

Lajuddin retains vital

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Chowdhury got the charge of Power and Energy, Food and Disaster Management, Communications and CHT Affairs Ministries.

Adviser CM Shafi Sami was given the charge of Agriculture, Cultural Affairs and Youth and Sports ministries.

Adviser Dhiraj Kumar Nath was given the Ministries of Fisheries and Livestock, Housing and Public Works and Liberation War Affairs.

Adviser Mahbubul Alam was given the charge of Water Resources, Information and Religious Affairs Ministries.

Adviser M Azizul Huq will look after the Ministries of LGRD, Shipping and Civil Aviation.

Adviser Prof. Sufia Rahman was given the Ministries of Health and Family Welfare, Labour and Employment, and Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment.

Adviser Yasmin Morshed was given the Ministries of Women and Children Affairs, Primary and Mass Education and Social Welfare Ministries.

Adviser Sultana Kamal was given the Ministries of Industries,

21 die

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25 of Sherpur upazila in Bogra.

The injured had been admitted to Sirajganj Sadar Hospital, Rayganj Upazila health complex, Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital and different local clinics in Sirajganj and Bogra towns.

The critically injured eight are identified as Shabur, 35, of Bera in Pabna, Dolon, 21, of Dhunot in Bogra, Shimla, 25, and Shahadat, 28, of Sherpur upazila in Bogra, Chan, 23, of Kazipur in Sirajganj, Selim, 25, of Moulovibazar, Biplob, 26, of Dhunot in Bogra and Nurul, 23, of Ullapara in Sirajganj.

Following the accident, vehicular movement on the road was disrupted for three hours. Besides, hundreds of vehicles got stuck on both side of the road creating a long traffic-jam.

Informed, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. They also sent the bodies to Sirajganj General Hospital Morgue for autopsy.

Higher officials of district administration, including deputy director Aminul Chowdhury visited the spot.

Focus on Paltan rally

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would go for all-out movements.

"If the chief of the caretaker government says that they need time to meet the demands, we will take an alternative decision. But if he doesn't carry out the immediate tasks then we'll have no alternative but to go for an all-out movement. It would be a country-wide indefinite hartal and blockade programme," senior AL presidium member Amir Hossain Arnu told The Daily Star last night.

Echoing the same, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque Inu said the caretaker government chief would have to take stern measures to create congenial atmosphere for holding fair elections.

He said Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz and three other election commissioners are the main barriers to hold a fair election. He demanded that the president should reconstitute the

Call to make

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Terming the government steps taken in this regard 'too insufficient', the committee at a meeting at the Institutions of Engineers in Dhaka demanded that the skilled, competent and meritorious officials and employees and those who were 'tortured' in various ways in the ministries and other departments be transferred to the posts of those who were involved in the politicisation process.

The committee asked the government to make OSD all who were appointed on contract and demanded posting of 'non-partisan and competent' officials to the offices of the caretaker government chief, president, and Election Commission, ministries of establishment, home and finance, and Cabinet Division.

It also demanded making OSD the heads of Desa, Wasa, public works and housing department, Agriculture Research Institute, Rice Research Institute, directorates of health, drug administration, family welfare and livestock, Agriculture Development Corporation, PDB, BTV and Rajuk, and replace them with 'competent and neutral' officials.

It demanded making OSD all the 'politically appointed' officials at the ministries and departments that will be involved with the conducting of elections.

LDP offers

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Have amassed a huge amount of national assets in the last five years.

Former speaker and LDP Presidium Member Shaikh Razzak Ali, former MP Ali Zinnah and LDP leader Shahadat Hossain Selim were present on the occasion among others.

Science, Information and Communication Technology, and Textiles and Jute Ministries.

The portfolios were allocated after nearly 24 hours of oath-taking of the advisers.

Home secy

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When asked about the hasty cancellation of transfer order of power secretary ANM Akhter Hossain, the establishment secretary said there was no specific allegation against the power secretary.

Meanwhile, already four days into power, the interim government has yet to bring an extensive and effective reshuffle in the civil administration as its initial measures to introduce an unbiased administration proved ineffective.

