

## JS membership

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Earlier this year, BNP leader Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, who conceded defeat to Jasim in the polls, filed a writ petition challenging his election. The HC declared illegal the EC's decision to allow Jasim to contest the ninth parliamentary election.

As per the Representation of the People Order (RPO), if anybody is sent to compulsory retirement, they cannot contest parliamentary elections within five years since the retirement, Hafizuddin's counsel barrister Rafique-Ul Huq yesterday told reporters. Jasim's counsel advocate Mahmudul Islam told The Daily Star that his client can however contest the Bhola-3 by-election as the stipulated five-year period since Jasim's punitive retirement has expired.

Jasim had submitted his nomination paper on Awami League-led grand alliance ticket for contesting the December 29 parliamentary election from Bhola-3 constituency.

BNP candidate in the constituency Hafizuddin appealed to the EC opposing the candidature of Jasim. He stated in the appeal that Jasim was sent to compulsory retirement on August 31, 2004, and the stipulated five years' time would not be completed on the polling day, December 29, 2008.

However, on December 10, 2008, the EC rejected the appeal and allowed Jasim to contest the election.

Hafiz then filed a writ petition with the HC, challenging the EC decision and prayed for cancellation of Jasim's parliament membership.

On February 26 this year, the HC declared the EC decision and Jasim's parliament membership illegal.

Upon a petition filed by Jasim, the SC then stayed the HC verdict and asked Jasim to file a regular leave-to-appeal petition against the HC verdict.

After hearing arguments from both sides, the SC yesterday dismissed the appeal.

## Afghanistan needs credible leadership

Says US official

AFP, Washington

Afghan leaders have to prove they are a credible partner in ensuring security in their country, a top US official warned yesterday as Washington mulls whether to send more troops to Afghanistan.

White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel, a top advisor to US President Barack Obama, said Afghan President Hamid Karzai must ensure the country's turbulent election process produces a legitimate government.

"The question does not come how many troops you send, but do you have a credible Afghan partner for this process that can provide the security and the type of services that the Afghan people need?" Emanuel told CNN television.

"There are two roads there. One is another runoff election, between the two top candidates. And or a negotiation between those candidates."

"But the end result must be a legitimate and credible government to the Afghan people."

That's what's important. It's the Afghans making a decision about what type of government they're going to have and what road they're going to take to that point," Emanuel added.

The sharp warning came amid increasing international pressure on Karzai to end the dispute over the August 20 elections and accept a run-off against his former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah.

There have been growing concerns of widespread fraud in the elections, with preliminary results giving Karzai around 55 percent of the vote. Abdullah has around 28 percent.

But electoral officials have been auditing suspicious ballots to decide how many votes should be deducted from each candidate. If Karzai falls below 50 percent, as some observers expect, Afghanistan must hold a run-off election.

The dispute is complicating a major US policy review with the top US and Nato commander on the ground, General Stanley McChrystal, having asked Obama for an extra 40,000 troops to fight a bloody Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan.

## China starts resettling 330,000 for water project

AP, Beijing

Authorities have started resettling 330,000 people in central China to make way for a massive project to divert water hundreds of km to the booming cities in its arid north, a report said yesterday.

The estimated \$62 billion water diversion could be nearly three times as expensive as the Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest hydroelectric project.

When completed, the project's three routes will move billions of tons of water from China's central, southern and western regions through pipes and canals to Beijing and other fast-growing northern cities.

The central route, due for completion by 2014, is expected to supply about a quarter of Beijing's water.

But critics have warned the water diversion will cause environmental damage and still not quench the boomtowns' thirst.

People in Hubei and Henan provinces are being relocated from their homes near the Danjiangkou reservoir, where a sluice will be built to divert water from the Yangtze river and its tributaries, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

The resettlement will be completed in 2011, Xinhua said, citing Henan provincial authorities.

## Khaleda

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accordingly collected reports from all districts over phone.

