

## Stashed kickbacks

**FROM PAGE 1**  
his wife Tasmin Hossain.  
A source, however, told The Daily Star last night, "All the names mentioned in the newspaper reports are not on the list. The list includes only one or two."

The foreign delegation will stay in Bangladesh till Tuesday seeking mutual assistance in recovering about \$200 million or more.

The delegation met the ACC yesterday, regarding which ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal said, "The discussion was focused on various issues involving inter-country mutual assistance in recovering laundered money including evidence sharing."

In reply to a question regarding whether the foreign team sought any specific help in the investigation of Koko in connection with the money laundering, he said, "The matter figured prominently in the discussion," adding that both foreign governments and also the Bangladesh government have many evidence regarding Koko's involvement.

About the disclosure by the ACC about Koko siphoning off Tk 11 crore to a Singapore bank account, Hanif said, "The matter is under investigation, so details of it can't be discussed," but added, "There is no possibility of the amount of money coming down, rather it might go up."

The visiting foreign delegation is comprised of US Justice Department Deputy Chief Linda M. Samuel, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Agent Deborah Heprevotte,

and UK Institute of Management Consultant Ferdous Ahmed, who discussed the matter with the commission in an hour-long meeting in its headquarters in the capital since 9:30 in the morning.

Hanif Iqbal also said the ACC looks into issues of mutual legal assistance with instructions from the Attorney General's (AG) Office as the office is the central authority for dealing with Mutual Legal Assistance Request (MLAR).

When asked about the list of 12 accomplices published in the media he said, "The ACC is responsible to assist the central authority, it does not accept any such list directly from anybody."

Bangladesh has agreements with the US and UK according to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), under which the laundered money will be recovered from foreign banks.

Anisul Huq said the foreign delegation will recover the money and then hand it over to the Bangladesh government according to the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

He said if the accused are proven guilty they might be imprisoned for a maximum of seven years and fined.

The total processes of the recovery will be supervised by the UN, he added.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Shafige Ahmed yesterday told AFP that the US will help Bangladesh recover 200 million dollars of laundered foreign kickbacks to a group that includes a son of a former prime minister.

## BNP triumphs

**FROM PAGE 1**  
came from Shompara Bazar, Yasin Hajir Bazar, Noakhola and some other areas. No details were available immediately.

Earlier, voting ended peacefully at 4:00pm yesterday with remarkable turnout and significant presence of women voters. Balloting in the constituency, only among the 300, was postponed due to the sudden death of a candidate on December 4 ahead of the ninth parliamentary elections.

Voting continued yesterday at a few centres after the deadline and completed after all voters present inside the compounds cast their votes. In most of the 105 centres long queues were formed in front of the booths before beginning of voting.

Abdul Hoque had earlier identified 67 centres as "vulnerable" and deployed additional security forces there to avert any untoward incidents.

Eleven candidates remained in the race after withdrawal of nomination papers. But two of them nominated by alliance partners of AL—Mabbubur Rahman of Jatiya Party and Harun-Ur-Rashid of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal—extended their support to AL candidate HM Ibrahim on January 7.

Though Khokon was officially the four-party candidate, no activities by the key alliance component Jamaat-e-Islami were seen in favour of him.

Khokon and Ibrahim continued filing complaints all day that their supporters were being intimidated or barred from coming to polling booths by their rivals but the election officials brushed aside the allegations.

In his reaction after the voting ended, Ibrahim looked unhappy and told The Daily Star the balloting was "not completely fair". "Gooners of BNP occupied different polling centres in Deuti and Sonapur unions. I have filed complaints with the returning officer," he said.

No incidents of violence were reported but supporters of AL and BNP chased each other at Singbahura Girls' Academy and Sonpara polling centres leaving one injured. The wounded AL supporter, Khorshed Mollah,

### Parties unite

**FROM PAGE 16**  
secretary Mizanur Rahman, newly elected BNP MP from Khulna-2 Nazrul Islam Manju, district general secretary of BNP advocate Shafige Alam Moni, BNP leader and ex-acting mayor Moniruzzaman Moni, city Ameer of Jamaat Mian Golan Parwar and its city unit secretary Maulana Abul Kalam Azad were present in the meeting.

The political leaders also decided to jointly rush in and instantly bring the situation under control if further post-poll violence occurs anywhere in the district.

When contacted, all the leaders from three political parties admitted that they have already directed their leaders and workers in the district to refrain from violence and exercise maximum restraint and tolerance even in the face of any sort of provocation.

