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KEY REFORM PROPOSALS

- Advisers, election commissioners to be appointed by consensus
- Caretaker government to conduct routine work only
- Defence ministry to come under caretaker government
- Law enforcers to come under EC
- EC to have independent secretariat and finance
- EC to have full authority to hire or fire election staff
- Electronic voting system and voter ID cards to be introduced
- Religion-based politics and use of religion in vote seeking to be banned
- Black-money-holders, loan defaulters, war criminals to be ineligible to contest
- Political parties, candidates to submit financial statements to EC
- New voter lists to be made of hill people, expatriates

AL, allies announce agenda for caretaker, EC reforms



Rashed Khan Menon, left, makes a point to Sheikh Hasina and Dr Kamal Hossain after the 14-party opposition line-up announced its electoral and caretaker government reforms agenda at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party opposition line-up led by Awami League yesterday announced its agenda for electoral and caretaker government reforms expressly to ensure free and fair elections.

Accompanied by frontline leaders of the 11-party alliance, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and National Awami Party (NAP), Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and AL President Sheikh Hasina read out the reform proposals at a crowded news conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

See page 2 for further details

The declaration comprises a 5-point proposal to amend the formation and jurisdiction of the caretaker government, a 15-point proposal to make the Election Commission (EC) truly independent and an 11-point suggestion for reforms of electoral laws and regulations.

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon and JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu along with senior leaders of the AL and its allies were present at the conference. Barrister Amir-ul-Islam and Barrister Rokaunuddin Mahmud

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Reform proposals to hinder smooth election process

Says Bhuiyan, asks opposition to place demands in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Co-operatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said the opposition's agenda for electoral and caretaker government reforms is aimed at hindering the country's smooth electoral process.

"But the issue of making the electoral process free of terrorism and black money can be discussed in parliament," he told a press conference at his residence in the city.

"If the opposition parties are sincere about their demands then they should come to parliament and place their demands there," he remarked.

Bhuiyan said the BNP also wants free and fair elections, as it does not believe in vote rigging. He claimed, "The more free and fair is the electoral process the more are the chances for BNP to win the elections."

The BNP secretary general termed the proposal of the 14-party



Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan opposition line-up to appoint the chief adviser and other advisers of the caretaker government by consensus of all political parties 'illogical'. "There are so many political parties in the country that it is impossible to appoint the chief

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

It won't need major changes in constitution

Say legal experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No major constitutional amendment is needed to carry out the electoral and caretaker government reform proposals of the main opposition Awami League and its left allies, eminent legal experts of the country said yesterday.

Constructive discussion between the government and the opposition can easily see implementation of the suggestions for the sake of free and fair elections, they said, adding only a few minor amendments to the 13th Amendment of the Constitution are necessary to do that.

"I think no major amendment is necessary, we can incorporate the suggestions by retouching the 13th Amendment, which introduced the caretaker government system in 1996," Barrister Amir-ul-Islam told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said appointment of the chief adviser through consensus of all parties is possible under the existing Clause 5 of Article 58C of the Constitution.

On reforms of the Election Commission (EC) and electoral laws, the constitutional expert said

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Jute and textile workers enforce dawn-to-dusk hartal today

AL extends support

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jute, cotton and textile mill workers have called a dawn-to-dusk hartal across the country today demanding reopening of all closed mills and factories, saving the country's potential jute sector, declaration of minimum wages and curbing price hike of essentials.

The main opposition Awami League (AL), left leaning 11-party, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra have extended their support to the hartal called by the Jute, Cotton and Textile Mill Workers' Sangram Parishad and 24-hour strike at all mills and factories.

Leaders of Shilpa Samik Karmachari Rakha Samannay Parishad, a platform of workers, at a rally yesterday called upon all sections of people to take a strong stand against the conspiracy of destroying

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

'Bomb-maker' of London attacks caught in Cairo

AFP, REUTERS, Cairo/London

The alleged bomb-maker in the July 7 London terror attacks has been arrested in Cairo, where he is being interrogated, Egyptian officials said yesterday.

They named the man as 33-year-old Magdy Nashar and said he had been arrested "several days ago."

The did not give any further details.

British police said yesterday they were "aware" of an arrest in Egypt in connection with the investigation into last week's London bombings.

"We are aware of an arrest made in Cairo but are not prepared to discuss if we may or may not wish to interview (the person) in connection with this investigation," a spokeswoman for London's Metropolitan Police told AFP.



Magdy Nashar "This remains a fast-moving investigation with a number of lines of enquiry, some of which may have an international dimension." The US network ABC News

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

4 Indians held with grenades, arms on Sylhet border

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Members of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) nabbed four Indian nationals with three grenades, three firearms including an AK47 assault rifle, and ammunition when they intruded into Bangladesh territory through Atgram border in Jakiganj yesterday.

A BDR press release said the seized firearms and ammunition also include two 9mm pistols, three magazines and 328 bullets of 9mm pistols, four magazines and 316 bullets of AK47 rifle, Tk 2700 and Indian Rs 3000.

The BDR identified the arrestees as Robin, 28, Mortar, 26, Obar, 29, and Meel, 24, and described them as miscreants. They are believed to be of Khasi origin hailing from Shillong and Meghalaya of India.

Lt Colonel Mirza Monwar Reza, commander of 21 Battalion of BDR,



The engine of the train derailed in a collision with a bus at Mondolherat level crossing lies beside the rail tracts in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila yesterday.

4 killed, 45 hurt as train rams bus in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Four people were killed and at least 45 others injured, 20 of them critically, as a passenger train rammed a bus at Mondolherat level crossing under Lalmonirhat sadar upazila early yesterday.

Police said they could identify two of the dead as Joygunnesa, 45, and Kashem, 55, of Lalmonirhat sadar upazila. The two succumbed to their injuries on the way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH). The identities of two others, who died on the spot, could not be known even late in the evening.

The accident took place at about 6:30am when a Parbotipur-bound passenger train hit a Burimari-bound night coach from Dhaka at the Mondolherat rail crossing, 5 kilometres off Lalmonirhat Railway Station.

One of the injured passengers of

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