

Sudan Islamist leader unwilling to stand for president

AFP, Khartoum

Islamist opposition leader Hassan al-Turabi said yesterday that he is unwilling to stand as a presidential candidate against Omar al-Beshir, who is defying an international warrant for his arrest.

Turabi's Popular Congress party called for a government of national unity to prepare the country for elections scheduled for February next year.

People aged '60, 70 or 77 like myself, they have children who can become president. My son is now 40 years, and then you have even grandchildren who can join the parliament. So it is better to leave it for other generations," he told reporters at party headquarters.

"It is better to present new people, a new generation for new times. If you are a very young person you sit back and write books that guide us, that inspire us, or lecture to us... but don't put yourself forward. I don't have that much energy," Turabi said on the sidelines of a news conference.

Sudan's electoral commission announced last week that presidential, parliamentary and regional elections will be held in February 2010 -- the first proper elections in Africa's largest country since 1986.

Turabi is a former mentor of Beshir, having backed him when he toppled a three-year-old democratically elected government in a bloodless coup in June 1989.

Beshir is wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged crimes committed during the six-year conflict in the western Darfur region.

The accusations include murder, extermination, forcible transfer, torture, rape and

two counts of war crimes: attacks against civilians and pillaging.

The Popular Congress party has yet to say if it will contest the elections and if so who its presidential candidate will be.

But on Saturday it released a plan for a "transitional government" to settle "pending crises" and "prepare the country for elections."

The party held out an olive branch to political groups in Darfur by suggesting that a vice-president of Sudan should be appointed from the region.

"He is to be chosen by the consensus of the people of Darfur in the armed resistance and others, or immediately elected if consensus cannot be reached," the party said.

Jubo Dal

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headquarters on April 15.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said no threat or intimidation could prevent them from continuing the movement.

The rally was organised as part of BNP's two-day protest programmes across the country.

The government is trying to force Khaleda Zia to quit politics but it would never succeed in doing so, said Delwar.

He said the Awami League government now wants to divert public attention from its failure to implement the election pledges.

Dr Moyeen Khan alleged that the government has violated human rights through its attempt to evict Khaleda from her residence.

BNP leaders Mirza Abbas, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, lawmaker Zainul Abidin Faroque and Jubo Dal General Secretary Moazzem Hossain Alal, among others, spoke. A procession was also brought out.

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interrogate around 7000 people, he added.

PILKHANA SCHOOL REOPENS

Meanwhile, Birshrestha Noor Mohammad Rifles Public School and College inside the BDR Pilkhana headquarters reopened yesterday after one and a half months following the BDR carnage in February.

Students said attendance was good and all the classes were held on the first day of reopening the institution.

Army buses picked the students from the BDR gates and brought them to the school and college. They were dropped again at the gates after class hour, said a student, adding that those who have private cars were allowed to enter inside the headquarters only with their driver.

There are four schools and colleges inside the headquarters. The authorities have decided to reopen another institution on April 15 but no date has been fixed yet to reopen two other institutions, sources said.

Meanwhile, BDR authorities asked people who booked the Darbar hall inside Pilkhana on different dates till April 30 to take their booking money back as it will not be possible to reopen the Darbar hall before time, says a press release.

CONFESION AND REMAND

Another BDR jawan yesterday confessed to his involvement in the carnage at BDR headquarters while four more were taken on a four-day fresh remand.

Metropolitan Magistrate AKM Emdadul Haque recorded the statement of Havildar Jalaluddin under section 164 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) after the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced him before a Dhaka court.

With the statement of Jalaluddin, a total of 32 BDR jawans have so far made confessional statements.

The same court yesterday placed four BDR jawans on a four-day fresh remand when 14 suspected mutineers were produced before the court after completion of their five days remand. The court ordered to send 10 others to jail.

Those who were placed on fresh remand are sepoy Jasimuddin, Sumon Miah, Rafiqul Islam and Mizanur Rahman.

The court also ordered to send 13 other BDR jawans to jails after the CID, tasked with the investigation of the mutiny case, produced them before it after showing them arrested in the case.

With the 13 BDR jawans, a total of 1,024 BDR personnel have been shown arrested in the case.

20 hurt

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Eight of the injured were treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), seven at Mitford Hospital, one at National Medical College Hospital and the others at other local clinics.

It wasn't clear who attacked first.

Injured Sabuj Mahmud, from Delwar's group, told this correspondent that around 300 activists from Delwar's group had gathered at the cycle stand ground in the ghat at around 3:15pm to march to the reception with banners.

Suddenly around 100 members of Abdul Jalil's group locked into a tussle with them.

