

## No rigging

**FROM PAGE 16**  
and directives at an opinion exchange meeting with government officials of Dhaka Division at the International Conference Center (ICC) at the CA's office complex in the morning ahead of December 29 parliamentary elections and January 22 Upazila Parishad polls.

About 200 officials, including DCs, SPs, UNOs, metropolitan police commissioner, DIG of Police, Dhaka Range, senior officials of BDR, Ansar and VDP, and other election related officials from 17 districts of the division were present at the meeting.

This was the fifth such meeting after the first one held at Khulna on December 1, followed by Rangpur (Rajshahi division), Sylhet and Barisal. The last exchange opinion meeting of Chittagong Division is scheduled in Chittagong on December 23.

Home Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin, Cabinet Secretary M Abdul Aziz, Home Secretary Abdul Karim and one DC, SP, ADC and UNO, on behalf of the respective cadres, DMP commissioner and DIG of Police, Dhaka Range also spoke at the meeting.

Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Aziz Hasan gave the welcome address. The field-level officials in their speeches expressed the determination to implement the government's key objective to hold a free, fair and acceptable election and apprised the meeting about their full preparation to this end.

Addressing the meeting, the chief adviser termed the upcoming 9th Jatiya Sangsad elections and the Upazila Parishad polls as very impor-

tant. He asked the officials to carry out election responsibilities maintaining total neutrality and transparency, to avoid all mistakes and follow the directives of the Election Commission meticulously.

Fakhrudin believed that the government officials would be able to achieve complete success by properly performing their responsibilities at this important time of the election.

He said the present caretaker government wants to present the nation a free, fair and credible election. "The government has come very close to the objective."

Fakhrudin said: "This election is considered as standard for all future elections."

He said the present government has carried out many activities in the last two years so that black money, terrorism and muscle power cannot pollute the election. He told the officials to remain strict so that these vices cannot emerge at the last moment.

Fakhrudin said he believes that whichever alliance or party forms the government through winning the election, the true victory would be of people and democracy.

Home Adviser Matin in his speech asked the government officials to give top priority to the arrest of terrorists and recovery of illegal arms before the election.

Referring to the reported apprehensions of violence, reappearance of terrorists and ill-attempts by extremists and militants, he directed the law enforcement agencies to show zero tolerance in dealing with those.

## 5 in the EC dock

**FROM PAGE 1**  
At yesterday's meeting, EC also decided to challenge the court orders that have enabled the loan defaulters and convicted individuals to be candidates in the national polls, officials in the EC Secretariat said.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda has already talked to the Bangladesh Bank governor asking him to prepare for legal fights against loan defaulters who obtained court orders to become eligible to contest, sources say.

The EC will also challenge the Supreme Court order that allows Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka and some other municipality mayors to contest the election.

The EC in its decision earlier said mayors are not eligible to contest the parliamentary polls unless they resign from their current posts. Disposing a writ, the High Court upheld the EC decision, but the chamber judge of the Supreme Court stayed it.

Interestingly, all of the cases are set to be heard after the December 29 parliamentary election.

## Petrobangla

**FROM PAGE 16**  
begin initial work there within next three years.

The Geological Survey of Bangladesh (GSB) discovered high quality bituminous coal in Dighipara area of Nababganj upazila in Dinajpur during exploration from 1995 to 2004.

After drilling only five boreholes in 1.25 square km area, the GSB found coal in five layers having a thickness of 62 metres at depths ranging from 323 metres to 408 metres. It is primarily estimated to have a deposit of 100 million tonnes.

However, the deposit has the prospect of stretching over five square kilometres with 500 million tonnes of coal. Petrobangla, which got the licence beating a number of international companies, will have to undertake detailed work programme to confirm it.

While applying for the licence, Petrobangla argued that the coal zone could prove vital for the country's energy prospects. But it would take an investment of at least \$1 billion to develop this zone and therefore it would need a strategic partner.

