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lajuddin says it's now presidential form of govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President and Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government Prof lajuddin Ahmed yesterday reminded everyone that the present form of government has become a "presidential form of government".

"I would like to remind everyone that the present form of government has become a presidential form of government after reposing the responsibility of caretaker government on the president," lajuddin said at a meeting with secretaries to different ministries at the secretariat.

"Everything is being conducted as per the Rules of Business and Allocation of Business. I appointed officials at the president's office according to my choice and they are discharging their duties with sincerity," the president said, adding, "The highest constitutional institution has to be kept above all debates."

lajuddin asked all top bureaucrats to extend cooperation to the Election Commission (EC) as per government instructions for holding a peaceful, free, fair and neutral election.

"You have to discharge your duties by maintaining absolute neutrality and objectivity and staying above all fears, apprehensions and influence," he told the secretaries in the first meeting at the secretariat after taking office as the chief adviser.

The secretaries demanded that the president cancel all contractual appointments and fill the posts with regular officers for holding the next election in a free and fair manner.

They placed a set of suggestions to which the president said decisions in connection with those will be taken after holding a meeting with the council of advisers to the caretaker government.

Referring to articles 21(2) and

126 of the constitution, the president reminded them that it is the responsibility of the republic's employees to serve the people while it is the responsibility of the executive authorities to assist the EC in discharging its duties.

lajuddin said uncertainty has been created in the minds of people following a political tumble but the situation has been brought under control by establishing the rule of law. This trend will have to be maintained to gain public confidence by ensuring the rule of law, he added.

The president said it is indispensable for the administration to gain confidence of all political parties for ensuring free and fair elections. The civil and police administration will also have to

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lajuddin abusing 2 top posts

Alleges 14-party
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL)-led 14-party combine yesterday accused President and Chief Adviser (CA) to the caretaker government (CG) lajuddin Ahmed of abusing the two top posts in a move to establish 'dictatorship' in the country and implement BNP's political agenda.

"The president-cum-chief

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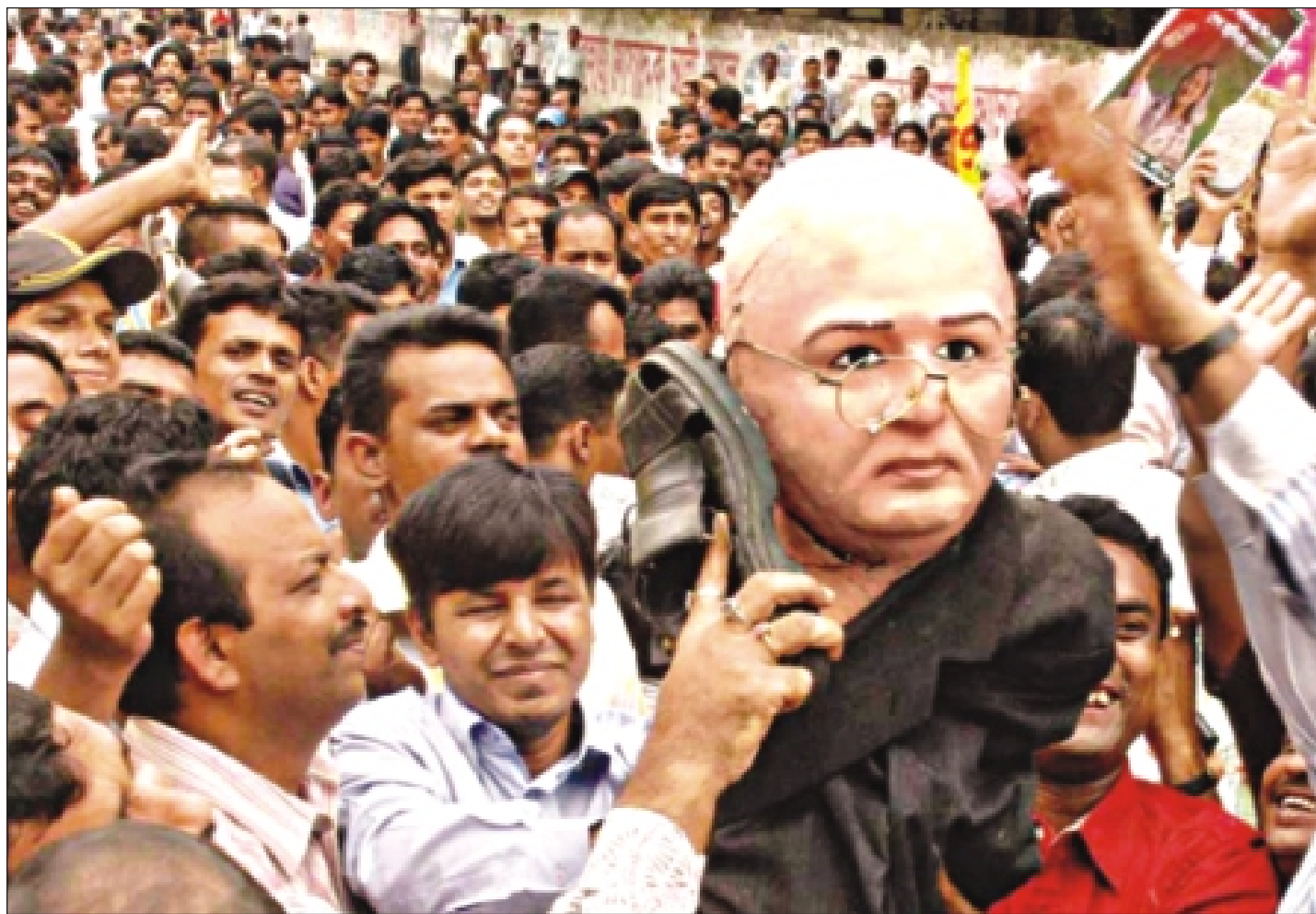
No public servant above criticism