Mohammad Fayeze from Jalil's group however said that Delwar's group attacked their procession so that they (Jalil's group) are unable to attend the reception.

Sadarghat sources said an issue arose between Jalil and Delwar's groups over handling of labourers at the ghat on March 9. Since then they have locked in quarrels several times.

Ghat sources also said both parties have been trying to establish control over the footpaths, cycle stands and other trades in the adjacent area for the last couple of months.

Kotwali and Sutrapur Police Stations sources said no case had been filed in this regard.

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University, laid stress on enforcement of Fire Prevention and Dousing Act, 2003 and removal of confusions among the existing laws and rules on fire safety.

Government bodies like Rajdhanii Unnayan Kartipakha, Fire Service and Civil Defence and Department of Environment must assert their authorities in this regard, he said.

Chief Architect of the Department of Architecture ASM Ismail stressed the need for making a fire safety plan for every building and creating mass awareness toward the fire safety measures to protect the building from fire.

Major Sheikh Md Shah Jalal, director (operations) of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said an inbuilt fire fighting system must remain in a functional state.

Aunupam Mazumdar, managing director of Perfect Engineering, Kolkata, Dr M Anwar Hossain, vice-chancellor of Ahsanullah Science and Technology University and IEB president Dr SM Nazrul Islam, among others, spoke at the discussion.

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communication technology Dr Yafez Osman, UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam and National University Vice-Chancellor Prof Kazi Shahidullah also spoke.

Earlier, a colourful procession was brought out on the occasion.

Experts on fire

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advisers and state ministers also spoke on the occasion.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said the government would very soon appoint an investigation agency and prosecutors and form a tribunal for holding the trial of war criminals of 1971.

He said trial of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's assassination case is at the final stage and it will be completed very soon.

The government has already appointed two judges to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court to hear the appeal of this case, he said, adding that he didn't understand why some judges had felt embarrassed during the hearing of the Bangabandhu murder case.

The government passed a law on the separation of the judiciary from the executive and another law on the human rights commission is likely to be passed in the next session of the parliament, Shafique said.

Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque said about 6,000 posts of doctors and 4,000 posts of nurses are lying vacant in the country.

"But my ministry cannot fill up the posts since the officials concerned stand in the way of my initiatives under the excuse of various rules and regulations," he added.

This government is facing serious mismanagements in the health sector created in the last seven years. The government needs some times to re-visit, he said.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said the government, with the help of people, is hell-bent on establishing the spirit of the liberation war and eliminating the network of conspiracy to build the digital Bangladesh and establish the spirit of the liberation war by 2021 as per its election manifesto.

Peshajibi Samannay Parishad (Professional Bodies' Coordination Council) organised the function to felicitate persons of different professional bodies who are at present serving as ministers, advisers and lawmakers.

Prime Minister's advisors Prof Syed Mudassar Ali and Prof Alauddin Ahmed, state ministers Abdul Mannan Khan, Architect Yafes Osman, lawmaker Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique, Supreme Court Bar Association President AFM Mesbahuddin, economist Abul Barakat and Peshajibi Samannay Parishad member secretary Dr Kamrul Hasan Khan, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Experts on fire

FROM PAGE 16
meeting organised by Sadar Upazila Parishad at its auditorium.

He also said directives regarding the bill will soon reach the MPs, upazila chairmen and vice chairmen to avoid controversy over their respective authority.

The BNP government scrapped the upazila system and Awami League restored it through peaceful and fair elections this year according to its election manifesto, said the minister.

"To make a digital Bangladesh by 2021, the public representatives should work untedly. Good governance is a must for establishing democracy in the interest of the country and its people," added the minister.

The minister also attended a reception meeting organised by local municipality. He also held view exchange meetings at the Zila Parishad auditorium, Gymnasium and Mymensingh Press Club.

Indian Maoists

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card system will soon follow, he said.

The buses will have card reader machines. With simple push of buttons, the machine will charge the cardholder for the trip from the rechargeable prepaid card. Fare will be around Tk 1.2 per kilometre.

At the initial stage, 40 air conditioned (AC) and 60 non-AC buses will operate on the route. The state-run Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) will also take part in the scheme providing 20 buses from its fleet.

The buses will start plying from 6:00am and the trips will end at 12:00 midnight or 1:00am. All the buses will have similar colours and minibuses will be removed from the route.

Association of Bus Company (ABC) will implement the plan for DTCB. A contract will be signed soon, Shahjahan said.

"The new route would be introduced on experimental basis under the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) for Dhaka city. If this pilot project succeeds then all the other 40 routes of the city will be brought under similar franchise system in phases," the DTCB official said.