In June last year, the energy ministry gave Petrobangla the permission to find a partner that has the finances, expertise and experience.

In mid-March, Petrobangla drafted an Invitation for Expression of Interest (EOI) to find its strategic partner. It was then decided that following the tender and selection process of Petrobangla's partner, the government must approve the joint venture between Petrobangla and the selected partner.

In this light Petrobangla should frame a tender structure and schedule and send it to the advisory council on economic affairs.

The ministry decided in mid-May that no new information should be incorporated with the EOI until the coal policy is announced and therefore, the EOI should be finalised after the announcement of the policy.

But the policy has not been adopted ultimately leaving it up to the next political government to decide on it.

## EC ends

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Mobasher on Saturday filed a complaint with the EC challenging the RO's decision in this regard. He argued that the Supreme Court did not order allocating the "sheaf of paddy" symbol to Gafur Bhuiyan. It only ordered the EC to accept Gafur's nomination papers.

Both Gafur and Mobasher are BNP leaders. The EC yesterday at a meeting went through the Supreme Court's order and decided that Gafur Bhuiyan should not be allowed to use the BNP's electoral symbol. It decided that Gafur Bhuiyan should be allocated an independent candidate's electoral symbol.

The EC in its order sent to the RO said Mobasher should be given "sheaf of paddy" symbol so that the court's order is followed properly.

Talking to reporters yesterday evening, Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda confirmed the EC's decision.

Manzurur Rahman, RO of Comilla-10 constituency, told The Daily Star around 8:30pm yesterday that he received a copy of the EC's decision.

"I will act as per the Election Commission's decision," he said.

## Khaleda pledges

**FROM PAGE 1**  
to the voters and seeking votes for them.

Khaleda had left her cantonment residence at about 9:15am for the one-day tour of Barisal. Party sources said on her way back to the capital, the BNP chief was set to address rallies at Faridpur and Manikganj also.

Apparently pointing to former BNP leader AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury while speaking at the rally in Munshiganj, Khaleda said voters would resist those who left the party.

At the rally at Bangabandhu Udyan in Barisal she said, "Only the BNP-led electoral alliance can solve the problems the nation has been facing for the past two years."

She urged people to vote for the alliance to ensure development and protect the independence and sovereignty of the country.

Pointing to Awami League, Khaleda said, "A certain party claims that this government is the outcome of its movement. Now, if that party comes to power, there might be further price hike and people would suffer more."

Pledging to give subsidy in agriculture, control food prices and generate employment for youths and women, the BNP chairperson expressed hope that the four-party alliance would regain power with two-thirds majority.

Thousands of supporters, workers and leaders of the

components of the four-party alliance attending the meeting were carrying sheaves of paddy, the BNP electoral symbol.

Khaleda introduced alliance candidates in different constituencies of Barisal-Majibur Rahman Sarwar, Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, Selima Rahman, Abul Hossain Khan, Col (ret'd) Shahjahan, Sharfuddin Santu, Abdus Sobhan, Nurul Islam Manju, Elen Bhutt, Mezbahuddin Farhad and advocate Khandaker Mahbub to the voters and sought vote for them.

She also introduced party candidates Shah Moazzem Hossain and Mizanur Rahman Sinha of Munshiganj constituencies.

## Evans

**FROM PAGE 16**  
[about election]," he added.

The high commissioner however would not comment on present security situation in the wake of reported threat on Awami League president Sheikh Hasina.

"I am not in a position to comment on that particular press report," he said, adding, the authorities will take necessary steps so all can campaign peacefully and ensure peaceful election day and free, fair and credible polls.

He said Britain will work very closely with the incoming democratically elected government.

## Sacrifice life

**FROM PAGE 1**  
election rallies at different constituencies in Tangail and Mymensingh.

She said Bangabandhu sacrificed his life for the country and if necessary she will also do the same.

