



"When an influential person is on board, drivers do not care about traffic signals."
NATIONAL PROFESSOR JAMILUR REZA CHOUDHURY AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE DRU (PAGE 3)



"The government and people of Bangladesh have been absolutely wonderful in providing humanitarian support for a million refugees under very difficult conditions."
SINGAPORE FOREIGN MINISTER VIVIAN BALAKRISHNAN WROTE ON FACEBOOK AFTER VISITING



"I announce that we will proudly bypass your illegal, unjust sanctions because it's against international regulations."
IRAN'S ROUHANI AFTER US REINSTATES SANCTIONS (PAGE 10)

IN THE LEAD UP TO NATIONAL POLLS Politics shows positive signs

Both ruling, opposition parties seem willing to end standoff over election

SHAKHAWAT LITON, RASHIDUL HASAN and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The state of politics in the run up to the upcoming parliamentary polls looks quite different from what prevailed in 2006 and 2013.

The first week of the 90-day timeframe from October 31 for holding the polls saw some positive signs like talks between the ruling and opposition parties and deferral of the election schedule by the Election Commission.

The EC had earlier decided to announce the schedule on November 4 but on that day deferred it to November 8. The announcement could be delayed further as hinted by a senior ruling AL leader.

The most significant thing is the absence of a violent street agitation by the opposition parties for mounting pressure on the government to meet their demands ahead of the polls.

But violent agitation was common before and in the first weeks of the 90-day

countdown to polls in 2006 and 2013. And both sides remained rigid on their stances, diminishing efforts to resolve the crisis.

In 2006, the AL-led alliance vehemently opposed former chief justice KM Hassan, who was supposed to become the chief adviser, and then chief election commissioner Justice Aziz, who was embroiled in controversy over a flawed voter list.

Its archrival, the then ruling BNP, stood by Justice Hassan and Justice Aziz terming the opposition demand unconstitutional.

The 2006 crisis led to the 1/11 change-over and installation of a military-backed caretaker government in 2007. The AL-led grand alliance won a landslide in the 2008 election under that caretaker rule.

Later in 2011, the government abolished the caretaker system.

The BNP-led opposition alliance took a rigid stance in 2013 on its demand for election under a neutral and non-party administration and refused to join the polls with the AL in power.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina welcomes Leader of the Opposition in parliament and Jatiya Party Senior Co-chairperson Raushan Ershad at the Gono Bhaban for talks last night as JP chief HM Ershad looks on.

PHOTO: PTID

Defer unveiling of polls schedule

Oikyafront urges at meet with EC, plans road march, rallies next week, holds rally in city today

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Jatiya Oikyafront plans to hold a road march towards Rajshahi and two rallies in Khulna and Mymensingh next week to mount pressure on the government to meet its seven-point demand, including election under a non-partisan government.

It also has urged the Election Commission not to announce the polls schedule before the end of the ongoing dialogues between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and different political alliances.

The Oikyafront may announce the programmes at its rally at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan today, its insiders said last night following a steering committee meeting of the alliance at BNP leader Moudud Ahmed's chamber in Motijheel.

The platform may also come up with an outline for an election-time government "without going beyond the constitution". Alliance leaders would meet at Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain's residence this morning to finalise the programmes, added the insiders.

KADER JOINS OIKYAFRONT - PAGE 16

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CHATTOGRAM DIVISION

AL aiming high in BNP bastion

Despite poor presence in the field, BNP thinks it can outshine rivals

STAR REPORT

History says Chattogram division is a bastion of the BNP.

The party here beat its rival Awami League in three out of the four battles of ballots since 1991. The one time it lost was not a humiliating defeat.

It was the BNP that almost removed AL's representation from the region in the 2001 parliamentary polls by taking a record 50 out of the 59 seats. The AL managed four seats, its lowest ever in the region since 1991 when democracy was restored.