Earlier, the franchise system was suggested by the

Indian Maoists

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the rebels, who use the forests of Chhattisgarh as their base, say they are fighting for the rights of neglected tribal people and landless farmers.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has described the Maoists as the biggest overall threat to the country's security.

LGRD minister

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DMC opens

FROM PAGE 1
Asad Rajib killed and 20 others injured at Dr Fazle Rabbi Hostel.

Later on the day, the college authorities formed a 3-member probe committee, headed by Prof Mohiuddin of the Haematology department to investigate the incident while BCL central leaders suspended the organisational activities of the college unit.

DMC Principal Kazi Din Mohammad said the probe body continues its investigation into the matter.

Prof Mohammad Ruhul Amin, president of DMC Teachers Association said, most of the students attended their classes and the college got back to its regular activities.

Thai PM forces

FROM PAGE 1
Kevin Rudd was in mid-air when the chaos erupted, forcing him to turn around and head for home after a refuelling stop.

The demonstrators soon dispersed and within hours all the visiting leaders had been evacuated. Abhisit made a surprise return to the summit venue late Saturday to say the state of emergency had been lifted.

"We apologise to the Thai people that this incident happened. Even though the government was not responsible, it is its duty to ensure the meeting runs smoothly," he said after being escorted in by scores of soldiers.

Officials did not say if or when the summit would resume -- it has already been postponed and shifted to new venues several times in an attempt to dodge the protest threat.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon, who had been due to attend the talks Sunday, led expressions of regret.

"I hope for an early restoration of normalcy in Thailand and for the settlement of differences through dialogue and peaceful means," he said.

Political commentator Thitinan Pongsudhirak said the protest movement had seriously undermined Abhisit's troubled administration and showed there was no end in sight to months of political drama.

"Their goal is to make the government unable to function -- I think certainly they have done that today," said the analyst from Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University.

Oxford-educated Abhisit has repeatedly resisted calls to step down despite escalating anti-government protests both in Bangkok and at the summit.

He came to power in a parliamentary vote in December after a court ruling toppled Thaksin's allies from government -- a development that came after anti-Thaksin protesters occupied Bangkok's two airports for more than a week.

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The meeting -- the biggest international gathering since the G20 summit in London earlier this month -- grouped the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) with China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.

Protesters said they had run out of patience with Abhisit's refusal to bow to their demands for his resignation, and that they were angry at the wounding of several supporters in earlier clashes with pro-government rivals.

The Red Shirts' have been asking him to resign for four months and we decided that now was the time to push him," Pichet Sukjindatong, one of the protest leaders, told AFP inside the building.

Hooting horns and triumphantly chanting slogans, anti-government protesters decked out in red pushed past lines of troops who carried shields and batons but offered little resistance.

They toppled metal detectors, smashed reception tables and left behind small pools of blood where some had been injured by gas.

About 100 demonstrators got as far as the driveway of an adjacent building where Asean leaders were holding a lunch meeting to thrash out a new schedule for the talks, after protest blockades had scrapped the morning's itinerary.

Hotel staff quickly cleared the restaurants and hustled the bikini-clad tourists out of the pool as the protesters staged a sit-in rally at the heart of the summit, blocked by security forces with flak jackets and shotguns.

Within minutes of the cancellation, several foreign leaders including Philippine President Gloria Arroyo and Abhisit himself were airlifted to a nearby military airbase where emergency planes were on standby.

Australian Prime Minister

FROM PAGE 1
The authorities concerned, the college was declared closed for indefinite period to avoid further untoward incidents on campus and its adjacent areas.

Police and locals said students from the college started gathering on Jigatola intersection at about 10:30 am.

At about 10:45 am, they put barricade on the road and vandalised at least four shops and damaged six vehicles on the road, sources said.

During the agitation, police barred traffic movement in front of City College at Dhanmondi to save the vehicles and were able to lift the barricade from the road at about 11:45 am after a hot chase.

Principal Dr Karim said some students confined him to his office for over two hours on April 5 demanding reduction of their examination fees to Tk 5,000 from Tk 5,730.

As the college is operated under the Dhaka University (DU), he informed the matter to DU vice-chancellor who verbally assured him of placing the students' demand before the subcommittee.

The principal alleged that 'the unruly students' confined all the teachers, including him, to the office denying the verbal assurance of the vice-chancellor.

The students alleged that they placed their demand before the principal several times for reducing the exam fees, increasing facilities in hostels and transport facilities and relocating the exam centre at the college but the principal did not pay heed to their demand that led to take such agitation.

The college students-- Mehedi, Asad, Nurul Islam, Bacchu and Shafiqul Islam--are among the injured persons.

