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Govt given 48 hours to meet 4 demands

Khaleda warns govt, EC of 'sloppy polls' without 4-party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP-led four-party alliance yesterday issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the caretaker government to meet its four-point demand in order to make way for its participation in the upcoming general election.

The four demands, cut short from the alliance's earlier seven-point demand, are total lifting of the state of emergency, suspension of some 'objectionable' clauses in the amended Representation of the People Order (RPO) including repeal of clause 91(e), deferring the December 28 upazila elections till one month from the parliamentary poll, and rescheduling of the polls ensuring that the hajis will get to cast their votes.

"BNP and the four-party alliance are declaring that they will contest in the upcoming elections if the government meets this four-point demand within the next 48 hours," said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at a news briefing in her Gulshan office around 9:00pm.

"If they don't meet the demands within the next 48 hours, and if the elections become uncertain due to that, then the government and the Election Commission have to bear total responsibility," Khaleda warned.

The last hajj flight however is due to return on January 12, according to Bangladesh Biman Managing Director Air Commodore (ret'd) Zahed Kuddus.

The former prime minister specifically demanded repeal of the clause 91(e) of RPO, which empowers the Election Commission (EC) to cancel candidacies during elections based on complaints.

Alliance insiders said the BNP leadership sent the demands to the military backed caretaker government earlier yesterday.

Meanwhile, sources said a government adviser already spoke to Awami League (AL) SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Lift emergency immediately
Suspend 'objectionable' clauses in amended RPO
Defer upazila elections till one month from parliamentary poll
Reschedule polls ensuring hajis will be able to cast their votes

Govt sits today for review

EC yet to comment; AL reacts sharply

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed has called an emergency meeting with advisers today to discuss and review the situation arisen out of the BNP's ultimatum over its participation in the next parliament.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

RPO, party constitution overlooked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) has ignored electoral laws and its own constitution to pick up some of its contenders in the upcoming parliamentary polls, rejecting proposals from grassroots level party committees in those constituencies.

As per the Representation of People Order (RPO), the AL SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Those who get AL ticket

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The list of the candidates who were nominated by the Awami League yesterday for contesting the upcoming parliamentary elections is as follows:

Mirza Golam Erfan (Panchagarh-1), Nurul Islam Sujon, (Panchagarh-2), Ramesh Chandra Sen, (Thakurgaon-1), Dabirul Islam, (Thakurgaon-2), Emdadul Haque, (Shamim Osman, Engineer

Poll dreams over for many AL stalwarts

Conviction, reform issue rule nomination

HASAN JAHI TUSHER and SHARIFUL ISLAM

Awami League (AL) yesterday finalised its nominations for the December 18 national polls, leaving out a good number of party bigwigs apparently for conviction under emergency power rules, post-1/11 role, and allegations of corruption and patronising crime.

The same day the party began issuing formal letters to those picked to be on its ticket. As of 11:00pm, some 150 candidates including over 35 new faces and 10 women received their papers at party President Sheikh Hasina's Sudha Sadan residence.

Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Kazi Zafarullah, Mohammad Nasim, Salman F Rahman, Abul Hasnat Abdullah, Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury, Maya, Sheikh Helaluddin, Shamim Osman, Engineer



Clockwise from top left: Mohammad Nasim, Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Sheikh Helal, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya and Abul Hasnat Abdullah.

Mosharraf Hossain, Syed Abul Hossain, Maqbul Hossain, HBM Iqbal, Hazi Selim, Mostafa Rashidi Suja, Abu Taher, Bahauddin Nasim and Pankaj Debnath are among those kept out for conviction,

graft charges and links to organised crime, said party sources.

Several mid-level central leaders have been excluded for their abortive bid to bring SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Rejoinder

The Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) in a rejoinder protested a comment made by Prof Nilufar Nahar of the department of chemistry of Dhaka University, which had been published on November 10 in The Daily Star news report titled 'BAEC find vindicates DU melamine results'.

The rejoinder claims that the comment might create doubts in the public mind about the analytical expertise of BCSIR, which it asserts is a centre of excellence.

Tac resumes work, extends deadline for application

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Truth and Accountability Commission (Tac) yesterday resumed functioning and extended the deadline for submitting applications for clemency till November 19.

Earlier on Sunday, the Supreme Court stayed for a month the November 13 High Court (HC) order declaring the commission and its mandate illegal and unconstitutional.

The Tac had a new lease of life through the apex court's decision. Its Chairman Justice Habibur Rahman Khan said they would speed up their work to finish the pending tasks before the stay expires.

On the day of resumption, the commission heard petitions from seven graft suspects.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) meantime has forwarded 70 new cases to the truth commission that has now more than 100 cases in hand to be heard within its tenure (five months) till January 2, said Tac sources.

Yesterday's extension of time is the fourth of its kind. Earlier on October 29, the SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

News analysis

Hail loan, bill defaulters

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Loan defaulters aspiring to participate in the coming parliamentary election are among the luckiest persons at the moment because the caretaker government has relaxed electoral laws twice to make it easy for them to contest the polls.

Individuals, who borrowed thousands of crores of taka from public banks promising to pay back in time but have defaulted, have now got opportunities to become lawmakers by rescheduling the defaulted loans just seven days before filing nominations.

These people never care about the laws; the government also rarely takes measures to recover the amounts from them. But when the national polls come these people suddenly become very important because holding the election without ensuring their participation is almost impossible.

