

Hasina welcomes opposition alliance's decision to join polls | Obaidul Quader says AL has no objection if polls deferred | Oikyafront to keep eyes on role of govt, EC ahead of election | CEC speaks today about opposition's demands | Oikyafront may place new proposal on polls-time govt if further talks take place | Mirza Fakhru says movement will go on for a congenial polls atmosphere

Defer polls by a month

Oikyafront, 20-party write to EC for new schedule as they announce decision to take part in polls; BNP starts sale of nomination forms today

SHAKHAWAT LITON and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The Jatiya Oikyafront and the BNP-led 20-party alliance have formally announced their decisions to join the upcoming parliamentary election but demanded that the Election Commission defer the December 23 polls by a month. They argued that if the election date is shifted by a month, it will still be possible to hold the polls within the 90-day constitutional timeframe starting from October 31. The announcements made at separate press conferences yesterday appear to be a seismic change in the present stance of the two opposition combines, which have been agitating for dissolution of the cur-

rent parliament before the polls and formation of a neutral polls-time government. The development came three days after the Election Commission announced the polls schedule fixing December 23 as the voting day. Both the alliances now want the EC to scrap the schedule announced on November 8 and come up with a fresh one. They said that they decided to join the polls as part of their "ongoing movement to restore democracy" and that they will continue their agitation. Hours after the two combines' announcements, BNP Secretary General

It's part of movement

Oikyafront, 20-party on decision to join polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The decision to participate in the election is part of their movement to restore democracy, the BNP-led 20 parties and Jatiya Oikyafront announced yesterday. The situation in the country is not suitable for an inclusive and credible



Bangladesh's centurions Mominul Haque (R) and Mushfiqur Rahim celebrate after the latter's century during their 266-run fourth-wicket stand on the first day of the second Test against Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Mushfiqur, Mominul make it Tigers' day

MASHAR UDDIN
There was a lot at stake for Bangladesh coming into the second and potentially series-saving Test against Zimbabwe on the back of eight consecutive sub-200 scores in their last four Test matches, all of which they lost. By the end of the first day at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, their score of 303 for five will surely provide huge relief after the humiliating 151-run defeat in the first Test. The architects of putting



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chairs the first meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Board at the party's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Aspirants abound, cause AL worry

RASHIDUL HASAN
At least 4,000 nomination papers were sold in the last three days earning the Awami League around Tk 12 crore. But that's also a source of worry for the party. With such a large number of nomination seekers on the list, AL high-ups now brace for the tall task of picking a single candidate for each constituency in the upcoming national election. Then there is the fear of internal feuds as some aspirants being denied party tickets may run as independent candidates. Around 12 to 13 AL hopefuls have bought nomination papers against each of the 300 constituencies so far.

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