

# EC RECONSTITUTION

## BNP to take its proposals to president today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP will today send to the president its proposals for reconstituting the Election Commission and amending the Representation of the People Order (RPO).

BNP Vice-Chairman Ruhul Alam Chowdhury and Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi would go to the Bangabhaban at 11:00am to submit the copies of the proposals, Syrul Kabir Khan, an official of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's media wing, told The Daily Star last night.

They would submit the proposals to the Bangabhaban officials as they were yet to get appointment with President Abdul Hamid.

The BNP hopes to get the president's appointment soon, party sources said.

At a press conference on November 18, Khaleda placed a 13-point proposal for reconstitution of the EC on the basis of consensus among the political parties.

The BNP chief proposed bringing some amendments to the RPO and

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# 12 NRBs get CIP status

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has recognised 12 non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) as commercially important persons (CIPs) for their outstanding contributions to the economy by remitting foreign currencies and importing Bangladeshi products to the country of their residence in 2015.

The expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry disclosed the names of the 12 CIPs by publishing a gazette on its website on Sunday.

Mahatabur Rahman, managing director of Al Haramain Perfumes based in Dubai of the United Arab Emirates, Akter Hossain, a real estate businessman in the UAE, Abul Kalam, chairman of Star Gold Group in Dubai, Ahmmad Al Zaman, a businessman in Qatar, Adnan Imam in the UK, Abdul Rahim in the UK, Yeasin Chowdhury in Oman, Omar Faruk in the UAE, Jesmin Akter in the UAE, and Mossedek Chowdhury in Oman have been selected for being the highest remitters.

Abul Kashem of Kuwait and Mohammad Selim of the UAE have been selected as top importers of Bangladeshi products in their states of residence.

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# Compensation

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terms like "public interest and public purpose" used in the draft law. The committee can also go for more members, if necessary.

Cabinet Secretary M Shafiul Alam told reporters after the meeting that the committee has been formed as the cabinet observed that the issue of land requisition is very complex and the terms used in the draft law needed to be explained more clearly.

Asked how land price is determined, he said the average value of the land purchased in the previous 12 months in an area concerned would be the value of the land at present.

"It means if the value of a property is Tk 1 crore now, the compensation will become Tk 3 crores," said Alam.

The cabinet also approved the "The Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons Act-2016" aiming to improve healthcare services. Besides, it endorsed the "Palli Sanchay Bank (amendment) Ordinance, 2016" for placing it in parliament for making it a law.

The cabinet unanimously adopted a condolence motion at the death of former President of Cuba Fidel Castro who died on November 25 at the age of 90.



Relatives show bruises on the left leg of freedom fighter Imam Uddin who was beaten up at his house by some villagers of Ishwarganj upazila in Mymensingh for protesting the beating of his son on Saturday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Police clueless about the four missing youths

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disappeared in a similar fashion. Police were yet to find any clue to the sudden disappearance or whether they have any links to militancy, said Soheli Rana, sub-inspector at Banani Police Station.

Soheli, who is investigating the matter, said they have collected security camera footage of a restaurant where the four had snacks together moments before they went traceless and their mobile phones became unreachable.

The Daily Star yesterday talked to the family members of Pavel, Mahedi and Sujun. They ruled out the possibility of the trio's involvement in militancy.

Despite repeated attempts, this

correspondent couldn't reach Shafayat's family. His friends said he used to make Facebook posts on strict religious adherence.

Mahedi's uncle Mahabub Hawladar told this correspondent that his nephew came to the capital from Barisal on November 26 for a job interview at a multinational corporation.

On Friday, Pavel's father Ismail Hossain Khan filed a general diary with Banani Police Station about the disappearance of Pavel, Shafayat and Sujun.

According to the GD, Pavel, 23, went to Banani Super Market between 8:00pm and 8:30pm on Thursday to get some papers photocopied, and didn't return

home.

