

"There won't be any dialogue after today [yesterday]. We urged the EC to announce the polls schedule tomorrow and not to make any further delay."
JP SECRETARY GENERAL RUHUL AMIN HOWLADAR AFTER MEETING WITH EC

"We missed an opportunity in our first innings batting and there was nothing wrong with our plans or tactics, we just made a mess of it in our first innings."
BANGLADESH CRICKET COACH STEVE RHODES ABOUT THE BATTING DEBACLE IN THE FIRST TEST MATCH (PAGE 14)

"I urge the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar to halt these rushed plans for repatriation."
UN HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATOR YANGHEE LEE ON ROHINGYA REPATRIATION (PAGE 16)



Talks end, thorny issues unresolved

AL rejects Oikyafront's proposals for neutral polls-time govt, deferment of election, dissolution of parliament but assures all of free, fair election

SHAKHAWAT LITON and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The weeklong talks between the ruling alliance and opposition parties ended yesterday, but all the major contentious issues that have created uncertainty ahead of the election remain unsettled.

During the second round of talks with the opposition alliance, Jatiya Oikyafront, the Awami League-led combine outright rejected the former's proposals for formation of a polls-time neutral government led by a chief adviser, dissolution of parliament before the announcement of election schedule and deferment of the election by a month.

The Oikyafront leaders threatened that they would realise their demands if the government refuse to budge. They are also planning a march towards the Election Commission should it announce the election schedule, which is expected today, before the stalemate is over.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Jatiya Oikyafront leader Dr Kamal Hossain exchange pleasantries after yesterday's talks at the Gono Bhavan.

PHOTO: PID

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Talk they talked

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Yesterday's talks between the Jatiya Oikyafront and the Awami League-led 14-party alliance began with Dr Kamal Hossain putting forward the Oikyafront's proposals on the outline of the polls-time government, reconstitution of the Election Commission and creation of a level playing field for all political parties.

In response, AL leaders said it was not possible to accept the proposals as those did not explain how the government would be formed after the dissolution of parliament.

"You are trying to bring a dark force to power," said one of the AL leaders.

Dr Kamal then said, "Make a small committee and hold talks with us again. The solution to the problem lies within the purview of the constitution. Your idea is not right. If you come up with an open mind, it is possible to reach a solution."

The ruling party leaders then warned the Oikyafront delegation against bringing "any dark force" to power. "You are trying to create chaos," commented one of them.

Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna then took the floor and said, "You are accusing us. We too can accuse you. It is not the objective of the dialogue. We want to reach a solution. So talk about the solution."

"You are saying that you have given us permission to hold rallies and meetings. Why permission would be needed? It is our right ... Opposition activists are being arrested and fresh cases are being filed," Manna said.

At this, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, "No new case will be filed and no one will be arrested except for those who have been accused in criminal cases."

The Oikyafront leaders then talked about the release of BNP chief Khaleda Zia. In response, the ruling party leaders said it is the jurisdiction of the court and the government has nothing to do with it.

As the Oikyafront leaders pointed out that Khaleda was deprived of bail, the AL leaders kept saying it was a matter of the court.

The opposition combine leaders said if the government does not oppose Khaleda's bail petition, she could be released.

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EC set to unveil schedule today

AL, allies back the move, Oikyafront opposes

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and RASHIDUL HASAN

The Election Commission announces the schedule for the 11th parliamentary polls today amid support from the ruling Awami League and strong opposition from Jatiya Oikyafront, comprising the BNP and several other parties.

The opposition alliance yesterday threatened a road march towards the commission if the schedule was unveiled without a solution to the current crisis over how to hold the election.

Since its inception on October 13, the Oikyafront has been pressing the government to dissolve parliament and hold the polls under a non-party election-time government. The alliance and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina held talks twice since November 1 in this regard.

The government, however, has rejected the demands, terming them unconstitutional. It insists that the election should be held under it in line with the constitution.

Meanwhile, main opposition in parliament Jatiya Party

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The chronicle of failed dialogues

Differences between political parties over polls persist for more than two decades

SHAKHAWAT LITON, RASHIDUL HASAN and WASIM BIN HABIB

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who wrapped up weeklong dialogues with political parties on the next parliamentary polls yesterday, had been part of the eventful history of both successful and failed talks.

Records of talks held in around last three decades since the restoration of democracy in the country show that crisis was resolved and political situation improved whenever dialogues between political parties became successful.

However, whenever talks collapsed, it had disastrous consequences. On every

occasion, the dialogue results cost the country's people, economy and democracy dearly. It happened between 1994-96, in 2006 and 2013.

Opposition parties led by Hasina had launched vigorous street agitations twice while those led by BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia took to the streets in 2013.

As the top leaders of the Jatiya Oikyafront, an alliance of BNP and several other political parties, were not happy with the outcome of their second round of dialogue with the PM yesterday, it will hold a rally in Rajshahi tomorrow.

