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## CURBING PRICE HIKE CA asks finance adviser to take proper measures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President and Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government Iajuddin Ahmed has directed Finance and Planning Adviser Dr Akbar Ali Khan to take appropriate measures to curb the price hike of essentials.

The chief adviser's instructions came when Dr Akbar met him at Bangabhaban on Monday to discuss some internal issues of his ministry.

The finance adviser is likely to hold a meeting with the food and commerce ministry officials today and suggest them the ways for controlling prices of essential products.

"In our observation, prices of rice, wheat and chilli have shot up these days," Dr Akbar told The Daily Star. "We would ask officials to release the food grains from government stocks to keep the market prices stabilised," he said.

According to Bangladesh

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## Khaleda accuses CG advisers of conspiracy

### Asks them not to tinker with EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former prime minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday blasted the council of advisers to the caretaker government for meeting without the chief adviser and accused them of conspiracy.

In a warning to the interim government, she said, "Just cooperate with the Election Commission in holding the upcoming polls. You are not here to implement anyone's political agenda."

"The advisers had a meeting without the chief adviser and it was very much unconstitutional. We don't know what they have discussed," she told a huge rally in front of the BNP central office at city's Nayapalton.

Pointing to the advisers'

November 6 meeting at a state guesthouse in absence of President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed, Khaleda asked, "What sort of plots they [advisers] have hatched at the



meeting without the chief adviser?"

Describing the present Election Commission (EC) as fully independent and neutral, she cautioned the caretaker government not to meddle with the commission's affairs.

The top leader of the four-party alliance then asked the chief election commissioner (CEC) and the other election commissioners to arrange for the elections in consultation with the president.

"People will not tolerate any interference with the Election Commission," she said taking a swipe at the caretaker government.

The BNP led four-party alliance organised the rally to mark the 'national revolution and solidarity day'. Hundreds of leaders, workers

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## CG functioning as per rules of business

### Says Cabinet Division; 6 cabinet bodies formed

BSS, Dhaka

Functions of the president and chief adviser, and all advisers to the caretaker government are being carried out as per the rules of business of the state.

Sources in the Cabinet Division yesterday told the news agency that there is no scope to be confused with the functions of the advisers.

The advisers to the neutral caretaker government are discharging their duties as per the rules. There is no scope to interfere in the activities of one adviser by another.

Only one formal meeting of the council of advisers was held on November 1 since the caretaker government took office on October 31, the sources said. All other meetings of the advisers with the president were call on programmes, it noted.

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## EC may get more commissioners

### Advisers' council sits today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More election commissioners may be appointed, a few caretaker advisers hinted yesterday as the council of advisers sits again today to find out ways to make the Election Commission (EC) more effective and credible.

If the chief election commissioner (CEC) does not resign from his post, the caretaker government may appoint four more election commissioners to bring a balance in the four-member EC, said another adviser on condition of anonymity.

"The election may not be acceptable at home and abroad if no changes are made in the Election Commission," Adviser Dr Akbar Ali Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The Election Commission

should be made acceptable to all for holding a free and fair election. We are discussing different alternatives in this regard," he added.

"The negative perception among the people about the Election Commission must be removed by doing something," Adviser Akbar said, adding that the council of advisers will discuss the issue in today's meeting.

The government and the EC have been at loggerheads over reconstitution of the EC for the last few days.

The council of advisers discussed several alternatives regarding the reconstitution of the EC in its previous four meetings.

An adviser even communicated with CEC MA Aziz on behalf of the council and sought his opinion whether he will resign if requested by the caretaker government.

Aziz said he will not resign from his post. On Monday, he even denied that the advisers' council or any adviser requested or called him to resign, and declared that the next parliamentary elections will be held in a free and fair manner under his authority.

Terminating the prevailing situation complex, the advisers said before resolving the issue of reconstituting the EC they cannot move forward to the other initiatives for creating a congenial atmosphere for the upcoming election.

Meanwhile, the EC, which was preparing to submit to the caretaker government a set of proposals for reforms in the electoral laws, retreated from its move in the wake of the latest development.

"In fact, nobody in the Election Commission is now talking about

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## Iajuddin not making interim govt effective

### Alleges Hasina, threatens to shut down country if he fails to be neutral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that President Iajuddin Ahmed assumed the post of the chief adviser (CA) to the caretaker government (CG) violating the constitution aiming to help the BNP-Jamaat alliance to come back to power.

"The president has made the non-partisan caretaker govern-

ment controversial and created a crisis within it. And for this the caretaker government is not being able to perform its duties properly. It seems that the chief adviser is on a mission to ensure victory of a certain party," the AL chief said at a news briefing in her Dhanmondi office in the capital.

Prior to the briefing, AL had a meeting of its presidium with party chief Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

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## Irregularities in voter list printing

### Blacklisted firms also get work orders

RASHIDUL HASAN

Printing of voter list for the next general election is going on amid allegations of irregularities and wrongdoings in the process.

Of the companies doing the job, some were blacklisted by the Election Commission (EC) earlier, some are inexperienced and a number of others do not have adequate infrastructure for accomplishing such a vital task, sources said.