They said the report mainly held the internecine conflicts at all levels responsible for the slow pace of committee formation process.

Meanwhile, party's joint secretaries general have been assigned to resolve the disputes among district level leaders.

Abdullah Al Noman, a joint secretary general of the party, yesterday held a series of meetings with the leaders of Patuakhali, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj and Netrakona to resolve the conflicts.

## Textbook board

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printing 19 crore copies of textbooks for different classes."

"We will form an inquiry committee today to investigate the cause of the fire and to ascertain the extent of the damage," the minister added.

The fire broke out in the warehouse no 3 on the ground floor and spread to the first floor which was heavily stuffed with stacks of textbooks, printing papers, and reams of hard papers for book covers.

The army engineering corps and navy divers were called in to join the firefighters of Fire Service and Civil Defence around 11:30am as the firefighters had not been able to make any headway into the warehouse alone, said the minister.

Meanwhile, a fire service diver Abul Khair, who got into the warehouse defying the raging fire but could not go in too far, said he noticed fire in the northwest part of the warehouse.

"Extreme heat, smoke, and humidity made it difficult to go inside," said Khair.

An NCTB staff on condition of anonymity said at least 60,000 reams of Karnaphuli paper were supposedly stocked in that part. Books were stored on the first floor.

Mohammad Fazul Haque, who is in charge of the warehouse, said early in the morning he heard people shouting "fire, fire," so he came out of his room and saw smoke gushing out of the warehouse.

Haque, who lives in the quarters for NCTB staff, adjacent to the warehouse, said he rang the chairman of the textbook board and the fire brigade immediately informing them about the incident.

Selim, an employee of an elastic factory close by, said they smelt burning papers and saw smoke coming out of the exhaust hole on the back wall of the warehouse around 1:00am, while they were working a night shift.

Director General (DG) of Fire Service and Civil Defence Brig Gen Abu Nayeem, Md Shahidullah said all agencies at the scene were fighting the fire in a coordinated manner under his command.

But an assistant director of Rapid Action Battalion-2 on the scene said, "Personnel of different agencies are working in their own way."

The firefighters, army engineers, and navy divers at one stage agreed that they would make an opening in the back wall and gradually clear off the stacks of paper in an effort to make headway into the warehouse, said Maj Shahjalal, director operations of the fire department.

Bundles of burnt papers with Karnaphuli Paper Mills Limited stamped on them were pulled out from the burning stacks.

High officials of the fire

department, army engineering corps, and the navy said the job of the firefighters were made tough by inappropriate stocking of books and papers in the warehouse.

"Even the basic principles of stocking were not followed," said Shahjalal adding, "Stocking of papers without keeping any gap between the stacks posed serious obstruction to firefighters' access."

"We haven't been able to detect the source of the fire yet," he added.

"Even the ventilation passage of the warehouse was blocked by stacks of papers," said the fire department DG.

The building built during the Pakistan period is very old and the firefighters could not knock down the walls fearing that might cause the entire structure to collapse.

The firefighters had to toil for six hours just to make way for an excavator, so it could start removing the burnt debris.

Brig Gen Nayeem said in the afternoon that it would take till this morning to fully douse the fire.

The education minister, fire service DG, and other high officials stayed at the scene till evening.

An army helicopter was seen hovering over the three-story NCTB building all through the day till around 5:30pm. The fire fighting officials said the chopper was there to monitor the events on the ground.

Fourteen units of the fire brigade took part in the operation.

## Tarique

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Upon a petition filed by Tarique, now in London, an HC bench comprised of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Rais Uddin issued the rule.

Earlier on Thursday, the same bench issued a similar rule upon the government and ACC to explain why the proceedings against former prime minister Khaleda Zia in the case should not be quashed.

Khaleda and Tarique filed the petitions with the HC on September 15 for quashing the proceedings against them in the case.

