

## Parties challenge in court president's becoming CA

Two more writ petitions filed on CA's executive power exercise, move to declare poll schedule before finalising voter list

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Besides their street agitations over the issues of chief adviser's appointment and authority and the Election Commission (EC), a number of political parties yesterday joined the Awami League (AL) led 14-party alliance in a legal battle against the caretaker government chief and the EC.

Eleven leaders of the 14-party alliance, Jatiya Party (JP), Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Zacar Party—a faction of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), and Islamic Front jointly filed three writ petitions in the High Court against the president's assumption of the post of chief adviser, his manner of exercising executive power, and the EC move to declare election schedule before

finalising the voter list.

The High Court is likely to hear the petitions today.

In a late-night development, President/Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed called Attorney General AJ Mohammad Ali to the Bangabhaban to brief him (president) on the implications of the petitions.

Coming out of the Bangabhaban at around 11:40pm, the attorney general declined to speak to the journalists waiting outside.

In one petition, the petitioners asked for court direction to Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed to hand over the office of the chief adviser "to a person who is competent, qualified, eligible, available and entitled to claim the valid legal title to such public office."

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Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil and Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud leaving the High Court premises yesterday after filing three cases against the caretaker government and the Election Commission.

## CG should take collective decision

Says Adviser Akbar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Adviser Akbar Ali Khan yesterday said the caretaker government should take collective decisions to keep the president's office above all controversies.

The adviser said the president is the highest post of the state. "So we (the advisers) want to keep him (the president) above all disputes," Akbar said during his first meet with reporters after he, along with four other advisers, refrained from attending their offices on Thursday -- allegedly protesting the chief adviser's unilateral decision on different issues.

He said the president would be above controversies if the caretaker government took collective decisions on different issues and, only then, the caretaker government would face all the criticism.

Akbar said they (the advisers) came to power only for three months and that is why they are not afraid of being disputed, but the

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## EC leaves mistakes for people to correct

Goes ahead with declaring polls schedule this week

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Reiterating its stance of announcing the election schedule this week, the Election Commission (EC) yesterday finally put the responsibility on the citizens to correct the mistakes on the updated voter list and for including new names on the list.

Despite the popular demand for correcting the mistakes on the controversial updated voter list and for including names of eligible people, the EC did not initiate any measure of its own to do the task. Rather on the eve of announcing the election schedule, it just reminded the people and its field level officials about the existing legal provisions for deletion and inclusion of names on the voter list.

Directed by the EC, its secretariat yesterday afternoon sent written directives to field level election

officials for carrying out the EC's decision. But it gave a very limited time frame for the task of deletion and inclusion of names on the voter list as it had planned to announce the election schedule this week.

According to the directives, the field level election officials will be able to include or delete any name on the voter list on their own till the announcement of the election schedule. Once the election schedule is announced, the power of deleting or including names on the voter list will be exercised only by the EC itself. At that time, the field level election officials will only be able to send their recommendations to the EC for consideration.

So, if the election schedule is announced this week, the process of deleting or including names on the voter list by the election officials will continue only for a few

days. Before and after the announcement of the election schedule, people applying for being registered as voters will have to submit receipts of municipal tax payment or house rent or payment to local guards, and affidavits of age or attested copies of SSC certificates with their applications on prescribed forms.

Regarding deletion of names from the voter list, people will also have to apply on prescribed forms to district or upazila election officers.

To update the existing voter list in last July, the EC failed to get response from the people as it did not send its staff to door to door visits for getting the job done. In the face of severe criticism, the EC finally sent its staff to door to door visits, but in absence of a procedure for checking the authenticity

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## Reconstitute EC, then declare polls schedule

14-party asks Iajuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 14-party delegation met President and Chief Adviser (CA) of the caretaker government (CG) Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday and told him that announcement of schedules for next general election would not be acceptable before reconstitution of Election Commission (EC) and correction of the updated voter list.

