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Next govt will have to ratify all reform works

Says AL spokesperson Ashraful

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday said it would ratify all reform initiatives taken by the caretaker government and officially recognise the laws passed under the current regime, if voted to power in the next parliamentary election.

"Not only Awami League but any political party that forms the next government will have to ratify the present government's activities for its own legality," AL spokesman Syed Ashraful Islam told reporters after holding a meeting with South Asia Director of the British Foreign

and Commonwealth Office Philip Burton and British Ambassador in Dhaka Stephen Evans at the AL leader's Nam flat residence in the capital.

"If the next parliament fails to ratify the caretaker government's activities, the parliament's own legality will be questioned," said Ashraf, also joint general secretary of AL.

Various issues including the election, post-election situation, election environment and the state of emergency were discussed at the meeting, he said.

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Poster control ordinance okayed

UNB, Dhaka

The council of advisers yesterday approved in principle the Graffiti and Poster Control Ordinance 2008 in order to keep candidates from campaigning by such means.

The new law will also restrict commercial advertisement by graffiti and posters.

"The ordinance has been framed to help enforce the restrictions imposed on graffiti and posters under the electoral code of conduct recently promulgated," it is stated in the objective of the ordinance.

The council of advisers also approved amendments to the amended Representation of People Order (RPO) to reduce time for clearing bank loans and utility bills by candidates, from 15 days to seven days from submission of nomination.

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BNP pulls for bill, loan defaulters

Delwar asks EC to give aspirants time for rescheduling loans till poll day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday demanded fresh poll schedule for the ninth parliamentary election so that its prospective leaders who have been declared loan and utility bill defaulters can take part in it.

Termining the Election Commission's (EC) new poll schedule "juggling of figures", BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain demanded that their aspirant candidates, who are defaulters of bank loans and utility bills, be given time till the day before election day to pay off and take part in the elections.

"You [the EC] will have to announce the poll schedule in such

a way that our candidates who want to contest the elections can get the opportunity," he said during a discussion meeting at the city's Institute of Diploma Engineers.

The meeting was organised to observe the National Revolutionary and Solidarity Day.

Referring to the changes the EC made in the poll schedule, he said it will make no difference as the party's prospective candidates will hardly get any benefit from it.

"You [EC] announced the poll schedule without giving opportunity to our party's prospective candidates to pay off their bank loans and utility bills, which we cannot accept."

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Russian nuclear submarine accident kills 20

AP, Moscow

An accident aboard a Russian nuclear-powered submarine making a test run in the Sea of Japan killed at least 20 people, officials said yesterday.

The nuclear reactor aboard the submarine was operating normally and radiation levels were normal after the accident Saturday, Russian navy spokesman Capt. Igor Dygalo said.

The accident occurred when a fire-extinguishing system went into operation in error aboard the submarine, Dygalo and other officials said. The system is designed to release Freon coolant when activated, according to the ITAR-Tass news agency, which cited an official with Russia's top investigative agency.

It was unclear what activated the fire-extinguishing system.

The official, Sergei Markin, said 14 civilians and six sailors were killed and 22 others were hospitalized after being evacuated to a destroyer that brought them to the Pacific port of Vladivostok, ITAR-Tass reported.

Earlier, Dygalo said more than 20 people were killed, including sailors and workers from the shipyard that built the submarine, and that 21 were injured and hospitalized. He said there were 208 people aboard, including 81 servicemen. Officials did not reveal the name of the submarine.

It was Russia's worst naval accident since torpedo explosions sank another nuclear-powered submarine, the Kursk, in the Barents Sea in 2000, killing all 118 seamen aboard. In 2003, 11 people died when a submarine that was being taken out of service also sank in the Barents Sea.

Saturday's accident came as the Kremlin flexes its military muscle and seeks to restore Russia's naval reach, part of a drive to show off the nuclear-armed country's clout amid strained ties with the West. A naval squadron is headed to Venezuela for joint exercises this month in a show of force near US waters.

Dygalo said the casualties resulted from the "unsanctioned activation" of the firefighting system in the two sections of the submarine closest to the bow, and that the nuclear reactor that powers it was not threatened.

The submarine was not damaged and was heading back toward shore on its own power, escorted by a rescue vessel, Dygalo said.

Markin said authorities have opened an investigation into violations of rules for operating military

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Govt's handling of graft suspects questioned by Justice Habibur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chief adviser to a caretaker government Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman yesterday expressed doubts about the effectiveness of the way the present caretaker government dealt with political leaders suspected of corruption.

"I do not know how effective the non-elected government will be... they put in jail leaders immediately after cases were filed and then released them... didn't they think of it before making arrests?" he said at a seminar on rural socio-economic reforms organised by Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB).

