

ADVISERS' NEW DIALOGUE INITIATIVE

Package proposal placed before Khaleda, Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A team of advisers to the caretaker government talked with the two major political alliances last night with a package proposal in an apparent last ditch effort to resolve the prevailing political crisis.

The proposals include making inactive two controversial election commissioners SM Zakaria and Modabir Hossain Chowdhury, appointment of new election commissioners, transfers of home and establishment secretaries and others related to the electoral process, and minor changes in the election schedule creating scope

PROPOSAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Making Zakaria, Modabir inactive
- Appointment of new election commissioners from former judges
- Changes in the poll schedule for correcting updated voter list leaving the announced poll date unchanged
- Correcting the voter list as much as possible
- Transfers of home, establishment, and LGD secretaries

for correcting the updated voter list, sources present at a daylong meeting of the council of advisers said.

The package proposal also urged Awami League (AL)-led 14-party coalition to withdraw its indefinite countrywide blockade, the sources said adding that the caretaker government is ready to initiate more steps to create a level playing field but the blockade must be withdrawn.

The advisers who expressed high hopes about the package yesterday said they believe the two major political alliances will agree with the proposals.

"We are working as facilitators to resolve the crisis. A solution to the crisis does not depend on us alone. It also depends on the major political alliances," Information Adviser Mahbul Alam told reporters after the meeting of the council of advisers.

In line with the decision of the council, three advisers --- Justice Fazul Haque, CM Shafi Sami and Mahbul Alam met the top leaders of the two alliances BNP-led four-party alliance and AL-led 14-party coalition, and discussed the proposals with them.

After a 45-minute meeting

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Blockade to go on until 5-pt demand met

Says 14-party STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party alliance yesterday said their ongoing non-stop countrywide blockade programme would continue until President and Chief Adviser (CA) to the Caretaker Government (CG) Iajuddin Ahmed met their five-point demand.

The Awami League-led alliance's five-point demand includes the demand for resignation of the president from the CA post and reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC).

"We placed our five-point demand before the CA at a meeting yesterday [Saturday] and he was supposed to let us know about his decision. As we have not received any decision from him, our blockade programme will continue," 14-party Coordinator Abdul Jalil told a press briefing at the Awami League's (AL) Dhanmondi office last evening.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



An artiste sings at the Jubo Mancha gathering at Muktangan in the capital during the Awami League-led 14-party alliance's countrywide blockade programme yesterday.

4-party agrees to change in EC commissioners

Remains rigid on election date

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led four-party alliance has responded positively to the package of proposals set forth by the caretaker government and agreed to have the Election Commission (EC) recast by sending two controversial election commissioners on leave while appointing two new ones.

a meeting last evening with three advisers-- Justice Fazul Huq, CM Shafi Sami and Mahbul Alam-- agreed to accept the proposals placed before her, said a highly-placed source in the party.

The immediate past ruling party, however, remains determined to have the election held on January 21. They have agreed to change the other dates related to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

14-party puts forward its conditions

Cancellation of poll schedule, fresh updated voter list; EC reform; admin reshuffle demanded

HASAN JAHRID TUSHER

Responding to the package proposal of the caretaker government (CG), Awami League (AL)-led 14-party coalition late last night placed three demands to be met immediately, which it placed as a prerequisite for its participation in the upcoming election.

The demands are cancellation of the announced poll schedule, preparing a fresh updated voter

list, and announcement of a fresh poll schedule.

The coalition also demanded reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC) after removing the old set of election commissioners and withdrawal of 300 'politically appointed' upazila election officers as its secondary demands.

And as its third line of demands it demanded thorough reshuffling of the civil and police administrations.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Unrest to mar investment climate: ADB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) in its quarterly economic update on Bangladesh cautioned yesterday that the present political unrest would take a heavy toll on the country's investment climate.

According to the report released in Dhaka, the bank predicted several risks of the country in near to medium term, which included possible political disruption, infrastructure constraints and external volatility in oil prices.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

JCD man killed, 50 hurt in clashes as blockade resumes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A leader of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was killed and over 50 were injured in clashes between rival political activists in Sylhet as the fourth round of countrywide indefinite transport blockade by the 14-party combine began yesterday.

