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Take BNP's money, but vote for AL
PM asks voters; says country will be ruined if BNP wins

AGENCIES

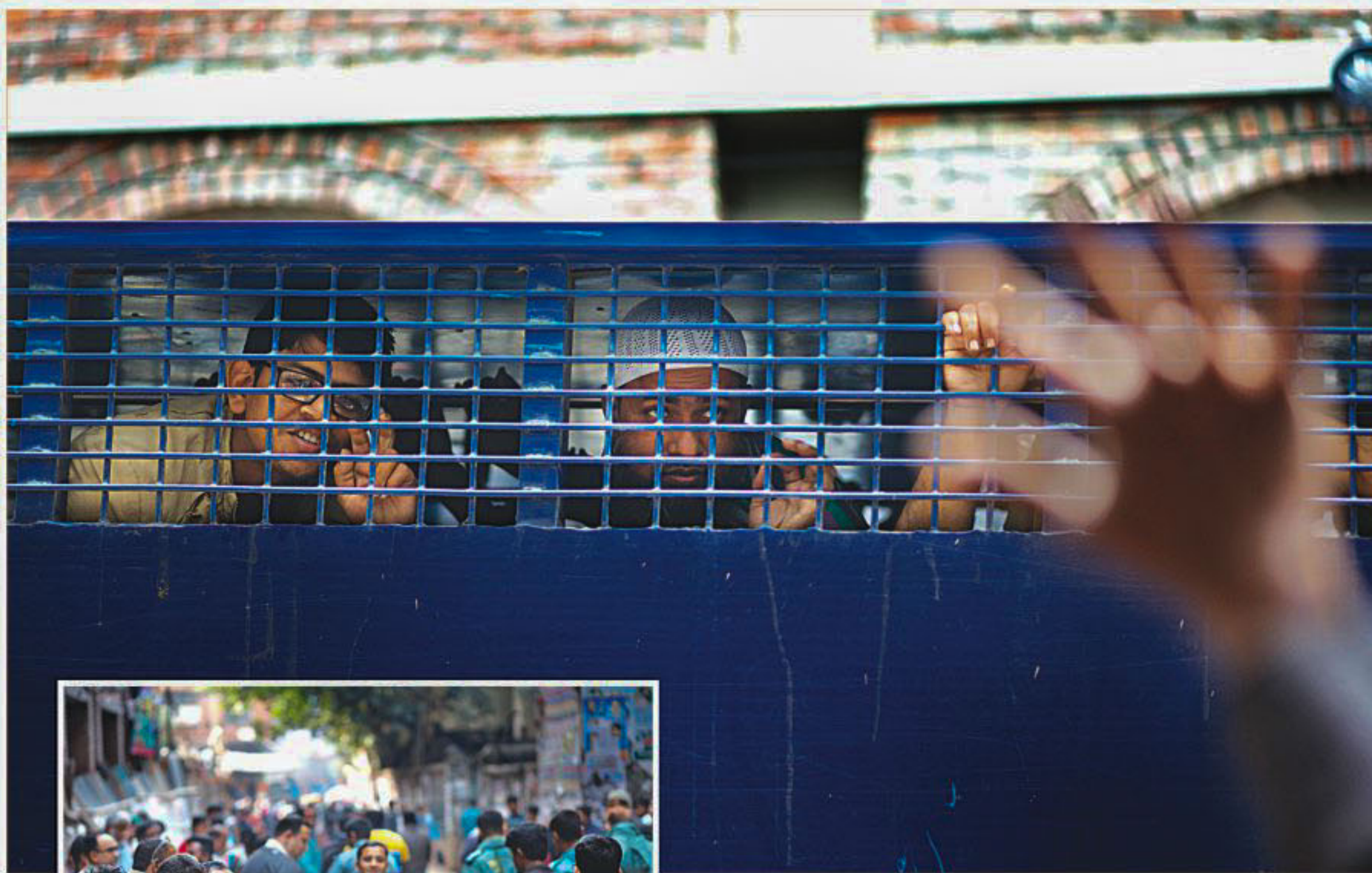
Bringing accusations of nomination business against the BNP, Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that the party was either plotting to rig the coming election or foil it.

"They [the BNP] nominated three to four candidates for each seat and those seats have been auctioned," said Hasina, president of the ruling Awami League.

"I would like to tell the countrymen that they plundered public money. So let the money return to the people. Take their money and vote for boat," she said, reports BSS Bangla.

She also urged the people to stop the BNP from winning the December 30 polls.

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Arrested BNP activists looking out of a prison van window near the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka yesterday. Inset, as families of the arrestees gather on the court premises, some try to have a glimpse of their loved ones.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

BNP in a tight corner

15 of its candidates out of polls race; fate of 22 Jamaat leaders hangs in balance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the election day draws nearer, more and more BNP leaders are skidding off the race. Latest, five opposition aspirants lost their candi-

dacies yesterday following a High Court order.

