

President did not mean any change in govt system

Says Bangabhaban
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangabhaban in a statement yesterday clarified President Iajuddin Ahmed's mentioning the form of the government as "presidential form of government" on Thursday, saying the president did not mean "any changes" in the government system.

Signed by a deputy press secretary to the president, the Bangabhaban statement blamed a section of media for not presenting the president's speech addressed to secretaries of different ministries "correctly".

Iajuddin, however, addressed the secretaries in his first meeting as the chief adviser.

As per the constitution the president is now carrying out the duty of chief adviser to the non-partisan caretaker government, the statement said.

The Bangabhaban statement hoped that its explanation will end all confusion centring the
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Storm gathers on horizon again

14-party deadline for interim govt ends today; 4-party vows to resist rivals on streets

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

An ominous uncertainty is gathering again on the horizon of the political landscape of the country with Awami League (AL)-led 14-party coalition's second deadline ending today without its major demands being met by the caretaker government.

The coalition is ready to enforce an indefinite nationwide blockade from tomorrow if the demands are not by the end of the day, according to 14-party coalition sources.

Meanwhile, BNP-led four-party alliance announced that it will resist the AL-led coalition's programme by being on the streets. "We will be on the streets too. If any body tries to attack us we will teach them a lesson on the streets," former minister also joint secretary general of BNP, Mirza Abbas, told a Jubo Dal rally in front of the party head-quarter in the capital yesterday.

BNP held several meetings and marches in different areas of the capital yesterday agitating against the AL-led coalition's scheduled programme of indefinite country-wide blockade.

Similar vows were also made last week at a joint rally of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dai and Islami Chhatra Shibir at Mukhtangan in the capital, which are the student wings of BNP and Jamaat respectively.

The four-party alliance is scheduled to hold rallies and marches today in metropolitan cities and in all upazilas in the country denouncing 'killings, terrorism, anarchy and anti-election conspiracies by Awami League'.

AL President Sheikh Hasina on behalf of 14-party coalition placed an 11-point charter of demands to the president-cum-chief adviser (CA) to the caretaker government (CG) during her meeting with him on October 30, urging him to prove his

neutrality by conceding the demands.

The coalition, which has been demonstrating for electoral reforms since July last year, plans to enforce the blockade in the capital and in district and upazila headquarters by taking to the streets, occupying all highways, shutting down all ports, and by halting rail and water transports.

It also has plans to hold rallies and marches in the capital and in other parts of the country until the demands are met, which include reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC), removal of the chief election commissioner (CEC), correction and revision of the voter list, cancellation of all contractual appointments of government officials, and withdrawal of all government officials
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Participants of a Sammita Sangskritik Jote rally hold an effigy of the chief election commissioner along with masks representing the evil at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday, demanding reforms in the Election Commission.



As a locomotive arrives, shopkeepers hurriedly move their goods at an illegal kitchen market that has sprung up on both sides of the railway lines near Malibagh Bazar in Dhaka.

Akbar fails to agree with CA's view

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Caretaker government Adviser Akbar Ali Khan in his reaction to President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed's remarks yesterday said it may not be correct to say now there is a presidential form of government.

He told newsmen that according to the Rules of Business, the advisers of the caretaker government should be at the helm of the ministries, not the secretaries.

They (advisers) are the heads of the ministries also if the matter is seen from the constitutional perspective. And if so, then likening the present system of government to the presidential type may not be correct, he noted.
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Iajuddin's remark 'impeachable'

14-party says his view on present form of govt unconstitutional

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL)-led 14-party alliance leaders yesterday said President Iajuddin Ahmed opened up scopes for impeachment for 'violation' of his oath and making 'unconstitutional' remark that the present government has become a presidential form of government.

"Through his speech, the president has violated the constitution as well as his oath and shown ignorance about the constitution. For this actions could be taken against him for contempt of constitution,"
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14-party coordinator Abdul Jalil said at a news briefing at his Gulshan residence in the capital.

Demanding implementation of the 11-point task put forward by the 14-party within 24 hours to create a congenial atmosphere for holding free and fair elections, Jalil warned that otherwise the entire country would be brought to a standstill by enforcing blockade programmes.

Although the 14-party alliance set a second deadline for the president to prove his neutrality by
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President needs to explain form of govt further

Says Prof Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the term "presidential form of government" used by the chief adviser on Thursday needs an explanation for understanding the objective of his statement.

"It is needed to be explained in what circumstances President and Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government Iajuddin Ahmed made the comment. We should tell President Iajuddin that his statement was wrong if he had made any mistake," Yunus told reporters.

