

## EC to destroy

FROM PAGE 1

troubles for the commission. They fear they might have to contend with complications in printing of ballot papers till two or three days before the election day. The EC is not sure how many names it might have to include in the ballots next week.

Usually, the EC starts dispatching ballot papers and other materials to electoral districts across the country two to three days before the vote.

Mihir Sarwar Morshed, deputy secretary to the EC Secretariat, said they faced similar problems in the parliamentary polls of 1996. At that time, they had to dispense with around 30 lakh ballot papers to abide by court orders.

For instance, he said, before the polling day of June 12, the High Court overturned the EC's allocation of electoral symbol 'minaret' to Islami Oikya Jote, and ordered to award the symbol to Islami Shashontanra Andolon.

Of those ruled valid as candidates in the upcoming polls, six are from BNP, three from AL and two from JP. The rest are independents.

Most of them had been out for convictions, concealing information and defaulting on loans or utility service bills.

**ONE OF TWO**  
Gulam Mawla Khan Bablu and Major (ret'd) Manjur Qader, BNP nominees for Sirajganj-5, had been disqualified by the RO and the EC.

Though both have got back candidacy on court orders, the RO concerned yesterday allocated the party's electoral symbol 'sheaf of paddy' to Qader.

As reasons, he first cited that he did not get the documents on Babul's candidacy. Later, he said he received the order's copy but the text was barely legible, said the secretariat sources.

In Comilla-10, the RO allocated 'sheaf of paddy' to Abdul Gafur Bhuiyan. On December 12, he assigned the symbol to Mobasser Alam Bhuiyan.

**MIX-UP OVER WITHDRAWAL**  
The documents available at the EC Secretariat show that AL withdrew its nominations for Dhaka-5 and Mymensingh-4 on December 11, the last date for doing so.

The letters signed by AL President Sheikh Hasina were sent to ROs of the two constituencies. On receiving the letters, the ROs did not allocate AL's electoral symbol 'boat' to Habibur Rahman Molla for Dhaka-5 and Matiur Rahman for Mymensingh-4.

AL sent another letter to the EC on December 12, saying that it issued the December 11 letter for Mymensingh-4 mistakenly, and that it in fact did not withdraw its nomination for the seat.

The EC replied that the RO's decision is final and it had

nothing to do since the time for withdrawal was already over.

Both Molla and Matiur rushed to the apex court and had ruling in their favour.

Syed Abu Hossain of JP, who had been on the AL-led grand alliance ticket in Dhaka-5, yesterday lodged a complaint with the EC, alleging that Molla had concealed information to obtain the court order.

Talking to reporters, he said Molla cannot get AL's electoral symbol as he withdrew his candidacy on December 11. "He did not mention the information to the court," the JP candidate claimed.

He said he is preparing to file an appeal with the SC.

In Chanpur-1, the RO concerned allocated 'boat' to Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir. He had earlier allocated the symbol to Mir Mohammad Iqbal Hossain.

MK Alamgir's candidacy had been rejected on grounds that he has conviction under the Emergency Powers Rules (EPR), 2007.

Former state minister and BNP leader Lutfozzaman Babar, who too had been discredited as a candidate for conviction under EPR, was allotted symbol as an independent contestant for Netrakona-4.

## Dense fog

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degrees Celsius was recorded in Srimangal, said the Met office official.

The residents in the capital also experienced chilling cold as the sun remained covered by thick fog throughout the day.

The demand for warm clothes witnessed a sharp rise in the city markets. A number of street hawkers were also seen selling warm clothes on footpath.

## Man hacked

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town and hit with sharp weapons on his left leg and hands.

"They (goons) asked me why I keep the portraits of Bangabandhu and the seven Birshreshthas at my residence," Selim said.

He further said some unidentified people went to his residence in the morning and asked him to remove the portraits.

Selim could not identify the gang members but pointed finger at Jamaat-e-Islam for the attack.

Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid, Awami League's Mosharraf Hossain and former BNP minister Kamal Ibne Yusuf (ind) are contesting the election from Faridpur-3 (Sadar) constituency.