Removal of acting Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Mahfuzur Rahman and Election Commissioner SM Zakaria must be done before reconstitution of the EC, the delegation told the CA.

The three-member delegation

comprising Abdul Jalil, barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud and M Mokammel Haque also asked the CA to meet their 11-point demand before announcing the schedules.

"We have told the chief adviser that there are several rules before announcement of polls schedules. The primary voter list will have to be made open for people. It will have to be corrected if there is any objection. Then it should go for printing and be published before announcement of the schedules," 14-party coordinator Abdul Jalil told a press briefing at AL's Dhanmondi office in the capital.

Jalil told Iajuddin that the announcement of schedules would

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## Bangabhaban sit-in today

Demand for voter list correction, neutral admin, EC reconstitution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party alliance, its like-minded political parties and alliances will stage a sit-in around the Bangabhaban today demanding depoliticisation of the administration, "meaningful" reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC) and corrections of the updated voter list.

They also demand resignation of Chief Adviser (CA) to the Caretaker Government (CG) Prof Iajuddin Ahmed from the post as he "failed to play a neutral role."

The 14-party alliance yesterday fixed 10 spots in the capital from which they would start for the sit-in programme around Bangabhaban.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) under its Ordinance

"to ensure security and protect government and public property" imposed a ban on staging sit-ins around Bangabhaban and laying siege to it from midnight today.

Jatiya Oikya Front, Jatiya Party (Ershad) and a number of Islamic political parties will hold simultaneous programmes with the Awami League-led 14-party alliance's programme to press home their common demands.

The alliance and other political parties would also stage similar sit-in programmes around the EC Secretariat tomorrow demanding the same.

Postponing the non-stop blockade on November 23, the Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina had declared the sit-in

demonstration from 10:00am to 2:00pm in order to realise their 11-point demand.

Hasina said the CA failed to perform his duties neutrally, adding, "He should step down from the post of CA and appoint a non-partisan person as the CA as per the constitution to hold a free and fair election."

After the chief election commissioner (CEC) went on a three-month leave on Wednesday, the AL now focuses on their demands for removal of the two other controversial election commissioners -- Mahfuzur Rahman and SM Zakaria -- and the appointments of two "uncontroversial and acceptable" people replacing them.

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## Mahmud to hold more meetings in future

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Defending his controversial meeting with in-service government officials at Uttara on Friday night as a "social gathering", former energy adviser Mahmudur Rahman yesterday said the news revealed by the media is "half true, distorted and motivated".

Mahmudur said he often arranges such social gatherings of his large number of friends and well-wishers and will organise more in future.

"A similar programme took place on Friday where around 30 guests were invited--around 15 of them non-government and 15 government officials, and only one

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## BUREAUCRATS' SECRET MEETING

### No investigation initiated yet

Advisers against giving 'em polls responsibility

STAR REPORT

Criticising the officials who attended a secret meeting at former Board of Investment chief Mahmudur Rahman's Uttara office on Friday, advisers to the caretaker government said these officials should not be given any election-related responsibility.

No investigation against these officials was initiated until yesterday.

Sources, however, said the Cabinet Division will soon send a

proposal to the president to form a committee and probe the incident.

The home ministry is also planning to investigate the matter separately.

Energy Adviser Hasan Mashhud told the press yesterday that the advisers discussed the matter with the president on Saturday.

"The president said he is expecting an intelligence report based on which he would take action," he said.

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Pilgrims heading for Makkah sit inside the first hajj flight of Bangladesh Biman that left Dhaka yesterday morning.

PHOTO: STAR

## Ershad expels GM Quader from JP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

GM Quader, presidium member of the Jatiya Party (JP), was expelled from the party by JP Chairman and his elder brother HM Ershad last night.

Ershad issued the order from London in a fax message, Sunil Shuvo Ray, press secretary to the JP chairman, told The Daily Star.

