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AL for specific poll timeframe, lifting ban on indoor politics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday demanded the caretaker government and the Election Commission (EC) specify the time for holding the next election and lift the ban on indoor politics without delay.

"The chief adviser has said that

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Judicial body for recruitment of 200 judges

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission (BJSC) has recommended recruitment of 200 assistant judges for manning an independent judiciary.

Commission Chairman Justice MM Ruhul Amin yesterday apprised President Iajuddin Ahmed of the overall activities of BJSC and its recommendations when he submitted the BJSC

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Five robbers beaten to death in N'ganj

A CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A mob beat five robbers to death as they were trying to get away after robbing two cloth traders at Sonargon in Narayanganj yesterday.

Police sources said the mob captured the robbers after they

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ACC to ask 21 more today to submit wealth report

Tarique, Shamim Iskandar among the new faces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) will serve notices today on 21 new graft suspects including former premier Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman and her brother Shamim Iskandar.

It will ask them to come up with wealth statements within seven

days of receipt. The decision was taken at a meeting yesterday.

A list containing the names will be unveiled today. It includes a host of former ministers and top public servants, said a source close to those working on the matter.

Six BNP and five Awami League (AL) men figure in the list. Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain,

Anwar Hossain Manju, Shahjahan Siraj, Obaidul Quader, Syed Abul Hossain, and Ziaul Haq Zia are among the former ministers and state ministers listed as graft suspects.

Besides, four ex-lawmakers—AL's Sheikh Hielal (Sheikh Hasina's cousin), Kamal Ahmed Majumder,

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VOTER LIST Photo not a must for enrolment now

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday suddenly disclosed that eligible citizens will be registered as voters even if their photographs are not available.

But the commission has yet to decide whether such voters will finally be allowed to cast their votes without their photographs on the voter list.

The EC had earlier decided that one will have to visit the voter registration centres to have his or her photograph taken for the voter list with photographs.

To complete the task of preparing the voter list with all eligible

persons' names on it within the shortest possible time, the EC had already decided to send its enumerators to door-to-door visits to collect the particulars of prospective voters, and now it decided to register voters even without photographs, sources said.

We have decided to register an eligible citizen's name on the voter list even if the person's photograph is not available. But the Election Commission will decide later whether that person will be allowed to cast a vote in the election," Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda told reporters yesterday.

Huda disclosed the decision a

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BNP reforms stuck in dynastic quagmire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chances that the BNP will take initiatives to bring reforms soon are slim as party Chairperson Khaleda Zia categorically said on Friday that they will start working on the reforms when the ban on indoor politics is withdrawn.

A few senior leaders are also confused if any step will be taken to free the party from the politics of dynasty as Khaleda ruled out its existence in her party and said it will back only those with qualifications and popular support.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of senior leaders expressed their resentment over the chairperson's ruling.

Khaleda's stance has also raised the question whether she will take steps to allow senior leaders' concern over making her brother the party vice-president, sources said.

The senior leaders who have been speaking for reforms in the party, however, have not started identifying the fields that require reforms as there has been no directive from the party high command.

Political leaders, civil society members, the Election Commission and a few advisers to the caretaker government have recently stressed reforming political parties to institutionalise internal democracy and transparency in their functioning.

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Power import move from Myanmar

Energy adviser says delegation to visit Yangon next month

BSS, Dhaka

Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Adviser Tapan Chowdhury yesterday said the government has taken an initiative to import electricity from Myanmar and a delegation is scheduled to visit Yangon early next month to open discussion on the matter.

Speaking at a meeting on 'Power sector reforms' with donors' representatives at the NEC Building in the capital, Tapan said the government is also exploring the possibility of importing electricity from Nepal and Bhutan.

But, he said, it appeared that Nepal and Bhutan are already having bilateral agreements on power with India. Bangladesh's success in negotiations may take time, he added.

Importing electricity from Myanmar, where possibility of hydroelectricity is immense, can be achieved quickly, he said referring to the present power crisis and the need to mitigate in the short run. He said the power secretary will lead the delegation.

Tapan said Dhaka is also keen to see that the tri-nation gas pipeline from Myanmar to India through

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Workers of Bangladesh Railway turn the metre-gauge lines into dual-gauge at Khilkhet in the capital to facilitate Dhaka-Kolkata direct train service which is likely to begin from August.

Dhaka-Kolkata train likely to start in Aug

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka-Kolkata direct passenger train via Darshana might start operating from August.

Members of recently formed technical and commercial committees comprising high railway officials from Bangladesh and India are reviewing necessary preparations regarding the service, officials concerned said.

Following two meetings between delegations of the two countries, the high officials are now negotiating the finer details. Laying of broad gauge tracks from Joydevpur to Kamalapur in Bangladesh is almost finished, sources said.

"The new broad gauge line up to Dhaka Cantonment from

Joydevpur is complete. Right now trains from Shialdaha railway station can directly come to Cantonment station. But we have not decided yet whether trains will commute between Joydevpur and Shialdaha or between Cantonment and Shialdaha," said Shafiqul Alam Khan, director of public relations of Bangladesh Railway.

Policy level details are being worked out now, including accommodating the immigration and custom departments, fixing the fare, the sizes of trains and the number of passengers they will be able to carry.

According to a proposal, there will be three categories of fares of \$8, \$12 and \$20. Bangladesh will keep 78 percent of the revenue while India will get the rest, as the

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