Awami League (AL) and its allies yesterday once again demanded sweeping changes in all tiers of the administration eliminating the pro-BNP and Jamaat officials as done by the 2001 caretaker government.

The establishment secretary said the reshuffle in field level of administration would begin from next week. "We will bring changes in the establishment ministry as well to expedite the field level reshuffle."

The establishment ministry is now working out a list of changes in the field level officials that include deputy commissioners, Thana Nirbahi Officers and Assistant Commissioners (Land), he added.

Meanwhile, the government is likely to change the present commissioners of six divisions today, sources said.

Portfolios

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would get which office.

"As a part of the team work, I thought he [the president] would discuss the matter with us before making the decision," one of the advisers told The Daily Star.

On the other hand, another adviser differed by saying, "Distribution of portfolios is not that important, as the main objective is to work for a free and fair election."

The adviser stressed more on working together as a team for the objective.

US envoy

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impartial role of the caretaker government to ensure fair elections wherein all political parties could participate.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and BNP Chairperson's Adviser M Morshed Khan were present at the meeting.

Briefing reporters, Morshed Khan said the meeting took place at the request of the US ambassador. He said they (diplomats) expressed their concern over the recent violence, which, Butenis said, does not match with the tradition of Bangladesh.

Butenis called for united efforts to overcome the situation and extending all cooperation to the caretaker government in accomplishing its mandated task of holding free and fair elections.

Asked about AL-led 14-party cabinet's demands, Morshed said it is the matter of caretaker government. "If there is any reasonable demand, the caretaker government can do whatever necessary."

AL mounts

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BNP standing committee members Khandakar Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, Mirza Abbas, Barkat Ullah Bulu, Aman Ullah Aman and Goyeshwar Roy, Jamaat leaders ATM Azharul Islam and Abdul Kader Mollah, Jatiya Party leader Humayun Kabir and Bangladesh Jatiya Party (Nazari) Secretary General Saifur Rahman addressed the rally among others.

Political situation

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delays submission of its report, and an administrator is not appointed soon, stagnation in manpower export to Malaysia will continue," said a Baira member who mainly deals with this issue.

Malaysia also wants transparency in the migration process but Bangladesh will count losses if it delays the process, he said seeking anonymity.

Following withdrawal of the ban on hiring workers from Bangladesh after a decade, Malaysia entrusted Baira with managing the migration issue and asked it to open an office in Kuala Lumpur.

Baira President MAH Salim then opened an office with 10 per cent share held by Baira and the rest by three Malaysians. He also took no approval for this from the Baira executive committee nor held any general meeting of the organisation.

There are allegations that Baira charged at least Ringgit 18,000 or Tk 36,000 more than the fixed rate, raising the migration cost to Tk 1.2 lakh to Tk 2 lakh. Some ministers in the immediate past government also allegedly demanded a share of the extra money.

Pro-BNP

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Station on October 31.

It was mentioned in the cases that the accused made the arson attack on the office room of BSMMU Biochemistry Department Chairman and Parishad Secretary General Dr M Iqbal Arslan, and injured a large number of pro-AL doctors.

JAMAAT CASE
Another Dhaka court rejected the bail petition of AL activists Shahin and Omar Faruk, arrested in connection with the killings of six Jamaat-e-Islami activists.

The two AL men were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail when they were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka.

Metropolitan Magistrate Abdur Rouf Khan passed the order when Paltan police brought them on completion of their one-day remand.

A Jamaat leader filed the case against AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil and 39 others for killing their six activists.

Jamaat

FROM PAGE 16
Ahmed, Ali Ahsan Mohammed Mujahid, Maulana Abdus Sobhan, Maulana Delwar Hossain Saidee, Muhammed Kamaruzzaman, Abdul Kader Mollah, ATM Azharul Islam, Prof Mujibur Rahman, Maulana Muhammed Abu Taher, Barrister Abdur Razzak and Maulana Rafiqul Islam Khan.

Jukta Front leaders, led by ASM Abdur Rob and Bangabir Kader Siddiqui, called on the president and chief adviser at Bangabhaban.

They welcomed the president for assuming the office of chief adviser to the caretaker government.

