

Govt may allow indoor politics on limited scale
Reformists, if corrupt, won't be spared

UNB, Dhaka

Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday said the government is contemplating allowing indoor politics on a limited scale.

Talking to reporters at his office, he said the government will have no objection if the political parties want to sit with the Election Commission to discuss the electoral reforms.

"We're thinking about allowing indoor politics in a limited way considering political party reforms, holding their councils and elections," the adviser said. "But it cannot be seen as permission for open politics," he added.

Mainul said the parties would require prior permission to organise meetings and processions as the government will have to see the

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Yunus among 30 greatest entrepreneurs

UNB, Dhaka

Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus has been named as one of the 30 greatest business entrepreneurs of all time by the BusinessWeek magazine of the US, for his contribution to economy and market.

BusinessWeek in its June 27 issue wrote that Yunus, the winner of 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, founded a banking system 30 years ago to lend small amounts of money to the rural poor in Bangladeshi villages.

"Most of the low-interest

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Parties unwilling to sit with EC with ban on politics

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission's (EC) initiative to hold dialogue with the political parties on proposed electoral reforms has apparently failed due to the parties' unwillingness to sit in such dialogue amid the embargo on indoor politics.

"We are to wait for lifting of the embargo on indoor politics," Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain told reporters at his office yesterday.

The EC last week announced that any political parties could sit with the EC to discuss the draft proposals for electoral reforms by

sending representatives despite the embargo on indoor politics.

Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday reiterated the government's 'no objection' if the political parties discuss with the EC on the proposed electoral reforms.

But no political parties, not even the name-only ones, expressed interest in sitting for dialogue with the EC amid the embargo on indoor politics, EC sources said.

"We want to hold discussion with the political parties. But so far we know none of the political parties want to sit in dialogue so long as the embargo on indoor politics remains effective," the election commis-

sioner said.

Rejecting the EC's initiative for discussion with the embargo on indoor politics remaining, the major political parties have said before holding such discussion the ban should go allowing them to hold their party's forum meeting to discuss the proposed reforms.

Several non-government organisations and social welfare bodies, however, met the EC after the draft proposals for electoral reforms were disclosed in April. The EC itself also invited civil society personalities a n d

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Reformists dare Khaleda to council meet

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Accepting what many consider a veiled challenge from BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, the pro-reform leaders yesterday said they too want the reform proposals to be passed at the party council.

The BNP chief on Saturday said the reforms issue would be settled at a council where everyone would have their say, and necessary changes would be brought about for the greater interest of the party, not to pander to any individual's whims.

Those for radical changes in the party that was in power for the highest three times said they hope this time the councillors who did not have the opportunity to have a council in the last 14 years would be able to speak their mind.

"She [Khaleda] is our leader, we respect her and want to make it clear again that the council will decide everything," said BNP Vice-president Hafiz Uddin Ahmed adding that they are hopeful they would have the majority required to bring changes in the party constitution.

The preparations for the council are on, he told reporters at the Gulshan residence of BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

Asked how they would arrange the council with a state of emergency in place, he said there should not be any problem if the government permits. "We will seek permission from the government once we are done with our preparations."

Meanwhile, the pro-reform group is making some more

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Shops might be allowed to remain open till 8pm

UNB, Dhaka

Shop owners may be allowed to keep their stores open until 8:00pm instead of the present 7:00pm cut-off time fixed earlier by the government as a power-saving measure.

Power Adviser Tapan Chowdhury at a meeting with shop owners yesterday gave the hint as the traders lamented that they have to suffer losses for early closing of their shops.

The adviser, however, said he would place a proposal to this effect and the final decision would come from the Council of Advisers.

"If the advisory council approves the proposal, you will be allowed to keep your shops open up to 8:00pm right from next Saturday," he told the leaders of the shop owners.

Tapan said all the advisers feel the shops should remain open till

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ACC's chief prosecutor Mahbub quits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Prosecutor to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Advocate Mahbubur Rahman yesterday resigned from his post following media reports that portrayed him as a 'corrupt person'.

He, however, claimed that he has resigned on 'personal and health grounds'.

His resignation came on the date when the senior lawyer was supposed to start his work at the ACC.

"I have submitted my resignation to the commission chairman seeking relief from the position on personal and health grounds," Mahbubur Rahman, also a former minister of autocrat Ershad's cabinet, told The Daily Star last night.

