

## Fakhruddin new CA

Advisers to be appointed soon, 4-party absent at oath-taking

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, a former governor of the Bangladesh Bank, assumed the office of chief adviser (CA) to the non-party caretaker government yesterday based on a consensus between the two major political alliances, beginning the reconstitution of the interim government.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, who on Thursday night had declared a state of emergency across the country and resigned from the post of CA amid a growing political crisis over the parliamentary election, administered the oath of his successor at a ceremony in Bangabhaban Darbar Hall yesterday.

With Dr Fakhruddin's assumption of the office of CA, resignation of Justice Fazlul Haque, who had been acting as the CA following the resignation of Iajuddin, became effective.

The president will now appoint



President Iajuddin Ahmed administers the oath of office to Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed as Chief Adviser to the non-party caretaker government, left, at Bangabhaban yesterday.

ten advisers in a day or two consulting with the newly appointed CA to complete the reconstitution of the council of advisers to the caretaker government that will initiate a fresh move for holding the next parliamentary election.

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday unofficially suspended all activities regarding holding the parliamentary election on January 22 as Iajuddin, who had appointed himself as the CA on October 29 last year, failed to create an atmosphere suitable for holding a free and fair poll.

Interestingly, BNP-led four-party alliance which had welcomed Iajuddin's assumption of the office of CA and who had attended his oath-taking ceremony on October 29 in Bangabhaban, boycotted yesterday's ceremony of oath-taking by the new CA.

But, Awami League (AL)-led 14-party coalition and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) that had

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## Rapid raids to capture 'corrupt, godfathers'

A number of political leaders under watch; airports on alert; many go into hiding

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Just hours into the declaration of state of emergency, the army raided the residences and offices of several political leaders and businessmen including former influential ministers on Thursday night.

The raids were carried out as part of a crackdown on 'corruptionists and godfathers of criminals', according to sources.

Troops detained Giasuddin Al Mamun, a close friend and business partner of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman. They went to Channel 1 office around 2:30am yesterday. Not finding him there, the troops went to his house in DOHS in the capital, said sources. But it could not be confirmed from where and when he was detained.

However, Mamun was freed after several hours, said the

sources. No government source confirmed the information.

The army also arrested former Awami League (AL) lawmaker Kamal Ahmed Majumder from his Banani residence.

Unconfirmed sources said the army also raided the residences of former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar, former BNP lawmakers Mosaddek Ali Falu, Mirza Abbas, Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu, Salahuddin Ahmed, Ali Asgar Lobi, and former AL lawmaker Haji Mohammad Selim.

Intelligence sources said about 30 leaders of the two main political parties - BNP and AL - have been put under surveillance.

According to sources, Tarique Rahman, former law minister Moudud Ahmed, former ministers Nazmul Huda, Mirza Abbas, former lawmaker Falu, and Dhaka City AL General Secretary Mofazzal

Hossan Chowdhury Maya are also on the list of persons to be watched by the intelligence agencies.

Land and air ports have been alerted so that the listed persons cannot leave the country. "We've received a list of some people who have been barred from going abroad," a Special Branch (SB) officer said on condition of anonymity.

Although Ali Asgar Lobi was scheduled to go abroad yesterday noon, he was barred from boarding the flight, the SB officer said adding that Lobi's name is on the list too.

The army conducted raids in the capital all through Thursday night and the early hours of yesterday. They raided Babar's house in Gulshan, Falu's residence in New DOHS, Mirza Abbas' house in Shahjahanpur and Salahuddin's house in Demra, according to the sources.

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## Curfew goes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities yesterday withdrew the indefinite night-time curfew from all the metropolitan cities and district headquarters, police control room sources said.

The curfew was imposed from 11:00pm to 5:00am following declaration of a state of emergency by the president on Thursday.

Meanwhile, restrictions imposed on news bulletins of private television channels were also withdrawn last night.

## US, UK reaction to emergency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United States yesterday said the Bangladesh government was compelled to declare a state of emergency following political parties' failure to resolve their differences through dialogue.

British High Commissioner (HC) Anwar Choudhury, meanwhile, welcomed "the potential opportunity for conditions to be established which are conducive to credible elections" with participation by all political parties, even though he termed unfortunate the fact that the situation arose in which the state of emergency was declared.

In the first US reaction since Thursday night's declaration of the emergency, a US spokesman said yesterday that the US continues to believe that holding free, fair, and fully participatory elections at the earliest is the best solution for the country.

The US has consistently urged the caretaker government to create conditions for free, fair, and fully participatory elections, he said.

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## JMB cadre held with bomb-making materials

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a cadre of the banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) with bomb-making materials and cartridges at Karatia Bazar in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The arrestee was identified as Arman, 25, son of Liakat Khan of Hilara Adabari village under

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## Iajuddin's U-turn speech

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The president's latest address to the nation and resignation from the post of chief adviser (CA) to the caretaker government (CG) proved that earlier he did not inform the people about the real situation over the parliamentary election, now postponed.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, who had taken over as the CA ignoring several constitutional provisions regarding appointment to this post, kept on informing the nation in different ways that the CG led by him created an ideal atmosphere for holding a free and fair election.

He also repeatedly claimed that there was no scope to delay the

polls, the Election Commission (EC) had completed all preparations including updating the voter list, and was determined to hold the election set for January 22 even by using the armed forces.

