



Wholesalers urge steps to curb extortion

B1



Taps run dry in Purba Jurain

P3



UN food agencies warn of 16 hunger hotspots

P5



'Everyone has gone silent out of fear'

P11

Govt readies a package to appease all

CA to address the nation today

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government is considering holding the national election and the referendum on the same day, among other options, to resolve the ongoing political crisis.

The referendum may include several questions for voters, including one on the notes of dissent submitted by political parties during the consensus talks on the July charter.

Several government sources said the administration, in an effort to accommodate conflicting demands of the parties, is also exploring options to form an upper house of parliament.

Two models are under discussion. One is that all 100 members of the chamber could be elected through proportional representation based on

- Govt mulls polls, referendum on same day
- Two options being considered for upper house PR
- Clause to auto-insert reforms in constitution after 270 days may be dropped
- Referendum to include questions on parties' dissent notes

the share of votes each party receives in the national polls.

Alternatively, half of the seats could be filled based on vote ratios, while the remainder would be allocated according to each party's share of seats in the lower house.

The government is also considering removing the clause that automatically incorporates reform measures into the constitution if the Constitutional Reform Council fails to act within 270 days since its first sitting.

As the parties failed to agree on constitutional reforms under the July charter within the government's one-week deadline, several advisers have been in intense discussions to find a way forward.

The advisory council is expected to discuss the issue at its regular weekly meeting this morning, three days after the deadline.

After the meeting, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Dissecting the July charter flashpoints

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Envisioned as a framework to reshape the nation's democratic trajectory, the July charter has instead turned into a wedge that is deepening the political rift.

The political parties remain sharply divided over the implementation of the charter, the time of a referendum and the fate of several notes of dissent incorporated into the charter.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Fair price for farmers more urgent than referendum

Says Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman yesterday questioned the logic of holding a referendum now, given that the country faces serious issues such as unemployment, unfair prices for farmers, and a failing education system.

"Ensuring a fair price for potato farmers is more urgent than holding a referendum," he told a discussion marking the National Revolution and Solidarity Day.



SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

Jamaat, allies threaten an indefinite sit-in at Jamuna

NCP expresses solidarity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Andolan Bangladesh and six other like-minded parties yesterday warned that they may launch an indefinite sit-in programme until their five-point demand is met.

"We want to solve the issues through discussion -- we sought an appointment with the chief adviser," said Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar in a press conference at Moghbazar's Al-Falah auditorium.

After meeting with him, if the demands are not fulfilled, the eight-party alliance will go for an indefinite sit-in programme in front of Jamuna, the chief adviser's residence, he added.

Meanwhile, Nasiruddin Patwary, the chief organiser of the National Citizen Party, also expressed solidarity with the five-point demand of the eight-party alliance.

"We express solidarity with their movement -- we are still in this," he said while speaking at the launch of the National Health Alliance -- a joint platform of healthcare professionals and students -- at the Dhaka Reporters Unity.

The five-point demands include

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Border Guard Bangladesh troops patrol the Dhaka University campus area yesterday as law enforcement agencies beef up security measures in the capital amid a spate of arson and crude bomb attacks over the last few days.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Tension rises amid more arson, crude bomb attacks

Troops, checkpoints blanket Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tensions ran high in the capital yesterday as security forces tightened security measures ahead of the Awami League's planned "Dhaka Lockdown" programme.

The heightened alert came as the International Crimes Tribunal-1 is set to fix the date today for delivering its verdict in a case against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina on charges of crimes against humanity.

The city has witnessed a spate of arson and crude bomb attacks in recent days, spreading panic among residents amid the latest political flare-up since the fall of the AL government on August 5 last year.

Law enforcers said they have blanketed Dhaka with tight security. More check posts sprang up across the city yesterday, with police and other forces searching vehicles and pedestrians. Police personnel have been deployed in front of nearly all major establishments in the city.

Apart from the police and army, members of the Border Guard Bangladesh have been deployed in Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narayanganj.

Political parties and student platforms yesterday vowed to foil any attempt by the AL and its affiliated bodies to destabilise the

situation. They announced rallies in Dhaka and major divisional cities, pledging to resist any move toward the reemergence of the AL, which remains banned from political activities.

Her trial in absentia, which began on June 1, heard months of testimony alleging she ordered mass killings. Prosecutors have filed five charges, including failure to prevent murder, amounting to crimes against



A bus burning in Jatrabari.

Meanwhile, the International Crimes Tribunal-1, headed by Justice Golam Mortuza Mozumder, is expected to announce the verdict date against Hasina today. Her co-accused are former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan and former inspector general of police (IGP) Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun.

humanity under Bangladeshi law. They have sought the death penalty if she is found guilty.

Hasina has denied all the charges and called her trial a "jurisprudential joke".

During the trial, the former IGP admitted his guilt and became a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Maersk's APM to build and run Laldia terminal

30yr-deal to be signed next week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is set to sign a 30-year agreement next week with APM Terminals BV, a Dutch subsidiary of the AP Moller-Maersk Group, to develop and operate Laldia Container Terminal at the Chattogram Port under a public-private partnership (PPP) framework.

The announcement comes after the cabinet committee on economic affairs yesterday approved the PPP model, which paved the way for the signing of the concession agreement between APM Terminals BV and the Chattogram Port Authority (CPA).

A concession agreement allows a private company to build, operate and maintain public infrastructure while transferring it back to the government after a defined term.

The CPA will sign the deal at a time when different organisations are opposing the government's move to lease out different terminals of the Chattogram port, including the existing New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT), to foreign companies.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A resort is seen wrapped in protective materials in Saint Martins Island despite the lifting of travel ban on November 1. Restrictions on overnight stay and the lack of ships have dissuaded tourists from visiting the island. As a result, most hotels and resorts on the island remain closed. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Faruk, Robin got Tk 2 lakh after shooting Mamun dead

Police say

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted investigators four days to interrogate each of the five suspects arrested over the killing of top-listed criminal Tariq Saif Mamun, 55, who was shot dead in front of the Dhaka National Medical Institute Hospital.

The suspects, who include the two shooters directly involved in Monday's broad daylight killing, were apprehended during raids in Dhaka and Narsingdi on Tuesday night, said police.

At this time, two firearms and a motorcycle used in the murder were also recovered, they added.

The arrestees have been identified as Faruk Hossain Foyzal, 38; Robin Ahmed, alias Piyash, 25; Mohammad Rubel, 34; Shamim Ahmed, 22; and Md Yousuf, alias Jibon, 42.

Later, police sued the five in an arms case they filed at Mohammadpur Police Station before producing them at a Dhaka court with a 10-day remand prayer. In response, the court granted

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4