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Cabinet okays extension of SC judges' retirement age

Plan to empower MPs to impeach judges rejected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet last night rejected a proposal for omitting the provision for the Supreme Judicial Council from the constitution and empowering parliament to impeach any judge for gross misconduct.

The cabinet approved the proposal for extending the retirement

age of Supreme Court judges by two years from 65 to 67. If the proposal is signed into a constitutional provision, former chief justice KM Hasan, who was ambassador to Iraq during the rule of the late president Ziaur Rahman, will be the chief of the next caretaker government in 2006.

The retirement age for the chairman and members of the Public

Service Commission and the comptroller and auditor general have also been proposed for extension from 62 to 65 and from 60 to 65.

The government will now recall the 14th constitution amendment bill from the parliamentary standing committee on law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry and incorporate the new provision for

age extension of the judges into it.

The law ministry proposed revival of the constitutional provision of 1972 after the Supreme Judicial Council opened a probe into the misconduct of High Court Additional Judge Syed Shahidur Rahman.

Amid strong opposition from

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Hasina leads city rally to demand govt's quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday led a procession of thousands of her supporters through streets in Dhaka, repeating the call for immediate resignation of the government to clear way for snap polls.

Frontline leaders of the Awami League (AL) and its front organisations, joining the procession, protested what they said was BNP-Jamaat alliance's total failure to run the country.

The demonstrators shouted anti-government slogans amid loud drumbeats and carried banners reading 'No More with this Government, 'Step Down Immediately' and 'Alliance Failed to Deliver'.

"Armed men rule the country. Armed cadres of the Jamaat-Islami are controlling everything," Hasina told a rally in the build-up to the procession that ended close to the Suhrawardi Udyan after two hours of meandering.

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ADP up again for cut

ADP REVISIONS & IMPLEMENTATION SINCE THE NINETIES

YEAR	Taka in crores		
	ORIGINAL ADP	REVISED ADP	IMPLEMENTATION (PERCENTAGE)
1993-94:	9750	9600	8983 (94%)
1994-95:	11000	11150	8983 (94%)
1995-96:	12100	10447	10016 (96%)
1996-97:	12500	22700	11041 (94%)
1997-98:	12900	12200	11039 (90%)
1998-99:	13600	14000	12509 (89%)
1999-00:	15500	16500	15471 (94%)
2000-01:	17500	18200	16151 (89%)
2001-02:	19000	16000	14090 (88%)
2002-03:	19200	17100	15000 (87%)
2003-04:	20300	18935 (proposed)	-

Tk 1,366cr downward adjustment proposed for slow implementation

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Like the previous years, the planning ministry has proposed downward revision of the Annual Development Programme (ADP), slashing it by Tk 1,366 crore due to slow implementation and poor flow of project aid from development partners.

The ministry proposed the

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JUDICIARY SEPARATION SC gives govt 3 more months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday gave the government three more months to fully implement its directive on separation of the judiciary from the executive.

This is the 18th extension given by the highest court since it issued a 12-point directive in December 1999 for the separation.

The government on April 13 sought a time extension by four months, prompting the court to express annoyance at the delay in implementation of the directives.

The court adjourned the hearing till today, but asked the attorney general to bring along an affidavit

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PHOTO: STAR

WILFUL WASTE: Workers dismantle a footpath in front of Curzon Hall of Dhaka University yesterday in an alleged display of deliberate public fund waste. Authorities say the sidewalk paved only a few months ago is being razed for the expansion of the road.

Drive against unregistered launches to go tight

RAFIQ HASAN

The government yesterday decided to intensify the drive against unregistered passenger launch and cargo vessels during this monsoon.

At a meeting with leaders of a faction of Bangladesh Launch Owners' Association (BLOA) led by KM Mahmudur Rahman, Shipping

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India goes to polls today

FROM PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The first phase of polling in India's parliamentary elections begins today amid tight security, which will decide the fates of 1,103 candidates of different political parties including Deputy Prime Minister L K Advani and External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha.