When the AL dealt the BNP a humbling defeat across the country in 2008, the BNP still did reasonably well in Chattogram. The people of Chattogram gave the BNP 18 seats, more than half of the total it got countrywide.

The AL that won two-thirds majority nationally was able to obtain 32 seats here.

In 1996 polls, when the BNP was defeated nationally, it was still able to secure more seats than the AL in Chattogram. The BNP won 34 seats while the AL 23 in that election.

In the January 2014 election, the AL candidates fared best ever in the region emerging victorious in 43 seats with the BNP out of the race. Even with practically a walkover polls, the AL could not break the BNP's record of 50 seats in the region.

The situation on the ground now is different. Poor presence of BNP activists in the field against an overwhelming number of

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Technocrats to be dropped from election-time cabinet

PM tells JP-led combine

RASHIDUL HASAN

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said there would be no technocrat in the polls-time cabinet in line with the constitution.

If the Jatiya Oikyafront wants their leaders included in the polls-time government, it would not be possible, she added.

"There are three or four technocrat ministers in my cabinet now. I will drop all of them," she said during last night's dialogue with Jatiya Party-led United National Alliance at the Gono Bhaban last night.

"Since they [BNP leaders] were in parliament [during the 2014 election],

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Quiet but deadly, Taijul lends hope

Tigers need 321 to win first Test



MAZHAR UDDIN from Sylhet.



Despite his outstanding entry into the international cricket when he took five wickets across two innings of his debut Test, Bangladesh left-arm spinner Taijul Islam has never been feted as a superstar.

The spinner has quietly been playing his role without much fuss and that was the case again yesterday at the Sylhet International Stadium, where his second five-for of the match repaired some of the damage done by the batsmen being bundled out for 143 in the first innings and conceding a lead of 139. Taijul's five wickets for 62 runs helped bowl out Zimbabwe for 181 in their second innings, setting up an unlikely but still possible chase of 321 that the home side will resume today on 26 without loss.

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Complete all examinations by Dec 10

Govt asks schools as JS polls ahead

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government has rescheduled and brought forward the dates of all primary and secondary school final exams so that students do not face any problems during the 11th national election, likely to be held in late December.

Officials of the Directorate of Primary Education and the education ministry said they had already issued directives to all the schools concerned to complete their final exams by December 10 as per the time frame given by the Election Commission.

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda will announce the upcoming parliamentary election schedule this Thursday in an address to the nation through Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar, the EC said, adding that the election would be held within

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Students of O Aa Ka Kha School in Savar practise sewing in a tailoring class. The school for underprivileged children provides students with vocational training alongside classes on regular subjects.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

School offers more than education

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN, back from Sirajganj

Children at Sirajganj's Kagmari char are now free from the hassle of making risky journeys to school on boats. They thank O Aa Ka Kha School, the brainchild of Sirajganj resident Dr Nazmul Islam, for that. The school not only saves the little learners' time but also provides them with education materials at a monthly fee of Tk 10 only.

It all started in 2016 when Nazmul, a graduate of Gonoshasthaya Samaj Vittik Medical College, received a blow in his persuasion of MBBS after he failed in a course on surgery. But instead of lamenting over it, Nazmul made the best possible use of his time by setting up the school in Savar on the outskirts of Dhaka.

In January this year, he extended his vision and established another branch for the children at Kagmari char, which is about 10 kilometres off his home town. Twenty of his friends, who were studying at the same medical school in Savar, supported him in his mission.

Sabina Yasmin, 9, feared that she might end up as a dropout as she had to go to Bhuapur upazila of Tangail to pursue education before O Aa Ka Kha was born.

"Due to safety concerns on the river way, many of my female friends stopped going to the school in Bhuapur," Yasmin told this correspondent recently.

Her friend Swarna Khatun narrated how she braved rain and scorching heat while making the journeys by boat. "Now I can let go off the worry of drowning and happily travel to my new school," said Swarna.

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