The HC disqualified them as the government did not accept their resignation as upazila chairmen. According to the Representation of the

People Order (RPO), anyone holding "an office of profit" like that of an upazila chairman cannot run for MP. With the five, the BNP now has no contenders in 15 of the 300 seats.

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BNP website blocked over 'distasteful' content

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

The BNP's official website - www.bnpbangladesh.com -- was blocked last week as it contained "distasteful" content, said the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) yesterday evening in an e-mail to the Election Commission.

Following a written complaint from the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the main opposition party, to the EC, the commission on Monday asked the telecom regulator to take necessary action regarding the complaint.

In reply, the BTRC yesterday said the website was blocked as it contained a lot of contents that went against the law and order of the country. They also requested the EC to reconsider their order to unblock the site again.

"Two intelligence agencies also requested the telecom watchdog to block the site and that's why we went for it," reads the BTRC email.

BTRC's Acting Chairman Md Jahurul Haque acknowledged to The Daily Star that the email was sent

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FARMERS BANK

DRAMATIC rise in LOAN DEFAULT

JEBUN NESA ALO

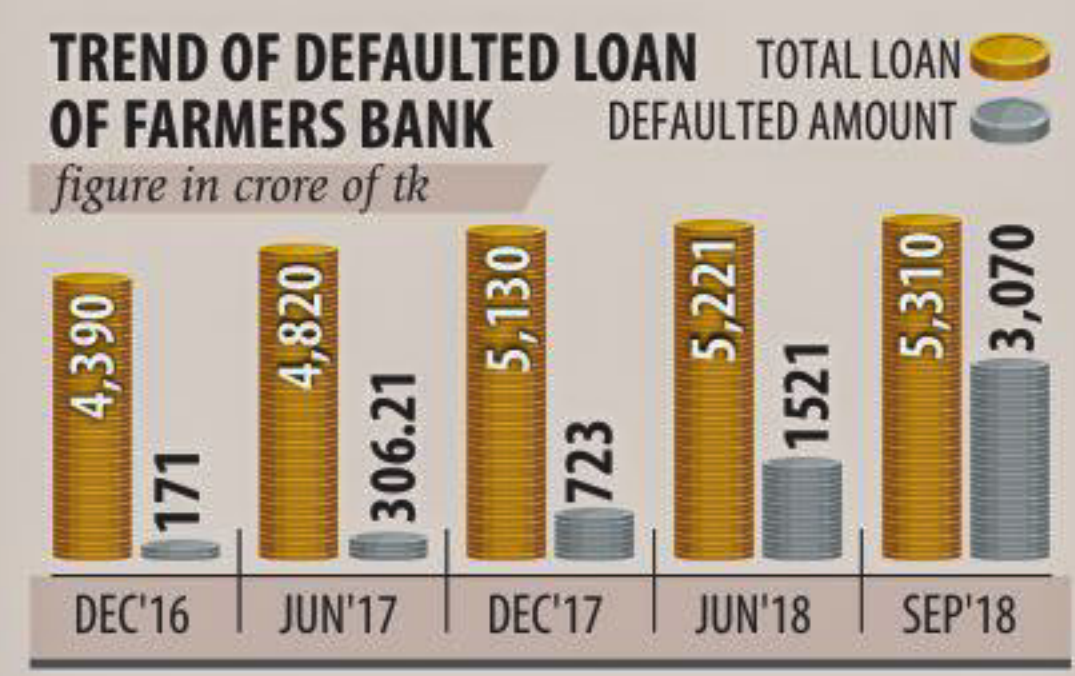
With Farmers Bank, no-one knows when the woes will end. And as days go by, more and more depressing statistics are coming out.

Since it was hit by massive corruption and irregularities a year ago, much of which is blamed on its former founder chairman, the bank has never been able to turn any profit and its bad loan portfolio is continuously swelling as more and more loans, even the good ones, are failing.

It seems even the good borrowers, and very few were there, have suddenly realised that being delinquent is a better option.

Farmers Bank found itself in the middle of a

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No let-up in attacks on BNP candidates

STAR REPORT

With the national election only eight days away, electoral violence have been continuing unabated across the country.

Two more BNP candidates came under attack and at least five campaign offices of ruling Awami League nominees were vandalised in different districts since Wednesday evening.

BNP candidate for Netrakona-1, Kayser Kamal, and his supporters came under attack allegedly from AL men in Kalmakanda upazila around 12:30pm yesterday.

Witnesses said a group of people swooped on the BNP men when they were going to the assistant returning officer's (ARO) office to lodge complaints over creating obstacles to campaigning.

