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SECOND EDITION

**'ECONOMIC  
TERRORISM'**  
Hassan Rouhani says  
about US sanctions on  
various countries  
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**"The government should not allow setting up any school without a playground. How could we expect our children to be healthy if there is no playground at their schools?"**  
PROF MUZAHERUL HUQ, FOUNDING CHAIRMAN OF PUBLIC HEALTH FOUNDATION (PAGE 3)

**"Sexual harassment is not a vague term -- there is a very clear set of actions that constitute sexual harassment."**  
DR MEHTAB KHANAM, CHAIRPERSON OF EDUCATIONAL AND COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY DEPT AT DU (PAGE 3)

**"Modernity does not protect us from genocide .... Nothing but our own actions, based on our values and principles, can protect us from genocide."**  
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES (PAGE 18)

## Leave banks alone

**Top economists urge politicians not to interfere in banks any further; CPD shows Tk 22,000cr plundered thru' scams, Tk 1 lakh cr stuck as nonperforming loans**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The most debated topic right now outside politics is probably the banks laden with around Tk 100,000 crore in nonperforming loans and at least Tk 22,000 crore taken out through scams in recent years. This is a roll back on the improvement achieved in the 1990s through reform programmes.

And yesterday, the country's top economists and bankers called on the politicians to pledge not to further interfere in banks, the heart of the economy, if Bangladesh must move on as a middle-income country.

They observed that the banking sector was now passing through "the worst time ever" that needs to be corrected with stern decisions.

"Breaching of rules and regulations has been pulling down the banks continuously," Wahiduddin Mahmud, former adviser to a caretaker government and an eminent economist, said yesterday.

"Please leave the banks alone.... When the country's economy grew faster in the last decade, the banking sector, the heart of the economy, is the only sector which sees decline in terms of breaching rules instead of improvement," he said.

According to former deputy governor of the Bangladesh Bank Khondokar Ibrahim Khaled, banks are in their "worst state" now.

"The central bank is unable to look after the interest of the depositors. We need to raise voice against the political interference in banks," he told a dialogue organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue at a city hotel.

Zahid Hussain, lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office, said there had been a nexus of regulators, bankers and big borrowers.

"The risk of our inaction is very high because of the bleeding happening in the banking sector," he warned.

Debapriya Bhattacharya, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, called on political parties to pledge in their manifestos not to interfere in the banking sector and carry out reforms to bring the banks from their brink.

He also announced that the CPD would form a citizen's commission on the banking sector after the election to find out the reasons behind the current state of the banks and suggest remedies.

The experts came together at a dialogue on "What Do We Do with the Banking Sector of Bangladesh".

At the beginning, Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the CPD, gave a presentation on how the banks slid backwards in the

MAJOR SCAMS COST BANKS  
Tk 22,502CR: CPD -- PAGE B1



**Supporters of BNP leader Ahsanul Haque Milon, who did not get party ticket for the December 30 polls, stage demonstration in front of Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office yesterday. Inset, damaged windows of the office after stones were thrown at it allegedly by some supporters of BNP leaders who were denied nomination.** PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN/COLLECTED

## Withdraw candidacy

**Hasina writes to party rebels**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina in a letter yesterday requested the party "rebels" to withdraw their candidacy and join the AL nominees on the campaign trail instead.

The prime minister in another letter sent to those who were not nominated said she was sorry that the rigorous nomination process and the decision of parliamentary board did not let her give them the AL ticket.

The letters signed by Sheikh Hasina were e-mailed to different media organisations by AL Office Secretary Abdus Sobhan Golap yesterday.

According to AL sources, around 50 party leaders who were not nominated

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## Khaleda loses all 3 appeals at EC

**Unlike her, Nazmul Huda wins appeal despite bribery conviction**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia lost a legal battle to contest the December 30 national election as the Election Commission yesterday rejected her all three appeals against cancellation of her nominations by returning officers.

Khaleda, who has been behind bars since February 8 after being sentenced by a special court to five years imprisonment for graft, filed nominations for Bogura-6, 7 and Feni-1. But during scrutiny, the ROs concerned rejected all the nominations on grounds of her conviction in criminal cases.

Her lawyers opted for appeals challenging the ROs' decisions. After hearing the appeals, an election commissioner accepted those. However, the chief election commissioner and three other election commissioners rejected the appeals.

Khaleda's lawyers later said she might file a petition with the High Court challenging the EC's decision.