We are determined to stop post-poll violence at any cost to ensure peace and security of the people, said the KCC mayor and the BNP lawmaker.

was sent to Dhaka for treatment.

Huge presence of women draped with back veils was seen at almost all the polling centres along with many marked with vermilion. The number of women voters is about 1.36 lakh, which outnumbers around 1.11 lakh male voters. Besides, a large number of male voters were elsewhere on professional ground.

Physically disabled Rashid Mollah said he cast his vote comparatively earlier as the officials spared him from standing in the queue.

"The voting environment was very peaceful. I wish all the elections were held in such a free and happy manner," he commented.

At Nawabganj Primary School centre, balloting was slower in the morning that sparked resentment among voters. The polling officers attributed women's inexperience in voting for the delay.

The Election Commission had postponed the constituency's vote following the death of Ganatantri Party president and AL-led alliance candidate Nurul Islam in a mysterious fire.

A huge number of police, Bangladesh Rifles and Rapid Action Battalion personnel were deployed across the constituency in addition to strike and mobile forces from early morning until ballot counting was completed.

A ban was imposed on movement of taxicabs, autorickshaws, microbuses, jeeps, pickup vans, cars, buses and trucks from midnight January 10 to midnight January 12.

Unaware of such a ban, a number of passengers got stranded at many places in two upazilas.

### UZ candidates

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Ros to circulate the candidates' particulars through handbills or leaflets to be distributed among voters, particularly at village markets and people's gatherings.

The ROs have also been asked to supply these information to the media and NGOs interested in circulating these.

The EC has already directed two monitoring officers, who were trained for such job for the recent parliamentary election, to assist the ROs.

The Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Election Rules 2008 made it mandatory for candidates to provide these information through affidavit so that voters can take appropriate decision.

**PRESIDENT PRAISES**  
President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday praised the EC for holding a free, fair and credible parliamentary election.

The president expressed his appreciation when Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda along with two election commissioners met him at the Bangabhaban.

The CEC and election commissioners Mohammad Sohul Hossain and Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakawat Hossain apprised the president of various aspects of the December 29 polls.

They also expressed gratitude to the president for his all out help in holding the polls properly.

### Diesel, kerosene

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reducing the prices of petrol and octane which are as high as Tk 77 and Tk 80 a litre.

The Berc chairman met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday morning. Following their discussion, the energy ministry sent its proposal to the commission for approval.

The government had increased fuel oil prices significantly last year as oil price crossed the 100-dollar mark, which kept soaring to 147 dollars a barrel in July. From then on, especially after the Olympics ended in China in August, oil prices have been experiencing a steady drop. Yesterday the oil dropped to 39 dollars a barrel.

While high oil prices had severely affected the health of BPC that had been counting several thousand crores of taka in loss every year for the last several years, it has been reaping a windfall of profits over the last few months.

BPC has been selling its existing stock of imported oil that it procured in late November of last year for \$ 55 a barrel crude and \$ 70 a barrel refined, making Tk 6 per litre profit from diesel and kerosene, and Tk 30 from octane and petrol. It is estimated that BPC recently has been making a daily profit of Tk 4.47 crore.

BPC has 2,30,000 tonnes of diesel, 30,000 tonnes of kerosene, 9,500 tonnes of octane, and 9,600 tonnes of petrol in stock, while future imports are likely to be even cheaper.

High price of fuel plays a major role in the spiralling of prices of essentials, as diesel is widely used in irrigation and transport of goods.

Meanwhile, the government reduced fares of diesel-run, inter-district and long-route buses and minibuses by Tk 0.02 alongside yesterday, UNB reports.

An official announcement said the re-fixed fare of diesel-driven buses is Tk 0.94 per kilometer for each passenger while minibuses Tk 0.97.

Besides, the fare of diesel-run buses ferried through Mawa-Paturia route is fixed at Tk 0.97 per kilometer while minibuses Tk 1.00.

"The new rates of fare will take immediate effect," a government handout said.

A meeting was held between Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain and bus owners' leaders at the ministry yesterday on fixing of the new fares.

Even though the bus owners have assured the minister that they would execute the re-fixed rates, the fact remains that they did not lower the fares when the caretaker government reduced the rates on October 26 last year.

The defiance of the government decision on fare cuts had frequently led to brawls between passengers and bus conductors on various routes.

### Graft charges

**FROM PAGE 16**  
minister barrister Aminul Haque and former BNP lawmaker Mohammad Giasuddin. Chairman of One Bank Ltd Sayeed Hossain Chowdhury will also be relieved of the charge of laundering over Tk 12.16 crore through mutual collaboration.