A general diary (GD) was lodged with Kotwali Police Station. Talking to The Daily Star, officer-in-charge of the police station said they would take measures to nab the culprits involved in the attack.

## S Korea completes troop pullout from Iraq

AFP, Seoul

South Korea yesterday completed its troop pullout from Iraq, ending a four-year mission to help reconstruct the war-torn nation.

The last group of 519 soldiers who had been stationed in the northern city of Arbil and a 102-member air support unit in Kuwait arrived home earlier in the day.

Prime Minister Han Seung-Soo hosted a ceremony at a military base in southern Seoul to disband the units, known as Zaytun (olive) in Iraq and Daiman in Kuwait.

"Zaytun and Daiman improved the overseas operational capability of our military and significantly contributed to raising the reputation of our country," he said.

South Korea sent 3,600 engineering and medical troops to Iraq in 2004, the third largest foreign troop presence at the time. It extended the deployment four times at the request of its close ally the United States but gradually cut the numbers.

The unit suffered no battle casualties.

President Lee Myung-Bak made a brief visit to shake hands and take pictures with soldiers.

"I welcome back all members of the Zaytun and Daiman units, and I'm deeply proud of you all for helping to elevate the status of our nation abroad," Lee said in a speech.

The troops provided medical services to almost 89,000 local residents and offered vocational classes to 2,299 people. They also built a variety of clinics and other public buildings.

## Khaleda

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introduce four-party nominee Motiur Rahman, Khaleda said if four-party is voted to power, they would construct another bridge over the Buriganga, set up sewerage system and ensure water supply by the Wasain area.

She sought support for four-party candidates to foil 'conspiracy' against the country. She however did not explain the conspiracy.

The former prime minister said multi-party politics in the country was banned in 1975 by forming Baksal. And people got it back through BNP and its election symbol sheaf of paddy, she added.

The ninth parliamentary election, now scheduled for December 29, was supposed to be held much earlier. But due to conspiracies by different quarters, it could not be held in time, the BNP chairperson said.

Khaleda said no efforts for development of the country were made in the last two years, and the process of development started by the previous four-party was brought to a halt. So, a people's representative government should come into being through the upcoming polls in the interest of the nation and the country, she added.

At both the rallies, the BNP chairperson introduced the four-party nominees by putting 'sheaf of paddy' in their hands.

BNP launches

FROM PAGE 16  
information on corruption, terrorism and irregularities by the Awami League (AL) government as well as information on "anti-Bangladesh propaganda" by Sajeeb Wazed Joy, son of AL President Sheikh Hasina and information on Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad.

## Vegetable

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Vegetable vendors at different city markets said the prices of all seasonal vegetables started falling since the Eid.

They said the sale of vegetables is low compared to its huge supply.

Retail market sources said bean was selling at Tk 7 to Tk 10 per kg while long bean at Tk 12 to Tk 15, aubergine at Tk 10 to Tk 15 and bitter gourd at Tk 10 to Tk 15.

Cucumber was sold at Tk 12 to Tk 15 per kg while tomato was selling between Tk 15 and Tk 20.

A piece of cauliflower was sold at Tk 10 to Tk 15 and a cabbage at Tk 5 to Tk 10. The price of per piece bottle gourd was between Tk 15 to Tk 20.

## Vote down corrupt

FROM PAGE 1  
militancy and build a developed and secular Bangladesh free from poverty and hunger.

The AL president addressed election rallies on Narail Govt Victoria College ground, Bhagharpara Charbhita High School ground in Jessore-4 constituency, Jessore Eidgah ground, Naldanga Bhusan Pilot High School in Kaliganj upazila and Uzir Ali High School ground in Jhenidah, Magura Adarsha College ground, Modhukhali Eidgah ground and Faridpur Govt Rajendra College ground and Goaland intersection in Rajbari.

She also introduced AL-led grand alliance candidates at the rallies.

A huge number of people gathered at her election rallies in the six districts -- Narail, Jessore, Jhenidah, Magura, Faridpur and Rajbari.