Speaking as the chief guest of the seminar held at Cirdap auditorium in the city, Habibur, former chief justice of the country, said,

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Deal signed on Tk 1,000cr Swedish grant

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh will receive 1.1 billion Swedish kroner, approximately Tk 1,000 crore, under a five-year agreement signed in Dhaka yesterday.

The money will be used in support of Poverty Reduction Strategy and be directed towards the areas of health, primary education, women's rights, democratic governance and urban environment in Bangladesh.

Secretary of the Economic Relations Division M Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan and Swedish Ambassador Britt Hagstrom signed the agreement on behalf of the respective countries, an official handout said.

The largest share of the cooperation will be channeled to primary health care and primary level education in support of the vision to ensure equitable and qualitative health care and education for all.

"This signals the start of new phase of Swedish cooperation with Bangladesh, a partnership that dates back to 1971," the Swedish envoy said.

"Sweden and the world at large have been much impressed by the progress made by Bangladesh

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Repair work, inset, continues on the Meghna Bridge on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway. The reduced width of the bridge because of this triggers a long tailback, top, on its approach road. The patching up of the bridge is set to finish early December.

Bikalpadhara, Gono Forum, Manju's JP float new alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Breaking away from the Awami League-led grand alliance, the Bikalpadhara Bangladesh and the Gono Forum yesterday launched a new electoral combine.

The rainbow coalition also takes in Krishak Sramik Janata League, Jatiya Party (Manju), Bangladesh Kalyan Party and Bangladesh Labour Party.

Bikalpadhara President Badruddoza Chowdhury and Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain had worked to patch together the alliance.

"We were in the Awami League-led grand alliance before 1/11 in order to save the country from a civil war. Now the situation is different. We'll contest the election from our own platform," Badruddoza told a press conference at the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh.

He said they will not go back to the Awami League-led alliance. The name of the alliance will be

finalised in two-three days after discussion with all the partners, he said.

Badruddoza said the alliance was formed on the basis of a five-point principle that include fielding honest, talented and pro-people candidates, making Bangladesh free from corruption, poverty and terrorism, and establishing liberal democracy in the country.

"I urge all pro-liberation and progressive political parties to join the new electoral alliance because people are eager to walk away from the traditional two alliances," he said.

He said they hope to meet people's desire for a new platform and new leadership.

Vowing not to field corrupt candidates, Badruddoza said the alliance will contest the elections slated for December 18 no matter whether some political parties take part in or not.

Krishak Sramik Janata League

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ILL-GOTTEN WEALTH Khaleda's APS Shamsul jailed for 13 yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday sentenced former prime minister Khaleda Zia's assistant personal secretary M Shamsul Alam to 13 years' imprisonment for amassing wealth worth Tk 1.79 crore illegally and concealing information about wealth worth Tk 1.48 crore from the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Shamsul's wife Khadiza Anam was also jailed for three years by the same court for assisting her husband in accumulating wealth.

Judge Tanzina Ismail of Special Court-6 set up on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises also fined Shamsul Tk 88 lakh in default of which he is to suffer one year more in prison.

Khadiza was fined Tk 1 lakh in default of which she would have to spend six months more in jail.

The court also ordered the confiscation of Shamsul's ill-gotten wealth.

Shamsul was handed down 10 years' imprisonment for acquiring

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Indonesia executes 3 Bali bombers

Radicals call for revenge

AFP, Tenggulun

Three Indonesian Islamists were executed by firing squad early yesterday for the Bali bombings which killed 202 people, sparking calls for revenge from their radical supporters.

Indonesia stepped up security at tourist spots and embassies following the executions of Amrozi, 47, his brother Mukhlas, 48, and ringleader Imam Samudra, 38, which sparked brief clashes between police and hundreds of mourners.

The three men were killed with shots to the heart shortly after

midnight near their prison on Nusakambangan island off southern Java, said attorney general's office spokesman Jasman Panjaitan.

They refused an offer of blindfolds and cooperated fully with their executioners, he said.

"All three convicted men were very cooperative and didn't resist at all. The families have also been cooperative and sincere," Panjaitan said.

A source in the prison told AFP they shouted "Allahu Akbar" (God is greater) as they were escorted out of their isolation cells shortly

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Pakistani airstrike kills 14 Taliban rebels

22 militants, 3 soldiers die in clashes

AFP, Khari Peshawar

At least 36 suspected extremists and three soldiers were killed in military airstrikes and ground operations targeting al-Qaeda and Taliban-linked militants in north-west Pakistan, officials said yesterday.

At least 14 militants were killed yesterday when Pakistani jets pounded suspected Taliban hideouts in a restive tribal area bordering Afghanistan while 22 militants and three soldiers were killed in separate clashes, officials said.

Jets fired at the towns of Damadola, Harkai and Siprai in

Bajaur district where Pakistani forces have clashed with Taliban and al-Qaeda-linked militants for the past three months, local administration official Jamil Khan told AFP.