The ACC filed the case against Khaleda, Tarique and five others on July 3 with Ramna Police Station in connection with embezzlement of Tk 2.10 crore by forming a "fake" organisation -- Zia Orphanage Trust.

On September 7, the trial court took into cognisance the charges against Khaleda, Tarique and four others, and fixed October 25 for next hearing.

Both Khaleda and Tarique had earlier got bail in the case from the HC.

Barrister Rafique-Ul Huq appeared for the petitioner.

## Misuse of rules

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amend laws, rules and regulations, if necessary, for the implementation of the projects.

The rules and laws should not be barriers to implementation of development projects under any circumstances, she said.

The government is aware of the benefits and limitations of government officials and employees and the new pay scale will be made effective from July 1 this year, Hasina said.

She said her government is also considering introduction of rationing system to supply necessary food items at low prices for government employees.

## Jalil

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in connection with dodging income tax to the tune of Tk 4 lakh.

In the case statement, the NBR mentioned that Jalil, chairman of Mercantile Bank Limited, had evaded income tax worth Tk 4,07,485 on his income amounting to Tk 54,60,234 from the bank for the fiscal years 2003-2008.

He concealed his income of Tk 54 lakh in his tax returns submitted to the NBR.

Jalil repeatedly provided false information about his real income and expenditure to Income Tax Department, alleged the NBR.

## 6 doctors

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Hussain, Fathima and Maimul Islam Majumder.

They pleaded not guilty and demanded justice before the court.

Manna's brother-in-law Reza Kader filed the case with Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court of Dhaka against the doctors and members of the board of directors of the hospital on September 17 last year.

In the case statement, the plaintiff said Manna was admitted to the hospital with chest pain around 4:15am and died at 2:00pm. He alleged Manna was in the hospital without treatment for over five hours.

Following the case, CMM Mohammad Enamul Haque assigned Metropolitan Magistrate Saifur Rahman Siddiqui to conduct a judicial inquiry into the matter.

After recording statements of three witnesses, the magistrate found that the case should be on trial and referred the case to CMM for further steps.

The CMM then took the charges into cognisance and issued arrest warrants against the accused on January 18.

## 4 die

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were brought to Bogra Nursing Home and other local clinics where the attending doctors declared the four dead early in the morning, the OC said.

Body of Azizar Rahman was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

## Shykh Seraj

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world food problems, especially agriculture and rural development, added Spijkers.

The award is named after former FAO chief Addeke Hendrik Boerma, the Dutch national who headed the organisation for two consecutive terms from 1968 to 1975 and was also the first executive director of World Food Programme (WFP).

During the 30-year history of the AH Boerma Award Mr Shykh Seraj is only the 5th winner in Asia. The other winners were two from India, one from Thailand and one from Japan.

"This award is another milestone for Bangladesh after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was awarded the Ceres Medal, the highest recognition by FAO to a statesperson, exactly ten years ago in 1999 for her outstanding leadership in agricultural development," Spijkers said.

"You have been selected for this award in recognition of your pioneering contribution towards increasing public awareness of all aspects of agriculture and development in both the print and more lately the broadcast media in Bangladesh," wrote FAO director general Dr Jacques Diouf to Shykh Seraj on his winning the award, according to a statement by the FAO.

Shykh Seraj has relentlessly been working for the last three decades for the promotion of agriculture through all forms of the media.

## 14 Taliban, 1 US soldier killed in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul

A roadside bomb attack claimed the life of one US soldier in Afghanistan, while 14 armed Taliban were killed in two separate incidents, Nato and the Afghan security forces said yesterday.

"One US service member was killed in an improvised explosive device (IED) attack in southern Afghanistan October 18," an Isaf statement said, without giving further details.

IEDs have become the main Taliban weapon in an intensifying insurgency against more than 100,000 foreign troops under US and Nato command in Afghanistan.

The independent casualties.org website, which keeps a tally, says 418 foreign troops have died in Afghanistan this year, compared with 294 in 2008.