It was also mentioned that his two friends Shafayat, 24, and Md Sujun, 25, who were with him at that time, also went missing.

The families of Pavel and Sujun live in the same building in the capital's Banani area.

**FAMILIES AT A LOSS**

"I have been in touch with law enforcement agencies ... I hope they will find him soon," Pavel's father Ismail told The Daily Star.

Ismail, a businessman, said his son is obsessed with cars and he had to buy him a sports car recently.

Sujun's elder brother Suman, an

## PROTESTING ASSAULT ON SON

# Elderly freedom fighter beaten up

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Eighty-eight-year-old freedom fighter was severely beaten up by some of his villagers in Ishwarganj upazila as he protested assault on his son over a trivial matter on Saturday.

The victim, Imam Uddin, of Ujanchar village in the upazila, is undergoing treatment at the local upazila health complex.

Quoting locals and the victim's family, Badrul Alam Khan, officer-in-charge of Ishwarganj Police Station, said Imam's son Jalal Uddin went to a local bazar to have a cup of tea on Saturday noon when arbitration on a land dispute was going on there.

At one stage, people involved in the arbitration were locked in an altercation. When Jalal made a comment about the altercation, an angry Nurul Islam, son of Ruhul Amin, also got into an altercation with Jalal over his comment.

Nurul then beat up Jalal and forced him to leave the place. Hearing the

incident, Imam protested it and asked Nurul why his son was beaten up.

Being angry, Ruhul, his son Nurul and brother Robiqul Islam along with some others went to Imam's house and beat him up with sticks before the family members, injuring him seriously.

Talking to this correspondent, Imam alleged that the attackers beat him up over a trifling matter. "I want justice for the attack."

Imam filed a case with Ishwarganj Police Station, accusing five people, including Ruhul, Nurul and Robiqul, on Sunday night, said OC Badrul.

No one was arrested yet in this connection.

Abdus Sattar, commander of Ishwarganj upazila Muktiyoddha unit, also visited Imam at the hospital.

"Attack on a freedom fighter is a heinous crime and the culprits must be brought to book immediately," the commander demanded.

## Boat

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Cox's Bazar's Teknaf yesterday.

However, it could not immediately be confirmed whether there were any casualties.

One of them, who survived, claimed that three of her relatives were dead and many could be missing.

Rehena Begum, 23, told reporters that the accident happened when the overloaded boat turned over near Bangladesh border around 5:00am.

The boat, which was carrying some 35 Rohingyas, had started from a village in Maungdaw in Myanmar around 10:30pm Sunday.

After the accident, three Bangladeshi fishermen rescued Rehena and took her to the shore, said local fishermen.

The Rohingyas were taken in the boat by four brokers -- Mohammad Ismail, Arafat, Mohammad Hashim and Mohammad Salam alias Gujja Boli, alleged the woman who later took shelter at her brother-in-law's home in Zadimura Nayapara area in Hnaila union of Teknaf.

Rehena claimed that she contacted her relatives over phone and found out that the bodies of her mother Bilkis, sister-in-law Monira Begum and nephew Mohammad Shoaib, who were also in that boat, were recovered and handed over to their families in Myanmar.

She does not know what happened to her two other nephews and other passengers.

Talking to The Daily Star, the three Bangladeshi fishermen, who rescued Rehena, claimed that they saw three bodies floating in the river.

Hnaila Union Parishad Member Mohammad Ali said he heard about the incident.

Local sources said Rehena was taken to BGB's Nayapara BOP camp and was provided with humanitarian assistance along with emergency treatment.

Contacted, BGB-2 Battalion Commanding Officer Lt Col Abu Jar Al Zahid said he also heard about the incident. He said BGB members were sent to the spot.

He also said the incident might have happened in the Myanmar waters.

Recently, UN estimated that at least 10,000 people have fled to Bangladesh in the last few weeks to avoid persecution by Myanmar military and police upon Muslim Rohingyas. However the local people from Cox's Bazar estimates that the number would be around 30,000.

