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WHO WILL BE THE CHOICE?

Cricket bigwigs give their views on the crucial ICC vice-president pick

PAGE 16

HOLIDAYING IN COX'S BAZAR

Hoteliers face gloomy business in the sea beach town

PAGE B4

PALESTINE IN UNESCO

Its flag flutters for the first time above the UN agency headquarters

PAGE 7

DCC POLLS BY MAY Next EC to conduct it

Says Ashraf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Elections to Dhaka south and north city corporations will be held under the next Election Commission to be constituted on expiry of the tenure of the incumbent EC, LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam said yesterday.

A day after the EC expressed its inability to hold the polls within 90 days of the enactment of the law to divide Dhaka City Corporation, the LGRD minister declared a plan to extend the time frame by another 90 days.

The 90-day period ends on February 29, and if the time limit is extended, the polls will be held in May, he told reporters after distributing 35 vehicles for waste

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

Politics gathering storm over new EC

Govt takes no step as yet to enact law, keep EC appointment beyond controversy

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The government has yet to make any move to enact a law that would require formation of an independent search committee for appointing a new Election Commission after the tenure of the current EC expires in early February.

The outgoing EC suggested enactment of such a law with a provision for parliamentary scrutiny for choosing a new EC.

The proposal seeks to involve the opposition in the process of appointing the chief election commissioner (CEC) and other election commissioners, and curtail the government's unilateral power in picking up its favourites for the crucial

election conducting job.

"There is no move right this moment to enact such a law," Law Minister Shafique Ahmed told The Daily Star on Monday over the phone. He said his ministry got no instruction to proceed with it.

The law minister's remarks are being seen as a deviation from what Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and some ministers have for the last one and half years been saying about making the EC stronger and truly independent to hold free and fair elections.

The law minister's remarks came amid growing demand for a stronger EC, especially after the recent scrapping of the non-partisan caretaker