Meanwhile, Taliban fighters attacked a Nato convoy in western Badghis province, the Afghan military said.

"Six armed Taliban were killed including a local commander in Bala Murghab district," Khair Mohammad Khawri, a senior Afghan military official, told AFP.

Four Taliban were seriously injured, he added.

A separate incident in south-

## SC upholds

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December 9, 2007 with Tejgaon Police Station accusing Hasina and six others. The charges were corruption and abuse of power in awarding three "abandoned" gas fields in Chhatak, Kamta and Feni to Canadian energy company Niko Resources Ltd during the tenure of previous Awami League government.

The case statement claimed the Niko deal caused a loss of Tk 13.6 crore to the state.

Following a petition filed by Hasina, the HC on July 7 last year stayed the proceedings and issued a rule upon the government and ACC to explain why the proceedings against the petitioner should not be quashed.

The ACC on October 15 last year filed a leave-to-appeal petition with the SC against the HC stay order.

After hearing arguments from the lawyer for Hasina, the apex court dismissed the ACC petition.

Barrister Rafique-Ul Huq appeared for Hasina while advocate Khurshid Alam Khan for ACC.

## Suicide attack

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prosecutor in the Sistan-Baluchestan provincial capital Zahedan, was quoted as saying by ISNA news agency.

Marziah said Abdolmalek Rigi, leader of the shadowy Jundallah (Soldiers of God) Sunni group, had claimed responsibility for the attack.

"So far no one has been arrested, but terrorist Malek Rigi has accepted the responsibility for this terrorist attack," Marziah said.

The interior ministry earlier said at least 29 people were killed and 28 wounded in the blast.

Iran's state broadcaster said the attack occurred at around 8:00 am (0430 GMT) in front of a local gymnasium in Pishan.

Fars news agency said the bomber struck when Guard officers were meeting local leaders of the Shia and Sunni communities. Some local tribal chiefs were among the dead, media reports said.

The official IRNA news agency said the suicide bomber "wearing an explosives vest blew himself up inside the meeting."

Fars said: "In this terrorist act, General Nur-Ali Shushtari, deputy commander of the Revolutionary Guards ground forces, General Mohammad-Zadeh, commander of the Revolutionary Guards in Sistan-Baluchestan province, the Guards' commander for the town of Iranshahr and the commander of the Amir al-Momenin unit died."

Three other commanders from the adjacent province of Kerman were also killed, according to Fars.

Parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani confirmed the officers' deaths in an announcement to parliament, which was broadcast on television.

"The goal of the terrorists is to disturb the security of the Sistan-Baluchestan province," he told parliament.

"It shows they do not want

ern Uruzgan province left eight armed Taliban dead and three wounded after clashes with Afghan and international forces, provincial police chief General Juma Gul Hemat said.

Southern Afghanistan -- the spiritual heartland of the Taliban -- has seen the most fierce fighting since US-led international forces toppled the hardline Islamist regime in 2001.

## Myanmar

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Locals alleged that Kew Ba Mong was involved with kidnapping people for ransom.

Recently he created a heavy pressure on the locals for huge amount of toll to buy firearms for his party, a villager said.

In this situation, they caught and handed him over to the law enforcement agency, he added.

## SQ Chy

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Committee president Dr Sheikh Farid on September 8.

Sheikh Farid in his complaint mentioned that the accused Salaudun Quader Chowdhury alias SQ Chowdhury insulted Bangabandhu and his family members by saying the killings were essential at the Khulna Press Club on August 15 last.

After hearing, the chief judicial magistrate accepted the case and directed Senior Judicial Magistrate Masud Parvez to investigate it.

The court issued the warrant after Masud Parvez had submitted his case report. Sheikh Farid, an organiser of the liberation war, said he felt ashamed when he came to know about Salaudun's acrimonious remarks through newspapers.