Around 350,000 Myanmar citizens known as Rohingyas who fled Myanmar during different times have been living in Bangladesh for decades. Only 33,000 of them are living in two registered Rohingya camps while others are living in different slums in Cox's Bazar and other places.

## 3 Jubo League men found shot dead

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And Soheli and Abdullah were active members of the municipality unit, said Ruhul Amin Biplob, secretary of Natore district Jubo League.

The three were known as the sidekicks of local AL lawmaker Shafiqul Islam Shimul.

Accused in 12 cases, including that for murder, drug peddling and extortion, Sabbir was arrested by Rapid Action Battalion in Natore town on August 12 last year. But lawmaker Shimul snatched him from the Rab team.

A video footage, obtained by this newspaper, shows that Shimul was locked in an altercation with Rab members before snatching Sabbir that day.

Soheli is accused in three cases, including one for murder.

The three used to move together.

According to locals, Sabbir formed a group called "Sabbir Bahini" and Abdullah and Soheli were its members. They were involved in various criminal activities in the district.

Around 11:45pm Saturday, witnesses said, 12 persons arrived at Tokia Bazar on two microbuses -- one white and the other black -- and started observing the three, who were taking tea at a stall there.

Noticing the teams, the Jubo League men tried to flee on their bike but the microbuses obstructed their way.

"The team members -- two of them wearing vests inscribed with the word 'Rab' -- beat them [the three] up, pulled them into the black microbus and drove away," a man who runs a tea stall at the bazaar told this newspaper, wishing anonymity.

Sabbir's mother Roksana Begum filed a general diary with Natore Sadar Police Station on Sunday.

"Sabbir along with Soheli and Abdullah left his Kanaikhal house for Tokia Bazar on a bike around 8:00pm Saturday. Some people, identifying themselves as Rab men, took them

away when they were taking tea at the bazaar," the GD reads.

Anwar Hossain, company commander (in-charge) of Natore unit of Rab, denied picking up any of the persons.

"Rab did not pick them up. We are investigating to find out who kidnapped the Jubo League men," Anwar, also assistant superintendent of police, told The Daily Star.

Abdul Latif, maternal uncle of Abdullah, said there had long been a feud between Abdullah and his cousins over the ownership of Chhayabani Cinema Hall.

"Abdullah was trying to turn the hall into a business centre but the other owners are trying to run the cinema business. Abdullah might have been murdered because of the enmity," he told The Daily Star.

Family members of Abdullah and Soheli did not file any case or general diary regarding their abduction.

Sabbir, 28, is unmarried; Abdullah,

30, got married last year. Soheli, around 25, is the father of a three-year-old son and a two-month-old daughter.

Yesterday, Natore municipality Jubo League at a press conference in the town demanded arrest and punishment of the killers.

Meanwhile, Ghoraghat police sent the bodies to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Natore Sadar Police Station, said they have no idea who kidnapped and killed the Jubo League men.

The three had been missing since Saturday night, he added.

Police recovered the bodies after locals spotted those around 7:00am.

Hamidul Alam, superintendent of police, Dinajpur, said all the three were shot point-blank in the head.

Police also found two bottles of liquors and four mobile phones from the scene. Officials informed the victims' family members through the only phone they could unlock. The

three other phones were password protected.

Talking to The Daily Star at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday, MP Shimul said he along with other MPs from Natore met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Sangsad Bhaban and raised the issue.

"We told Netri [Hasina] that we cannot tolerate the killing of our leaders and activists."

Shimul, lawmaker from Natore-2, said plainclothes men took away Sabbir and two others by a microbus while they were taking tea at a place in Natore.

Asked what the PM told them in response, Shimul said she assured them of looking into the matter and taking necessary measures to identify the persons responsible for the killings.

Asked if he doubts Rab men had picked up the three, the lawmaker said he will not make any comment on this as the PM herself is now dealing with the matter.