During her hectic tour schedule, Hasina addressed more than a dozen election rallies and in all of them she talked about the demands of the people of the constituencies concerned including construction of bridges, roads and gas supply. She assured the people of meeting those demands if the AL-led grand alliance is voted to power.

Hasina introduced grand alliance candidates in constituencies and the AL and Jatiya Party candidates gave her boat or plough shaped wreaths.

When she asked who would vote for grand alliance candidates, thousands of people at the huge rallies raised their hands and vowed to vote for them. She called upon them to vote for AL for the country's peace, progress and prosperity.

Many people also stood on roadways with the replicas of AL electoral symbol in their hands just to have a glimpse of the AL chief on her way to different election rallies.

She said during the last seven years the people of the country faced untold sufferings due to price hike of essentials.

Hasina said during the five-year tenure of the BNP-Jamaat government, the leaders indulged in corruption, plundering the country's wealth and militancy was spread across the country. She said international media is now revealing the story of their plundering state wealth.

She urged people to vote for the grand alliance so that the country is saved from further plundering of its wealth, militancy and corruption. She assured people of bringing prices of essentials down to the purchasing capacity of all people.

Hasina assured people of doubling the retired persons' and freedom fighters' allow-

## Delwar

**FROM PAGE 16**  
He said he will spend Tk 10 lakh of his own earnings and from his party fund while his wife will provide him with an additional Tk 2 lakh, and the remaining Tk 3 lakh he will get from his son Khandaker Akbar Hossain.

Jalil said he will spend Tk 12.67 lakh of his own money, although his wife is also quite wealthy.

The AL leader disclosed he has Tk 94.32 lakh in cash while Delwar said his cash amounts to Tk 20 lakh.

Jalil's wife earns Tk 18.14 lakh annually while Delwar's wife has no earnings at all, reveals the affidavits of the two senior leaders of the country's two major political parties.

Although Delwar's wife owns properties worth Tk 53.55 lakh, the amount seems a paltry compared to Mrs Jalil's properties worth Tk 4 crore.

In his wealth statement, Delwar identified himself as a lawyer and a politician by profession, while Jalil called himself a businessman and a farmer.

Jalil said he earns Tk 1 lakh from his 5.48 acres of land inherited from his father.

ances if the alliance is voted to power.

She said farmers will not have to look for fertilisers rather the grand alliance government would deliver fertilisers to their doorsteps. She pledged to construct health clinics for every 6,000-7,000 people.

Hasina reiterated that she will ensure employment of at least one member of every family and interest-free loans for unemployed youths.

At a huge gathering that looked like a human sea at Circuit Ground in Mymensingh, Hasina pledged to establish a fully-fledged grand university in Mymensingh town, making Mymensingh Stadium into an international stadium, and solve problems like the poor navigability of the Brahmaputra.

## Dipjol

**FROM PAGE 16**  
4) arrested him on December 10 from a house in Adabar in the city.

He has been convicted and sentenced to 45 years' imprisonment in four other cases, two filed under Arms Act and one each filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Board of Revenue.

The complainant told the court that Dipjol had returned the money he had misappropriated earlier and that was why the complaint was being withdrawn.

In the case filed with Mirpur Police Station on February 7, 2007, it was alleged that Dipjol received Tk 1 crore from the complainant sometime between April 4 of 2006 and February 7 of 2007. The complainant alleged that Dipjol gave him plots for shops at Godartek in Mirpur in the city though he did not have ownership of the plots.

Later the Water Development Board demolished these shops and evicted the complainant from the plots, causing him huge loss.

After Abu Bakar filed the case against Dipjol, the investigation officer of the case pressed charges against him on June 19, 2007.

## Ershad

**FROM PAGE 1**  
He said if his party goes to power, the army would be presented with the state's highest award for what they did to 'save the nation from grave crises'.

The former military strongman observed, "Those sharing my political beliefs are my brothers and those involved with the other political parties are my friends."

"Let us be cautious so our differences of opinion in politics do not lead to conflicts. Let us unite in efforts to ensure security and peace for all."

