

Premadasa forced to face impeachment

COLOMBO, Sept 15: President Ranasinghe Premadasa was Sunday forced into facing an impeachment motion after Parliament Speaker allowed the resolution and forbade him from dissolving the legislature, reports AP.

"I have entertained the impeachment resolution as it meets all the requirements of the Constitution. This precludes the President from dissolving Parliament," Speaker Mohammad Haniffa Mohammad said in a letter to Premadasa.

Copies of the letter were sent to local newspapers, leaders of the opposition and the governing United National Party in Parliament and its Secretary General.

In a bid to stave off the impeachment, Premadasa had told Mohammad on Friday that the motion had lapsed because it had not been listed on the agenda of the legislature's session beginning September 24.

The President made the observation quoting Attorney General Sunil De Silva, a government statement said.

But with Mohammad formally admitting the impeachment motion, doubts about its validity have been removed. Premadasa's critics also said he was planning to dissolve Parliament to escape the impeachment.

If the motion is discussed in Parliament and two-thirds of legislators present approve, the Supreme Court will begin an inquiry into the charges against the President.

If the court agrees that the accusations are valid, the President can be removed from office by another two-thirds majority vote in Parliament.

Premadasa has denied the charges against him, but deferred a meeting of Parliament — which was to have reconvened on September 3 — in an apparent bid to buy time.

Meanwhile, in the dense jungles of the northeast, troops killed at least 75 Tamil rebels in attacks on a guerrilla camp Saturday. Seven soldiers also were killed, military officials said.

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Women voters casting votes at a polling centre in Narayanganj

— Star photo



An old woman of Narayanganj took the pains to defy the inclement weather and cast her vote in the referendum.

— Star photo

Late night tally

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The Constitution Twelfth Amendment Bill has thus been confirmed by the people paving the way for a switch over to a parliamentary system, after sixteen years of presidential rule.

Unofficial results available with the Election Commission till 1.15 am (Monday) show there were 1,15,32,050 'Yes' votes for the parliamentary form of government against 22,00,498 'No' votes.

Till that time, complete results were available from only five districts — Narayanganj, Feni, Noakhali, Khagrachhari and Jessore — where 'yes' votes vastly outnumbered 'no' votes.

In all other districts except Rangpur the number of 'yes' votes was higher than 'no' votes.

Complete results of some districts: Jessore 'yes' 3,02,301; 'no' 45,057; Narayanganj 'yes' 3,15,314; 'no' 57,345; Feni 'yes' 1,97,151; 'no' 19,632; Khagrachhari 'yes' 88,225; 'no' 11,279.

Following are the division-wise results according to latest tallies available from the Election Commission:

Division	Total Centres	Results Recvd	Yes	No
Dhaka	7258	4805	32,18,600	6,05,818
Chittagong	6201	4754	44,03,344	5,54,205
Rajshahi	6202	3920	25,10,197	8,18,808
Khulna	4648	2703	20,39,989	2,95,184
Total:	24,309	16,182	1,21,72,130	22,74,015

Rangpur
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Ershad and the stronghold of his Jatiya Party.

According to results received till late last mid a total of 2,53,557 'No' votes were recorded as against 1,46,048 'Yes' votes in the district. Till that time results from 406 centres out of 491 in the district were available.

Referendum
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Khaleda Zia cast her vote at the Adamjee Cantonment College centre and the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at the Dhanmandi Government Girls' High School centre.

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Chief Election Commissioner Justice M A Rouf visited a number of polling stations to see the conduct of the referendum.

In Dhaka city, only members of law enforcing agencies and election officials were found to deal with the voters. Except some activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), BNP's student wing, few political workers were seen active to make the referendum a success.

JCD workers were found in some polling stations to help voters get their numbers on the voters' lists.

Heavy rainfall in the city made it impossible for voters to go to polling stations between 11 am and 2 pm. In the low-lying areas of the city, voters had to walk down through knee-deep to waist-deep water to cast votes in the afternoon.

Special arrangements were made for polling in the flood affected areas. In some districts, flood relief camps were used as polling centers and in some other areas, local administrations were mobilised to ensure transport to and from polling stations by using country boats.

A total of 24,309 polling stations with a total of 1,12,645 booths were set up all over the country to take votes.

Media coup to undo people's verdict: FP

Freedom Party yesterday alleged that move was underway to snatch people's victory through media coup and casting of fake votes in referendum, reports UNB.

Reviewing the referendum results received till yesterday evening, the Freedom Party's central committee and advisory committee in an emergency meeting observed that people had rejected the 12th Amendment Bill of the Constitution.

