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**President okays appointment of 7 new HC judges**  
*One not interested*  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday appointed seven new additional judges to the High Court division for two years for the first time as per the recommendation of the Supreme Judicial Commission.

However, one of them has refused to become an HC judge for his 'ill health'.

The judges are Deputy Attorney General Delwar Hossain, Deputy Attorney General Syeda Afsar Jahan, Supreme Court lawyers Abdul Hakim, Borhan Uddin and Kamal-Ul Alam, Rangpur District

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## Hasina, Khaleda agree to sit, talk crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finally, former prime ministers and arch-rivals Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia yesterday agreed to sit together to solve the crises confronting the country.

However, while Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina wants an agenda for the discussions, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia says the talks should not be confined to specific subjects.

The issue of the much-desired meeting between the two resurfaced when AL spokesman Syed Ashrafur Islam yesterday afternoon said their party chief is ready to sit



with her counterpart in BNP if the government sets an agenda.

He was briefing reporters after a meeting between the AL president and ambassadors of the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden.

"I'm always ready for dialogue, but that ought to be based on an agenda. Problems won't be solved if we just meet and have a cup of

tea," Ashrafur quoted Hasina as telling the European envoys who met Khaleda the night before.

Later at night, BNP spokesman Nazrul Islam Khan said their chairperson had heard about Sheikh Hasina's readiness to sit with her. "And she wants to let the countrymen know through the media that she too is ready for talks."

He was speaking to reporters at Khaleda's Gulshan office.

"There's no need for a specific agenda when the talks will be between two former prime ministers and heads of the top two political parties in the country. She

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## EC seeks troops from Dec 12

*Deployment will be made for 20 days to ensure poll security*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The armed forces will be in the field along with other law enforcement agencies for 20 days from December 12 to maintain law and order before and after the upcoming parliamentary and upazila parishad elections.

A high-powered meeting of the Election Commission (EC), the government, armed forces and intelligence agencies yesterday took

the decision on troops deployment.

Chaired by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda, the meeting decided to engage the army, navy, air force, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), armed police, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and Ansar in election duties six days before the parliamentary election scheduled for December 18.

The two election commissioners, home secretary, inspector

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## BNP desperate for polls after 2 months

*AL may settle for 10 days' deferral; move on to strike a deal*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the BNP is pressing hard to delay the general elections, the government talked with other political parties over the issue, and the AL, a key player to influence any such decision, has indicated that it may accept a deferral by only about 10 days.

The BNP-led four-party alliance wants to put back the election date by two-to-three months so that it can prepare itself for a better-than-now-perceived result, sources said.

On the other hand, Awami

League (AL), which feels itself in a better position to come to power, hinted it can afford a deferral by not more than 10 days, party sources told The Daily Star. It is agreeable to such a situation in the hope of having a fully participatory election.

The positions of the two major axes of the election fulcrum now puts the government in a sticky situation as it has yet to find an acceptable middle ground to bring both parties and their alliances to election.

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**4-party won't take part in 'stage-managed' polls: Delwar**  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said the four-party alliance would not participate in any stage-managed election designed to form a 'rubber stamp parliament and a puppet government'.

"We want to take part in a free, fair and credible election and will accept the election result," he said at a meeting in the city's Diploma Engineers' Institute to press home the four-party's demand to release their three top leaders.

"Those who will win in that election will form the government and we will sit on the opposition bench if we lose," Delwar said, adding that they however will not accept any staged election.

Meanwhile, the three leaders -- M Saifur Rahman of BNP and

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## Saifur, Nizami, Mojahid get HC bail; case stayed

*Hearing deferred after they appeal to special court saying they will file nomination paper for JS polls*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted two months' ad interim bail to former finance minister M Saifur Rahman, Jamaat-e-Islami Amier Matiuur Rahman Nizami and Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid in the Barapukuria coalmine corruption case.

An HC bench of justices Muzammel Hossain and Afzal Hossain Ahmed stayed proceedings of the case against them for two months and issued a rule upon

the government and the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) to explain within four weeks why the proceedings against them should not be quashed.

Meanwhile, the Special Judge's Court-2 fixed November 23 as the next date for hearing in the case after the three politicians along with another accused former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain appealed to it to re-fix the date saying they would submit their nomination papers to contest the next parliamentary election.

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## EC forms 80 electoral probe committees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday constituted 80 electoral enquiry committees comprising judicial officers to prevent and control polls-related irregularities prior to the December 18 parliamentary election.

As the number of parliamentary seats for Dhaka metropolitan area has now risen to 15 from seven in the past, eight enquiry committees will work in the area, and one in each in the 64 districts to stop pre-election irregularities by political parties and candidates, sources in the EC said.

Four enquiry committees will work in Chittagong metropolitan area and one each in Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet metropolitan areas.

Each committee comprises two judicial officers such as additional district judge, joint district judge,

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## Delhi assures Dhaka of cutting trade gap

*Fakhruddin urges Manmohan to remove non-tariff barriers*

UNB, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yesterday assured that they would take steps to reduce the existing trade gap between Bangladesh and India.

The Indian premier made the assurance as Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed requested him to take measures for striking a balance in the volume of trade between the two countries through narrowing the existing gap.

To this end, Bangladesh also requested India to increase trade facilities for increased export of Bangladeshi products to the Indian market through removing non-tariff barriers.

The assurances and requests were made when the chief adviser had a meeting with the Indian prime minister at his residence in the afternoon.

During the bilateral talks, the Indian side mentioned the import of 80 lakh pieces of garments annually from Bangladesh. Bilateral, regional and international issues

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## Talking polls and beyond

## Bad election seen by the yearend

*Selim finds no fundamental changes in institutions overseeing polls*

WASIM BIN HABIB

General Secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Mujahidul Islam Selim has said the nation is going to witness a 'bad election' by the yearend



as the government has failed to bring any fundamental changes in the institutions overseeing the polls process.

"Money game will be on, violence and manifold attempts to influence the administration will be there this time also," he said.

Despite all this, the CPB will participate in the coming election as the nation badly needs an elected government, Selim said in an interview with The Daily Star.

"We think an elected government must govern the country,

Find details of the interview on page 11

and restore people's rights. So, a bad election is better than no election," he said.

Referring to the government's amending the Representation of the People Order (RPO) 'under pressure from some parties', the CPB leader said the coming election would be similar to the 'farical or semi-farical' elections held earlier.

Terming the caretaker government's reform measures as 'something like cosmetics', he said this government is following the policies of previous governments. "A tradition of plunder has been created in the economic, political and social arenas due to these policies."

Opposing continuation of the state of emergency during the

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কক্সবাজারে পাঁচতারা অবস্থিত টাইম শোয়ার হোটেলের অবস্থান সমুদ্র থেকে মাত্র ২০ ফুটের দূরত্বে। সমুদ্রের এক পাশে হোটেল, কক্সবাজারের আর দিগন্তটি সেই। পা বাড়ালেই ঈর্ষ আর স্নেহ পূর্ণ শব্দ, হোটেল আর সমুদ্রের এক ফাঁকে টাইম শোয়ার হোটেলের পক্ষে বিশাল সমুদ্রের উত্তাপ পাওয়া যায়। আর কক্সবাজারের আর দিগন্তটি সেই। টাইম শোয়ার হোটেলের পক্ষে বিশাল সমুদ্রের উত্তাপ পাওয়া যায়। আর কক্সবাজারের আর দিগন্তটি সেই। টাইম শোয়ার হোটেলের পক্ষে বিশাল সমুদ্রের উত্তাপ পাওয়া যায়।

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