It is not the time to brand the president a failure and he should be given more time to prove his
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Huda bent rules to lease out Tk 4.16cr rly land

RASHIDUL HASAN

Communication minister of the immediate past government Nazmul Huda exercised influence to bend rules for leasing 4.16 acre land of Bangladesh Railway in the capital without any tender process for constructing a five-star hotel.

Millennium Holdings Ltd was given the land on the west of Tongi Diversion Road in Baro Maghbazar area under a nominal licence fee of Tk 35 per square foot to build Hilton Hotel of the US-based hotel chain giant.

Sources said Huda directly influenced railway officials for leasing the railway land to the Millennium Holdings, which has no experience in construction business and an office of its own, for 60 years

without floating any tender ignoring objections from several sub-committees and Bangladesh Railway Authority members.

"Hilton's presence in Bangladesh will enhance our country's image in the world. Please take necessary action to make it possible for Hilton to establish their hotel in Dhaka," Huda wrote in a note on the Millennium Holdings' application.

Huda, also chairman of Bangladesh Railway Authority, took the initiative to ease the existing railway rules and procedures to complete the leasing process in just six months.

A lease agreement between Bangladesh Railway and the Millennium Holdings was signed on October 19, only eight days before the BNP-led four-party alliance

government handed over power to the caretaker government.

Chief Estate Officer of Bangladesh Railway M Mokbul Ahmed and Managing Director of Millennium Holdings Ltd Mohammad Iqbal signed the agreement.

The railway land lease committee in its note, however, said there is no scope to lease railway land to any organisation without floating tenders. Three other sub-committees also observed the same.

Leasing railway land in this way violates the procedures of the railway laws for leasing land, said
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Boucher meets with CA today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka this morning on a two-day official visit.

He will call on President and Chief Adviser to the Caretaker
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CA still has time to prove his neutrality

Says Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina last night said the president-cum-chief adviser (CA) to the caretaker government (CG) can still take measures to prove his neutrality since there is 24-hour time yet to meet the 11-point demand of the 14-party combine led by her party.

"If you [president and CA Iajuddin Ahmed] do not take any measures within 24 hours, then a peaceful and all out blockade will be enforced from November 12 to press home our demands to create
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PMO handled admin with eyes on polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The immediate past government promoted officials with political leanings towards BNP and Jamaat to high-ranking posts of the civil administration with an aim to using the administration during the upcoming general elections, sources said.

Officials of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) controlled promotions to key posts during the immediate past government's five-year tenure and the officers without political leanings towards the ruling alliance

were either deprived of due promotions or got punitive postings, sources said adding that the highest number of officers were made OSDs (officer on special duty) by the last government.

Recommendations of the Superior Selection Board (SSB), the highest policymaking authority in

giving promotions to government officials, were turned down by the PMO. While in many cases the PMO officials influenced the SSB to recommend certain officials for promotions.

The four-party alliance government inducted the highest number of secretaries from the 1979 batch of the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS), decorating the administration with a whopping 33 secretaries from that batch out of a total of 54. But, in a number of cases competent officials of the same batch
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EC reconstitution not possible within 75 days

Says Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former law minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said reconstitution of Election Commission (EC) demanded by Awami League-led 14-party alliance is not possible within the next 75 days as the next general election will have to be held by January 25 as per the constitution.

"The caretaker government has to declare the election date within 90 days [of assuming office] and
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Ershad now mulls alliance of his own

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (Ershad) might not join any alliance led by Awami League or BNP before the upcoming election, instead they might seek to forge a new alliance with some religion based political parties, said sources.

JP Chairman HM Ershad at a view exchange meeting with the party presidium and advisory council members and former lawmakers yesterday said within 15 of this month it will be finalised whether to join any alliance ahead of the next
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Oli wants Aziz to go through judicial council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Executive President of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Colonel (ret) Oli Ahmed yesterday demanded removal of the chief election commissioner (CEC) through a supreme judicial council for 'violating' the oath by telling a lie.

Telling a lie by CEC MA Aziz, who is a former justice, is tantamount to violating the oath and so he should be removed, Oli told a meeting at Norda bus stand at
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A rag-picker sorts through small polyethylene bags used for packaging milk. The bags dumped in Kamrangirchar on the outskirts of the capital pose a serious threat to the environment of the area.

Huji man admits to carrying out grenade attack on Suranjit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A detained operative of the banned militant outfit Harkatul Jihad (Huji) on Thursday said the organisation carried out the grenade attack on the Awami League (AL) rally at Derai in Sunamganj in June 2004.

Huji militant Hafez Arif Ahmed alias Naieem gave the information in his confessional statement before a first class magistrate in Sunamganj.

AL Presidium Member Suranjit Sengupta was speaking at the rally during the attack. The attack that was carried out one month after the grenade attack on British high commissioner to Dhaka in Sylhet killed an AL activist.

Court sources said Naieem was produced before Magistrate
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