"We will examine the legal side whether we can go to the High court. If we are convinced, we will file an appeal with

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## BNP leaves 53 seats for allies

**Partners in 20-party get 34, those in Oikyafront 19**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has left 53 seats for its partners in the 20-party alliance and the Jatiya Oikyafront for the December 30 polls.

The party is now finalising its candidates for another 45 seats. Earlier on Friday, it announced the names of its contenders in 202 constituencies.

Of the 53 seats, 34 are for the BNP's allies in the 20-party while the rest are for the partners in the Oikyafront, said party insiders.

Leaders of the partners in both the combines yesterday started collecting nomination letters from the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office in the capital.

All of the nominees, except Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) chief Oli Ahmed, will contest the election with BNP's electoral symbol "Sheaf of Paddy". Four other LDP leaders, however, would be fighting with the BNP symbol, BNP insiders said.

For the partners in the Oikyafront, the BNP set aside seven seats for the

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## The JP plot thickens

**Earlier removed as secy general, Hawlader now 'next to chairman'**

RASHIDUL HASAN

It was all set.

The Jatiya Party was going to unveil the final list of candidates at a press conference around 8:00pm yesterday. Journalists and senior JP leaders had already started arriving at the party chief's Banani office for the event.

But things took a dramatic turn just about half an hour before the press conference. JP leaders said it has been postponed.

In no time, a press release was sent to the media announcing that JP Chairman HM Ershad has made party presidium member and lawmaker Ruhul Amin Hawlader his special assistant.

And the new status of Hawlader is "next to the JP chairman."

In a similar move, less than four weeks before the December 30 election, Ershad on December 3 removed Hawlader as the party secretary general and replaced him with State Minister for LGRD Moshir Rahman Ranga.

A number of JP presidium members last night told this newspaper that they were totally confused



as to what was going on in the party and who actually ran the organisation.

"As the secretary general, Ranga is the party's second-in-command. But now Hawlader got a position that is next to chairman. So who is actually the second-in-command?" a JP senior leader asked.

In the press release signed by Ershad, it was mentioned that Hawlader would carry out the party's entire organisational activities in the absence of the

party chairman.

The JP boss took the decision as per section 20/1/Ka of the party charter and it will take immediate effect, read the release.

It comes a day after Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader on Friday formally announced that 40 to 42 seats were left for JP to contest the 11th parliamentary polls.

Following Quader's announcement, JP Secretary General Ranga asked around 20 party aspirants to come to the Banani office on Saturday (yesterday) to receive letters that have to be submitted to returning officers to get the party's electoral symbol "plough."

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## Tigers seek perfect end

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will be looking to continue their fine run in their favoured fifty-over format this year when Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and his troop takes on a demoralised West Indies in the first of the three-match ODI series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

The day-night affair is set to start from 1:00 pm local time.

There is some good news for the Tigers as the experienced Tamim Iqbal and Shakib Al Hasan will return to the ODI side following injuries sustained in September's Asia Cup.

Skipper Mashrafe will surely look to finish the last series of the year on a high after maintaining a winning percentage of 64.71 in ODIs, which is the

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**Bangladesh ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had his attention turned away from cricket momentarily by strength and conditioning coach Mario Villavarayan's son, with whom the inspirational captain joked around during yesterday's training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.**

PHOTO:  
FIROZ AHMED

### FAILED NOMINATION BIDS

## Aggrieved party men vent anger

**BNP activists pelt stones at chairperson's office, lock Rizvi inside Nayapaltan headquarters**

STAR REPORT

Supporters of the Awami League and BNP leaders who were not nominated have demonstrated in the capital and several other districts, and demanded party tickets be given to their favourites.

Activists of both the parties protested yesterday, turning violent in many places.

As part of their protest, supporters of failed BNP nomination seekers pelt stones at party chief Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office.

A group of aggrieved BNP activists also locked the party's Nayapaltan office from outside, confining Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed for nearly an hour.

About a hundred supporters of BNP leaders ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon (Chandpur-1), Taimur Alam Khandaker (Narayanganj-1) and Selimuzzamn Selim (Gopalganj-1) gathered in front of Khaleda's office around 5:30pm and started chanting slogans denouncing BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir for "depriving" their favourites of nominations.

At one stage, they tried to break into the office and then hurled stones at its windows, witnesses said.

Fakhrul and BNP standing committee members Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and Nazrul Islam Khan and some other leaders were inside the office at the time.

In Nayapaltan, a group of ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon's

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