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New party to take off amid politics ban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite the ban on all sorts of politics, the process for floating a new political party is going on in full speed.

Former BNP leader Ferdous Ahmed Qureshi, who had been inactive in politics for a long time, took the main initiative to float a new political party.

The initiative got a new dimension recently as Jatiya Party (JP) leader Roushan Ershad along with a group of JP leaders got involved with the process.

They have reportedly held meetings among themselves and with the initiators of the new party.

A few mid- and junior-level political leaders like Sayeed Khokon of Awami League (AL) and former lawmaker Nurul Islam Moni of BNP also joined the move.

Roushan Ershad along with JP leaders Col (retd) HM Gaffar, Col

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Poland to recruit Bangladeshi workers

UNB, Dhaka

Poland is interested to recruit Bangladeshi workers for its construction and infrastructure sectors in view of the vacuum created due to Polish workers' migration to other European countries.

"We discussed the possibilities of sending Bangladeshi workers for Polish construction and infrastructure sectors to fill up the void as Polish workers themselves move into other European Union countries," Foreign Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury said after a meeting with a Polish delegation at the foreign ministry yesterday.

The five-member delegation is headed by Ambassador Professor Jan Bielawski, a special envoy of the Polish president.

The foreign adviser noted that Bangladesh and Poland have long historical relations, which have the

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Over 1,000 Biman staff respond to retirement offer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of Biman officials responding to Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) crossed 1,000 yesterday, managing director (MD) of Biman said.

The 16-day time limit for accepting the offer of retiring willingly ends on Wednesday.

The national flag carrier is going to become a public limited company (PLC) by the end of this month as declared, Biman MD Dr MA Momen said, terming the response to the VRS as satisfactory.

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Condemned Mohiuddin arrives today

2 US officials accompany the ex-major convicted on August 1975 carnage

STAR REPORT

AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed, condemned to death for killing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family about 32 years ago, might finally be brought back to the country today.

His prolonged legal battle in the US to avoid being expelled ended in failure on Thursday as a district court in Los Angeles issued a ruling that it did not have jurisdiction over immigration judge's order for his deportation.

Immigration and foreign ministry officials said ex-army Major Mohiuddin, 60, boarded a plane



Major Mohiuddin

from Los Angeles yesterday noon and was scheduled to arrive at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) on a Thai Airways flight at around 12:30pm.

"We've just received a communication from our Consul General in Washington that the process of his deportation has begun," Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury told reporters at a briefing yesterday.

He however did not elaborate on the much-talked about return, citing security concerns of the US authorities.

Two US Homeland Security

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Pvt land-phone in Dhaka soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) is set to grant licences to private land-phone companies to operate in the capital by the end of this month.

"We are prepared to issue licences to private land-phone companies to operate in the central zone. We expect to offer the licences by the end of this month," BTRC Chairman Maj Gen (retd) Manjurul Alam told a private television channel yesterday.

BTRC is also pondering about tagging a set of conditions with the licences.

"All of the companies are interested to operate in Dhaka as the profit margin is higher here. We will tag a condition that any company interested to operate in Dhaka is obliged to expand their activities nationwide and this is mandatory," said the BTRC chairman.

Any company failing to expand

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EC proposal to stop 'nomination business'

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday drafted a new proposal to curtail the absolute power of political parties' parliamentary boards to nominate party candidates for parliamentary election in a bid to stop reported unbridled nomination business.

According to the proposal, members of the local unit of a registered political party will primarily elect through secret ballots two or more tentative candidates for each parliamentary area and the party's central parliamentary board will choose from the list a candidate for the constituency.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Sakhawat Hossain revealed this while talking to reporters at his office yesterday.

At present, the political parties' parliamentary boards composed of party chiefs and some other top leaders enjoy absolute power to choose the candidates to contest in the parliamentary election and grass-roots level leaders have little to say in the process.

Using this power, the major political parties, especially the BNP and Awami League reportedly made huge amounts of money by selling party nominations to businessmen and black money holders during the previous parliamentary elections, while the dedicated leaders were ignored in many cases.

The new proposal as well as the proposed conditions for a political party to get registration with the EC will be finalised upon consultation with the major political parties after the embargo on indoor politics is

lifted.

Once the proposal is made a rule, the political parties will have to include the provision in their constitutions and follow it to nominate candidates for the parliamentary elections. If the proposal is implemented, the parliamentary boards will no longer have the absolute power to choose candidates.

