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Ban on indoor politics relaxed

Limits set on what parties can do

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Indoor politics is allowed again from today, albeit on a limited scale with strict conditions attached, following the chief adviser's (CA) declaration of lifting the ban through his address to the nation last night.

"The government will lift the restrictions on indoor politics tomorrow to create an environment conducive to talks with political parties," CA Fakhruddin Ahmed

said adding that reforms will be brought to the electoral laws and rules after the discussions with the parties.

CA's address hailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Welcoming the government's decision to relax the curbs on indoor politics, leaders of different political parties yesterday lauded

According to a gazette notification issued by the home ministry last night, a political party may

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the chief adviser's address to the nation, and said they would soon start working at party forum towards reforms.

Talking to The Daily Star, they

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If possible, polls before Dec-08

Chief adviser tells nation



UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said if possible, the government will arrange general election ahead of the previously set December 2008 deadline after completion of the electoral roll with voters' photos.

He reaffirmed his commitment to transferring power to elected public representatives after arranging the elections within the set timeline.

"Immediately after preparation

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Choosing leadership for parties not EC's job

Says new BNP secygen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said it is not the duty of the Election Commission (EC) to determine the leadership of a political party, only the policymakers of a party has the right to choose its leadership.

"The people will not accept any decision that will come through obfuscating the issue as we have already made the matter clear to the commission," he told reporters in his NAM apartment in the

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Expulsion during ban on politics unjust

BNP rebels tell CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the BNP faction led by Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a letter to the chief election commissioner (CEC) yesterday labelled Khaleda Zia's decision to expel Bhuiyan and Ashraf as a violation of government restrictions on political activities.

By the same token, they questioned the appointment of Khandaker Delwar Hossain as the party's secretary general.

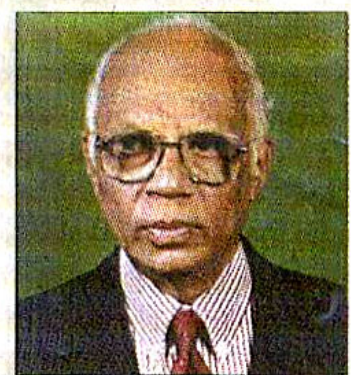
A delegation led by BNP Vice-president Major (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed submitted the letter to CEC ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday evening. During an hour-long

meeting at the commission, they tried to convince the election commissioners that Bhuiyan-led faction represents the mainstream BNP and deserves the EC's invitation for the electoral talks beginning September 12.

Representing the pro-reform group they also requested the EC not to take cognisance of the letter sent by those loyal to Khaleda Zia.

Earlier on Wednesday, BNP's new Secretary General Delwar wrote to the CEC and informed him about the latest changes in the party line-up. In the letter, the EC was requested not to communicate

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ASHK Sadeque passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) leader and former education minister ASHK Sadeque died of cardiac arrest at his residence at Keshabpur upazila in Jessore yesterday morning. He was 73.

He left behind his wife, a son

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CAMPUS VIOLENCE

4 DU teachers, 32 others charged

Specific charge against 3 RU teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police charged four Dhaka University (DU) teachers and 32 others including 15 DU students with instigating violent student protests on the university campus and at other places in the city last month.

The chargesheeted teachers are already detained DU Teachers' Association (Duta) General Secretary Prof Anwar Hossain and Sciences Faculty Dean Prof Harun-or-Rashid and Duta President Prof Sadrul Amin and applied physics department Chairman Prof Neem Chandra Bhowmik.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD)

President Azizul Barea Helal, who was shown arrested in two cases in connection with the violence and remanded for 10 days for interrogation, was however not charged in any case.

The police in the forwarding report placed before the court on August 25 had mentioned that Helal gathered students and general people at different places on the DU campus from 10:30pm on August 20 to 12:00 noon on August 21 violating the Emergency Power Rules (EPR).

Investigation officers of the cases prayed to a Dhaka court yesterday for issuance of arrest

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Rain-fed rivers continue to worsen flooding

Surma, Kusiara embankments at stake

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The flood situation in the country has deteriorated further due to incessant rains over the basins of the Ganges, Meghna, Brahmaputra and southeastern hills.

Our correspondent in Sylhet said authorities are struggling to protect the Surma and Kusiara embankments while the civil administration and the military are working together to save the vulnerable parts of the Teesta barrage.

The Padma is flowing over the 1,296-foot-long town protection embankment in Rajbari, BSS reports.

People are being infected with diarrhoea again for having con-

taminated water and stale food. The fresh flood has destroyed crops worth millions of taka and left hundreds of thousands homeless in a number of districts.

Besides, academic activities have been seriously hampered as the institutions are being used as flood shelters in the affected areas.

Experts fear that flooding this time might drag on for a longer period of time and the eastern fringe of the capital might be inundated within four or five days.

Selim Bhuiyan, flood expert and former chief of Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), told The Daily Star, "The flooding of the Brahmaputra-Jamuna is unusual and alarming...we have had floods

there only last month."

Usually the Ganges-Padma and its tributaries swell up during late August and early September and the Meghna basin is vulnerable to floods all throughout the monsoon season. But what is significant this time is the fresh floods in the Brahmaputra-Jamuna, he added.

The flood is likely to deteriorate in the next 72 hours and it might linger till the second week of September, Bhuiyan said.

Eminent water and flood expert Dr Alim Nishat warned that the eastern part of Dhaka city is likely to be inundated again in the next four to five days.

According to the FFWC bulletin,

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ESSENTIALS

Prices stay at high levels

Approaching Ramadan makes ginger, chickpea and onion costlier

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of essentials remained stable at different markets in the capital in the last two days except for three items, the prices of which rose following the fresh floods caused by heavy downpour over the last few days across the country.

Many said the reason behind increasing prices of chickpea, onion and ginger is also the upcoming Ramadan, the month of fasting when consumption of these items increases along with a few others.

Depending on the visibility of

the moon, Muslim devotees will start fasting in three or four days and traders have already started increasing prices of items that sell well during the Ramadan.

The price of chickpea increased by Tk 5, onion by Tk 3 and ginger by Tk 4 per kilogram.

Traders, however, could not say the reason behind the price hike.

"When wholesalers increase the prices we also have to increase them," said a grocer at the Mohammadpur kitchen market in the capital.

Yasmin, a shopper at the

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