A huge number of riot police were deployed on the campus.

Khaleeda's house

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Bus tickets

FROM PAGE 16
World Bank financed Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP).

The first digital ticket counter was opened by BRTC in Dhaka city in January this year under a pilot project to study its feasibility.

Khandaker Rafiqul Hossain Kajal, president of ABC, said a few digital counters will be opened on April 14. Hopefully by this June, they will be able to set up all the counters, he said.

"However, installation of the digital card reader inside buses might take a few more months. It will take about Tk 1.2 lakh for each bus to install the card reader. We are searching for sponsors," he said.

N-Wave, a company, will give technical support in this regard, informed the ABC president.

The new franchise system will help hassle-free faster service to the commuters in a disciplined way. The bus operators will also be able to check their loss caused by irregularities, he said.

"Bus companies often face financial loss as manual ticketing involves different types of errors and problems like cash handling, pilferage and other irregularities. A digital system can remove the problems and errors," Kajal said.

Leather

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Govt plans

FROM PAGE 1
The economy, he said. But the problem is that only increasing the ADP size would not work, its implementation is important.

Zaid further said if the ADP cannot be implemented properly, there remains a possibility of wastage of government funds. So, ADP allocation should not cross Tk 25,000 crore. If the ADP size is of Tk 25,000 crore, the government is likely to be able to utilise Tk 22,000 crore to Tk 23,000 crore implementing it.

World Bank (WB) senior economist Zahid Hossain said a hugely expanded ADP size this year would be justified since it is consistent with the country's investment priorities: power generation, rural and urban infrastructure and basic education.

The government needs to provide some fiscal space to face the impact of global financial crisis. But it is too early to make specific financial commitments for particular packages at this stage. "To maintain fiscal flexibility, in my view, the ADP size should not exceed Tk 250-260 billion," he said.

The WB economist said the problems in ADP implementation seen for long are include delay in getting land, taking long time in project preparation and approval, lack of experienced staff, court cases concerning many projects and delay in release of funds.

"I don't think these problems can be resolved in a year. Without addressing these, increasing the ADP size would not produce any positive result," he said.

Suicide bomber

FROM PAGE 16
fighters to turn against the insurgency starting in 2006 has been key to reducing violence in Iraq, but the so-called Awakening Councils are constantly being targeted by militants.

The Iraqi government, however, has been suspicious of the fighters, maintaining that some retain ties to the insurgency.

Salaries for the paramilitaries, which were once paid by the US military, have been delayed by the Iraqi government for two months and there have been concerns among the paramilitaries that the Shia-led authorities could disband them.

The wounded in Saturday's bombing were treated at the hospital in the nearby town of Iskandariyah, said Dr. Nahidh Mohammed al-Maamouri, who also confirmed the casualty toll. The police said the bomber's identity was not immediately known.

There are some 90,000 Awakening fighters and their tensions with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government came to a head last month in central Baghdad when the arrest of one of their leaders triggered a shootout with US-

BSMU

FROM PAGE 16
Police arrested four doctors in this connection.

According to witnesses, five to six men stormed a third-floor room in Block-C and started beating up Nazrul at around 11:30am. They also ransacked the room.

Nazrul, now under treatment at the BSMU intensive care unit (ICU), was general secretary of Mymensingh Medical College Chhatra Sangsad in 2001 and had enmity with the attackers, claimed a DAB member.

BSMMU Vice-chancellor Prof Pran Gopal Dutt visited the injured officer at the ICU in the afternoon.

Immediately after the incident, police picked up four-- Abu Ibrahim Apu, Shahnewaz, Tozaffaz Hossain Sunon and Abdullah Hel Maruf--from Shabbagh area in this connection.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Shabbagh Police Station Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star that the arrestees have admitted beating Nazrul. They said they did it in revenge for an attack on them during the BNP-led four-party alliance rule.

ACC's refusal

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Indian polls

FROM PAGE 1
115 tolas of gold jewellery valued at Rs 16 lakh. He too does not own a car.

Congress candidate from Mumbai North-Central constituency Priya Dutt, daughter of late film actor and Congress leader Sunil Dutt, has declared assets worth Rs 37 crore. This includes agricultural land, commercial and residential buildings, houses and apartments in Mumbai.

Indian Agriculture Minister and Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar's assets are worth Rs 8 crore. His daughter Supriya Sule, who is also in electoral fray this time, is richer than him with declared assets of Rs 53 crore.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Rajasekara Reddy has properties worth Rs 1.35 crore and his son Y S Jagannathan Reddy is richer with assets worth Rs 77 crore.