They said turn out of voters in Sunday's referendum, to decide the issue of the form of government, was not more than 5 to 7 per cent while among the majority of the voters cast 'no' vote.

The Freedom Party leaders called upon the Acting President, Election Commission and administration to ensure that none was able to dismantle the journey towards establishing democracy which began with the successful student-people movement of 1990 and the February 27 impartial election.

Shahabuddin visits city polling centres

The Acting President, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, cast his vote in the referendum at Vikarunnessa Noon Girls' High School polling centre at 10-30 am, reports BSS.

After casting his vote, the Acting President went round several polling centres in the city to see for himself the polling.

The polling centres in the city which the Acting President visited were Green Road Family Welfare Training Centre, City College and the Residential Model School centres.

Justice Shahabuddin drove to Savar where he visited the Radio Colony Model School polling centre.

Khaleda thanks people for taking part in referendum

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Sunday thanked the people for taking part in the referendum to give democracy an institutional shape, reports BSS.

Begum Zia said this while visiting various polling centres in the city to see the polling defying heavy rains.

The Prime Minister also thanked the voters for coming to the centres to cast their votes braving the inclement weather. "Your participation in Sunday's referendum amply demonstrates that the people want to give democracy an institutional shape," she said.

She visited the centres at Tejgaon Polytechnic Girls' High School, Nazrul Shikkhalaya, Khilgaon Model College, Ali Ahmed High School, Bouddha Mandir Primary School, Kamalapur High School, Ramkrishna Mission High School, Salimullah College, Badrunnessa Women's College and Azimpur Girls' High School.

During her visit, the Prime Minister saw a large number of people queuing to cast their votes ignoring incessant rains since morning.

Earlier Begum Khaleda Zia cast her vote at the Adamjee Cantonment College polling centre at 11 am.

Giving her reaction to the newsmen, a beaming Begum Zia said,

Mandate in referendum AL's victory, says Nasim

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 15: Chief Whip of the Opposition Mohammad Nasim termed the massive mandate for 'yes' vote in today's referendum "a successful outcome" of Awami League's struggle for parliamentary democracy, reports UNB.

"It's the victory of the people, of democracy and of Sheikh Hasina," Nasim said. He also thanked the people for casting their vote in favour of parliamentary form of government.

Nasim also visited some flood affected areas in Kazipur upazila today and demanded immediate relief to the flood victims.

He expressed the fear that many people may die of starvation if immediate succour is not sent to Kazipur which experienced flood for the third time this year.

By-election

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Musharraf Hussain Shahjahan (Bhola-2), Major (ret'd) Mohammad Qamrul Islam (Dhaka-5), Barrister Zamrudin Sirer (Dhaka-9), Noor-e-Alam Chowdhury Liton (Madaripur-1), Shahjahan Khan (Madaripur-2), and Amir Khasru (Chittagong-8).

The Midnight File

Madani suffers from "internal hemorrhage"

ALGIERS, Sept 15: The imprisoned leader of Algeria's main Muslim fundamentalist party is suffering internal bleeding after more than a week on a hunger strike and the party's No. 2 man has been hospitalized, their lawyers and supporters said Sunday. Abassi Madani, 60, president of the Islamic Salvation Front, suffers from a "serious internal hemorrhage" of an ulcer, according to the National Support Committee of Political Prisoners, reports AP.

Accord with Iraq soon: Kurdish leader

NICOSIA, Sept 15: Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani met Sunday with Iraqi leaders and said an agreement with the government on Kurdish autonomy could be reached within days, the Iraq News Agency reported. Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, met with Defense Minister Hussein Kamel Hassan and Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council, the state-run agency said, reports AP.

Najibullah offers unilateral truce

KABUL, Sept 15: Afghan President Najibullah offered today a unilateral ceasefire in the wake of a US-Soviet agreement to cut arms supplies to the warring sides by the end of the year. But the President warned that if military pressure by the Mujahedeen resistance attempting to overthrow his Soviet-backed government continued, the responsibility for the results would rest with the rebels, reports AFP.

Three Election officials held in Chatkhil

Three election officials of Chatkhil upazila of Noakhali district were arrested for violation of Election Rules during referendum Sunday, reports BSS.

Deputy Commissioner of Noakhali when contacted over phone said Md. Abdul Shafi, Assistant Presiding Officer and Abul Kalam and Mrs Nilufar Yasmin Polling Officers were caught red handed while stamping 'No' seals in Panchgaon union of Chatkhil upazila.

The DC said Upazila Magistrate and Officer in Charge of Chatkhil found these officials stamping 9 ballot papers around 12 noon.