[Our Natore and Dinajpur correspondents contributed to this report]



Police on scene at Kolapara in Dinajpur's Ghoraghat upazila where the bullet-riddled bodies of three Jubo League activists, Redwan Sabbir, Abu Abdullah, and Soheli Rana were discovered yesterday morning.

PHOTO: STAR

## Democracy is what the winner says it is

FROM PAGE 1

after restoration of democracy, cannot hold party events without the government's permission, cannot hold public rallies without the fear of police repression, whose leaders run from pillar to post appearing in cases lodged in various parts of the country and, most alarmingly, some of whose members have simply disappeared.

We have built an inclusive democracy indeed. The party that was toppled from power as an enemy of democracy is now an integral part of it, and the party that helped to topple the autocrat, and whose role was second to none, is labeled as an enemy of democracy.

The most important thing to recall today is the promises the political parties collectively made to the people at that time and how, over the years, every one moved away from them. What is known as "Teen Joter

Roop-rekha", (The Joint Outline by the Three Alliances, comprising of the 15 party alliance led by the AL, 7 party alliance led by BNP and 5 party alliance of the Left leaning parties) had set out a very clear outline for a democratic and egalitarian society committed to the welfare of the people especially through good governance and building a corruption free society.

There were two basic issues against the Ershad government: the illegitimacy of the regime and the widespread corruption of the administration. The purpose unflinching, the feeling unambiguous, the goal clear that Bangladesh would never be governed by a military dictatorship however sanitised through formation of political parties and holding "managed" elections. There could not be any government that was not elected by the

people through a free and fair election.

The Joint Programme of the Three Alliances-- from now on "The Jote", therefore, had a very clear focus; to constitute a "legitimate" government-- meaning one that came through people's vote and expressed through a free and fair election, thus setting up a successor transitional government to that of Ershad that would conduct the all important election, occupied a lot of thought and energy of the political parties resulting in the formation of an interim caretaker government under the chief justice, Shahabuddin.

So sincere was the intention of the "The Jote" to make the election truly free and fair that they voluntarily prepared a code of conduct to ensure that the election was truly reflective of the "will" of the people. We reproduce below some of the main points:

- The political parties in the three alliances will follow general democratic norms of mutual respect and tolerance of others' views in their electoral statements and activities. The parties in the alliances will always try to instill democratic spirit in their workers.
- The parties in the three alliances will refrain from publicising slander or make derogatory remarks about other parties' patriotism and religious beliefs. The parties will not support communalism and will resist communal propaganda.
- The parties in the three alliances are making a pledge to shun confrontation in carrying out electoral activities. Our earlier announcement of not taking into the political parties of the three alliances the identified collaborators of Ershad's autocratic government and holders of illegal arms will be strictly enforced.

- The parties in the three alliances will not try to influence the administration or law enforcing agencies in their own electoral interest. They will try to uphold the neutrality of the administration.
- The three alliances will try to ensure that the mass media can play an independent and neutral role.
- The parties in the three alliances will take forward the democratic process by accepting people's mandate given through the elections.

The above "code of conduct" voluntarily proposed and accepted by all the political parties in the alliances shows the extent to which our politicians were committed to the idea of a genuinely representative government to run the affairs of the country.

However, with the removal of the "common enemy" and after the holding of the first election after the res-

toration of democracy, the unity began to fall apart and partisan interest began to overtake national interest. Democracy building was back-burned and has remained there ever since.

Today as we "celebrate" Democracy Restoration Day we need to introspect on what we "restored" 26 years ago, and whether the democracy that we have today resembles what was envisaged then. How many of the promises made during the anti-Ershad struggle have been fulfilled? What are the possible costs of the non-fulfillment of those pledges? And, most importantly, what lies ahead in our march towards building a genuinely democratic society that has been our persistent dream since our Liberation War. Is democracy what the winner says it is, or will democracy be what the people say it is?