Blaming the AL men for the attack, Kamal and his supporters held a sit-in in front of the ARO's office for around three hours from 1:00pm. They demanded legal action against the attackers.

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Better than ever

IGP says about polls atmosphere; CEC too sees congenial environment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The law and order situation centring the upcoming parliamentary election is better than ever, and law enforcers are well prepared to ensure a peaceful environment during the polls, said Inspector General of Police Mohammad Javed Patwary yesterday.

"If the prevailing situation continues, we will be able to deliver a wonderful election," he told reporters after a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda.

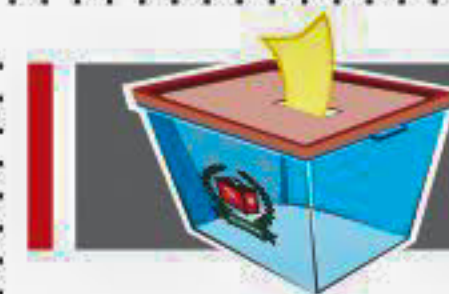
The IGP and several other top police officials went to meet the CEC to update the Election Commission on police preparation for the December 30 polls.

On the allegation by opposition parties that police are not under the EC's control, the police chief said, "We are taking actions on specific allegations. Now, not only the police but also all the administration and the law enforcers are under the commission."

His comment came at a time when the rift between the CEC and an election commissioner has deepened over the issue of level playing field.

On Monday, Election Commissioner Mahub Talukdar told journalists that a level playing field was still absent and the words -- level playing field -- had become meaningless. The next day, the CEC told reporters in Rangamati, "He [Mahub] did not speak the truth. The overall election atmosphere is good."

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FROM CAMPAIGN TRAIL

NATORE

Palak offers to donate money at campaign

Election law prohibits such announcement

ANWAR ALI

Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the Awami League candidate for Natore-3, may have broken the election law by offering cash donation to villagers in his constituency.

At a campaign in Radhanagar village of Singra upazila on Monday, Palak, also state minister for ICT, announced a donation of Tk 2 lakh to fill up a local canal and directed the

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JASHORE

Horror haunts Malopara still

Memories of 2014 attacks by 'BNP-Jamaat' men remain fresh among villagers

SHARIFUL ISLAM and MOHSIN MILON

Children in Jashore's Malopara village still have nightmares of people coming to attack them. And with the election on the horizon, panic has spread even among the adults.

It stems from their experience of the election day on January 5, 2014, when Jamat-Shibir and BNP men unleashed their fury in a series of mindless attacks on the locals.

They vandalised 130 houses of the Hindu community and torched 10 more in Malopara because the villagers had

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Shakib leads Tigers to leveller

MAZHAR UDDIN

Skipper Shakib Al Hasan's all-round performance, which included his maiden T20I five-wicket haul, helped Bangladesh bounce back to level the three-match series as the Tigers registered a comfortable 36-run win over the West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Shakib, who waged a lone battle during the first T20I which the hosts lost by eight wickets in Sylhet, this time ensured that his contributions would not go in vain after scoring an unbeaten 26-ball 42 in a Bangladesh record fifth-wicket stand with Mahmudullah Riyad which culminated in the Tigers posting their second highest T20I total of 211 for five.

Shakib also ended with career-best bowling figures of five for 21 from four overs before the West Indies were eventually bowled out for 175 in 19.2 overs.

The left-hander's efforts were ably backed by a collective approach from his teammates, with Liton Das's blistering 34-ball 60 setting up a perfect platform.

The West Indies, despite losing wickets at regular intervals, kept the run rate near ten till the halfway mark in their innings but the cushion provided by the huge total on the board helped the Tigers maintain pressure on the batting side and eventually seal victory.

Left-arm seamer Abu Hider got the breakthrough by removing the dangerous Evin Lewis for one before Shakib

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T20I captain Shakib Al Hasan led from the front, scoring an unbeaten 26-ball 42 during a Bangladesh record fifth-wicket stand with Mahmudullah Riyad before coming back with the ball to scalp his maiden five-for in the shortest format of the game as the Tigers won the second T20I by 36 runs to level the three-match series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Govt declares public holiday on Dec 30

BSS, Dhaka

The government has declared December 30 as a public holiday to enable the voters to cast their votes without hassles from work-related commitments.

A gazette notification has already been issued to this end, said an official hand-out.

On Monday, the Election Commission sent a letter to the public administration ministry requesting them to announce December 30 as public holiday.

The voting in the 11th parliamentary polls will be held on the day.

The public holiday meant for enabling the officers and employees of the government, semi-government, private and autonomous bodies and the teachers, officers and employees of all public and private educational institutions throughout the country to exercise their rights of franchise.