Ershad, also former president, added that if voted to power, JP will propose banning hartals and violence in the name of agitation.

The laws that go against the spirit of Quran and Sunnah will be amended and Kamwi madrasas will be recognised, he said.

The JP boss also pledged freedom of religion for all.

He said his party will prioritise population control, food security, agriculture, industry and modernisation of the armed forces, police and Bangladesh Rifles.

## Sirajganj-2

**FROM PAGE 16**  
who is also the forest and environment affairs secretary of Central Women Awami League.

She alleged that the youths also hurled bricks at the microbus damaging window-panes of the car.

"I also heard two gunshots at the spot and took immediate cover under a seat while microbus driver sped away from there. I stopped the car near Mercantile Bank on Green Road where we took shelter," said the AL leader.

On information, police rescued Henry, her husband Shamim Talukder Labu and others from inside the bank. She also registered a general diary (GD) with Dhanmondi police station.

No one was injured in the attack, police said.

Party insiders said followers of Henry requested former home minister Mohammad Nasim to introduce her as a candidate of grand alliance during a reception ceremony of Nasim in Sirajganj town on Friday.

As Nasim did not comply, AL activists ransacked district AL office and damaged Nasim's portrait, sources said.

## AL asks

**FROM PAGE 1**  
said yesterday that the government has already taken the highest possible measures to ensure Hasina's safety.

"Inshallah there will be no attack," he told reporters at his ministry office.

CNN-IBN, an India-based English news channel, reported Saturday that, "Indian intelligence agencies have warned Bangladesh that a six-member suicide squad of the banned Harkat-ul-Jehad-al-Islami (Huji) has been trained to assassinate Hasina."

Imam, a former cabinet secretary, said AL has already informed the chief adviser, the home adviser and the home secretary and asked them to beef up security for Hasina as well as party presidium member Matia Chowdhury who has also received threats from the banned Islamist militant outfit Jama'at ul Mujahideen Bangladesh.

Asked whether Hasina would shorten or change her election campaign in wake of the threat, Imam ruled out such a possibility saying that the threat could be a tactic by opponents to damage her campaign.

## ADP revision

**FROM PAGE 16**  
process. The implementing agency for land acquisition demanded Tk 700 crore.

Sources said the project is scheduled to end by the year 2010.

Normally, ADP is revised at the end of a fiscal year but this time it is being done in the middle of the fiscal year through the NEC meeting considering the significance of the project.

The main aim of the project is to ease traffic jam, facilitate drainage of water and increase the beauty of the area. Under the project a lake around 5.2km long would be made.

The project will link Panthapath and Pragati Sarani.

## SC rejects EC bid

**FROM PAGE 16**  
The EC also decided to ask the law ministry to delete Representation of the People Order (RPO) from the schedule of Mobile Court Ordinance 2007, said a source.

The law ministry on November 16 included the RPO there to empower the executive magistrates to hold trial for electoral offences.

Legal experts said the inclusion has become unlawful following the SC observations. In Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), only judicial magistrates are authorised to try electoral offences that are grave in nature and punishable by both imprisonment and fine.

An individual can be sentenced to up to seven years in jail and fine for electoral offences on the polling day, according to the RPO.

But executive magistrates, who are employed to maintain law and order, do not have the authority to award imprisonment. As per the Mobile Court Ordinance 2007, they can only slap fine.

The RPO says magistrates are to be assigned on the election day to hold summary trial for electoral offences under sections 73, 78, 79, 80, 81 (1) and 82.

The offences include interfering or attempting to interfere when a voter casts his vote, defacing or destroying a ballot paper, creating obstacles to polling or counting of votes, resorting to violence, and intimidating voters or those connected with election activities or duties.

## Act against terror

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Mukherjee has faulted Pakistan for allegedly failing to act against terrorist groups operating in its territory against India.

Mukherjee accused Pakistan of making contradictory statements on Maulana Masood Azhar, chief of the banned militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad.

