled January 22 polls has been nominated from Dhaka-18.

Shirin Sultana who is contesting at Dhaka-9 seat was a former lawmaker of the reserved seats. MA Qaiyum who got nomination for Dhaka-10 is the ward councillor of his own constituency.

BNP candidate Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu is taking part in the poll from jail.

Of the less known candidates of the AL-led grand alliance, Shyampur AL General Secretary Sanjida Khanam is contesting from Dhaka-4, businessman Mizanur Rahman Khan Dipu from Dhaka-6, Tejjagan unit AL President Asaduzzaman Khan

Kamal from Dhaka-11, AL President Sheikh Hasina's nephew barrister Fazle Nur Tapash from Dhaka-12, Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak from Dhaka-13, and member of AL city committee Aslamul Haque Aslam from Dhaka-14.

The AL has shared three constituencies with Jatiya Party (JP) and Workers Party because of lack of its own candidates. The party nominated JP President HM Ershad at Dhaka-17, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon at Dhaka-8 and JP leader Syed Abu Hossain Babla at Dhaka-5.

"We had no alternative to picking new faces in some constituencies since there were no popular candidates. But new faces were nominated after being confident that they will come out victorious," AL Presidium member Matia Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

"As the areas of constituencies in the capital are smaller, we hope these new leaders will be able to communicate with the voters of their own constituencies," she said. Matia played an important role in nominating party candidates across the country.

Religion
FROM PAGE 16
for long. But this type of propaganda might disrupt that harmony," he told The Daily Star.

The Awami League submitted a written complaint objecting to such campaign to the district election investigation committee yesterday afternoon, said party leader in the district advocate Altafur Rahman.

He also claimed that Shamsul Haque, who has been shown as a presidium member of Bangladesh Muslim League in a leaflet, is actually the present vice-president of Thakurgaon Sadar BNP committee.

Shamsul Haque could not be contacted for comments after several attempts.

Bus crash
FROM PAGE 16
bound bus from Ramchandrapur hit the autorickshaw near Teghoria bridge at about 8:30am.

Autorickshaw passengers Makbul Hossain, 66, Chairman of Kamalla Union Parishad, and Kanduri Begum, 80, wife of Malu Miah of Pipulia Kanda village in the upazila, died on the spot.

The accident also left Tazul Islam, 38, son of Kanduri Begum, his sister Montaz Begum, 45, sons Samiullah, 6, and Rabiullah, 4, and daughter Sumaiya seriously injured.

Of them, Samiullah, Rabiullah and Sumaiya died on way to Comilla Medical College Hospital.

Bus crash
FROM PAGE 16
bound bus from Ramchandrapur hit the autorickshaw near Teghoria bridge at about 8:30am.

Autorickshaw passengers Makbul Hossain, 66, Chairman of Kamalla Union Parishad, and Kanduri Begum, 80, wife of Malu Miah of Pipulia Kanda village in the upazila, died on the spot.

The accident also left Tazul Islam, 38, son of Kanduri Begum, his sister Montaz Begum, 45, sons Samiullah, 6, and Rabiullah, 4, and daughter Sumaiya seriously injured.

Of them, Samiullah, Rabiullah and Sumaiya died on way to Comilla Medical College Hospital.

Bus crash
FROM PAGE 16
bound bus from Ramchandrapur hit the autorickshaw near Teghoria bridge at about 8:30am.

Autorickshaw passengers Makbul Hossain, 66, Chairman of Kamalla Union Parishad, and Kanduri Begum, 80, wife of Malu Miah of Pipulia Kanda village in the upazila, died on the spot.

The accident also left Tazul Islam, 38, son of Kanduri Begum, his sister Montaz Begum, 45, sons Samiullah, 6, and Rabiullah, 4, and daughter Sumaiya seriously injured.

Of them, Samiullah, Rabiullah and Sumaiya died on way to Comilla Medical College Hospital.

Ctg jives
FROM PAGE 16
Bazar and Goalpara. He also addressed rallies in those areas.

The grand alliance shared Chittagong-9 and Chittagong-7-two of the four vital city constituencies-with Jatiya Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD). However, none of the AL leaders, who filed nominations there, withdrew their candidacy creating confusion among party men and people.

However, grand alliance candidate JSD Executive President Mainuddin Khan Badal of Chittagong-7 managed to confirm the departure of AL leader Abdus Salam from the race.