"According to reports received here airstrikes have killed 14 militants and destroyed several underground bunkers and ammunition dumps used by them," local government official Mohammad Jamil told AFP.

Meanwhile, at least 22 militants and three soldiers were killed in clashes in northwest Pakistan, where the military is waging a fierce battle with Taliban-linked

militants, officials said Sunday.

Fifteen militants and three soldiers were killed late Saturday in the scenic Swat valley during an ongoing army operation against fighters loyal to pro-Taliban cleric Maulana Fazlullah, a senior military official told AFP.

Pakistani helicopter gunships and artillery pounded militant positions in Matta and Kabal districts, both Fazlullah strongholds, the official added, on condition of anonymity.

The mountainous Swat valley was until last year a popular tourist destination where many Pakistani

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Amla ton crushes Tigers' hopes

BISHWAIT ROY in Benoni

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal produced a brief whirlwind but the Tigers were far from chasing down a mammoth total in chilly conditions as South Africa clinched the three-match series after winning the second game by 128 runs thanks to Hashim Amla's fantastic 140 at Willowmoore Park here yesterday.

Set an improbable 359 runs to win, Bangladesh got off to a flying start with left-handed Tamim coming hard on the two new-ball bowlers, especially Dale Steyn off whom he flicked a superb six down to fine leg. Riding on Tamim's

quickfire innings, Bangladesh scored 46 runs in first five overs but ultimately managed to score 230 before being bowled out in 49.2 overs.

Steyn avenged Tamim's punishment by getting rid of the Chittagonian batsman in the fifth over. Indeed, Tamim's 22-ball 41 with seven fours and a six remained the only highlight of the innings as the Tigers tried playing for pride after losing skipper Mohammad Ashraf.

With the departure of Ashraf the contest was all but over although the scoreboard was reading 101-3 in 19.4 overs as the asking

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Envoys of 8 Muslim nations meet Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The envoys of eight Muslim countries yesterday called on Awami League (AL) President and former premier Sheikh Hasina and hoped that the national election would be held on December 18.

"We hope that we are going to witness a free and fair election in Bangladesh and an environment to conduct such polls will be created," Palestinian Ambassador Shaher Mohammad told reporters after a

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4 robbers beaten to death in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Four suspected robbers were beaten to death by a mob at Habbaria village of Santhia upazila in Pabna early yesterday.

The four were identified as Ebadat alias Ebad, 35, regional leader of outlawed PBCP 'Janajuddha' faction and son of Moylal of Vulbaria village, Robiul Islam Robi, 30, son of Mojai, Lal Pramanik, 32, son of Ahmed Pramanik of Bhabanipur village, and Shamim, 28, son of Shahed of Tebaria village in the upazila.

Police said locals rushed to the spot after hearing cries when a gang of 10 to 12 robbers stormed into the house of Abdul Aleem at about 1:00am.

They caught four robbers and beat them up, leaving them dead

on the spot. But most of the robbers managed to flee, police said.

On information, police rushed to the spot and sent the bodies to Pabna General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police also arrested another alleged robber Hablu alias Habu and recovered a local-made gun, a shutter gun and one bullet.

M Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Santhia police station, told The Daily Star that they were investigating the matter as the arrested robber gave them important clues.

The alleged robbers are also outlawed 'Janajuddha' operatives and engaged in looting, extortion and such type of criminal acts, he said.

Three separate cases were filed with Santhia police station in this regard.

AKM Mosharraf denied bail in Barapukuria case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court rejected the bail petition of former state minister AKM Mosharraf Hossain and ordered to send him to jail yesterday after his surrender to the court in Barapukuria coalmine graft case.

The BNP leader surrendered to the Special Court-2 set up on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises in the case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Judge Amar Kumar Roy rejected the bail petition after his counsel Shah Alam submitted it to the court.

Alam then submitted an application seeking division for his client in prison. In reply, the judge said the accused will be given all facilities according to the jail code.

On November 3, the High Court (HC) had directed the former state minister for energy and mineral resources to surrender before the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



Exhausted by the competitive nature of school education in the city, this primary-level student of a renowned school falls asleep on her way home in a rickshaw van. The photo was taken at Shahbagh.

HC asks Nanak, Bahauddin Nasim to surrender in trial court

Asks govt not to harass them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed Awami Jubo League President Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Awami Swechchhasebak League President Bahauddin Nasim and former Chhatra League president Liaqat Shikdar, all wanted in multiple criminal cases, to surrender before the trial courts within 10 weeks.

After hearing separate bail petitions filed by the accused, a division bench of the HC comprising Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Huq and Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury also asked the relevant authorities not to harass or arrest them in the meantime.

The HC passed the orders when

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