"(That) Masood Azhar was under house arrest was the observation of the Pakistan Defence minister. But after that contradictory statements are emanating from the country. Sometimes it is said he is not seen. Sometimes it is said that he is not available in Pakistan."

"We cannot chase terrorists in other states. We are requesting that you to fulfil your commitments. We want your words to be followed by action. We are asking for nothing more, nothing less," said Mukherjee.

On Saturday, Mukherjee doubted whether Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari was in control of his country. "The pretence of democracy is not equivalent to democratisation. We do not believe that it is for us to advocate how other

countries should be governed but we most certainly like to know whom we should deal with vis-à-vis another government. In other words who runs the show?" said Mukherjee.

Earlier on Friday, Mukherjee said in Gangtok that India was keeping all options open to defend itself. "Terrorism remains a scourge for our region. If a country cannot keep the assurances that it has given, then it obliges us to consider the entire range of options that exist to protect our interests and people from this menace," he said.

Pakistan, under intense international pressure, has moved against the militant group Lashkar-e-Toiba, which allegedly trained the 10 terrorists who attacked Mumbai, and its front Jamaat-ud-Dawa. The Pakistan government says 53 people are in custody, including Lashkar's leader, Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, and two men accused by India of being key plotters of the Mumbai carnage.

India alleges the crackdown is cosmetic and the two groups can easily operate by changing their names and addresses.

## Trouble for AL allies

**FROM PAGE 1**  
parliament while Ershad alone won 5 seats of Rangpur district from jail. But in the 1996 election the party started to lose seats.

In 1996, JP won 32 seats in the parliament including 21 of the 22 seats of greater Rangpur area comprising Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Kurigram and Gaibandha districts, and 13 of the 14 seats it won in 2001 election were of the area.

In 2001, AL and four-party alliance each won in 4 constituencies there, while in 1996 none of them could win a single seat of the area.

This year, four-party alliance leaders are hoping to win more seats of the area as Ershad's popularity is fading there, and since in a few constituencies conflicts are flaring up between AL and JP nominees despite being partners in the grand electoral alliance.

Jamaat-e-Islami, a key component of the four-party alliance, also has strong organisational base and support in a few of the constituencies in Nilphamari and Gaibandha. It even won a Nilphamari seat in 1996, and won in one constituency in each of the two districts in 2001.

Rahim Uddin Boroshia, president of Rangpur district unit BNP, told The Daily Star last night that four-party alliance hopes to win in 10 constituencies of the area including 2 seats of Rangpur district.

This year JP leaders Joydul Abedin Sarker, Anwarul Islam, and Mohammad Ali Sarker are contesting in the poll as independent candidates in Lalmonirhat-1, Rangpur-1 and Rangpur-2 respectively, while three of their party colleagues are their rivals as grand alliance nominees.

Anisul Islam Mahmud, acting chairman of JP, told The Daily Star last night that JP leaders will win the upcoming poll as grand alliance nominees in the area because Ershad is still loved there.

He said the intra-alliance conflict that is plaguing a few constituencies of the area will be resolved soon making way for the alliance's victory there.

But some other JP leaders fear that frequent changes in party nominees in the area's constituencies over the years had a negative impact on the voters.

In 1996, JP nominee Ahsan Ahmed won in Nilphamari-2, but in 2001 Ershad's new nominee Joydul Abedin failed to win the seat. This year, grand alliance nominated AL leader Asaduzzaman Nur in that constituency.

In Rangpur-1, Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantu and Moshirur Rahman Jhantu won the elections with JP tickets in 1996 and 2001 respectively, but this year Ershad nominated Mokbul Hossain Shariar there.

At least in 11 constituencies of the greater Rangpur area this year the JP chairman nominated people who had not contested in the last election, giving rise to resentments and fissures among the party's rank and file.

