



## Advisers tell Zakaria to go on leave, spare Modabbir

EC changes poll schedule again but not the voting date

SHAKHAWAT LITON and RASHIDUL HASAN

The advisory council of caretaker government requested Election Commissioner SM Zakaria yesterday to go on leave of absence while at its request the Election Commission (EC) rescheduled the polls timetable again, keeping in mind holding of election within the 90-day constitutional obligation.

The advisory council claimed that it has implemented the entire package proposal finalised 16 days ago although the proposals also included sending of Election Commissioner Modabbir Hossain Chowdhury on leave and appointment of new election commissioners to recast the EC.

The council of advisers also decided not to appoint any new

election commissioner although its package proposal had a deal in this regard.

Upon hearing about the latest changes, the Awami League (AL) led grand alliance rejected them, sources said.

A delegation of the AL-led grand alliance rushed to the EC yesterday afternoon and rejected the new timetable for the ninth parliamentary election, demanding announcement of election schedule after properly correcting the voter list first.

The grand electoral alliance consisting of the AL-led 14-party alliance, Jatiya Party (Ershad), Liberal Democratic Party, a faction of Islami Oikya Jote, and Islami Oikya Front will clarify its stance on the over-all situation today.

Sources said the Bangabhaban

communicated with Zakaria yesterday afternoon and informed him of the advisory council's decision.

In line with the request of the council of advisers, the EC rescheduled the next election by extending the deadline for filing nomination papers by three days up to December 24. Today was the deadline in the earlier schedule.

The dates for other stages of the election were also re-fixed. In the new timetable, the date for scrutiny of nomination papers is December 28 and the date for withdrawal of candidature is January 3. The previous deadlines were December 22 and 28.

The polling date, however, remains the same—January 22. The EC has to complete the election by January 25, the last day of the con-

stitutionally stipulated 90-day period for holding election.

EC Secretary Abdur Rashid Sarkar disclosed the new polls schedule yesterday afternoon through a gazette notification. He said the EC rescheduled the official polls plan to ensure participation of all political parties in the election.

Following these latest developments towards resolving the existing political deadlock, the council of advisers hoped that all political parties will now participate in the election.

"The council of advisers has now implemented the entire agreed package proposal and hoped that the decision will be acceptable to all. We also hope that all political parties will now participate in the election process,"

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## Latest proposal of advisers rejected

14-party, LDP, JP decide today new agitation plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Awami League (AL) and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in separate meetings with the European Union (EU) election observation team yesterday described President Iajuddin Ahmed as the 'key obstacle' to a free, fair and neutral election.

Observing that Iajuddin's activities will go in favour of the BNP-Jamaat alliance in the upcoming polls, the leaders of both the parties said other than his resignation from the post of the chief adviser (CA), there is no other way for holding the election in a credible manner.

The three-member team, led by chief observer Alexander Lambdorff, which also met senior leaders of BNP, emphasised creating a congenial atmosphere for the polls with participation of all parties. Other members of the team

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Earlier, Jalil also AL general secretary, visited JP Chairman HM Ershad at his President's Park residence in the morning and discussed the current political situation with him.

He also consulted with the top leaders of LDP, Zaker Party and other components of the grand electoral alliance before the briefing.

AL-led alliance will sit again today to chalk out fresh programmes.

In a latest development yesterday, the CG decided to make a formal request to 'controversial' Election Commissioner SM Zakaria to go on a leave and the Election Commission (EC) rescheduled the next election without changing the polling date.

At the briefing, Jalil said,

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## 14-party, JP enforce hartal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL)-led 14-party combine and Jatiya Party (Ershad) enforce a dawn-to-dusk hartal across the country today as part of their joint movement to resist any one-sided election.

Jatiya Oikya Front comprising the Liberal Democratic Party

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Rajuk starts re-demarcation of walkway by Gulshan Lake

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Rajuk, the city development authority, commenced the re-demarcation of its walkway area yesterday, incorporating a large stretch of the Gulshan Lake at the end of road-103.

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## FAULTY TONGI POWER PLANT

## 9 top PDB officials sued for graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against nine Power Development Board (PDB) officials, including one of its former chairmen, involved in the construction of the Tongi 80 megawatt power plant.

The nine officials are accused of deliberately accepting sub-standard machinery from the plant's Chinese builder Harbin, as well as dispensing with the approval of higher authorities for the deviation they committed for their personal gains, the case filed with Gazipur Police Station states.

The accused officials are: SA Mayeed (former chairman of PDB), Dr MAK Azad (former member (Generation), PDB), BSMM Haq Fatimi (former project director), Akhtarul Islam (director, Ghorashal power plant), Naimul Hossain (deputy director of

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Roushan talks with Khaleda  
Announcement on alliance likely today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of Jatiya Party (JP) leaders led by its President Member Roushan Ershad met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night and expressed their solidarity with the BNP-led four-party alliance.

BNP sources said during the meeting at Hawa Bhaban that lasted about two hours, Roushan expressed her willingness to join the BNP-led alliance.

The meeting discussed the latest political situation as well as

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## 3 cattle lifters beaten to death in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mob beat three cattle lifters to death and injured one at Syedpur in Sitakunda upazila during early hours yesterday.

One of the killed was identified as Nurun Nabi, 30, from Phulbari of Mymensingh while the other two remained unidentified.

The injured, Rabiu alias Ronny, 35, was undergoing treatment at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH), said police.

Sources said a gang of ten cattle thieves on a truck went to West Bakkhali village of Madhyam-Bogachar under Syedpur at around 2:30am.

They broke in and rounded up

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## Western envoys meet BNP leaders, advocate all-party participation in polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Diplomats from several Western countries and representatives of UNDP and other donor agencies met BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday and once again raised voices for holding a free and neutral election with participation of all political parties.

Sources said BNP leaders told the delegation that according to

the constitutional framework there is no scope to defer the poll date beyond the stipulated 90 days.

The envoys, however, did not express any opinion to the BNP leaders.

British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury, who led the delegation, also did not make any comment while talking to reporters after the meeting at the BNP

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## Right to pick honest candidate at stake

Citizen's campaign critical of protecting poll aspirants' personal info

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Shujan) yesterday said people's right to choose an honest and credible candidate in the upcoming parliamentary elections will be hampered since they will not be able to know vital information about the contestants.

A movement for good governance, Shujan expressed its concern over the issue at a press conference in Dhaka styled as 'Attempt to Snatch Away Voters' Right to Know'. Its leaders talked on the stayed High Court (HC) verdict that compels the Election Commission (EC) to collect and make public

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