The delegation included Prof Mohammed Shafiq, Sekandar Ali Moni, Advocate Fazlur Rahman, Abdul Baten Chowdhury, Kamal Uddin Ahmed and Iqbal Siddiqui.

'BDR men' beat

FROM PAGE 1
reached the spot and charged truncheons indiscriminately.

Former legislator of Hatia Mohammad Ali claimed indiscriminate truncheon charge left Abdus Shahid dead on the spot.

However, Imam Uddin said the BDR team was going to a nearby bazaar following reports of violence there. He claimed the people at the tea stall scrambled in panic after seeing the headlights of the BDR vehicle. He said Shahid collapsed in shock and died at his home early Wednesday morning.

BDR forces were withdrawn from Hatia on Tuesday night.

Agitation if Lajuddin

FROM PAGE 1
election since long. We don't believe in politics of violence."

AL leaders said the president has to make a pledge within this time frame that he would implement those tasks. In her statement, Hasina said her party wants to give Lajuddin time to show his neutrality. He could do that by taking necessary measures to ensure a level-playing field for all the parties contesting the parliamentary election scheduled for early next year.

The president, who decided to head the interim government, must follow a neutral path by meeting the 11-point demands by November 3, the statement said.

The demands include restructuring the Election Commission through removal of the Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz and three election commissioners, cancellation of all political appointments in the administration, updating the voter list with photographs of voters and arranging transparent ballot boxes.

Butenis, Deputy High Commissioner of UK Stephen Bridges and NDI resident director Owen Lippert asked at the briefing if the AL would participate in the coming election. They also wanted to know whether the opposition would resort to street protests soon.

Jail and other AL leaders ruled out any possibility of violence if the interim administration took steps to meet their major demands. "We believe in elec-

First council meeting

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but no official measure has been taken yet in this regard. "We will chalk out probable measures for reforms and then if necessary will seek legal opinions," the adviser said.

The meeting, which was held in Bangabhaban for about two hours, discussed the law and order situation, and reshuffling of the police and civil administrations. The advisers' council vowed to hold the next parliamentary election in a free and fair manner.

Dr Akbar Ali Khan, also a former cabinet secretary, said a committee for reshuffling the administration will be formed in a couple of days. "Our first task is to ensure an environment for holding a fair election," he added.

President Lajuddin Ahmed explained the prevailing situation and the steps initiated by him to his advisers and told them that the next parliamentary election must be fair.

The home secretary reported in the meeting that the law and order situation is now in a better shape. Meeting sources said eminent human rights leader Adviser Advocate Sultana Kamal expressed her concern over the latest mass arrest in the capital.

In response to her concern, the president directed the home ministry to carefully deal with the matter so that no innocent person is harassed. About reshuffling the administration, the advisers repeatedly expressed their opinion that the reshuffle should be done carefully to avoid politically motivated postings, sources said.

The advisers, who were sworn in on Tuesday night, are expected to start working from today after receiving their portfolios.

Talking to The Daily Star last night,

Taher Thakur

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Fourteen people were killed by artillery fire on August 15, 1975 night at M o h a m m a d p u r when Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated along with most of his family members in a bloody military putsch.

The military personnel's, who were taking part in the putsch, artillery fire hit two housed in Mohammadpur and left 14 people dead.

On the fateful night over 30 years ago, the army personnel who took part in the Bangabandhu killing operation also killed Habibur Rahman, Anwara Begum-1, Anwara Begum-2, Moyful Bibi, Sabera Begum, Abdullah, Rafique, Safia Khatun, Shahabuddin, Kasheda, Aminuddin, Honufa Bibi, Rezia Begum and her daughter Nasima in Mohammadpur.

On November 29, 1996, Mohammad Ali, a resident of Sher Shah Suri Road, Mohammadpur, who was injured in the attack, filed the case with Mohammadpur Police Station against Lt Col Syed Farook Rahman, Lt Col Sultan Shahrir Rashid Khan, Major Bazul Huda, Lt Col Khondaker Abdur Rashid, Lt Col Shariful Faruk Dalim, Lt Col SHMB Noor Chowdhury, Maj AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed and Lt Col AM Rashed Chowdhury, Maj Ahmed Shariful Hossain, Lt Col Abdul Aziz Pasha, Capt Abdul Majed, Capt Mohammad Kismat Hasem, Capt Nazmul Hossain, Dafadar Marfat Ali Shah and Dafadar Mohammad Abdul Hashem Miridha. Of them, Aziz Pasha died in Zimbabwe in 2002.