The constituencies are Nilphamari-1, 3 and 4,

## Criminals shoot

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Police Station said the incident took place in an open space in Chowdhury Kunja area around 8:30pm.

Talking to The Daily Star in his DMCH bed, Sayeed said, "Unknown assailants sprayed indiscriminate bullets when I was having tea with my friend Hasan and a few others."

"Getting hit in the chest, I fell to the ground...I cannot remember much else," Sayeed said.

Rangpur-1, 2, 3 and 5, Kurigram-2 and 3, and Gaibandha-1 and 4.

Meanwhile, contestants from JP are also facing challenges in the area from contestants of their alliance partner AL, although AL officially conceded the constituencies to JP.

Col (ret'd) Maruf Saqlain of AL and Shaikat Chowdhury of JP both are contesting in Nilphamari-4, Tipu Munshi of AL and Karim Uddin Boroshia of JP are facing each other in Rangpur-4, Ashiqur Rahman of AL and Fakhar-uz-Zaman of JP both are vying for the same seat of Rangpur-5, Zakir Hossain of AL and Golam Habib Dula of JP are fighting for the same seat in Kurigram-4, Monwar Hossain Chowdhury of AL and Ali Mahub Talukder of JP are fighting each other in Gaibandha-4, while Fazle Rabbi of AL and Roushan Ershad of JP are rendered rivals in Gaibandha-5 despite being partners in the grand alliance.

Contestants from JP will surely face problems in the area if the AL nominees do not withdraw their candidacies, said JP insiders.

Moreover, AL leaders Sheikh Hasina, Asaduzzaman Nur, Motahar Hossain, and Mahub Ara Gini are also contesting as grand alliance nominees in Rangpur-6, Nilphamari-2, Lalmonirhat-1, and Gaibandha-2 respectively.

JP leaders said they are trying to convince the AL leadership to persuade their other party members into withdrawing candidacies in the greater Rangpur area. Ershad himself talked to AL leaders about the problem.

## BTCL staff

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Of the cases, seven were filed against 14 employees for embezzling Tk 32,55,30,200 by using fake bills and vouchers in the name of repair and maintenance costs of vehicles over seven fiscal years from 2000-2001.

Four other cases were filed against nine BTCL staff for misappropriating Tk 8,07,83,975 in the name of conveyance bills between the fiscals 2004-2005 and 2007-2008.

According to the cases, Tk 2.10 crore, Tk 2.46 crore, Tk 2.26 crore and Tk 1.25 crore were embezzled in four fiscal years between 2004-2005 and 2007-2008 in the name of conveyance bills through mutual collaboration of eight staff.

Seven cases were filed for misappropriation of Tk 5.84 crore, Tk 4.57 crore, Tk 3.78 crore, Tk 4.05 crore, Tk 5.00 crore, Tk 4.84 crore and Tk 4.17 crore in the seven fiscal years from 2000-2001 to 2006-2007 respectively.

The 14 BTCL employees are divisional engineers Raichur-Rahman, Mostafa Hanif Chowdhury, Abdul Ghani, Nani Gopal Ghosh, Fakhrul Haider Chowdhury, and AKM Zafar Sadek and deputy divisional commissioners Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah, Mohammad Abul Kashem, Mohammad Sayedul Huq, Shahjahan Miah, Fahmed Huq-1, Fazlul Huq-2, Ahmed Ali and Mohammad Faruq.

They were also accused of misappropriating Tk 25.73 lakh as they drew this amount of money in advance in the fiscal 2000-2001 in the name of repairs and maintenance of vehicles.

The nine BTCL staff are accountants Aiyub Reza Hossain, Abdul Latif, Amir Hossain, Mujibur Rahman, Habiburrahman Bahar Chowdhury, Fazlur Rahman, and ASM Sirajul Islam, cashier Mohammad Badiul Alam and Rabul Islam.

The cases were filed under sections 420, 409, 109 of the penal code and section 5 (2) of the Corruption Prevention Act, 1947.

## Slum dwellers