Twenty chairmen of different union parishads and municipalities, seven government officials and 14 people from different professions, including business, will also be let off.

Earlier, the ACC had to submit final reports in over 200 other cases for the same reason.

"We have decided to submit final reports in the cases," said ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal during a routine press briefing at ACC headquarters yesterday.

Sources in the ACC said the joint forces initiated most of the investigations but faced difficulties in collecting evidence to prove the charges.

Barrister Aminul was accused of misappropriating Tk 1.30 lakh by selling government trees. The case was filed with Tanore police station in Rajshahi on April 2, 2007.

Mohammad Giasuddin was made accused on charge of violating leasing conditions while allocating 8.27 acres of land of the Roads & Highways department to others. The case was filed with Siddhirganj police station in Narayanganj on April 10, 2007.

Tejgaon police filed the case against Sayeed Hossain Chowdhury on charge of laundering money.

The cases in which the ACC has decided to submit final reports are misappropriation of government materials, including relief and funds, bribery, money laundering, deception, abuse of power, irregularities, amassing wealth illegally and concealing information about wealth from the commission.

## 50pc students

**FROM PAGE 16**  
However, NCTB Chairman Prof M Masir Uddin denies these allegations against the textbook board saying that NCTB officials are not alone responsible for the ongoing crisis.

"It was only after the tender was completed that the printers and publishers informed us about the higher number of books needed this year. But we did not float a tender because of official rules," he said.

Publishing agency owners however point out that that finding out the actual demand of books is not necessarily their job, but the NCTB's.

The students are meanwhile continuing their lessons without any clear idea about the new concept in the absence of new books.

Kamrun Nahar, a senior teacher of Ispahani Girls School and College in the capital said, "We have begun classes on January 5 but most of our students are yet to get the new textbooks. For this reason, our classes are not running at full swing as they should be."

"I am panicking because I cannot follow the new method depending on the class lectures alone," said Sadia Arefin, a student of class eight in Viqarunnisa

### 3 ACC staff

**FROM PAGE 16**  
entry/control operator in Narsingdi, will be demoted.

The commission made the decision after departmental enquiry found the ACC employees' involvement in bribery.

ACC sources said Habibullah blackmailed many people in Narail into giving him bribes abusing his position as ACC employee.

He realised Tk 500 as bribe from a person in Narail before the Bureau of Anti-corruption became defunct.

The matter came to light after the person lodged a complaint with the commission.

In fear of losing job, Habibullah tried to reach an understanding with the person but failed.

ACC in an investigation found Habibullah guilty of realising bribes.

Police caught ACC employee Abdur Rahman red handed while he was taking bribe at a government office in Narsingdi.

### Tk 2.72 lakh

**FROM PAGE 16**  
"I shouted for help and pedestrians there caught one of the thieves after a short chase. But the other thieves made off with the bag containing money and other documents," he said.

Dhanmondi police said that Liton, the suspected thief, admitted his involvement in the stealing incident.

Interrogation was going on and they were trying to nab other thieves, said police.

## Money Laundering

**FROM PAGE 1**  
UNCAC is the first legally recognised international instrument to put anti-corruption measures within a framework of regulatory agreement and laws.

Some 140 countries across the world have so far signed the convention while Bangladesh is the first country in South Asia to ratify it.

The basic purposes of this Convention are to promote and strengthen measures to prevent and combat corruption more efficiently and effectively, promote, facilitate and support international co-operation and technical assistance in the prevention of and fight against corruption including in asset recovery, promote integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs and public property.

Under the Convention, Bangladesh will receive international assistance in investigations of and proceedings in civil and administrative matters relating to corruption. Parties are bound to render specific forms of mutual legal assistance in gathering and transferring evidence for use in court, extradite offenders and also in transfer of sentenced persons.

The Convention declares explicitly asset-recovery as "a fundamental principle of the convention".

This is an important issue for many developing countries where a high level of corruption has plundered national wealth and where resources are badly needed for reconstruction and development works.

This convention incorporates provisions for prevention and detection of transfers of illicitly acquired assets, the recovery of property, and the

Noon School and College.

Most of her classmates also feel the same way about the new system, she added.

"I wanted 5000 copies from the wholesaler but received only 200 copies of the Bangla, English and Mathematics textbooks. They all sold out in four hours," said Mohammad Mahsin, a book retailer in Nilkhet Book market.