The caretaker government that earlier enacted laws to keep loan defaulters out of the national elections has now softened its stance on them. The two major political parties, the Awami League and BNP, have also put pressure on the caretaker administration in this regard.

Not only the defaulted loans, the government has also relaxed the strict provisions to keep defaulters of utility services bill out of the parliamentary polls, reducing the timeframe for paying them from three months to seven days before filing nominations.

In previous parliaments, a large number of lawmakers did not pay their telephone bills although they withdrew their phone bill allowances.

Questions have been raised why the caretaker government



has surrendered to the loan defaulters and why the two major political parties are also crying out for them.

Are the loan defaulters so powerful?

Political analysts say "yes". They are powerful since they have money to influence the political process.

Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman, however, claimed on Saturday that the provision on loan defaulters was relaxed to make it "more realistic".

On recommendations of the Election Commission (EC), the caretaker government SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

Made in Bangladesh, made by JMB

Investigators caught off guard by local grenade expertise

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The revelation of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh's (JMB) explosives cache sends a chill down the investigators' spine that the outlawed militant outfit has developed expertise to manufacture powerful grenades and explosives using materials available in the local market.

Some investigators say they were stunned to see JMB could produce such explosives again even in the heart of the country and without smuggling in materials from abroad.

"We had information regarding JMB regrouping and recruitment moves through dawlat [invitation] activities. But after the latest operation, we learned they have gone further as they stockpiled explosives too," Col Gulzar Uddin Ahmed, Rab additional director general, told The Daily Star yesterday.

During the August 17, 2005 countrywide synchronised bombing, JMB collected from the local market some materials including battery, wire, capacitor, resistor, switch and electric circuit but smuggled in detonators, power gel SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Party demand for letting convicts contest polls unconstitutional

Says Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gano Forum (GF) President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said the recent stand of the political parties not to participate in the national election if the convicted politicians are not allowed to compete is unconstitutional.

He also said the government has no scope to deal with anybody on polls participation.

He made the remarks while talking to the reporters after attending a view exchange meeting on 'Right to information: promises of political parties in election manifestos and its implementation' in the city's Cirdap auditorium.

"Election Commission has the responsibilities to prepare voter list and declare election schedule and the commission has done this. Now, the political SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Talking polls and beyond

Alternative political movement needed

Says Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury

WASIM BIN HABIB

Eminent educationist and author Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury has said the country urgently needs an alternative political movement aiming at realisation of the Liberation War's objectives, which were to bring about a radical democratic transformation in the state and society.

"The patriotic and democratic forces in the country should come together to bring into being people's own political party to achieve such a transformation," he said in an interview with The Daily Star.

People are sick and tired of the electoral alliances. What they want to see is a party capable of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all, decentralisation of power and rule by elected representatives in all spheres, he said.

The Emeritus Professor does not have any confusion about holding of the parliamentary elections slated for December 18, but has worries about the nature of the election.

Find details of the interview on page 11

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Efforts are on to ensure poll participation of all parties

Says adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commerce Adviser Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday reiterated that efforts are on so that all the political parties take part in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

"In every sector including politics we should move forward with all our strength to realise the people's need," he said.

The adviser was talking to the journalists while coming SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

EX-ENVOY NAZIM Special court ignores HC stay in verdict

Allege defence lawyers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In spite of a stay order passed by the High Court (HC), a special court on November 16 sentenced suspended Bangladesh ambassador to the United Arab Emirates ATM Nazimullah Chowdhury to five years' rigorous imprisonment on charges of embezzlement of state funds, defence lawyers alleged.

Nazimullah's lawyers said the special court has violated the HC stay order and they will file a contempt of court petition on November 23 with the HC against the judge and public prosecutor (PP) concerned of the special court.

Barrister Ahsanul Karim, lawyer for Nazimullah, yesterday told The Daily Star that the HC on November 12 stayed for six months the proceedings SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

BSF regrets killings on Panchagarh border

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday regretted and apologised for killing three people and wounding another in Maynaguri village in Tetulia upazila of Panchagarh Sunday night, according to Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) officials.

The BSF at a flag meeting with the BDR also assured that such incidents will not recur in future.

The meeting, held at zero line near Majhipara border in Tetulia, decided that a BSF member caught by the villagers would be handed over to BSF after treatment, said BDR SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Act without fear

CA asks DCs, SPs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed reaffirmed yesterday that his caretaker government is committed to giving the nation a free, fair and neutral election with participation of all political parties.

"All preparations are at the final stage for holding the parliamentary election on December 18 and the upazila polls on December 28. We are committed to holding both elections in free, fair, neutral and acceptable manner," he said.

The head of the interim government made the remarks while addressing field level senior government officers in his office.

Divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners (DCs), police commissioners and superintendents of police (SPs) attended the meeting.

"The entire nation is eagerly waiting for the polls," said Fakhruddin adding that the government's main objective is to hold free, fair, neutral, peaceful and acceptable elections which will reflect the expectations of all sections of people.

The CA said they are at the door step of attaining that goal. He urged the field level officers to carry out their duties neutrally, without fear and without bowing down to intimidation, undue pressure, and greed.

Fakhruddin said his government fought in the last two years to root out from the society the influence of black money, muscle, SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Polls must be held within constitutional timeframe

Observes HC

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday ruled that national elections must be organised within the constitutional timeframe, except for any special legal excuse.

"Only parliament is the owner of sovereign power of the republic, because the members of parliament represent people directly," the court said while discharging a long-pending writ petition against Bangladesh's permission for the US-led coalition force to use facilities here for the Afghan warfare.

"None but the parliament SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



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