The accused have been put in thana hazat and a case has been instituted under election rule, the DC added. They will be produced before court today (Monday).

The Deputy Commissioner said the spoiled ballots were later replaced and voting for the referendum carried out smoothly.

DU

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backed Chhatra League.

Meanwhile, Dhaka University Academic Atmosphere Council (DUAAC) at a meeting Saturday decided to set up a monitoring committee comprising the Proctor, Proverbs and the student leaders to monitor the campus situation and help to maintain academic atmosphere.

The committee will have its units at all the halls and meet daily during the first week after reopening.

CMC closed

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due to clashes between the JCD and BCL. At least 30 students were injured in the clashes and 20 rooms of different hostels of the college ransacked.

Residents vacated hostels by 8 am today.

The college authorities also banned holding processions and rallies on the campus to avert further clash.

Meanwhile 20 workers of the JCD and BCL were injured in a clash between the two groups at Sitakunda, 30 km off the city today.

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Drug abuse

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able with the Bangladesh government as to the number of drug addicts.

The Assistant Secretary of State called upon the Bangladesh government to come up with well-knit programmes to curb the menace of drug trafficking and abuse for possible US assistance in future. He disclosed that the United States has about 150 million dollars available for external assistance to track down the traffickers.

Terming Bangladesh as an "unfortunate victim of the golden triangle," Melvyn Levitsky, who administers President George Bush's international efforts to nab drug barons, said Burma, which is a stone's throw from the country's southern coast, is flagrantly ignoring global initiatives to cut down opium production. He said Burma is responsible for contaminating the world with drugs that eat up the vitals of youths of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal and other countries of the region.

Referring to existing US cooperation with the Bangladesh government, he told this correspondent that there has been a continuous collaboration between the drug enforcement agencies of the two friendly countries.

"Bangladesh officials are being trained in the United States while modern equipment have been given to the drug administration and control authorities in Dhaka to track down the traffickers," he pointed out. He said the United States is aware of the serious drug situation in Bangladesh and will divert a sizeable chunk of its assistance to the country in the years ahead so that it could successfully implement its programmes to wipe out drug addiction menace. "I'm concerned over reports of seizures of cocaine in Dhaka recently," Melvyn Levitsky said adding, "It appears that cocaine, being

produced in Latin American countries has gone all the way to Bangladesh, that is indeed serious."

Levitsky said the United Nations is funding a number of Bangladesh's programmes against drug addiction and trafficking. He termed Bangladesh as an in-transit country and said the US will work with countries like Bangladesh to enhance their political will and institutional capability to counter drug activities through economic and military assistance, interdiction and effective crop control methods. He lauded Bangladesh's signing of the UN convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

The US Assistant Secretary of State was particularly critical of Burmese "intransigence" in tackling menace of poppy production in the country. Branding Burma as the world's major opium-producing country, which uses Bangladesh as one of the transit routes in the region, he said the 1989-90 crop exceeded 2,200 metric tonnes of opium-down slightly from the previous year but nearly twice as large as that of two years earlier.

Rain

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busy shopping areas. Movement of vehicular traffic was fewer and in some areas, specially Bashahaboo and Khilgaon, even rickshaws could not ply in roads due to water. Few motor vehicles were found plying in few roads.

The rainfall was caused by formation of regional cloud over West Bengal and adjoining areas of Bangladesh with its centre of intensity over Dhaka.

Satellite pictures showed the cloud intensity was located over Dhaka till last night and weatherman forecast moderately heavy rainfall at many places in Dhaka, Comilla, Sylhet, Noakhali, Chittagong and at places over Rajshahi and Khulna divisions today (Monday).

Rainfall recorded by the Met office outside Dhaka were: Bhola — 58 mm, Patuakhali — 30 mm, Tangail — 31 mm, Iswardi — 21 mm, Jessore — 18 mm, Sylhet — 17 mm, Mymensingh — 9 mm and Dinajpur — 8 mm.

What experts say

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will be fully operative. Hence the new cabinet will be formed after the election of the new president and the present cabinet shall continue until the new president is elected, they say.

According to the Presidential Elections Act, the Chief Election Commissioner will announce an election schedule within five days from the date of the announcement of results. If there are more than one candidates, the Chief Election Commissioner, in consultations with the Speaker, will fix a date for voting in the parliament chamber.

As per indications the process will be completed within next 15 days and the power will be transferred to the BNP government by the first week of next month.

The country will be governed under the parliamentary system ending the presidential form after 16 years, which is the legacy of the one-party BKSAL rule introduced in 1975.

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