Hasina also joined election rallies in two constituencies in Manikganj and sought vote for the first time for 'plough', the electoral symbol of Jatiya Party, a component of the AL-led grand alliance.

Addressing a huge rally on Jessore Eidgah ground, Hasina said some people became rich overnight looting public money during the tenure of the BNP-Jamaat coalition government.

About Tk 20,000 crore was misappropriated in power sector alone during their tenure, she said.

The AL chief also alleged that BNP plotted election engineering in the stalled 22 January polls through inclusion of over one crore fake voters in the voter's list.

"Since she [Khaleda] failed to do that she now seems sad and angry about the upcoming election," she said.

Hasina also thanked the

caretaker government and the army for preparing an authentic voter list.

She however criticised the government for failing to check the price hike of essentials.

The former premier said people have been suffering because of price spiral of food items for the last seven years.

People belonging to mid-income group now can support their families for 15 days with their monthly income while day labourers cannot afford two square meals a day.

"If we are voted to power, we shall bring down the price of essentials and generate more power to ensure electricity supply in every village," Hasina said.

"Now it is your [people] turn to elect the right people to save the country by casting vote for boat," said the AL president hoping that people would rise again in the December 29 polls the way they did during Liberation War in 1971 responding to the call of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Addressing two rallies in Jessore, the AL chief pledged to take initiatives to resolve the problem of water logging in different areas including Bhabadah in the southern districts.

She also pledged to modernise the Benapal port and also the Mongla port through construction of a deep seaport there.

At an election rally in Narail, Hasina promised to build a bridge over the Madhumati river to facilitate communication between Gopalganj and Narail.

Hasina, accompanied by her younger sister Sheikh Rehana and Rehana's daughter Azmina Siddique Ruponti left the capital on December 16 for conducting election campaign outside the capital.

## Prof Ataur

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It termed the DU fact-finding committee as faulty, incomplete and baseless and claimed there was no authenticity of our report trusting report of the fact-finding committee.

**Our Reply**  
Our report was based on the final report of a DU fact-finding committee. The committee was approved by the DU syndicate, the highest decision making body of the university, and the report was placed before the syndicate.

Our report was not intended to damage the personal image of Prof Ataur Rahman, but only to inform the public about the outcome of the fact-finding committee.

The facts mentioned in our report are based on the committee report. We reiterate that we had no intention of damaging either the reputation or the image of Prof Ataur Rahman.

## UN team

FROM PAGE 16

Afghanistan, would go to Dhaka before December 29, reported ANA from New York.

The team will see whether all preparations have been completed for holding a free, fair and neutral election.

Farhan said the UN secretary general expressed deep satisfaction at the participation of all political parties in election campaign. He also hoped that the election would be held on December 29 in a congenial atmosphere.

The UN secretary general gave a statement thanking the present caretaker government soon after he learnt that the state of emergency had been withdrawn in Bangladesh.

## Koko's money

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the opponents of the BNP-led alliance.

Nazrul urged the ACC and the caretaker government to refrain from doing such propaganda.

With the help of Singapore government the ACC came to know that Koko has 20.61 lakh Singapore dollars and 2.61 lakh US dollars in a bank in that country. The anti-graft body revealed the stunning information on Thursday.

ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal also told reporters that they received evidence and necessary papers that confirm Koko's ownership of the money.

## Independent

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Court's exercise of that power.

If the new secretariat was set up under the Supreme Court keeping the structure of Registrar's Office in place, effective control and supervision of lower courts and tribunals by the Supreme Court would be easy, the experts added. The law ministry's interference might hamper the new judicial secretariat's functioning, they feared.

Annoyed by the provisions in the new ordinance, Bangladesh Judicial Service Association, a platform of around 1,200 judicial officials across the country, scheduled an emergency meeting for today in the capital to discuss the situation including the law ministry's move to scrutinise the functions of the new secretariat, as it was drafted by the ministry.

The association already in a statement urged the government to scrap the ordinance.

## 36 graft accused

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A total of 53 women candidates are in the polls race in 58 constituencies. Of them, 19 are from Awami League-led grand alliance, 13 from BNP-led four-party combine and rest 21 are from other political parties or independent candidates.