After the fall of autocratic ruler Gen HM Ershad in 1990, the first successful talks

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BNP submits to PMO list of 1,046 cases

Claims 46,748 of its activists accused, 10,298 arrested
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday submitted a list of 1,046 "fictitious cases" filed against its leaders and activists to the Prime Minister's Office.

BNP Assistant Office Secretary Taiful Islam Tipu brought the list to the PMO around 11:00am and PM's Personal Secretary Abdur Rahim received it.

Some 10,298 BNP men were arrested, 46,748 made accused and 1,046 cases were lodged from September 1 until yesterday, according to the list.

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372 arrested in one day

Families gather at Dhaka courts for dear ones picked up before and after Oikyafront rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sufia Begum, along with her daughter, waited at the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court Dhaka since morning yesterday to catch a glimpse of her son Abu Sufian.

The coveted moment finally came at 5:25pm when a handcuffed Sufian was being taken to the court prison cell with some others.

Sufia, who is in her 50s, ran to him and grabbed Sufian. She held on to him, shouting, "My son did nothing. He is innocent. Please free him."

She was among the family members and relatives of the 372 arrested prior to and after the Jatiya Oikyafront rally at Suhrawardy Uddyan on Tuesday. They had thronged the court premises to see their arrested loved ones, after failing to find any traces of them since Tuesday morning or afternoon.

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GAS CRISIS

Four power plants shut temporarily

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four power plants with a combined capacity of around 1,000MW were closed for a temporary period because of a fall in gas supply.

However, it will not affect the overall generation of electricity as there are plenty of oil-based plants to offset the loss, an official of the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) said yesterday.

The plants are in Chittagong, Sirajganj and Narayanganj, he said.

The nationwide daily demand for electricity stands at less than 10,000MW while the country's generation capacity is over 12,000MW, the official said, requesting anonymity.

The sudden gas shortage occurred on Saturday when an emergency valve of the offshore liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Moheskhal stopped functioning. The terminal was supplying 330 million

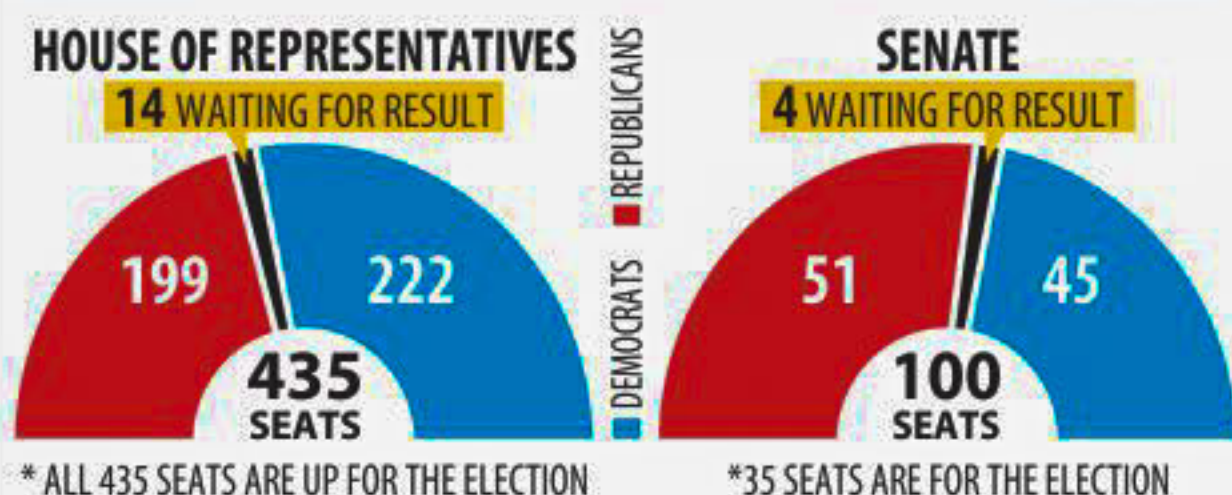
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A man holds up a placard urging political parties to be accommodating in front of the Gono Bhavan yesterday during talks between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Jatiya Oikyafront leaders.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

US MIDTERM ELECTIONS



Voters deliver mixed verdict

Partisan battle awaits Trump as GOP loses House, gains in Senate

AFP, Washington

A defiant President Donald Trump yesterday shrugged off the loss of the House of Representatives as Washington braced for the prospects of partisan warfare after US voters delivered a mixed verdict in a hard-fought midterm election.

With Democrats promising aggressive probes of Trump's administration and his personal finances after winning the House, the president went on the offensive.

"If the Democrats think they are going to waste Taxpayer Money investigating us at the House level, then we will likewise be forced to consider investigating them for all of the leaks of Classified information, and much else, at the Senate level," Trump said on Twitter.

"Two can play that game!"

Trump also lashed out at the ongoing investigation by Special Counsel Robert Mueller into whether his 2016 election campaign colluded with Russia to help him win the

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