

## The knots yet to unravel

AL and BNP sweat over sharing seats with allies as only 4 days left before nomination-filing closes

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and WASIM BIN HABIB

The last date of filing nomination is just four days away, but the Awami League and the BNP could not finalise their candidates for all 300 seats yet because of disagreements over sharing seats among alliance partners.

The discord centres around the number of seats to be shared among the allies, alliance sources said.

While the alliance partners, many of them little known, in both camps are negotiating hard to get tickets for as many constituencies as they can, the AL and the BNP are trying to seal the deal with bare minimum.

Parties have until November 28 to submit nomination papers.

On November 17, three days after AL chief Sheikh Hasina met party aspirants at the Gono Bhaban, the AL Parliamentary Board finalised a draft nomination list for 232 seats out of the total 300.

Though one week has passed since, the party could not finalise a complete list mainly because of the disagreement with Jatiya Party, the main opposition in the current parliament and a key ally in the AL-led grand alliance, according to the sources.

"We hope to come to a decision within a day or two about sharing seats with our partners," AL Presidium Member Abdur Razzaq told The Daily Star yesterday.

The BNP completed interviewing its aspirants on

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



A child ragpicker walking through a rubbish dump in Sylhet's Dakshin Surma upazila. Every day, about a hundred children from nearby areas rummage through piles of waste deposited there by the Sylhet City Corporation. They collect and sell discarded bottles and other plastic materials to local scrap dealers without using gloves or any other safety gear, exposing themselves to infections and diseases.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## PM interacts with youths

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday interacted with a diverse group of youths and listened to their dreams, hopes and aspirations about future Bangladesh.

Demonstrating a strong sense of enthusiasm and vigour, around 150 young people selected from across the country, including professionals, entrepreneurs, students, sports and cultural personalities, and representatives of various youth groups and associations, took part in the discussion, "Let's Talk with Sheikh Hasina", organised by the Centre for Research and Information (CRI).

For the first time in Bangladesh's political history, the PM directly talked to the youths and asked the participants to share their ideas and thoughts on the country's development.

The participants discussed the government's policies and measures to take the country forward, including employment

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

PHOTO ON PAGE 2

## No backing out of EVM use: CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite strong opposition from the Jatiya Oikyafront, the election commissioners will sit today and decide how and in which places the electronic voting machines will be used.

The commission would not backtrack on its decision to use EVMs on a limited scale in the December 30 polls, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda said yesterday.

The Jatiya Oikyafront on Thursday said it might sue the EC and government if they do not rescind the decision to use EVMs.

The Jatiya Oikyafront, an alliance of BNP and several other parties, has been saying from the outset that the EVMs can be manipulated and using these would create scope for vote-rigging.

The ruling Awami League, however, has been arguing that EVMs are modern and flawless.

"There is no legal bar to using EVMs in the elections," the CEC told reporters at the Nirbachan Bhaban in the capital yesterday.

The EVMs will make the election more transparent, he added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

## Transfer no one without reason

14-party asks EC a day after Oikyafront demanded withdrawal of 92 officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party alliance yesterday urged the Election Commission not to accept the Jatiya Oikyafront's demand for the withdrawal of 92 top officials from the civil and police administrations.

In a letter to Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda, the 14-party said the opposition alliance came up with the "illogical" demand "as part of its conspiracy to make the December 30 national election questionable".

On Thursday, the Oikyafront, comprising the BNP and several other parties, demanded withdrawal of the 92 officials -- 22 civil servants and 70 senior police officials -- for what it said was ensuring a level playing field in the polls.

The officials, termed partisan by the alliance, included the secretaries of the EC, home and public administration ministries. An Oikyafront delegation handed over a list of the officials to the EC.

The BNP also alleged that the deputy commissioners, who have been made returning officers for the upcoming polls, were called in for a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office soon after they were briefed at the EC on November 13.

In its letter, the 14-party alliance said no returning officer attended any meeting at the PMO. However, several of the ROs might have gone there for meeting their former colleagues.

"We called upon the Election Commission not to transfer any officials without any specific reason," Dilip Barua, general secretary of Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal, a component of the alliance, said yesterday.