Blaming a section of EC officials for all this, they alleged that these

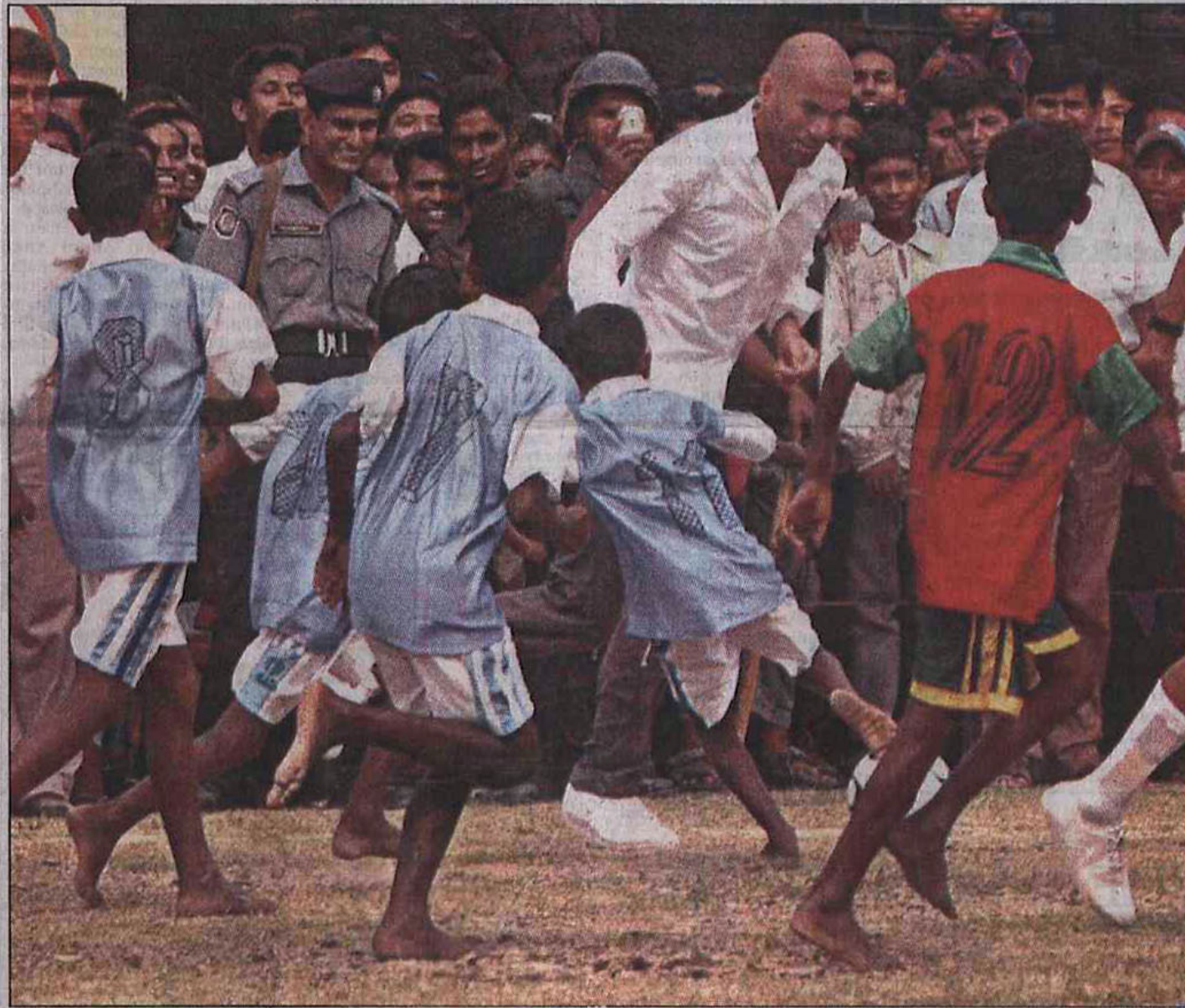
officials made money through corruption in the tender process for the printing of voter list.

Some companies engaged in printing allegedly do not have their own offices while some either do not have any address or used fake address to obtain work order for the task.

Besides, some inexperienced firms were given work order but experienced ones were ignored.

There are also allegations that EC officials even tampered with or destroyed documents of many

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French football legend Zinedine Zidane enjoys a game with local boys in Itahata village of Gazipur yesterday. Zidane, who is on a three-day visit to Bangladesh, went to Gazipur to see a microcredit project of Grameen Bank.

## Country dances to Zizou tune

AL MUSABBIR SADI and  
JASIM UDDIN KHAN

Zinedine Zidane may no longer be gracing football pitches across the world following his retirement from the game after this summer's World Cup but the legendary footballer's day-out in Dhaka yesterday was all about kicking the ball.

His trip to Gazipur in the morning to visit a Grameen Bank project ended with an exhibition match between a Bangladesh XI and Argentina XI where he scored the only goal for the home side. In the

evening, he enthralled a 15,000-strong crowd at the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) with glimpses of his skills that made him one of the greatest footballers of all time.

Popularly nicknamed Zizou, the enigmatic French football maestro received rousing receptions wherever he went and he found it amazing.

"My thanks to Prof (Muhammad) Yunus and Franck Riboud to invite me here. I am very happy to see the level of interest in football

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## Republicans risk losing Congress as US votes

REUTERS, Washington

Democrats hoped to sweep Republicans out of power in the US Congress on Tuesday after a bruising campaign dominated by discontent with the Iraq war and doubts about President George W. Bush's leadership.

Democrats are on course to recapture control of the US House of Representatives for the first time since 1994, opinion polls showed, with their chance of taking over the

Senate hinging on races for several key states that are too close to call.

A majority for the party in even one chamber of Congress could slam the brakes on Bush's second-term legislative agenda, hasten his lame-duck status and give Democrats a chance to investigate his most controversial policy decisions, such as the war in Iraq.

Polls opened at 6 am EST (1100 GMT) in some areas of the eastern United States and will start to close

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