Party sources hinted that the former lawmaker's joining the Awami League led 14-party leaders in filing a case challenging the authority of the Chief Adviser might be the reason for his expulsion.

GM Quader could not be contacted for his comments.

## Concern over delay in appointing new ECs

Advisers find post of acting CEC unconstitutional

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the controversy over assumption of the post of acting chief election commissioner (CEC) by Justice Mahfuzur Rahman mounting, President Iajuddin Ahmed has yet to appoint the two new election commissioners that he earlier decided to do on November 22.

The Election Commission (EC) led by Justice Mahfuzur Rahman, who authorised himself as the acting CEC on last Thursday by convening a commission meeting, is now planning to announce the election schedule this week, trig-

gering a fresh spell of controversy even in absence of rather infamous CECMA Aziz.

Secretary to the EC Secretariat Abdur Rashid Sarkar last night called on President/Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban.

The president wanted to know from him the EC's preparations for the upcoming election. The EC secretary told Iajuddin that immediate appointment of two more commissioners will help the commission gear up better for the polls, said Bangabhaban sources.

The president on November 18 first disclosed his desire to appoint

two more election commissioners and again on November 22, following Aziz's announcement of taking a leave of absence, he informed the nation through a speech that he had decided to appoint two more election commissioners.

But no new election commissioner has been appointed yet although four days have passed since his address to the nation and questions are being raised even in the EC Secretariat about the delay.

It has been a mystery why the president is delaying the appointment of two more election

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## 4-party to hold rallies to protest 'plot' against polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led four-party alliance will bring out procession and hold rally in all divisional and district headquarters today and tomorrow to protest a "conspiracy" of the Awami League led 14-party combine to foil the elections.

The alliance will also press for announcement of the election schedule at earliest. The Dhaka city unit of the alliance will organise a rally in front of the BNP central office today. Senior alliance leaders will address the rally.

Earlier, four party leaders from their rally held at announced that the rally would be held at Muktangan.

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## Khaleda sees plot against democracy, constitution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said a conspiracy is being hatched against the country and the conspirators are trying to destroy the democracy, the constitution and important institutions.

Urging teachers to work for her party in the upcoming elections, she said, "Teachers should work for BNP if they wanted to protect the country's independence and sovereignty."

She was addressing a teachers' views-exchange meeting organised by Shikhhak Karmachari Oikya Jote at Biam auditorium in the city yesterday.

"I hope you will work for me and I will also work for you," she told the teachers.

Hundreds of teachers from across the country joined the meeting and they were chanting slogans expressing their support to the BNP chairperson.

Khaleda did not make any comments on the demand of teachers' job nationalisation if voted to power again. She did say that she would provide free education for females up to graduation level.

Blasting her political opponents, the former prime minister said, "Awami League (AL) has not only failed to lead the country, but also mastered the art of destroying it."

"They could not have had enforced programmes like the blockade if they loved the country," she said adding that AL destroyed the country while they were in power and even now, they plan to destroy the nation's future generations by creating anarchy in the education sector.

Khaleda also alleged that the AL destroyed the country's defence in the past by creating their own forces.

She questioned why the AL was raising demands to the caretaker government when no previous caretaker government faced such demands.

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স্যালাইনের পাশাপাশি ডায়রিয়া আক্রান্ত শিশুকে পর পর ১০ দিন বেবি জিংক ট্যাবলেট খাওয়ান।

ক্রিং... ক্রিং...  
**বেবি জিংক**  
ডায়রিয়া হলে শিশুকে দিন

৬ মাস থেকে ৫ বছরের শিশুকে একটি করে ট্যাবলেট খাওয়াতে হবে।

এক চামচ খাবার পানিতে বেবি জিংক ট্যাবলেটটি দিলে এমনিই গলে যাবে। গলে যাওয়া পুরো ট্যাবলেটটি আপনার শিশুকে খাওয়ান।

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