Shujan plans to complete its electoral survey in all the 300 constituencies within a few days.

About getting back of candidacy under court orders after publication of the final list of candidates by the Election Commission, Badiul said this has created confusion in public mind.

In reply to a question, former adviser of caretaker government ASM Shahjahan, who was present at the press conference, said any conspiracy to foil the election would not succeed since 15 crore people of the country are now

## Shoe-tossing Iraqi

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those who assaulted him," the judge told The Associated Press. "Al-Zeidi has the right to drop this case."

The journalist was in custody and was expected to eventually face charges of insulting a foreign leader. A conviction could bring a sentence of two years in prison.

Al-Kinani also confirmed that the journalist had written a letter of apology to al-Maliki. Iraq's president can grant pardons that are requested by the prime minister, but the judge said such a pardon can be issued only after a conviction.

He added that he could not drop the case even though neither Bush nor al-Maliki had complained. "This case was filed because of an article in the law concerning the protection of the respect of sovereignty," he said.

A spokesman for al-Maliki said Thursday that the letter contained a specific pardon request. But al-Zeidi's brother Dhargham told The AP that he suspected the letter was a forgery.

The incident, a vivid demonstration of Iraqis' dismay over the US-led invasion and occupation of the country for more than five years, turned al-Zeidi into an instant folk hero. Thousands of Iraqis have demonstrated for his release.

The judge said the investigation would be completed and sent to the criminal court on Sunday, after which a court date would be set within seven

to 10 days.

Al-Zeidi's action was broadcast repeatedly on television stations around the world. US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack suggested that worldwide attention to the shoe-tossing was overblown.

"We would hope that the fact of a US president standing next to a freely elected prime minister of Iraq who just happens to be Shia, who is governing in a multi-confessional, multiethnic democracy in the heart of the Middle East, is not overshadowed by one incident like this," McCormack told reporters in Washington.

McCormack said he believed that in the coming years "the fact of the president making that visit under those circumstances will probably overshadow any memory of this particular gentleman and what he did."

In the Iranian capital Tehran, hard-line Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati praised the act at Friday prayers, calling it the "Shoe Intifada."

Jannati proposed people in Iraq and Iran should carry shoes in further anti-American demonstrations. "This should be a role model," said Jannati.

Also Friday, the head of a large West Bank family said it is willing to offer one of its eligible females as a bride for al-Zeidi. The leader, 75-year-old Ahmad Salim Judeh, said that the 500-member clan had raised \$30,000 for al-Zeidi's legal defence.

## US offers automakers

FROM PAGE 16

The rescue announced could include up to four billion dollars more pending congressional approval.

General Motors and Chrysler were expected to draw on the funds immediately to avert bankruptcy, and will be required to implement new belt-tightening moves and demonstrate their long-term viability.

"These are not ordinary circumstances," President George W Bush said in announcing the aid.

"In the midst of a crisis and a recession allowing the US auto industry to collapse is not a responsible course of action."

The funds will be drawn from the Treasury's 700 billion dollar Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP).

An additional four billion dollars from the TARP will be available in February, contingent upon congressional approval of the second portion of that program.

The automakers will have to take steps to demonstrate their viability by March 31.

"The automakers and unions must understand what is at stake and make hard decisions necessary to reform," Bush said. "We intend to send a clear message

to everyone involved in the future of American automakers."

He added that restructuring the industry would "require meaningful concessions from all involved in the auto industry."

Among the "targets" established by the loan would be a two-thirds reduction in debt by exchanging debt for equity, more flexible work rules and cuts in wages, to make the companies competitive with foreign manufacturers established on US soil.

"The loan will be automatically called by the government and will be repaid in full if certain conditions are not met" by March 31, a senior administration official said.

"The most important one is that the firms must be viable." The official added that "this does not mean the firms has to be profitable but clearly ... the firms have to be profitable soon."

Chrysler LLC chairman and chief executive Bob Nardelli a letter of intent for the loan had been signed.