Former minister Taher Uddin Thakur, the lone civilian accused in the case, is now on bail.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Shahidul Islam Sardar appeared for the state while Syed Mizanur Rahman and Shahin Islam Sabu defended the accused.

EC reconstitution

FROM PAGE 1
fulfil the demand but the president will decide.

"But, I do not condone the practice of making ultimatums," he said adding that there would be no need of an election if all demands of AL could be fulfilled. They (AL) may realise all their demands after the election if they win, he said.

Restructuring the EC is one of the main demands of 14-party coalition and it has been agitating to realise the demand for a long time. Civil society leaders and most of the non-political organisations also demanded restructuring of the EC for holding an acceptable election.

Blaming AL for the recent violence in the country, the BNP leader said because of their programme of bringing sticks and oars to the capital many people

tion. We have given time to the caretaker government to implement our demands. If those demands are met, we must go for election," Jalli said.

He went on, "We want a congenial atmosphere. I can assure you that we do not practise politics of violence. But we can't deprive the people of their rights".

Later, Jalli told reporters that they do not want 'a civil war' in the country.

Dr Kamal, who moderated the briefing, earlier explained the constitutional provisions on the president becoming the head of caretaker government. They did not expect the president to take over as chief of the non-party interim government, he added.

Termining Lajuddin a 'party loyalist president', Dr Kamal narrated how he 'violated' the Constitution to head the non-partisan administration.

"I have never seen such violation of the Constitution by a president, who is the custodian of the Constitution," the eminent jurist said. And there is still time to constitute a non-partisan caretaker government without the president, he added.

Hasina's statement mentioned that the 14-party has neither rejected the president taking over as chief adviser nor accepted it.

Senior leaders of the opposition combine were present at the briefing.

a number of advisers said they also expressed in the meeting their concern about the time crunch ahead of the next parliamentary election scheduled for January. The caretaker government has a huge task ahead and has to create a level playing field for the next polls, they said.

The advisers after the meeting expressed their confidence that they will be able to gain the peoples' trust through their work.

"We, the ten advisers and the chief adviser, are aware that the election should be held in a free and fair manner acceptable to the people," Adviser CM Shafi Sami said.

Emerging from the meeting the adviser told reporters, "We are going to work very hard and everybody will be happy."

Another adviser, Yasmin Murshed, said, "We will definitely be able to hold a free and fair election."

Advocate Sultana Kamal said, "We have a tough time ahead, we will have to work with great speed."

Adviser Lt General (retd) Hasan Mashud Chowdhury told reporters that they will start working from today after distribution of portfolios. "We discussed some matters today. You (reporters) will come to know about our activities in time."

The advisers in the afternoon placed wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar and observed silence in memory of the martyrs of the liberation war.

Citizens' group
ones, making the administration neutral and unbiased and taking steps to free the law enforcement agencies from political influence.

These steps can encourage the major political parties and alliances to take part in the election, the release said.

The caretaker government must ensure an atmosphere for a free and fair election, the eminent citizens said, adding that an atmosphere has to be created so that all voters are inspired to go to the polling centre and cast vote safely and freely.

In case of serious need, help of the army can be taken to maintain law and order but that must be done under the civil administration, they observed.

They emphasised people's staying watchful to preserve the fundamental rights and rights to vote and called upon the citizens and social forces to be united and active for the purpose.

The signatories to the statement include Dr Anisuzzaman, Ajay Roy, Mujibul Haque, MSyeduzzaman, Dr Mujaffer Ahmed, Laila Kabir, Kamal Lohani, Dr Hamida Hossain, Dr Ajoy Roy, Dr AMM Shawkat Ali, Dr Hayat Mamud, Hashem Khan, Ayesha Khanam and Tobarak Hossain.