Says ex-cabinet secy
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former cabinet secretary M Mujibul Haque yesterday said no public servant is above public criticism as the people pay them for their service.

His comment followed President and Chief Adviser (CA) of the caretaker government lajuddin Ahmed's remarks that criticism by certain quarters about his office staff are unwarranted and tantamount to interference in the affairs of the State.

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Activists of Jubo Sangram Parishad hit an effigy of chief election commissioner with shoes at Khamarbari in the capital during their march to lay siege to the Election Commission office yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Commentary A stunning comment deserving explanation

Has our system of government become Presidential?

MAHFUZ ANAM

The President/ the Chief Adviser yesterday addressed the secretaries to the government urging them to perform their duties with diligence to ensure a free and fair election. Permit us to quote two relevant paragraphs from his speech. He said (our translation) " I want to remind everyone that since the responsibility of the chief adviser to

the caretaker government has been reposed on the President therefore the present government has become a Presidential form of government" (The Bangla text reads: আমি সবাইকে স্মরণ করিয়ে দিতে চাই যে, রাষ্ট্রপতির উপর তত্ত্বাবধায়ক সরকারের দায়িত্ব অর্পিত হওয়ার পর বর্তমান সরকারের ধরন হয়েছে রাষ্ট্রপতি শাসিত সরকার।)

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Don't make 'unwarranted' remarks about president's staff

lajuddin asks all
UNB, Dhaka

President lajuddin Ahmed yesterday underscored his supreme authority over the state and government affairs, saying any unwarranted remarks about his personal officials are tantamount to interference in the affairs of the state.

"The highest constitutional institution of the state must be kept above controversy. In this era of free flow of information, everything is being run with transparency. There is nothing to hide-no

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Constitution does not back lajuddin's view

Hasina on 'present form of govt'
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said it would be a great mistake if President lajuddin Ahmed considers himself as the chief of a presidential form of government after taking charge of the non-party caretaker government.

"If he [president] thinks it a presidential system of government, he will make a mistake as the constitution does not support this view. Constitutionally it is a non-party caretaker government," Hasina said at a meeting with former members of different standing committees of the

8th parliament at her party office at Dhanmondi in the capital.

For three months, the president, who has become chief adviser to the caretaker government violating the constitution, should forget that he is a partisan president and as the chief of a non-party caretaker government, he has to perform his duties neutrally following the constitution, she said.

She urged ensuring an atmosphere to hold a free and fair election where people would cast their

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EC besiege programme ends without violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) besiege programme called by Jubo Sangram Parishad ended yesterday without any violence but left the traffic system in the capital collapsed as thousands took to the streets.

The besiege programme was called by Jubo Sangram Parishad, an alliance of youth wings of the 14-party alliance, to press their demand for the reconstitution of the EC and removal of four election commissioners including Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz.

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People left to suffer on city streets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Traffic management system virtually collapsed yesterday in parts of the capital for six hours due to the Election Commission (EC) siege programme enforced by Jubo Sangram Parishad and barricades erected by police on the streets around the EC.

Thousands of commuters had a hard time reaching their workplaces and other destinations during the morning rush hours as police put up barbed wire barricades in streets leading to the EC to restrict the demonstrators from entering the EC.

Demonstrations by thousands of people on the major thoroughfares

of the city during the siege programme multiplied the plight of the city dwellers.

The worst affected areas were Dhanmondi, Lalmatia, Mohammadpur, Elephant Road, Green Road and Sobhanbagh -- where a massive traffic gridlock forced people to be stuck in their vehicles for several hours.

All modes of vehicles from Mirpur and Gulistan and vice versa were forced to take a detour through the side roads and alleyways of Mohammadpur, Lalmatia, Green Road and Dhanmondi to reach their destinations. This caused severe traffic congestion in the area and worsened the overall

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Jatiya Oikya Front demands action against CEC for 'untruthfulness'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Jatiya Oikya Front (JOF) met Chief Adviser lajuddin Ahmed yesterday and demanded a Supreme Judicial Council be formed in order to take actions against the chief election commissioner (CEC) for being untruthful before the media.

