

## Advisers tell Hasina of EC reformation move

### Chief adviser sends Shafi, Sultana to Sudha Sadan late night to convey AL chief their decision

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Two advisers to the caretaker government late last night rushed to AL President Sheikh Hasina conveying the message that they have initiated effective steps to reconstitute the Election Commission (EC).

Advisers CM Shafi Shami and Sultana Kamal on instruction from Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed met Hasina at 9:40pm for more than an hour.

Following the meeting the AL softened its ultimatum ending today for tough action unless the caretaker government implements

its 11-point demand including EC reconstitution. The AL will wait for another week for the implementation of its demands, party sources said.

"We have been told from the council of advisers that effective steps have been taken for reconstitution of the Election Commission," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil made a one-liner to the waiting journalists after Shafi and Sultana left Sudha Sadan at 10:53pm.

Meantime, all the advisers at a meeting yesterday afternoon expressed a common sentiment

that the EC should be reconstituted to remove all negative images that overshadowed its credibility.

The advisers' council met again last night to discuss ways to make the EC effective but could not take any decision as the advisers found it difficult to reconstitute the EC because of some constitutional barriers.

A few advisers even said at the second meeting of the advisers' council yesterday afternoon that the chief election commissioner (CEC) and three other election commissioners have lost the moral right to stay in their offices.

The council is likely to sit again tomorrow.

In the first meeting yesterday, the advisers' council discussed the ways to minimise all negative images of the EC to gain people's confidence in it for holding a free and fair election, sources said. The advisers are also determined to create an environment acceptable to all political parties as soon as possible.

"The Election Commission's responsibility is like that of a referee. A referee cannot have the moral right to stay in job if the

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## Aziz, ECs 'neutral, non-partisan'

### Observes Khaleda, terms their removal demand 'illogical'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said the chief election commissioner (CEC) and the other commissioners are "neutral and non-partisan people" holding the constitutional posts.

The country cannot concede to Awami League (AL) and its allies' "illogical demand" for removal of the commissioners.

During her visit to the BNP central office last night, the first since handover of power, she also told reporters that AL had appointed their 'own man' as the CEC but the present CEC is a neutral person.

She arrived at the party office at around 8:00pm amid applause from hundreds of leaders and workers of BNP and its front

organisations.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and city BNP President Sadek Hossain Khoka were among others to receive the immediate past prime minister.

A good number of leaders and workers including Moudud Ahmad, Obaidur Rahman, Tanveer Ahmed Siddique met and greeted the BNP chairperson.

Referring to the formation of the interim government, Khaleda said everything has happened constitutionally. AL did not want Justice KM Hasan as the chief adviser, and now that their demand is met, they should not have anymore objections.

"Chief adviser and the other advisers have taken charge and hopefully, the next election will be

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## Same men reshuffled among top cop posts

### 6 divisional commissioners also changed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The top posts of the police were reshuffled again yesterday in a span of 24 hours, leaving the same men in important positions.

For example, the DG of Rab has been made the inspector general of police within 48 hours of his appointment to the former post. On the other hand, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) chief has been put at the helm of Rab. The same CID chief was the commissioner of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) only 48 hours earlier.

IGP Anwarul Iqbal has been made an officer on special duty (OSD).

The posts of chief of Special Branch (SB) and DMP commissioner have been swapped within 48 hours. The commissioner, Naim

Ahmed, had just joined his new post six hours before his new transfer to a less important posting at SB.

The latest changes show that the people who had allegedly been in good book of the last regime have gotten better postings.

Naim had played an important role in arresting Shibir activists accused in the Rajshahi University Prof Taher murder case. Shibir leader Mahbul Alam Salehi was on the run when Naim was the Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) commissioner and Awami League then lauded Naim's role in the case in parliament.

Besides, the interim government also transferred six joint secretaries to the posts of divisional commissioner yesterday.

ABM Bazlur Rahman, additional IGP of Special Branch (SB),

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## Jail Killing Day today

### Trial lost in judicial maze

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 30th anniversary of the killing of four national leaders and Liberation War heroes.

On this day in 1975, Syed Nazrul Islam, acting president of Bangladesh government in exile in 1971, Tajuddin Ahmed, prime minister of the same government, M Mansur Ali, finance minister,

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## Reception to Prof Yunus at Bangabhaban November 5

UNB, Dhaka

President and Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government Iajuddin Ahmed will accord a reception to Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus on November 5.

The reception will be held at Bangabhaban at 7:00pm, said an official announcement yesterday.

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Land grabbers fill and occupy a part of the Shitalakhya river at Shenpara near Kanchpur on the outskirts of the capital.

PHOTO: STAR

## CEC to consider if advisers ask him to quit

### But reminds them to follow constitution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz yesterday said he will consider if advisers to the caretaker government request him to resign from his post but he reminded them to follow the constitution before making such request.

"I am 100 per cent confident--absolutely confident--that insha Allah there will be an election and everybody will participate in it," Aziz said, adding that the EC is prepared to hold the election in time.