The 14-party enforced the blockade demanding President Iajuddin's resignation from the post of chief adviser of the care-

Dr Kamal for consultation body for interim govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday proposed immediate formation of a consultation body for the caretaker government to ensure protection of the president's post from any outgoing government's illegal and unconstitutional interference.

Besides such a body comprising representatives from different political parties and the civil society, a national security council could also be constituted with men

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Students of Vigarunnisa Noon School and College in the capital make last minute preparations for their exams yesterday as the 14-party alliance keeps educational institution out of the purview of their blockade.

Bangladeshi hajj pilgrim killed in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A Bangladeshi hajj pilgrim was killed in a road accident in Medina in Saudi Arabia on Thursday.

The victim, Abdus Samad Sarkar, 65, of Aysora village under Basail upazila of Tangail, left Dhaka for hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia on November 26 with the first batch of 301 Bangladeshi pilgrims on a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight.

The victim was run over by a speeding vehicle while crossing the road after the Esha prayers at Haram Sharif in Medina, victim's family sources said.

He was buried in a grave in Medina on Friday after the Juma prayers, added the family sources.

Lawyers demonstrate for and against CJ's stay order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The lawyers loyal to Awami League (AL) and BNP yesterday demonstrated on the Supreme Court (SC) premises throughout the day for and against the chief justice's staying the proceedings of the writ petitions filed against the president.

No judicial work took place at the country's apex court yesterday due to the countrywide blockade enforced by the AL-led 14-party combine. Additional policemen were deployed there to forestall untoward incidents.

Acting CEC bins NDI claim of excess voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Acting Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Mahfuzur Rahman yesterday said the Election Commission (EC) does not agree with the National Democratic Institute's (NDI) survey report claim that there are 1.22 crore names registered in the voter list which are either excess or duplicates.

"We do not agree with the claim," the acting CEC said while talking to journalists at his office after an NDI team along with US Ambassador to Bangladesh Patricia Butenis met him to deliver their survey report.

The US ambassador told journalists that there are excess voters in the voter list but most of them are due to migration and there is absolutely no indication that the excess voters are on the roll due to fraud or manipulation.

The US based organisation NDI's Residential Director Owen Lippert said, "A transparent voters' list would be part of an acceptable election."

"I thought it was crucial that we had spent time with the Election Commission because the survey result is quite encouraging,"

Butenis told the awaiting newsmen after meeting with the CEC.

"The credibility of the voters' list is the key issue now," she said, adding, "The NDI and we are interested to work with the Election Commission on this voters' list."

"No party will benefit from these excess voters or it could be said that they all [political parties] would suffer equally and there is absolutely no evidence of manipulation. I think that's very encouraging," observed the US envoy.

The NDI on Saturday unveiled the survey report where they said 1.22 crore names registered in the updated voter list are either excess or duplicates.

"Their (NDI) report is not absolutely correct," the acting CEC said adding that the NDI also conducted this kind of survey in 2001 and later admitted there were mistakes in that report.

Mahfuzur said the NDI's claim that there are 1.22 crore excess voters in the list is baseless.

Mahfuzur Rahman urged the NDI team to be more specific so that the Election Commission (EC) could correct the voter list.

He said the EC left no stone

turned to find out the flaws in the voter list.

On the possibility of changes of the election schedule, the acting CEC said, "We did not get any such recommendation from the council of advisers."

Asked if the voter list is error-free, Mahfuzur said it is not that there are no errors in the list and the voter lists of other countries are not flawless either but they can be corrected.

He, however, pointed out that the EC would not be able to correct the errors or duplications in the voter list of 2000, as there is a Supreme Court bar to correcting it.

"We're not saying that the list is completely flawless but we're trying our best to correct the updated list," he said.

Owen Lippert said, "We're not saying that these are fake voters, these are excess and duplicate names, and it's because of migration from village to cities."

"We didn't find any fictitious names in the voters' list," he added replying to a question.

Lippert said the flaws of the list could be addressed by several methods and the EC would make a special effort to address the problem.

সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্ব-সাধারণের জ্ঞাতার্থে জানানো যাইতেছে যে, আমাদের মোয়াক্কেল R.A.K. Ceramics (Bangladesh) Pvt. Ltd., বাড়ী নং-৫, রোড নং-১/এ, সেক্টর-৪, উত্তরা, ঢাকা, বিশ্বমানের নানাবিধ ডিজাইনের টাইলস্ সামগ্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার হইতে আইনানুগ নকশা স্বত্ব (DESIGN RIGHT) লাভ করিয়া "R.A.K. Ceramics নাম ও লোগো (LOGO)" ব্যবহার করিয়া উহার উৎপাদিত পণ্য সমূহ নিয়োজিত ডিলারদের মাধ্যমে সারা বাংলাদেশে বাজারজাত করিয়া আসিতেছে। আমাদের মোয়াক্কেলের প্রত্নতকৃত ও বাজারজাতকৃত নিজস্ব ডিজাইনের R.A.K. Ceramics (Bangladesh) Pvt. Ltd., R.A.K. নাম ও লোগো (LOGO) সম্বলিত টাইলস্ সমূহ গুণগত মানের দিক থেকে বিশ্বমানের হওয়ায় গ্রাহক/ব্যবহারকারীদের নিকট অত্যধিক সমাদৃত। আমাদের মোয়াক্কেলের ব্যবসায় ঈর্ষণীয় হইয়া অতি সম্প্রতি কতিপয় অসাধু ব্যবসায়ী ও দুষ্টিচক্র মহল অন্যান্য লাভের হীন উদ্দেশ্যে, আমাদের মোয়াক্কেলের উৎপাদিত ও বাজারজাতকৃত টাইলস্-এর ডিজাইন সমূহ নকল করিয়া অবৈধভাবে নকল পণ্য বাজারজাত ও বিক্রয় করিতেছে। এমনকি আমাদের মোয়াক্কেলের উদ্ভাবিত ডিজাইনের টাইলস্ সমূহ নকল করতঃ বাজারজাত ও বিক্রয় করিয়া কতিপয় অসাধু ব্যবসায়ী মহল ক্রেতাসাধারণকে ধোঁকা, বিভ্রান্ত ও প্রতারিত করিতেছে; যাহা আইনতঃ দণ্ডনীয়। বাংলাদেশে উক্ত ডিজাইনের টাইলস্ প্রস্তুতের একমাত্র মালিক আমাদের মোয়াক্কেল, R.A.K. Ceramics (Bangladesh) Pvt. Ltd.।

অতএব, সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যক্তি, প্রতিষ্ঠান ও পরিবেশককে আমাদের মোয়াক্কেলের অনুরূপ নকল টাইলস্ ক্রয়, মজুদ, বিতরণ ও বিক্রয় হইতে বিরত থাকিবার জন্য পরামর্শ প্রদান করা যাইতেছে এবং R.A.K. Ceramics (Bangladesh) Pvt. Ltd. এর সকল সম্মানিত ক্রেতাগণকে R.A.K. টাইলস্ ক্রয় করিবার সময়ে টাইলস্ গায়ে খোদাইকৃত R.A.K. Ceramics এর নাম ও LOGO নিশ্চিত হইয়া টাইলস্ ক্রয় করিবার পরামর্শ দেওয়া যাইতেছে।

আমাদের মোয়াক্কেলের পক্ষ হইতে এই মর্মে সতর্ক করা যাইতেছে যে, যদি কোন অসাধু ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান আমাদের মোয়াক্কেলের প্রত্নতকৃত টাইলস্ ডিজাইন বা ট্রেডমার্ক/LOGO নকল করে এবং কাহারো দোকানে যদি উক্তরূপ ডিজাইনের নকল টাইলস্ বিক্রয়ের উদ্দেশ্যে পাওয়া যায়, তাহা হইলে তাহাদের বিরুদ্ধে দেওয়ানী বা ফৌজদারী অথবা উভয় আইনের বিধান মোতাবেক যথোপযুক্ত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হইবে।

ধন্যবাদান্তে
 আশরাফুল হাদী
 ব্যারিস্টার এট্ট-ল
 ড. কামাল হোসেন এন্ড এসোসিয়েটস
 চেম্বার বিল্ডিং (৩য় তলা), ১২২-১২৪ মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০।