AL leader Afzarul Ameen who filed nomination for Chittagong-9 got the party symbol Boat. Morshed Murad Ibrahim of JP (Ershad), the grand alliance nominee, however got the JP symbol Plough.

Vigorous campaign activities are going on in Chittagong-9 as both the AL and JP nominees will be battling against BNP's Abdullah Al Noman and former Chittagong City

Corporation (CCC) acting mayor M Manjur Alam. AL leader M Manjur Alam is an independent candidate.

Eighty-one candidates, including 32 from the Awami League-led grand alliance and the BNP-led four-party alliance, received 24 electoral symbols for running in the elections in 16 constituencies of Chittagong.

Grand alliance candidates of AL are campaigning with their election symbol Boat in 13 constituencies of Chittagong while Jatiya Party (Ershad) candidates are campaigning with their own symbol Plough in two constituencies. A Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) candidate is also running in the election under the banner of grand alliance with the symbol Boat.

From the four-party alliance, BNP nominees are campaigning with their Sheaf of Paddy symbol in 15 seats and a Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami candidate with the symbol Scale in one constituency.

Mohiuddin

FROM PAGE 16
"I have forgiven all who plotted against me in my absence. I shall not take vengeance on any of them," he said at a meeting with top CCC officials, department heads and ward councilors at his CCC office immediately after taking charge.

Rab personnel arrested Mohiuddin, also Chittagong city Awami League (AL) president, on March 7, last year at his Chasma Hill residence in city's Sholoshahar in connection with Bijoy TV graft case.

A total of 22 cases had been filed against him.

The present caretaker government filed five cases while the rest were filed by the previous BNP-led alliance government.

Of those, the HC and the Appellate Division quashed three cases while no specific allegations were found against the mayor in four cases.

The chief adviser urged the secretaries to expedite release of pensions of retired government officials and the publication of updated secretariat directory.

On increasing production, he said instead of becoming dependent on import they need to stress on increasing domestic production. He also emphasised the use of technology for establishment of good governance and a society free of corruption.

After about an hour of speech that began at 11:00am, Fakhruddin had a closed door session with the secretaries.

Cabinet Secretary M Abdul Aziz delivered the welcome address at the open session and moderated the meeting while nine secretaries of various ministries spoke at the closed door session.

HC hands over
FROM PAGE 16
Mohammad Joyal Abedin and mother Begum Sufia Kamal submitted her passport to the HC though their lawyer as per the court direction.

Earlier, in the morning Humayra's parents produced her (Humayra) before the HC bench as per its earlier order.

The bench recorded her statement in a closed-door session for more than half an hour.

The court then told the lawyers and her parents present at the court that the court has become astonished hearing the statement of Humayra about her detention.

"Humayra's parents will fall into a serious trouble, if her statements are disclosed. We don't want to fell them into any trouble," the court said.

In response to a habeas corpus petition filed by ASK and Humayra's cousin Shipra Chowdhury on December 4, the HC directed Humayra's father Joyal Abedin, mother Begum Sufia Kamal and uncle Abu Bakar to produce her before the court on December 14.

On December 5, following a petition filed by Anne Marie Hutchinson, a friend of Humayra in London, the High Court of Justice, Family Division in London, forbade her parents to force her (Humayra) to enter into a marriage and allow the representatives of the ASK and the British High Commission to meet her in Bangladesh at a subsequent time as required by them.

The order said if the respondents do not obey the directions, they will be guilty of contempt of court and may be sent to prison, fined or their assets may be seized.

Her parents earlier told the court through their lawyers that Humayra was mentally sick and she should be kept with her parents. But they failed to show any document about her illness to the court.

Barrister Sara Hossain argued for the petitioners while Barrister Ruhul Qudus Kajal stood for Humayra's parents.

Liberation War
FROM PAGE 16
Mamoon yesterday filed the writ as public interest litigation.

The secretaries of the liberation war affairs and the land ministries, district commissioner of Chittagong, Chittagong City Corporation and the registrar of University of Science and Technology, Chittagong (USTC) have been made respondents in the ruling.

The petitioners said the then Awami League government in 1998 began the process of acquiring land of the liberation war killing field at East Pahartali under Khushi Police Station in Chittagong.

The BNP-led four-party alliance government finalised the project in 2002 but it cancelled the decision of acquiring land for the killing field in 2006 and allocated the land for the USTC.