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

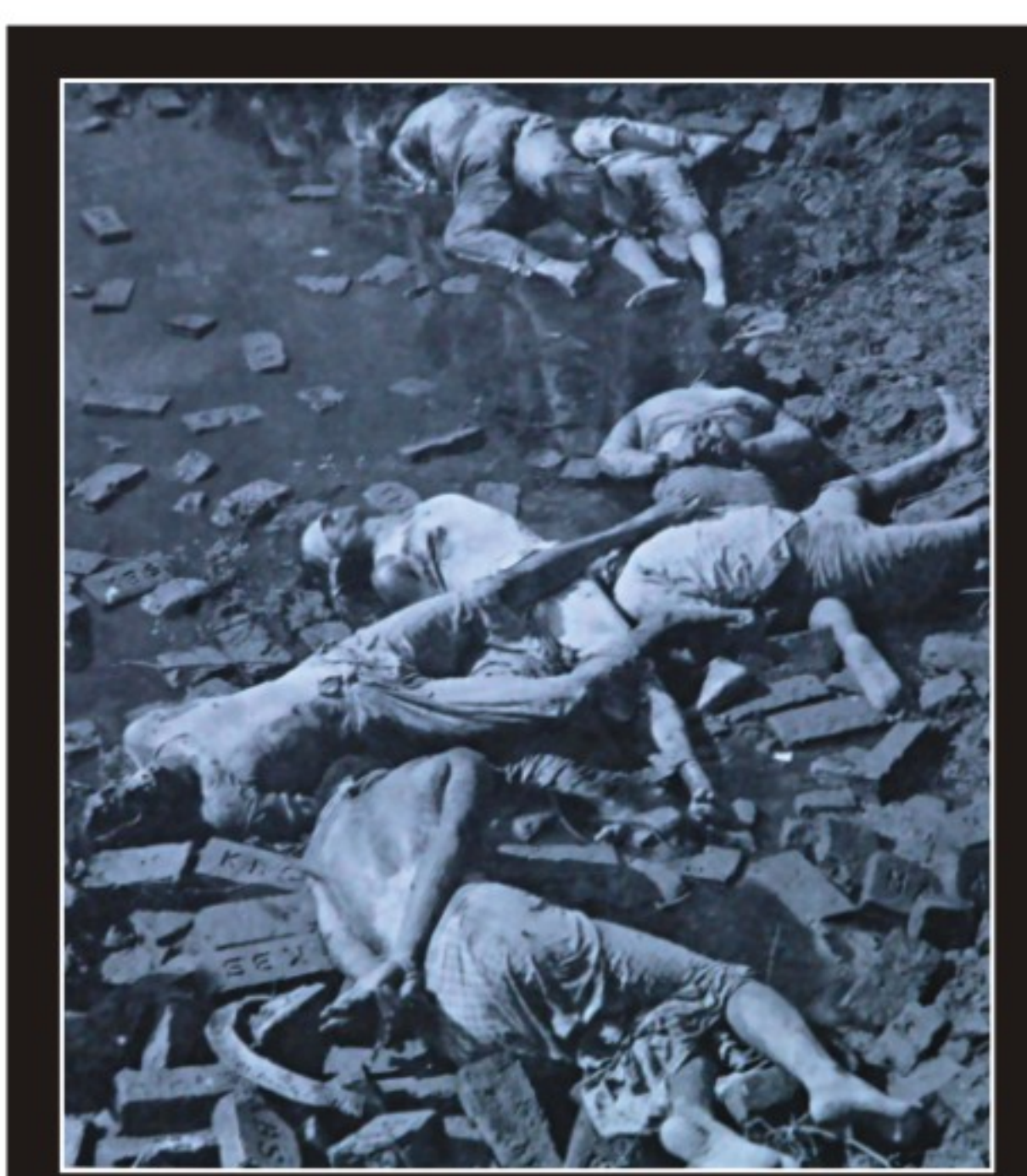


PHOTO: FILE
The killing field of Rayerbazar where bodies of intellectuals were dumped.

Time to redeem the old pledge Martyred Intellectuals' Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
SVED BADRUL AHSAN

The wounds remain as fresh as they were four decades ago. The memories of those done to death by the murder squads of the collaborators of the Pakistan occupation forces are, forty years on, as agonising as the moment when we first discovered that they had been abducted, that indeed they had been subjected to a macabre end by elements unwilling to have their masters from the west lose the war and that, having lost the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Kabir Chowdhury passes away

RAKIB AHAMMED

Kabir Chowdhury, a national professor who became the icon of anti-communalism through his decades-long active stance against the forces of evil and injustice,

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5
MORE ON PAGE 2, 10



PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

The terracotta tiles on the memorial for martyred Dhaka University teachers, students and employees in front of the vice-chancellor's residence in the capital are being repaired yesterday ahead of the Martyred Intellectuals Day today. Several tiles were missing or damaged.

V-DAY PARADE PM to fill in for ailing president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Instead of President Zillur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will take salute at the Victory Day parade at the National Parade Square this year.

The government and doctors have advised the head of state to take rest considering his health

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

ZIA TRUST Khaleda to face graft charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission is likely to press charges against former prime minister Khaleda Zia and several others in Shaheed Zia Charitable Trust corruption case.

Yesterday at a monthly press briefing, the anti-graft body declared that

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Amini calls 3 'murtad'

They accuse him of distorting their statements

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Ain Bastobayon Committee Ameer Fazlul Haq Amini yesterday declared two state ministers and the director general of Islamic Foundation "murtad" (apostate) for what he said "criticising Islam".

He demanded removal of the three from their posts by December or else the committee would go for tougher movements like hartals from January.

At a press conference at

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

CUT BANK BORROWING, ENERGY SUBSIDY IMF may add strings to its \$1b credit

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The International Monetary Fund might ask the government to cut borrowing from banks and subsidy on energy to maintain budget discipline.

The organisation might impose these conditions on the government in the first year of the \$1 billion credit to the country, officials of the finance ministry said yesterday.

The government and the IMF resumed talks in Dhaka on December 1 over the loan after negotiations fell apart last year.

A visiting IMF delegation led by David Cowen for providing Extended Credit Facility (ECF) loan could wrap up the two-week talks with the government tomorrow, officials said.

After holding several meetings with the finance minister, finance division and Bangladesh Bank, the IMF mission is going to tag the conditions with the loan.

The IMF's three-year extended programme is meant mainly to help Bangladesh tackle balance of payments (BoP) problems. The country's BoP is already under tremendous pressure.

Last year, the first priority for ECF loan was placing VAT and income tax laws in parliament, a finance ministry official said. However, this time the IMF is emphasising more on maintaining discipline in budget and the financial sector.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

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