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DEMAND FOR REFORMS
14-party to stage
demonstrations
today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party opposition combine observes today "reform proposals implementation day" in a bid to put pressure on the government before the final round of talks between the ruling BNP and the Awami League (AL) tomorrow.

The opposition is set to stage countrywide demonstrations today to observe the day. They will hold a massive rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital and bring out a procession to press home their demands for electoral reforms.

The opposition top brass will instruct their activists today to go for all-out demonstrations with sticks, oars and poles to put up strong resistance and paralyse the city if the government hands over power to "BNP-partisan" Justice KM Hasan.

The top district-level leaders will also direct local leaders to make preparations for keeping the streets under control if the situation so develops.

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Hasan's security upped as eyes fixed on him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid heightened anxiety in the people's minds with the ruling and opposition alliances preparing to face off in the streets, it now depends on Justice KM Hasan where the country's politics will be heading for next week.

In the wake of the opposition combine's threat to launch agitation against Justice Hasan's assuming office as the chief adviser to the next caretaker government on expiry of the present government's tenure next Friday, the government yesterday beefed up security for the former chief justice.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday deployed 12 personnel of the armed police battalion at Hasan's residence in addition to eight policemen stationed earlier. Different intelligence agencies are also maintaining close vigilance, police administration sources said.

The possibility of forging a consensus in the ongoing dialogue

between the ruling BNP and main opposition Awami League (AL) over Justice Hasan is diminishing fast due to the rigid stances of the two parties.

Meanwhile, the Bangabhaban, office and residence of the president, and the cabinet division are preparing for administering the oath of the next caretaker government.

Although the date for oath-taking is yet to be fixed, sources in the Bangabhaban and cabinet division said it will take place any day of the next week after the president invites Justice Hasan to take oath as the chief of the interim government.

But nothing is certain about the formation of the caretaker government as the ruling BNP is still favouring Justice Hasan to be its chief while the AL-led opposition combine has been vehemently opposing his appointment.

The position of Justice Hasan, who has maintained silence over

the controversy, is expected to become clear only after the president invites him to take oath as the chief adviser.

Speculations, however, are mounting over whether he will accept the post or not.

Some eminent persons from political and cultural arena, who have been trying to convince Justice Hasan not to accept the post of the caretaker government chief, have failed to guess his next course of action, sources said.

Many political analysts believe that Justice Hasan will not accept the offer sensing an imminent political confrontation, but others think that he might take the job as a challenge to prove his capability and neutrality.

"I do not see any ray of hope in the prevailing volatile political situation as both BNP and Awami League are preparing to confront each other. Everything now depends on Justice Hasan," former

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City abuzz with
Eid shoppers

MOON MOON SULTANA

Shopping centres as well as the footpath shops of the capital are buzzing with shoppers as Eid-ul-Fitr, the biggest festival of the Muslims, is only one or two days ahead.

"Many things are yet to be bought and the time is very short. So I am buying anything I find in front," said housewife Mina, who came to Gawsia Market from Mirpur yesterday.

On a footpath shop beside the Gawsia Market, she was choosing sandal-shoes for his two sons.

She will also go to the Priyangan Shopping Centre to buy readymade shirts and pants for his sons after shopping at Gawsia, she said.

Footpath shops that sell cheap cosmetics and imitation jewellery are popular to the low-income customers.

Oxidised and golden earrings and chains costing Tk 50 to 200 are selling very well, said Rakibul, a footpath hawker.

Footpath shops selling ladies' bags and plastic products were also seen busy with customers.

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Jute mill workers
block Dhaka-Ctg
highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Thousands of people travelling to the port city and the capital ahead of Eid, faced untold sufferings yesterday as agitating jute mill workers blocked the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway to press home their demands for payment of arrears and bonuses.

Hundreds of buses, trucks and other vehicles were stuck in a severe traffic gridlock for over three hours as the angry workers of Anwara Jute Mill laid the barricades in front of the mill gate at Barabkunda under Sitakunda upazila at around 10:00am.

The snarl-up stretched to around 30 kilometres, police and witnesses said.

At around 1:15pm, the Upazila Officer (UNO) of Sitakunda Jalaluddin Ahmed along with the police officials negotiated with the CBA leaders of the mill and assured them of payment of 10-days' arrear

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A launch leaves Dhaka yesterday with passengers occupying every bit of floor-space on the vessel ahead of the Eid holiday. Despite mobile courts' warnings of stern actions against such overloading, vessels carry on their malpractice.

**Dissident BNP leaders
may join new party
of Oli, B Chy**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of dissident leaders of ruling BNP is trying to create a common platform soon under the leadership of former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and BNP Standing Committee Member Col (retd) Oli Ahmed.

Badruddoza Chowdhury, also Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB), and Oli have already agreed in principle to form a new political party, sources said, adding that they will clarify their positions on this soon.

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**Alliance's last
day at office
likely today**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers may attend their office at the ministries today for the last working day although the five-year tenure of the present four-party coalition government is scheduled to complete on October 27.

After the October 23-25 Eid vacation, the ministers can attend the office only for a day, as October 27 is Friday, a weekly holiday.

But due to the political pre-occupations and the preparation for power handover, it will be tough for the ministers to attend the office on Thursday, the last working day for

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**Congratulations to Dr M Yunus and
Grameen Bank on attaining the
Nobel Peace Prize - 2006**

Many congratulations on receiving the highly coveted Nobel Peace Prize. Over here in the UK, our British friends and fellow Bangladeshis are thrilled to hear this fantastic news. It is a tremendous achievement not only for you and the Grameen Bank, but also for Bangladesh and all Bangladeshis living abroad. Your honest perseverance and dedication has brought us self respect and made us, and especially our nation, very proud.

It appears from the media coverage in Bangladesh that receiving your Nobel Peace Prize is already having a unifying effect on the whole country. This is a very good sign and has now inspired the whole nation. You have become a symbol for our nation internationally.

We pray that your hopes and aspirations for our country are allowed to materialise and that this coming effect will spill over and benefit the present political process in our country at this critical juncture.

We wish you a happy and long life.

With our warm regards

From all of us at

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Wishing
you the light of faith,
the warmth of home,
the love of family...
all the deepest joys
of Eid

Eid Mubarak

Time is broken into transient moments. A blink can capture one precious moment from the fleeting passage of time. Memory can make it eternal. Sharing the memory gives it the name of knowledge.

Let us celebrate the eternity of happy moments picked from such momentous occasions and let us share the happiness around.

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