Veteran film director Prakash Jha, who is contesting the poll as a candidate from Ram Vilas Paswan-led Lok Janshakti Party in Bihar, has assets worth Rs 55 crore.

Indian Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel, a businessman and a party colleague of Sharad Pawar, has assets worth Rs 74 crore.

Other millionaire politicians in the electoral contest are Samajwadi Party's Abu Azmi, from Mumbai North West, and assets worth Rs 124 crore. Film star Chiranjeevi of Andhra Pradesh, who floated a political party last year, owns assets worth Rs 88 crore and former state chief minister and Telugu Desam Party chief N Chandrababu Naidu has properties worth Rs 68 crore.

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The government needs to provide some fiscal space to face the impact of global financial crisis. But it is too early to make specific financial commitments for particular packages at this stage. "To maintain fiscal flexibility, in my view, the ADP size should not exceed Tk 250-260 billion," he said.

The WB economist said the problems in ADP implementation seen for long are include delay in getting land, taking long time in project preparation and approval, lack of experienced staff, court cases concerning many projects and delay in release of funds.

"I don't think these problems can be resolved in a year. Without addressing these, increasing the ADP size would not produce any positive result," he said.

Suicide bomber

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fighters to turn against the insurgency starting in 2006 has been key to reducing violence in Iraq, but the so-called Awakening Councils are constantly being targeted by militants.

The Iraqi government, however, has been suspicious of the fighters, maintaining that some retain ties to the insurgency.

Salaries for the paramilitaries, which were once paid by the US military, have been delayed by the Iraqi government for two months and there have been concerns among the paramilitaries that the Shia-led authorities could disband them.

The wounded in Saturday's bombing were treated at the hospital in the nearby town of Iskandariyah, said Dr. Nahidh Mohammed al-Maamouri, who also confirmed the casualty toll. The police said the bomber's identity was not immediately known.

There are some 90,000 Awakening fighters and their tensions with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government came to a head last month in central Baghdad when the arrest of one of their leaders triggered a shootout with US-

BSMU

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Police arrested four doctors in this connection.

According to witnesses, five to six men stormed a third-floor room in Block-C and started beating up Nazrul at around 11:30am. They also ransacked the room.

Nazrul, now under treatment at the BSMU intensive care unit (ICU), was general secretary of Mymensingh Medical College Chhatra Sangsad in 2001 and had enmity with the attackers, claimed a DAB member.

BSMMU Vice-chancellor Prof Pran Gopal Dutt visited the injured officer at the ICU in the afternoon.

Immediately after the incident, police picked up four-- Abu Ibrahim Apu, Shahnewaz, Tozaffaz Hossain Sunon and Abdullah Hel Maruf--from Shabbagh area in this connection.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Shabbagh Police Station Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star that the arrestees have admitted beating Nazrul. They said they did it in revenge for an attack on them during the BNP-led four-party alliance rule.

ACC's refusal

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The ACC, which has questioned the committee's jurisdiction to examine its activities, did not send any documents sought by the committee till yesterday, said Parliament Secretariat officials working for the committee.

They said parliament has empowered all its committees to summon the witnesses to appear in person, examine their submission on oath and call for documents.

The rules of procedure have elaborated the committee's authority, the officials added.

Parliamentary affairs experts said the committee on public undertakings has the jurisdiction to oversee the ACC's activities. The anti-graft body's failure to attend the committee meeting would be tantamount to contempt of parliament.

On April 7, the committee in a letter asked the ACC to send the commission's latest annual report, latest audit report and documents on its activities and recent problems to it two days before the scheduled meeting with the commission high-ups.

But the next day, the ACC refused to appear before the parliamentary body with documents saying the summons is "beyond jurisdiction of the committee."

In defence, the ACC said the commission is fulfilling its accountability to the president by submitting its yearly report under section 29 of the ACC Act for placing before parliament.

Besides, it continuously submits proposals on prevention of corruption to the president in compliance with its duties as contemplated under section 17 of the act, said the commission.

Indian polls

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115 tolas of gold jewellery valued at Rs 16 lakh. He too does not own a car.

Congress candidate from Mumbai North-Central constituency Priya Dutt, daughter of late film actor and Congress leader Sunil Dutt, has declared assets worth Rs 37 crore. This includes agricultural land, commercial and residential buildings, houses and apartments in Mumbai.

Indian Agriculture Minister and Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar's assets are worth Rs 8 crore. His daughter Supriya Sule, who is also in electoral fray this time, is richer than him with declared assets of Rs 53 crore.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Rajasekara Reddy has properties worth Rs 1.35 crore and his son Y S Jagannathan Reddy