He was talking to reporters after a 12-member team, led by him, handed over the letter to EC Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed at his office.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

## Pilot killed in BAF fighter plane crash

STAR REPORT

A pilot of Bangladesh Air Force was killed when a fighter aircraft on training mission crashed in Tangail's Madhupur upazila yesterday afternoon.



Arif Ahmed

Arif Ahmed Dipu was a wing commander at BAF.

The fighter aircraft, F-7BG, crashed in Rasulpur area at 2:50pm, around 25 minutes after it took off from Dhaka, said Muhammad Reza-Ul Karim Shammee, assistant director at Inter Services Public Relation Directorate (ISPR).

Father of two, Arif was from Pabna's Ishwardi. He was commissioned in the BAF in 1997.

The aircraft crashed in the Madhupur Sal Forest near BAF Firing Range in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Gunmen storm China consulate in Karachi

4 killed; all 21 consulate staff unharmed; Baloch rebels claim responsibility; Beijing, New Delhi condemn attack; blast in Peshawar kills 31

AFP, Karachi

Four people were killed yesterday when gunmen armed with hand grenades and a suicide vest stormed the Chinese consulate in the Pakistani city of Karachi, officials said, with the attack claimed by a separatist group which branded Beijing "an oppressor".

Separately, a suicide bomb attack at a crowded marketplace in northwestern Orakzai, Peshawar killed at least 31 people and wounded 50 yesterday, local media reported.

Pakistani authorities said security forces had secured the area surrounding the consulate after the attack, the latest assault on Chinese nationals in the country, where Beijing has poured billions of dollars into one of the largest projects in its massive Belt and Road programme.

China "strongly condemned" the attack and asked Pakistan to take measures to ensure the safety of Chinese citizens and institutions in the country, as well as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) mega-project.

Three gunmen tried to enter the consulate in the southern port city, but were inter-



cepted by guards at a checkpoint, Karachi police chief Ameer Sheikh told AFP.

"They were holding Kalashnikovs. First, they hurled a small (grenade) and then started firing," said Allah Bakhsh, a guard at a nearby house who witnessed the attack.

Police officials said two of their personnel were killed, along with a father and son from Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, who were seeking Chinese visas and were caught in the crossfire.

At least one of the attackers was wearing a suicide vest which did not detonate, another senior police official said.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4



## Batsmen rain on Nayeem's parade

SAKEB SUBHAN from Chattogram

If the first day was action-packed, yesterday's second was a blockbuster at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram.

Bangladesh's debutant off-spinner Nayeem Hasan, 10 days short of his 18th birthday, became the youngest bowler in Test history to take five wickets on debut but the batsman took some of the gloss off the achievement to the point that West Indies, from being on the ropes, are now in a position of parity -- if not ascendancy -- in the second Test.

Much of the credit for producing two enthralling days of Test cricket should go to the wicket as it enabled the spinners to dominate, while also being true enough to allow a gem of a cameo from West

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Bangladesh off-spinner Nayeem Hasan became the youngest bowler in Test history to take five wickets on debut as he ran through the West Indies on the second day of the first Test in Chattogram yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Make an all-out effort to create right conditions

UNHCR urges Myanmar on safe return of Rohingyas

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UN refugee agency yesterday urged Myanmar to exert all efforts to create conditions for safe return of Rohingyas and address the root cause of their displacement.

"The responsibility for creating conditions conducive to the voluntary return lies with Myanmar," the UNHCR said in a statement in which it also lauded Bangladesh for hosting and supporting nearly one million Rohingya refugees.

The UN body appreciated the commitment of Bangladesh to protect the refugees' right to safe, voluntary and dignified return to their homes.

Welcoming Myanmar's commitment and actions regarding the issue, the UNHCR said it would be important for the country to demonstrate concrete progress toward ensuring freedom of movement, access to services, documentation and livelihood opportunities.

"These steps would be essential to help build refugees' confidence that the conditions in Myanmar have sufficiently changed to allow them to contemplate their return," the statement said.

"It is essential that the UNHCR and the UNDP be granted effective access to refugees' places of origin and potential areas of return, in line with the tripartite MoU signed by UNHCR, UNDP and Myanmar in June 2018," it said.

The UNHCR also called for international support for the Myanmar government's efforts in this regard.

On November 11, Filippo Grandi, the UN high commissioner for refugees, said Myanmar demonstrated progress by proposing go-and-see visits for Rohingyas.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1