Col Faruk

FROM PAGE 16
prosecution and the defence and set November 1 for the delivery of the verdict.

The cases -- one under the Arms Act, one under the Special Powers Act and the other under the Explosive Substances Act -- were filed with Cantonment Police Station on August 18, 1996.

During the trial, the court recorded statements of six prosecution witnesses in each case.

According to the prosecution, a team of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) along with the then officer-in-charge (OC) of Cantonment Police Station raided Faruk's house at DOHS in the capital at about 3:45am on August 18, 1996, arrested Faruk and seized a revolver, a shotgun, an airgun, a Sten gun, 616 bullets, eight international passports, 2,830 Pakistani rupees and 62.75 Libyan dinars.

Later, four cases were filed with Cantonment Police Station -- one under the Arms Act, one under the Foreign Currency Control Act, one under the Explosive Substances Act and the other under the Special Powers Act.

Earlier on May 9 last year, the same court acquitted Lt Colonel (dismissed) Syed Farukur Rahman of charges in a case filed for possessing foreign currencies, as the charges brought against him were not proved.

Another court on October 20, 2004 sentenced Faruk to life in jail in the Jail Killing case.

Medicare

FROM PAGE 1
service charge of every item was increased at that time.

"But this time the service charge has not increased on any item--only the user fee rates have been re-fixed while new fees have been fixed on new instruments and facilities such as CT scan, MRI, air-conditioned cabin and other similar items," Mosharrar said.

Health Secretary KM Zafarullah told The Daily Star yesterday, "The orders were circulated 15-20 days ago. But the hospitals delayed declaring it."

However, the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) authorities said they received the circular on Tuesday and they launched the new charges yesterday without any prior notice.

Other government hospitals including Mitford Hospital are yet to receive the copy of the circular.

"We have heard about the newly adopted fees, but we have not yet received its copy," said Dr Mohammad Mahmud Hossain, director of Mitford Hospital.

The DMCH authorities introduced the new charges in several units yesterday while the other units are either yet to receive the copy of the circular or could not understand it clearly.

Employees at the Pathology Department of DMCH said they will introduce the new charges from today. Most pathological tests were free for the outdoor and free-bed patients earlier.

INCREASED CHARGES
The cost of X-ray imaging for the outdoor and free-bed patients has been increased to Tk 70 for big films and Tk 55 for small ones. The facility was free earlier. The facility will cost the paying bed patients Tk 55 and Tk 45.

Fifteen patients who went for emergency X-ray during 12:00-4:00pm yesterday had to count money for the first time as the service was free earlier.

Rahazuddin, 80, admitted in ward No. 22 yesterday, found it difficult to manage Tk 180 for three X-ray imaging of chest and throat.

Ultrasonography, which was free for the free-bed patients, will now cost Tk 110 and Tk 220.

The cost of both single-channel and three-channel ECG tests has been increased to Tk 80 from Tk 66 and Tk 76.

The charge for an air-conditioned cabin, which was Tk 615 per day, has increased to Tk 800.

The price of ticket for first aid, which would cost Tk 5 earlier, has increased to Tk 5.50, while the price of admission form has increased to Tk 11 from Tk 5.50.

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Japan to keep North Korea sanctions despite nuke talks

AFP, Tokyo

Japan will keep up its sanctions against North Korea despite the communist state's decision to return to six-nation talks on nuclear disarmament, senior ministers said yesterday.

They said Japan would only lift the measures, which include a ban on all North Korean imports, if Pyongyang abandons its nuclear programme completely.

"We still don't know the conditions" for North Korea's return to the talks, Foreign Minister Taro Aso told a parliamentary committee.

"We can't welcome the resumption of the six-way talks with open arms. Basically we will continue with the sanctions," he said.

North Korea said Wednesday it would return to the disarmament talks with South Korea, China, the United States, Japan and Russia on the condition that the issue of lifting US financial sanctions is settled during the negotiations.

The decision came just three weeks after the communist state stunned the world with its first atomic test.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki, the top government spokesman, said Japan will not lift its sanctions unless North Korea abandons all its nuclear programmes.