The first phase will cover 140 Lok Sabha seats spread over 13 states and three federally-administered territories where an estimated 17.56

crore voters are expected to exercise their franchise.

Nearly one lakh police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed in the constituencies that also include two constituencies in the sensitive Jammu and Kashmir and all 26 constituencies in Gujarat states.

Helicopter gunships have also been deployed to ensure free and peaceful polling in Naxalite-infested regions of newly-created Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand states where parliamentary polls are being

held for the first time. The Naxal outfits have given a call for polls boycott.

The army, Border Security Force and paramilitary forces will keep a watch on the conduct of polling in Jammu and Baramulla constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir tomorrow in the wake of threats by militant outfits Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed to disrupt the election process in the state.

Threat perceptions due to possible attacks by some anti-national

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BNP-AL face-off over siege plan

Massive arrest of opposition workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tension is growing over the main opposition Awami League's (AL) scheduled siege to Hava Bhaban tomorrow noon as different front organisations of the ruling BNP came up with counter programmes on the same day, raising fears of a confrontation between the two mighty parties.

Front organisations of the AL will lay siege to Hava Bhaban at Banani, office of BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia, while the BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) plans to lay siege to Sudha Sadan at Dhanmondi, AL President Sheikh Hasina's residence, tomorrow morning.

Moreover, the city BNP has taken up some programmes protesting the planned Hava Bhaban siege. It will hold a public rally at nearby Gulshan

and bring out processions in each thana in the capital on the day.

Meantime, police with support from Bangladesh Rifles yesterday arrested over 500 AL workers who were coming to Dhaka to join the siege programme.

The AL's wings including Jubo League, Chhatra League and Krishak League have taken up extensive preparations apparently on instructions of the party leaders to make the siege a success.

The JCD yesterday held a rally at Muktagang to mobilise support for its laying siege to Sudha Sadan.

Meanwhile, the government has planned to deploy police force to prevent the opposition supporters from laying the siege.

Police have been kept on high alert in view of the conflicting political programmes, sources in the

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Dhaka-Beijing row deepens over trade centre launch

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Bangladesh-China diplomatic row over the opening of a Taiwanese office in Dhaka has hardened ahead of the scheduled inauguration of the office on April 26.

China has demanded postponement of the launch of Taiwan Trade Centre in Gulshan's Navana Centre in Dhaka and clarification of Bangladesh's position on its committed 'One-China Policy'.

Although Bangladesh has already spelled out the trade office has nothing to do with diplomatic recognition of Taiwan, China says the office is set to fully function as a diplomatic centre.

Dhaka-Beijing row surfaced after the opening of Taipei Representative Office in Gulshan 2 in March.

The trade centre authorities have already sent out invitation for the

inauguration event at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on April 26.

After the opening, a trade meeting of 52 Taiwanese firms will be held in Dhaka on April 26 and another in Chittagong on April 29.

At a meeting on Sunday with Abdul Awal Mintoo, president of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (BCCI), Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Chai Xi expressed deep concern over the trade centre and asked him to play a role to stop the inauguration.

Chai even went on to add that not only the Chinese foreign office was watching the Bangladesh situation, but also the Chinese Defence Ministry was 'getting involved', Mintoo said.

The Chinese envoy did not elaborate what he meant by the defence ministry's involvement.

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এলো

বিডি গুঁড়ো মশলা

স্মার্ট জীবনের জন্য...

বাংলাদেশের কোটি কোটি মানুষের জীবনে এলো এক নতুন নিচয়তা।

বিডি ফুড নিয়ে এলো স্বাস্থ্যসমৃদ্ধ ও বিশ্বমানের বিডি গুঁড়ো মশলা, যা শুধু সর্বোৎকৃষ্ট হুদ, মরিচ, ধনিয়া, জিরা থেকেই প্রস্তুত হয়নি- প্রতি কণা মশলার সাথে মিশে আছে দেশের প্রতি অকৃত্রিম ভালবাসা... শিথ, মা ও পরিবারের সবার সুস্বাস্থ্যের প্রতিশ্রুতি।

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