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Plot thickens as prospects for talks dim

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA *and* WASIM BIN HABIB

The political crisis deepens with the Awami League apparently slamming the door on talks and the BNP and its allies pressing ahead with their oust-the-government movement, experts say.

Now that the election schedule has been announced, there is no time for dialogues, said AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday.

When the polls schedule was announced on Wednesday night, the ruling party and its allies celebrated. But the opposition rejected the schedule and called hartal to press home its demand for polls under a non-partisan administration.

Political analysts say if the major parties remain unyielding, there will be further instability and confrontations, and the already crisis-ridden economy will suffer.

If the major parties remain unyielding, there will be further instability and confrontations, and the already crisis-ridden economy will suffer.

They believe talks can still be held for the greater interest of the country.

"As things stand, the political crisis has deepened. It seems the election will be lopsided. But the situation may change if parties reach a consensus," says Prof Nizam Ahmed, an expert in parliamentary affairs.

The election schedule is not something absolute; it can be changed if the parties agree, says the former teacher of public administration at the Chittagong University.

Shantanu Majumder, a political science professor at the Dhaka University, says, "When the window for talks is closed, confrontation happens. Dialogue is the only way out."

While announcing the schedule for the 12th parliamentary election, Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal urged the political parties to avoid conflict and find a solution. The political environment

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A charred carriage of a commuter train at Gharinda Railway Station in Tangail sadar upazila. Three carriages of the stationary train, which runs between Dhaka and Tangail, were damaged in a fire early yesterday. Police suspect arson. PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

M Sakhawat Hossain

'Situation is tricky this time'

Former election commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain said shunning talks has pushed the country into uncertainty. This time the situation is different as the leftist parties from parties from the right are against elections under this government, he said.

The international community is putting pressure on the government to hold a free and fair

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Al Masud Hasanuzzaman

'Almost no chance of dialogue'

Prof Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, a former teacher of government and politics at the Jahangirnagar University, said chances of dialogue between political parties are almost nil as the Awami League has ruled out the possibility of talks.

This will give opposition parties the opportunity to intensify their ongoing movement, which may lead to chaos, he said.

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Harun-or-Rashid

'Nation can't afford repeat of last two polls'

Prof Harun-or-Rashid, former political science teacher at Dhaka University, said the country cannot afford an election like the ones held in 2014 and 2018.

He said according to the constitution, there is no option but to go for the polls.

Prof Harun said the election could have been competitive, participatory, and held in a peaceful

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POLLS CAMPAIGN

Candidate can't spend more than Tk 25 lakh

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The amounts a candidate can spend for electioneering on each voter and in total in the upcoming national election is the same as before, according to a notification from the Election Commission.

For electioneering, a candidate can spend Tk 10 per voter and Tk 25 lakh in total even if the number of voters in a constituency is more than 2.5 lakh, as per the notification issued in line with The Representation of the People Order, 1972.

If any alliance of political parties wants a single symbol in the

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'People's personal info' leaked from database linked to NTMC

Reports Wired magazine; agency chief says it's sample, incorrect data

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"People's personal data" linked to the National Telecommunications Monitoring Centre, the state's lawful communication interception and intelligence agency, have been leaked.

US-based tech magazine Wired released a report yesterday stating that the leaked data contains people's names, addresses, national identity card details, phone numbers, duration of phone calls made, fingerprint photos, and passport and bank account details.

The data also details lists of cell towers and the components of mobile phone networks used.

Security researcher Viktor Markopoulos who works with CloudDefense.AI discovered the leak, reported Wired.

It said the leaked database had over 120 indexes (a kind of cross-referenced folder) with different files in each. Some of the indexes had tens of thousands of entries.

NTMC Director General Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan admitted to The Daily Star that there has been a leak of some data, but it was not from the NTMC system.

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BNP goes for 48-hour hartal from Sunday

11 vehicles torched; 3 train carriages burnt; LDA to stage demo against polls schedule

STAR REPORT

The BNP yesterday called a 48-hour nationwide hartal from 6:00am Sunday protesting the unveiling of the polls schedule by the Election Commission.

Party Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi announced the programme at a virtual press briefing.

Rizvi said the party will enforce the strike also to mount pressure on the government to step down, hand over power to a non-party neutral government and release all arrested BNP leaders and activists, including Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

The announcement came on the last day of the of the BNP's 48-hour nationwide blockade.

At least 11 vehicles were torched in several districts in 24 hours preceding

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Aussies edge Proteas to set up India final

REUTERS, *Kolkata*

Australia sealed their place in Sunday's final of the 50-over World Cup against India following a nervy three-wicket victory against South Africa in the second semifinal on Thursday.

Australia bowled out South Africa for a below-par 212 despite David Miller's defiant 101 but the chase was not as straightforward as Pat Cummins and his team would have liked.

Travis Head (62) led Australia's rollicking start before a mid-innings wobble put the five-time champions in a spot of bother.

Head and David Warner, who hit 29, started strongly before South Africa struck back.

Aiden Markram bowled Warner and Kagiso Rabada sent back Mitchell Marsh for a duck as Head, who was dropped on 40 and 57, looked to bat on.

However, Australia were in trouble at 137-5 after Keshav Maharaj bowled Head and fellow spinner Tabraiz Shamsi struck twice in quick succession.

The left-arm wrist spinner trapped Marnus Labuschagne lbw for 18 and bowled Glenn Maxwell for one in his next over.

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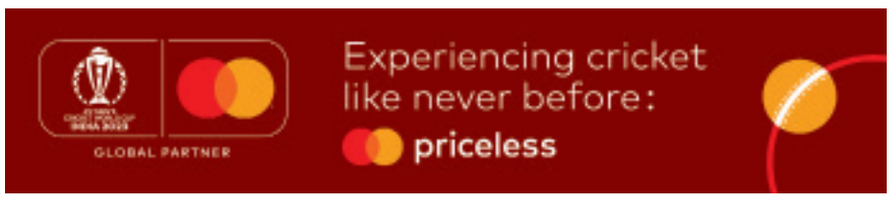
Australia captain Pat Cummins celebrates hitting the winning boundary with Mitchell Starc as the five-time World Champions had to dig deep for their three-wicket win in the World Cup semifinal against South Africa in Kolkata yesterday. The Aussies will face hosts India in the final in Ahmedabad on November 19. PHOTO: REUTERS



Kohli show to go on

NABID YEASIN

It was inevitable.

More than it being a question of if, it was rather a debate over how and when.

And, the answers to those last two questions were befitting the awe-inspiring personality that is Virat Kohli as he ascended the highest pedestal in ODIs in the most cinematic way on Wednesday.

With his cricketing idol, Sachin Tendulkar, present and applauding from the stands of his home ground, the Wankhede Stadium

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