He however admitted that he was selling the books at a higher price than the actual government price but blamed it on the wholesalers who were pricing the books high because of the shortage of books in the market.

The NCTB chairman said that they have already begun selling 14 textbooks since January 6 but alleged that a vested group was adding to the crisis by creating obstacles to supplying the books to retailers in time.

NCTB will put 37 textbooks on the market on January 15 and textbooks of 22 less important subjects on January 26, he added.

There are a total of 76 textbooks for classes VI to X in the curriculum under the board.

### Govt to rev up

**FROM PAGE 16**  
The home ministry is planning to arrange training for the police force and increase their facilities to make them competent and efficient, said a home ministry official.

The ministry will take departmental actions against the police officials who neglect their duties and reward those who perform duties sincerely.

It will take stern actions against those involved in corruption or abuse of power, ministry sources said.

The ministry will also investigate the allegations of politicising the police department during the tenure of BNP-Jamaat coalition and take necessary measures to depoliticise it.

Sohel Taj said, "Our main goal is to make law enforcement agencies efficient, well-equipped, responsible and fully professional so that the people can consider them as their friends."

On Sunday, Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad directed the senior police officials to work neutrally and sincerely without fear or favour.

Referring to the formation of a special force, Sohul Taj said the matter is still at the initial stage.

Replying to a query about extra-judicial killings by law enforcement agencies, he said his government would always remain very sincere in checking violation of human rights in the country.

He said their main objective is to improve law and order in the country as it is one of the main factors in establishing rule of law and good governance.

### Attorney general

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Shafique Ahmed at the secretariat in the afternoon and handed over his resignation letter to forward it to President Iajuddin Ahmed.

The outgoing attorney general told newsmen at his office that as per tradition, after political changeover the incumbent attorney general quits his post.

He also said that he was ready to resign from his office at least five days ago but the law minister requested him to remain until a new attorney general is selected.

"I have heard that the government has already selected a new attorney general," he said, adding that the new attorney general may take over within one or two days.

Salah Uddin was made attorney general on July 20 last year, two days after Fida M Kamal stepped down from the post.

Meanwhile, ministry sources said the law minister yesterday signed the papers for the appointment of Mabbubey Alam as new attorney general.

The president may declare his appointment today, according to the sources.

Mabbubey was the additional attorney general from November 15, 1998 to October 4, 2001.

He was enrolled as a senior Supreme Court lawyer in 1998 and was elected member to the Bangladesh Bar Council in 2004.

He was the elected president of the Supreme Court Bar Association in 2005-2006 and served as its general secretary for 1993-1994 term.

### Govt to seek

**FROM PAGE 16**  
the government would try to be included in the Millennium Challenge Account and hoped that it would succeed in doing so.

The ERD secretary told the finance minister that Bangladesh has never failed in paying foreign debts.

Bhuiyan also said the global financial crisis might have a negative impact on the country's economy but they have not received any indication of that from the donors.

He also said the resource gap would be \$90 billion in implementing the PRSP in the next three fiscal years including the current one.

The ERD secretary said in the current fiscal year till December 31 last year, 25 project agreements involving \$1.75 billion have been signed while 36 project agreements involving \$1.2 billion will be signed in the next six months.

### Indian FM

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Pinak said his government's main concern is to ensure security by eradicating terrorism.

"There is no compromise on the issue of terrorism. We'll jointly move against the terrorists in this subcontinent," said the Indian envoy, whose country has fought off some terrorist onslaughts in recent times.

Asked about port transit to India, he said it is not a political issue—India sought the transit to enhance trade between the two countries.

"If Bangladesh gives port transit to India and other countries in this subcontinent, it can earn more revenues," the envoy said.

Talking to reporters at his Secretariat office yesterday, Commerce Minister Col (ret'd) Farooq Khan said Bangladesh will discuss unresolved issues, including imbalanced trade, with Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukharjee expected to be here early next month.

"All unsettled issues will be put on the table for discussion in the greater interest of the country and we hope we'll be able to resolve the issues through discussions," he said.

Asked about the yawning trade gap with New Delhi, the commerce minister said the trade gap is natural since India is a big country. He, however, said the government will focus on reducing the trade gap through discussions.

"We want good relationship between the two countries to ensure economic development," he said.

### Helal appears

**FROM PAGE 16**  
against the petitioners should not be quashed.

Sheikh Helal had earlier filed two separate petitions in this regard.