Barrister Tanjib-ul Alam appeared for the petitioners.

BNP touches

FROM PAGE 16
without which, he said, no pledges can be fulfilled.

Zahid Hussain, a senior economist working with a multilateral donor agency, said it is very much encouraging that both the major parties have given economic issues much more importance than they did in the past.

"As citizens we hope both the parties will help each other pursue their avowed agenda in these areas no matter who wins the election. The proof of the pudding will be in the eating," he said.

The BNP explicitly and implicitly promises to move forward the economic policies and programmes it had during its last stint in power along with others but it has not laid out any milestone or specific target for poverty reduction and economic growth, Zahid said.

"We assume these will be spelled out when [the BNP] defines the policy framework for achieving the broad development objectives to which its manifesto has made a firm commitment. In particular, the voters deserve to know how BNP is preparing itself to face the challenges emanating from external markets due to the global recession that is currently unfolding and appears to be getting worse by the day," Zahid said.

He said both the AL and the BNP have demonstrated a serious concern about improving governance and expressed their readiness to offer the position of deputy speaker to the opposition. BNP has gone a step further by saying it wants the Speaker to be completely detached from party affiliation.

"BNP is in a unique position to demonstrate the credibility of their commitment to this by setting a precedent immediately even though it will only have a symbolic value," Zahid said.

Unnayan Samunnay Chairman Dr Atur Rahman described the BNP's manifesto as an "instant reaction" to existing problems that

room by security staff, an AFP journalist said.

Soles of shoes are considered the ultimate insult in Arab culture. After Saddam Hussein's statue was toppled in Baghdad in April 2003, many onlookers beat the statue's face with their soles.

Some Iraqi journalists stood up to apologise.

The White House said Bush ducked to avoid the first shoe, while the second narrowly missed the president.

Bush said: "Thanks for apologising on behalf of the Iraqi people. It doesn't bother me. If you want the facts, it was a size 10 shoe that he threw."

Playing down the incident, the president later added: "I don't know what the guy's cause is... I didn't feel the least bit threatened by it."

Air Force One, Bush's distinctive powder blue-and-white jetliner, landed at Baghdad International Airport in the afternoon local time, after a secretive Saturday night departure from Washington and an 11-hour flight. In a sign of modest security gains in this war zone, Bush was welcomed with a formal arrival ceremony a flourish that was not part of his previous three trips to Iraq.

Bush planned a rapid-fire series of meetings with top Iraqi leaders, including Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. He and Bush were marking the recent security agreement between the two nations.

Bush's national security adviser, Stephen Hadley, said the agreement was "a remarkable document unique in the Arab world because it was publicly debated, discussed and adopted by an elected parliament."

Hadley said the trip "shows that we are moving into a different relationship... with Iraqis rightfully exercising greater sovereignty, we in an increasingly subordinate role."

It was Bush's last trip to the war zone before President-elect Barack Obama takes office Jan. 20. Bush's most recent Iraq stop was over 15 months ago, in September 2007.

After a 10-hour-plus flight, Bush was met at the airport by US Ambassador Ryan Crocker and the top US commander Gen. Raymond Odierno. The president then climbed aboard a helicopter for a five-minute flight to the presidential palace.

Other Iraqi officials on Bush's agenda were Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, the country's two vice presidents, the speaker of the Council of Representatives and the head of the Kurdistan Regional Government Massoud Barzani.

Bush arrived in daylight, a sign of the security gains made in Iraq.

Still, the trip was conducted under heavy security and a strict cloak of secrecy. People travelling with the president agreed to tell almost no one about the plans. The White House tried to avoid raising suspicion about the president's whereabouts by putting out false schedules detailing activities planned for Bush in Washington on Sunday.

Bush's visit came after Defense Secretary Robert Gates' unannounced stop in Iraq on Saturday, at a sprawling military base in the central part of the country. Gates will be the lone Republican holdover from the Bush Cabinet in the Obama administration.

lacks a long-term vision to solve those problems.

The BNP has promised to bring down inflation but does not explain how it would do that, he said, adding, "I think there was no well planned research behind the preparation of the manifesto. They spoke of a collateral free loan against deposit of certificates. But I think it would be wastage of money. In the past such steps were taken but those failed."

Centre for Policy Dialogue Executive Director Mustafizur Rahman said the BNP's manifesto prioritises three