"I have told you many times that the posts of CEC and other election

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## Notice

We regret that the Star Weekend Magazine could not come out today due to printing problem. The magazine will be distributed along with Saturday's newspaper. However, it will be available on our online edition as usual. We apologise to readers for the inconvenience. -- Editor

## Meet demands or face all-out movements

### 14-party threatens CA, waits till noon today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party alliance yesterday reminded the president and caretaker government chief of the deadline to prove his neutrality and threatened to go for all-out movements if their demands are not met by noon today.

A three-member delegation of the Awami League (AL)-led 14-party yesterday met President and Chief Adviser to the caretaker government Prof Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban. The delegates -- Abdul Jalil, Amir Hossain Amu and Nurul Islam -- urged him to carry out the 11-point task, saying they would otherwise announce fresh course of agitation from today's Paltan Maidan rally.

"We have told the president if we can't see his activities through which we can observe his neutral-

ity by tomorrow [today] noon, there will be no alternative but to go for vigorous movements," AL General Secretary Jalil said. He was speaking to reporters at a press briefing at the party's Dhanmondi office last night.

Prior to the briefing, the 14-party held an emergency meeting where Jalil directed all the allies to chalk out programmes for today.

The 14-party sits today morning to finalise their next course of action.

The alliance delegates yesterday also reminded Iajuddin to bring radical changes in the posts of the deputy commissioners, superintendents of police, upazila nirbahi officers, thana nirbahi officers and other top posts in both the civil and police administration.

Earlier at a preparatory meeting

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## Contracts, projects to be reviewed

### Adviser Akbar Ali says spending to be prioritised, welcomes strict watch on council's activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adviser Akbar Ali Khan yesterday said the interim government will review all development projects and contracts approved during the last days of the immediate past alliance government.

"It is our responsibility to look into these matters," he told reporters on his first day in office as the finance and planning adviser.

Akbar, also in charge of commerce, post and telecommunications ministries, was replying to

queries about the Awami League (AL) led 14-party combine's demand for scrapping of all the decisions taken by the BNP-Jamaat government on development projects, block allocations and signing of contracts after January 1.

The opposition's call figures in the 11-point demand that AL President Sheikh Hasina submitted to the President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed on October 30.

The advisers should review the government's last six months'

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## SCBA wants Adviser Fazlul to resign

UNB, Dhaka

Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) has demanded immediate resignation of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Justice M Fazlul Huq for what it said his hostile attitude towards the 14-party combine.

The demand from the SCBA came within three days of his taking over the charge of an adviser to the caretaker government.

"Justice Huq has lost his neutrality by making arrogant comments on the political stand of the 14-party alliance with regard to overseeing the actions of the non-party caretaker government to judge its impartiality," SCBA President Barrister M Amir Ul

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## Ershad may join BNP alliance today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a major political development, former president HM Ershad-led Jatiya Party (JP) is going to join the BNP-led four-party alliance today.

JP sources said Ershad unilaterally finalised the decision yesterday, ignoring the opinion of senior party leaders including Kazi Zafar Ahmad and Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawlader.

To avoid discontent and unexpected situation arising out of his move, Ershad also suspended the November 4 and 5 extended meeting of his party.

"The party chairman has decided to return to the BNP-led four-party alliance, and this will be announced tomorrow (Friday)," JP

Presidium Member Kazi Firoz Rashid told The Daily Star last night.

The announcement would follow a presidium meeting of the party this morning. Ershad will preside over the meeting at the party's Banani office, Firoz Rashid said.

Senior JP leaders, including Kazi Zafar and Ruhul Hawlader protested the party chairman's unilateral decision to join the four-party alliance without settling parliamentary seat-sharing issues, party insiders said.

On Wednesday, Ershad met BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia and discussed the terms and conditions of his joining the coalition. BNP

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## Pricy essentials remained people's permanent plight

### Minister changed yet Commerce went downhill

STAR REPORT

Changes to the commerce ministry portfolio twice did little help to curb the price hike of essentials during the BNP-led four-party government's tenure. The situation rather worsened further, making the life of the general public unbearable in the last five years.

The ministers holding the commerce portfolio always remained in the media limelight for their contradictory statements and other moves. They shifted from one policy to another without considering its impact, allowed syndicates to operate virtually unchal-



lenged, and proved inefficiency in dealing trade not only at home but also in the global forums.

At the end of the alliance government's tenure, the Prime Minister's Office, especially the principal secretary to the PM, intervened in the activities of the commerce and other ministries to address skyrocketing prices. However, the move has so far failed to yield any positive results.

Besides, when negotiating skills play a vital role in protecting any country's interest in the changed global scenario, the government's policymakers ignored the issue of capacity building. As a result, Bangladesh was outperformed by other countries with similar interests.

Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury was the first to go apparently for his failure to curb the price hike of essentials. The government on March 25, 2004 made Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, whose charge of the home affairs earlier ended in failure, the commerce minister.

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