The same HC bench granted two months' bail to Sheikh Helal's wife Rupa Chowdhury in a corruption case filed by the ACC on charge of abetting her husband to accumulate illegal wealth.

The court also stayed the proceedings of the case and issued a similar rule upon a quashment petition filed by Rupa Chowdhury.

The couple appeared before the court yesterday.

ACC had filed one of the cases against Helal on charge of amassing illegal wealth and the owner of Reza Construction Limited filed the other case on charge of extortion.

Helal was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment in the corruption case and seven years in the extortion case. A special court sentenced his wife to three years' imprisonment in the corruption case.

Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam assisted by Barrister Shamim Haider Patwari appeared for the petitioners.

## Israel takes battle

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Israeli ground forces made their deepest foray yet Sunday into Gaza's most populated area, with tanks rolling into residential neighbourhoods and infantry fighting urban warfare in streets and buildings with Hamas militants who kept up their rocketing of southern Israel.

An Israeli army spokeswoman said residential neighbourhoods in Gaza are riddled with homemade bombs and booby traps, including mannequins placed at apartment entrances to simulate militants and rigged to explode if soldiers approach.

The army "is advancing more into urban areas," said the spokeswoman, Maj. Avital Leibovich. "Since the majority of the Hamas militants are pretty much in hiding in those places, mainly urban places, then we operate in those areas."

Despite the tightening Israeli cordon, however, militants still managed to fire off a rocket Monday morning, which fell near the southern town of Kiryat Gat but caused no casualties, police said.

Thousands of Israeli reservists also joined battle against Hamas, the Islamist movement which has continued to fire missiles into Israel throughout Operation Cast Lead, launched with the avowed intent of ending the rocket attacks.

In Egypt, which has been spearheading Western-backed efforts to end the war that has sparked widespread protests across the world, talks were due to resume between Egyptian officials and Hamas.

But Israel's pointman for Gaza talks, Amos Gilad, delayed a planned visit in what Israeli radio speculated was meant as a pressure tactic on Hamas.

Speaking on a trip to Holon, a suburb of Tel Aviv, Olmert said Israel was achieving its objectives in the conflict.

"We hope that the violence will end swiftly but in order for that to come about, two things must happen: rocket fire must stop and the terror organisations must stop rearming," he said.

"These things are not impossible and we are closer to them today than a few days ago."

"I hope that the efforts of recent days by the Egyptians will allow us to end the war," added Olmert who is to stand down after elections on February 10.

The negotiations in Cairo are cantering on a three-point plan that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak unveiled last week.

The plan calls for an immediate ceasefire to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza, talks on opening Gaza's border crossings and taking steps to prevent arms smuggling, and relaunching Palestinian reconciliation efforts.

On Sunday, Cairo upped the pressure on Israel by summoning its ambassador to demand that the Jewish state comply with last week's UN Security Council resolution and open humanitarian corridors to relieve the besieged territory.

Both Israel and Hamas have waived off the resolution that called for an immediate end to the fighting.

Officials in Cairo said that the talks with Hamas have been positive, saying the Islamists agreed "on the importance of... stopping the shedding of Palestinian blood as soon as possible."

Osama Hamdan, Hamas's representative in Lebanon, told Al-Jazeera television afterwards that "there was some progress on some points" of the Egyptian proposal.

"We reject parts of this proposal... but that does not mean rejection of all the proposal."

Although it has so far ignored the UN ceasefire resolution, Israel is aware it cannot afford to remain diplomatically isolated for long, especially with Barack Obama due to enter the White House next week.

Israeli security officials believe they have struck a tough blow against Hamas, killing hundreds of the Islamic militant group's fighters, including top commanders. The director of the Shin Bet security agency told the Cabinet on Sunday that Hamas leaders in Gaza are ready to surrender.

The army also says Hamas has been avoiding pitched battles against the advancing Israelis, resorting instead to guerrilla tactics as its fighters melt into crowded residential

**Ordinances**

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Of the total, 44 ordinances are regarding fresh laws, 70 amendments to the main laws while six ordinances were promulgated only regarding the Election Commission (EC) to hold free and fair polls.

areas. Israeli officials on Sunday suggested that what is now Israel's deadliest onslaught against Gaza could be approaching an end.

"The decision of the (UN) Security Council doesn't give us much leeway, thus it would seem that we are close to ending the ground operation and ending the operation altogether" said deputy defence Minister Matan Vilnai.

Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayad, whose remit is limited to the West Bank, said the Egyptian initiative offered the best hope of peace, putting pressure on both Israel and Hamas to respond positively.