"These requirements will require consideration from all constituents, requiring commitment first in principal, leading to implementation this coming year," Nardelli said.

## Both alliances face

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again had to allot symbols to some of the new candidates including AL's Principal Motiur Rahman in Mymensingh-4 and Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir in Chandpur-1, putting AL and its grand electoral alliance in the new dilemma there.

Activists, supporters and campaigners of both alliances are finding themselves confused due to the sudden new development in the electoral race, which is exceedingly veering towards divisions within both alliances, as the leaders are yet to make it clear to the campaigners who are really their nominees in the problem constituencies.

In some constituencies including in Moulvibazar-2 and 4, supporters of rival candidates from the grand alliance already engaged in clashes yesterday over claiming real nominations.

In Mymensingh-4 both Rawshan Ershad of Jatiya Party (JP) and just reinstated candidate Principal Motiur Rahman of AL, both are electioneering simultaneously giving rise to a real division among grand alliance supporters.

A similar situation might occur in Comilla-11 after JP's Kazi Zafar Ahmed gets his electoral symbol, where electioneering of grand alliance nominee Mujibul Haq Mujib is going on in full swing.

The electoral landscape has changed in that constituency due to the SC order and political parties there are considering the issue seriously.

Both electoral alliances admitted that return into the race of some of their rejected nominees gave rise to fresh problems in their election campaigns.

The newly reinstated heavy weight candidates from BNP are Maj (ret'd) Manjur Kader in Sirajganj-5, Kabir Ahmed

Bhuiyan in Laxmipur-2, and Abdul Gafur Bhuiyan in Comilla-10, from AL Habibur Rahman Molla in Dhaka-5, and from JP Fakir Ashraf in Netrakona-2 and Kazi Zafar Ahmed in Comilla-11.

BNP's Lutfozzaman Babar also became a new independent candidate in Netrakona-4, becoming a new headache for his party's alliance nominee there Lt Col (ret'd) Syed Ataul Haque.

Expressing deep concern and disappointment, JP Chairman HM Ershad told The Daily Star last night that the grand alliance might have to pay heavily for the latest division in the alliance.

"Nominees of Jatiya Party and Awami League are contesting against each other in 11 constituencies, which might end up handing over the wins to BNP candidates," lamented Ershad.

AL must resolve the crisis as soon as possible 'since it is responsible for the creation of the dilemma', Ershad noted.

"There is no doubt that we are facing fresh problems as some of our party leaders managed to get back into the election race," RA Ghani, a senior member of the BNP standing committee, told The Daily Star last night.

"It's really a problem, our electioneering will face problems," Ghani said noting that there were only 9 days left till the election day, and party nominees are already campaigning in full swing.

He also said they have yet to discuss the new development in the appropriate party forum.

BNP chief Khaleda Zia returned to Dhaka yesterday, and she might sit soon with party policy makers to work out a solution, he added.

HT Imam, co-chairman of AL election conducting committee told The Daily Star last night that they are hopeful to resolve the problem but today

development of the country were made in the last two years, and the process of development started by the previous four-party was brought to a halt. So, a people's representative government should come into being through the upcoming polls in the interest of the nation and the country, she added.

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Commission, once declared to quit politics and not to run in election anymore. He was the first BNP leader to propose curtailing power of the party chairperson to ensure democracy in the party.

Voters said these issues would decide Khoka's fate in the election.

Faruk Raghieb, a businessman in Waiz Ghat area, said, "Badruddoza Chowdhury is a clean person but he is new in the area whereas Khoka is familiar face. Both of them, however, have good reputation which would draw votes for them... Mizanur Rahman is also a new candidate but he might also secure many votes."

He said, "Voters will evaluate Khoka's performance during his three tenures as the area's MP and as the mayor. They will also take Khoka's announcement to quit politics into consideration."

Samiran Deb, a resident of Patuati, said, said there would be a tight fight in the constituency because the candidates are strongmen of their respective parties and have their vote banks in the area.

Shah Alam, a first time voter residing at North Brook Hall Road, said, "After the changeover of January 11 people have seen many things about their political