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Resigned or not?  
Confusion about JP ministers still runs high

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Confusion reigned yesterday over the resignation of Jatiya Party ministers from the “polls-time cabinet” as there were different versions from the party and the government on the issue.

The resignation letters could not be handed over to the prime minister as she denied some JP leaders an appointment, party Chairman HM Ershad told a press conference at his Baridhara residence.

Several JP leaders went to the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) yesterday to turn in the resignations, but nobody received those, he added.

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# WTO's Bali package: a mixed bag

Bangladesh to gain from trade facilitation; duty privileges are still without legally binding commitment: CPD

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The country stands to gain considerably from the ‘Bali package’ struck at the ninth WTO ministerial meet in Bali on Saturday if it acts judiciously, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) said yesterday.

The keystone of the agreement, the first in the group’s 18-year history, is trade facilitation, which stipulates that measures will be taken to cut red tape and streamline customs and port procedures to ease the movement of goods through national frontiers.

“Trade facilitation is important for the country as it will reduce the cost of trading in Bangladesh,” the private think-tank said in its assessment of the landmark WTO deal in context to Bangladesh.

The findings of the study were shared with reporters

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## CPD OBSERVES

- Possibility of getting aid for trade
- Manpower outflow to rise
- No specific timeframe and legally binding commitments for duty-free access
- Higher procurement may raise food prices
- Higher prices for cotton if export subsidy withdrawn

# Thai PM calls early polls

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand’s premier called a snap election yesterday to try to defuse the kingdom’s political crisis, but protesters kept up their fight to topple the government with an estimated 140,000 demonstrators flooding the streets of Bangkok.

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra has faced more than a month of sometimes-violent demonstrations by boisterous protesters storming key state buildings in a bid to unseat her government and replace it with an unelected “People’s Council”.

By dissolving parliament and calling a new election that her party is likely to win, the embattled premier aims to cool public anger without bowing to the demonstrators’ demands to suspend the country’s democratic system.

Protest leaders, however, said they were not satisfied and pledged to rid Thailand of the influence of her older brother Thaksin

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# TIB raps govt for weakening ACC

Says amendment to anti-graft law 'conspiratorial'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government through a “conspiratorial” amendment at the fag end of its tenure had turned the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) into a toothless cat, Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), said yesterday.

“The amendment is unconstitutional and discriminatory, and is a condemnable act,” he said while addressing an award ceremony for investigative journalists marking the World Anti-Corruption Day at the capital’s Brac Centre.

A game had been played with the anti-graft act for four years and then came the amendment, although the parliamentary standing committee did not recommend it, he said.

As per the amendment, the ACC now requires government permission to initiate corruption charges against any public servant.

“The change was brought after a lawmaker had proposed it in the last session of parliament while the president’s assent was taken hurriedly at midnight,” said the TIB chief.

He also pointed out that at a question-answer session of the UN convention on anti-corruption in Panama City in November the law minister had admitted that the amendment was a mistake.

Iftekharuzzaman had also attended that convention.

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Pickets, some apparently teenagers, make fire on the street and pelt law enforcers with brick chunks and crude bombs in Bakalia area of Chittagong. Inset, a law enforcer running away after a homemade bomb went off close to him.

PHOTO: STAR

# Govt asked not to execute Mollah

UN experts, HRW against execution; Mollah issues notice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two UN human rights experts and the Human Rights Watch have urged Bangladesh to halt the execution of Jamaat leader and convicted war criminal Quader Mollah.

UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers Gabriela Knaul and Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions Christof Heyns expressed concern that Mollah could be executed as early as today without getting a chance to appeal.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh condemned Mollah to death after the prosecution appealed against the verdict of the international crimes tribunal that gave him life imprisonment.

“The right of appeal is of particular importance in death

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# Condition of Zohra Tajuddin improves

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Awami League leader Syeda Zohra Tajuddin, wife of the country’s first prime minister Tajuddin Ahmad, was taken off the life support system and her condition was “better” yesterday, said her daughter Simeen Hussain Rimi.

Zohra, a presidium member of the party, underwent surgery at leading corporate hospital

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PRAYER TIMING December 10		
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

# JCD leader shot dead in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Unidentified criminals shot dead a Jatiyatibadi Chhatra Dal leader and another one injured in Jessore town yesterday.

Kabir Hossain Polish, 30, son of Mohidul Islam of Vola Tank Road area in

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# Razakars killed 42 Hindus in Bagerhat

Freedom fighter tells war tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A freedom fighter yesterday testified that Razakars had shot 42 Hindus dead at Shakharikathi Bazar of Kachua upazila in Bagerhat during the Liberation War in 1971.

Witness Lutfar Rahman Nakib, 62, told the International Crimes Tribunal-2 that Razakars had looted several villages following an inflammatory speech of Jamaat-e-Islami leader AKM Yusuf, “the founder of

Razakar Bahini”.

Lutfar, the 16th prosecution witness in Yusuf’s case, said Razakars forcefully converted the Hindus of Shakharikathi village to Muslims following Yusuf’s orders in mid July 1971 and forced them to take beef, forbidden in the Hindu religion.

Meanwhile, the tribunal yesterday closed the cross-examination of Sunil Kumar Dakua, the 15th prosecution witness in the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

The Daily Star

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ONLINE POLL

Do you think deferring the polls date will help political parties come to a solution?

Yes

44%

No

56%

TOTAL VOTES: 337

TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad that the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from her post is the only way to resolve the present political stalemate?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

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