He denied having quit following media reports against him and said that his resignation has no connection with these. Earlier several

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Announcement

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains monthly FORUM free of charge.
— Editor

WEALTH REPORT

ACC team quizzes Tarique's wife, mother-in-law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A four-member team of the anti-graft national taskforce yesterday questioned Tarique Rahman's wife and mother-in-law about his wealth statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Led by ACC Deputy Director Zahirul Huda, the team entered the Dhanmondi residence of Tarique's in-laws at 3:45pm and after around two hours left with photocopies of some property documents.

Besides quizzing Zubaida Rahman Khan, wife of the detained son of former premier Khaleda Zia, and her mother Iqbal Mand Banu, they examined the documents of Zubaida's property, and bank statements.

Major Redwanur Rahman, National Board of Revenue (NBR) Deputy Commissioner (income tax) Abdus Samad Al Azad and

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Safeguard tax on imports taken off

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government has withdrawn the provision for imposing safeguard tax on import of products, which was proposed in the current budget to protect local industries in line with the World Trade Organisation policy.

According to a rule drafted by the National Board of Revenue (NBR), the safeguard tax was supposed to have been executed from yesterday but sources said it was withdrawn following strong opposition from a donor agency.



PHOTO: STAR

Jubilant students at a rally near the Teachers-Students Centre on the Dhaka University Day yesterday, the 86th founding anniversary of the country's premier educational institution.

Charges pressed against Harris Chy for keeping foreign currencies illegally

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Gulshan police yesterday pressed charges against Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, in connection with a case filed for possessing huge local and foreign currencies at his residence.

The hearing on arguments of the arms case filed against controversial businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun will be held today while detained former communications minister Nazmul Huda was shown

arrested yesterday in an extortion case.

Besides, Harris' brother-in-law and driver were placed on five-day remand in connection with a graft case filed against them with Dhanmondi Police Station.

HARRIS CASE

Sub-Inspector (SI) Babul Hossain of Gulshan Police Station, who is also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka

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PHOTO: STAR

Stagnant rainwater mixed with sewage continues to be a nuisance for people on road 8/A of Dhanmondi in the capital, as the sewerage system there is too clogged to drain it away.

8 held with 5kg heroin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Narcotics department officials arrested eight drug traders including four females and seized 5 kg heroin worth Tk 5 crore from a residence at Wari in the capital on Saturday night.

The arrestees Sima Akter, Mosammat Parvin, Tania Begum, Eti Akter, Manju Bhuiyan, Shahidul Islam, Alauddin and M Selim were placed on a three-day remand by narcotics department yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a 12-member team of narcotics department raided the top floor of a two-storey building and recovered 680 polythene packets containing 27,880 puria (small pack) of heroin, sources said.

Of the seized heroin, the females hid 240 packets under their cloths, sources said.

Sima, one of the arrestees, brought out 440 more packets from almirah under continuous questioning by the officials.

Assistant Director of Department of Narcotics Control Fazlur Rahman said Sima confessed to have brought the heroin from her village home in Benapole three days back in a goods-carrying handbag.

Narcotics department sources said the arrestees were involved in

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B Chy-led LDP jumps on reform bandwagon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following the examples of BNP, Awami League and Jatiya Party, Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury led Liberal Democratic Party (LDP--Badruddoza) also announced a draft proposal yesterday for reforming the party, which includes a provision of barring any member of the party from holding any party post for more than six years consecutively.

LDP (Badruddoza) will make its finalised reform proposal public within the next 15 days, said party President Badruddoza during a discussion meeting in KC Memorial Clinic at Baridhara in the capital.

The discussion meeting and a milad mehfil was organised in memory of the late mother of LDP central leader Shakot Hossein Bepari.

"According to the reform proposal, no one will be allowed to hold any party post including the post of the president for more than three terms in a row", said LDP Vice-president Abdur Rashid while revealing the 15-point draft reform proposal.

Badruddoza led LDP's party reform proposal came three days after the organisation had split into two factions officially. The other

faction of the party is led by Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed, retaining the party's original name.

The proposal also suggests that the Election Commission should extend financial support to parliamentary political parties according to their representations in the parliament.

It stipulates that the party's national committee, executive committee, and district and thana committees will be elected through secret ballots of party representatives in a council, which should be held every two years.

All monetary transactions of the party will be conducted through bank accounts which will require joint signatures of the treasurer and the vice-president of the party, the proposal says.

Grassroots level leaders will nominate party candidates for national elections, the proposal adds.

It also stipulates that if a party member becomes the prime minister, president or a minister in a government, that person will have to relinquish the party post he or she has been holding until that time.

Badruddoza, who gave a speech

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