## BSF kills 1

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members of Koiladangi camp opened fire on Bodir Hossain while he was returning home with some cattle around 3:30am leaving him dead on the spot.

BSF members took away the body to India immediately. BDR protested the killing in a letter and asked its Indian counterpart to return the body.

Later, a BRD-BSF flag meeting was held and BSF agreed to return the body, Md Abul Hossain, company commander of Chapasha border outpost in Haripur said.

to have economic progress in this region. But certainly the Guards will act with more force to establish security in the region."

In a separate statement later he said the United States was implicated in the deadly attack.

"We consider the recent terrorist attack to be the result of US action. This is the sign of America's animosity against our country," Larjani said.

"Obama has said he will extend his hand towards Iran, but with this terrorist action he has burned his hand," he said referring to US President Barack Obama's repeated diplomatic overtures to Tehran.

The Guards said foreign powers were behind the attack.

"The world arrogance, by provoking its lackeys and mercenaries in the region, carried out a terrorist attack on a popular meeting between the Guards and tribesmen," the Guards said in a statement carried by local media.

Iranian officials and several government bodies term Western powers, including the United States, as "world arrogance."

Aladdin Borujerdi, senior MP and head of parliament's commission on national security and foreign policy, also pointed the finger at Washington.

"The enemies of the Islamic revolution, especially the United States is the main supporter of terrorist networks" such as Jundallah, he was quoted as saying by Mehr news agency.

Iranian officials have previously accused Britain and the United States of supporting ethnic minority rebels of Jundallah operating in the sensitive border areas, especially in Sistan-Baluchestan province.

Jundallah is strongly opposed to the government of predominantly Shia Iran.

## Hasina cleared

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Earlier, the government on August 17 this year withdrew Paltan Killings Case filed against Hasina and 44 others in October 2006.

It had also withdrawn a Tk 2.99 crore extortion case against Hasina, her sister Sheikh Rehana and their cousin Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim on May 5 following complainant Azam Chowdhury's submission of an application to the home ministry.

The three other accused in the corruption case are former state minister Obaidul Quader, former joint secretary of cultural ministry Asaduzzaman Bhuiyan and architect Iqbal Habib of M/S Bhatti Shoptobirinda Ltd.

In the probe report, the IO mentioned that the authorities concerned had relaxed some existing provisions for appointing consultants for construction of the grave complex without floating any tender but they had no bad intention or purpose of getting personal benefits.

The IO appealed to the court for clearing Hasina and the others of the charge.

Monjur Morshed, official of now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption, filed the case with Ramna Police Station against Hasina and three others on July 3, 2004.

The complainant accused Hasina of approving a proposal to appoint Bhatti

## Huda

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When the court asked Mamun whether he wanted to say the incident of killings did not take place, the counsel said it is true that Bangabandhu and his family members were killed. His clients were not involved in the incident but rather a third force was involved in it, the counsel said.

Mamun said many contradictions are there in the statements of the prosecution witnesses in this case and his client will be proved innocent if those are considered.

The court said according to the provision of article 103 of the constitution, the Appellate Division cannot hear arguments on the statements that had already been placed at trial court.

Mamun said the Appellate Division is the last resort to seek justice. If the court does not hear arguments on the statements, there will be no place for his clients to seek justice.

The five-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Justice Md Tafazzul Islam adjourned the hearing till 9:30am today.

## Land leases

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The committee will hold a coordination meeting with those NGOs in the Chittagong Hill Tracts affairs ministry soon to this end," he added.

The committee asked the authority concerned to take all measures to ensure peaceful environment in the hill districts, he said.

The committee also evaluated the implementation of different sections and sub-sections of CHT peace treaty.

Chaired by Muhammad Shah Alam, the newly appointed chairman of the committee, the meeting was attended, among others, by Dipankar Talukder, state minister for CHT affairs ministry, Jatindra Lal Tripura and KM Khalid.