Executive President of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed told newsmen following the meeting with lajuddin.

Oli, who led the seven-member team, said they told the chief adviser that the caretaker government is failing to create an environment for free and fair general elections.

"We told him that the caretaker government could not earn the trust of the common people

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Moudud against reconstitution of EC for 'time constraints'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The upcoming general elections must be held within the constitutionally set timeframe accepting all positive and negative aspects of the Election Commission (EC) and voter list, former law minister Moudud Ahmed said yesterday.

"It would not be practical to reconstitute the EC and correct the existing voter list due to time constraints," he said at a discussion yesterday.

As per the constitution, the election must be held by January 25, Moudud said at the programme titled "Politics of Conspiracy: Responsibility of the Nationalist

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Vehicles come to a standstill at Shahbagh on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the capital yesterday as Jubo Sangram Parishad's Election Commission siege programme created huge traffic pressure at certain points of the city streets.

PHOTO: STAR

Mashhud's disclosure silences Aziz

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz yesterday kept mum on caretaker government Adviser Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury's disclosure that he visited the CEC's residence, which the latter denied outright earlier.

The CEC yesterday neither allowed journalists to meet him nor replied to their questions while leaving office in the afternoon.

On behalf of the council of advisers, Hasan Mashhud and the military secretary to the president met Aziz on November 2 night, seeking his opinion whether he will resign if requested by the caretaker government to pave the way for reconstituting the Election Commission (EC).

But talking to reporters on

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713 officials sacked on political grounds

Reveals AL
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The immediate past BNP-led four-party alliance government sacked 713 officers and did not promote 2,166 others in civil and police administration, but it awarded promotion to 1,586 officers on political grounds and appointed 266 on contract basis.

The Awami League disclosed a list of such officials yesterday at a press conference at the party's Dhanmondi office in the capital.

The AL claimed that the alliance government appointed 300 upazila election officers, 184 upazila education officers, 217 assistant education officers, 472 upazila land officers, 5,738 primary school headmasters, 58,588 assistant teachers,

499 assistant superintendents of police (ASP), 2,071 sub-inspectors (SI), and 24,270 police constables to influence the next election.

Besides, the previous government appointed 17 people at different constitutional posts--four in Election Commission, 10 in Public Service Commission, and three in Anti-Corruption Commission, the list noted.

They cancelled the appointments of 22 judges from the High Court Division and appointed 27 there. They also appointed two judges in the Appellate Division considering their political identity, it said.

According to the list, the alliance government sacked one

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Dhaka to become sixth largest city by 2015

Population to reach 22m
BSS, Dhaka

Dhaka will become the sixth largest city in the world and third largest city in Asia in terms of population by 2015 as its dwellers are estimated to reach 22 million.

The Dhaka city currently ranks the world's 11th largest one with the population growth of 3.2 percent per year compared with 1.7 percent of the country.

This was revealed yesterday at a seminar titled "Urban Issues and Challenges in Dhaka" organised by the World Bank (WB) at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Eminent economist Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud presided over the seminar while Director of the South Asian Region Department of the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management of the WB Sadiq Ahmed presented a keynote paper titled "Making Dhaka liveable."

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Democrats to control US senate

Complete election sweep with Virginia victory

AP, Washington

Democrats completed an improbable double-barrelled election sweep of Congress on Wednesday, taking control of the Senate with a victory in Virginia as they padded their day-old majority in the House.

"The days of the do-nothing Congress are over," declared Democratic Sen Harry Reid of Nevada, in line to become majority leader. "In Iraq and here at home, Americans have made clear they are tired of the failures of the last six years."

Jim Webb's victory over Sen

George Allen in Virginia assured Democrats of 51 seats when the Senate convenes in January. That marked a gain of six in midterm elections in which the war in Iraq and President Bush were major issues.

Earlier, State Sen Jon Tester triumphed over Republican Sen Conrad Burns in a long, late count in Montana.

With a handful of House races too close to call, Democrats had gained 28 seats, enough to regain the majority after 12 years of Republican rule and place Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California in line to

become the first female speaker in history.

"It was a thumping," Bush conceded at the White House. "It's clear the Democrat Party had a good night."

Allen's campaign issued a statement noting that state officials are conducting a canvass of the votes cast in Tuesday's balloting.

"At the conclusion of those efforts, Senator George Allen plans to make a statement regarding the outcome," it said.

The Senate had teetered at 50

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Boucher flies in tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard A Boucher, who is due to arrive in Dhaka tomorrow on a two-day visit, will hold meeting with the president, chiefs of major political parties and members of the civil society to overcome the current political impasse in Bangladesh.

This will be his second visit to Bangladesh since his first visit on August 2 to 4 this year.

US embassy sources said Boucher will have a busy schedule after arriving in Dhaka on Saturday morning as he will meet with senior government and political figures as well as members of the civil society.

He will meet BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Awami League

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