Besides, locals will be able to know about the prospective candidates and the leaders who want to contest the polls will work for the betterment of the locality, Election Commissioner Sakhawat said.

"It will also help to curb nomination business," he said, adding

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Proposal ready for reform within BNP

Bhuiyan to announce plan by June 20

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Pro-reform leaders of BNP have almost finalised the proposal for intra-party reforms to drastically curb party Chairperson Khaleda Zia's power in taking decisions.

Party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan is likely to announce the reform proposal for discussion within June 20, party sources said.

However, it is yet to be decided whether the reform proposal will be shown to Khaleda Zia for her opinion before its formal announcement.

Many leaders of the party, including a few former lawmakers from Bogra, home district of Tarique Rahman, son of Khaleda Zia, yesterday met Bhuiyan and expressed

their support for the reform initiative.

Meanwhile, the BNP secretary general yesterday met party Standing Committee member M Saifur Rahman for discussion on the issue and the latter supported Bhuiyan's stand on the reform.

"We want reforms to keep the party in progress and discussion is going on," former whip in parliament Rezaul Bari Dina, who met Bhuiyan, told The Daily Star.

"We have discussed and finalised the reform proposal. I hope the secretary general will make an announcement on reform proposal within June 20," former BNP lawmaker Abdul Alim told the

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Four more PSC members quit on 'personal grounds'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four more members of the Public Service Commission (PSC) resigned yesterday, citing personal reasons.

They—AKM Shahadat Hossain Mandal, M Anwarul Haq, Latifur Rahman, and M Fazlul Haq—tendered their resignations to President Iajuddin Ahmed.

Earlier on Thursday, Ashrafur Islam Chowdhury who was the head

of the 27th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) exams, stood down mentioning the same reason.

PSC Chairman Saadat Hussain yesterday said the five have resigned on personal grounds. "One member resigned on Thursday and four today," he told the reporters.

The military-backed administration decided to reform the PSC, a quasi-judicial body mandated by

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Anwar Hossain Monju submits wealth report

His loan bigger than assets

UNB, Dhaka

The wealth statement of Jatiya Party (Monju) Chairman Anwar Hossain Monju and his family was submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday disclosing that his wife Taslima Hossain possesses much more wealth than Monju himself.

ACC Secretary Delwar Hossain received the statement submitted by Monju's wife.

Monju, a former communications minister, is believed to be abroad at the moment.

The statement shows Monju possesses wealth worth about Tk 4.54 crore against a loan of over Tk 7 crore meaning he is highly indebted, while his wife Taslima,

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Bombs, arms seized in Bagerhat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police recovered seven powerful bombs, two firearms and bomb making materials from Joxmoni village under Mongla upazila of Bagerhat district on Saturday night.

The recovery was made following a confidential statement of Abdul Khaleque, leader of a gang of robbers in the Sundarbans.

Arrested on Saturday morning from the premises of Rampal upazila office in Bagerhat district, Khaleque was taken on a three-day remand for interrogation yesterday, police said.

He was a bodyguard of detained former BNP lawmaker MAH Salim.



PHOTO: STAR

This recent picture shows Chittagong City Corporation establishing a housing estate by cutting hills in the city's Foy's Lake area.

Big shots levelled vast terrain of Ctg hills

PINAKI ROY and SHAHIDUL ISLAM from Ctg

Several quarters comprising influential political leaders, former ministers, criminals, big business houses and even government and autonomous bodies have been involved in massive cutting or razing of vast terrains of hills in Chittagong.

City dwellers have been sur-

prised over the past few years to see the brazen defiance of law and disregard for the country's interest in the activities of these political big shots and businessmen.

The political figures include former commerce minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, former food minister and BNP Joint Secretary General Abdullah-Al Noman, Chittagong City

Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, and former civil aviation minister Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin. Business organisations like S Alam Group and Abul Khair Group are also involved in hill cutting.

These people gobbled up hills at Khulshi, Nasirabad, Lalkhan Bazar,

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Mobile court starts drive in Ctg against hill-cutting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The divisional authorities unearthed three incidents of hill cutting in Chittagong yesterday, the first day of the drive against such practices.

A mobile court led by Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) Magistrate Syeda Tahera Ferdous in separate drives in the city's South Khulshi and Kotwali areas found four residential buildings, which were built after cutting a huge portion of a hill.

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