But his address to the nation Thursday night totally contradicted his earlier stances, proving that earlier he had tried to keep the people in the dark about all these matters.

He admitted that the whole nation has plunged into an abyss of concern, instability and uncertainty. And discipline is seriously affected.

On voter list, Iajuddin admitted flaws in the process of updating it, and said it is imperative to prepare

a flawless voter list for a free and fair election. "It is not possible to hold an acceptable election within the stipulated 90 days, and without correcting the voter list," he said on Thursday.

Earlier in a statement on January 6, the president said the government firmly believes that the January 22 election will be held in a "free, fair and impartial manner". He also said if any political party feels it has the right to withdraw from polls race at the eleventh hour of the election process, nothing can be done, and reaffirmed that he is committed to handing over power to a government elected in time.

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## Grand alliance calls off all programmes

UNB, Dhaka

The Awami League (AL)-led grand alliance has called off its action programme, including blockade and hartal, in the changed political context.

Awami League General Secretary and Co-ordinator of the grand alliance Abdul Jalil declared the cessation of agitation at a press briefing at AL's Dhanmondi office after returning from the Bangabhaban where Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed took oath as the chief adviser yesterday evening.

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## Emergency a stopgap measure: 4-party

Hopes effective steps for continuity of democracy

UNB, Dhaka

The BNP-led four-party alliance has termed the declaration of a state of emergency a 'temporary measure' and hoped for early handover of power to elected people's representatives through election.

"The four-party alliance hopes that all necessary effective measures will be taken for early transfer of power to elected people's repre-

sentatives for the sake of continuity of the hard-earned democratic process," said a statement of the alliance last night.

Signed by BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, the statement observed that there is no alternative to handing over power to elected representatives in the interest of protecting constitutional rule and country's democratic image as well as overall welfare of the people.

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## BNP leaders frustrated

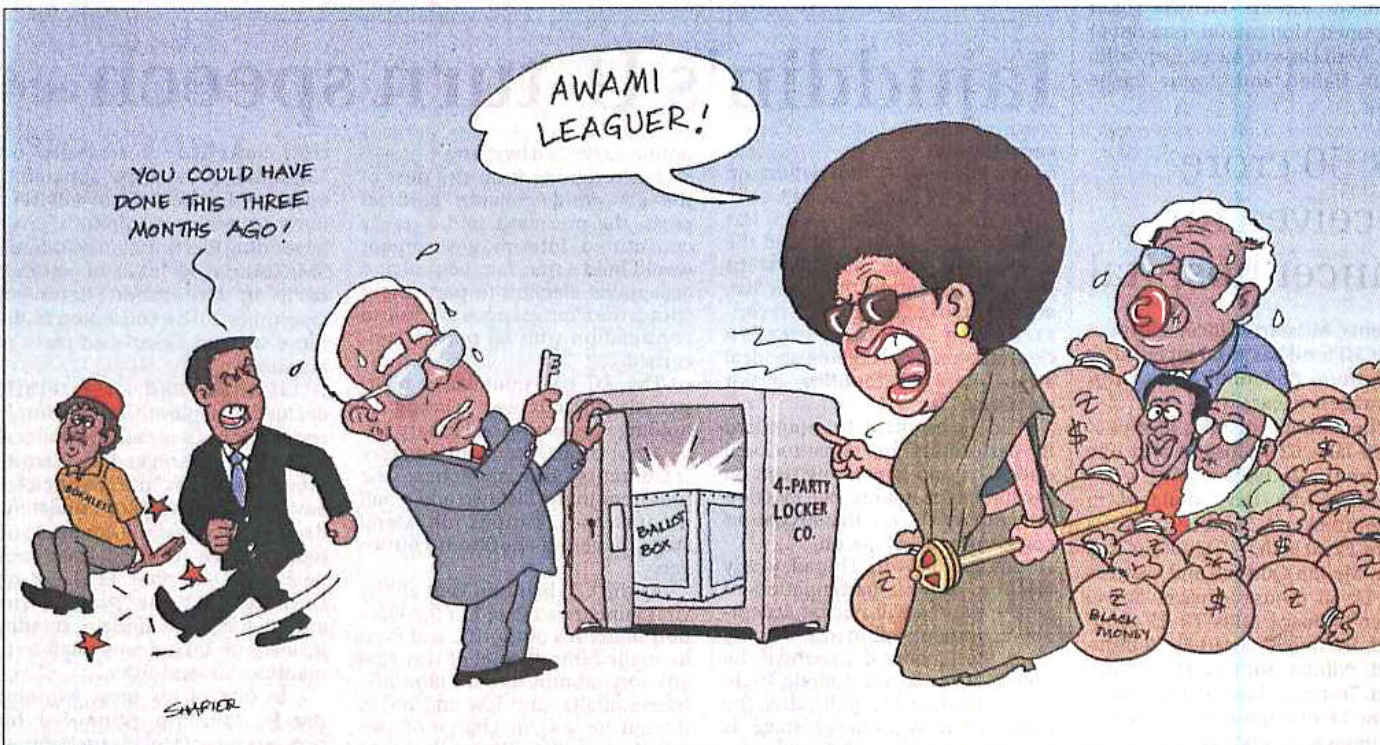
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led four-party alliance stayed away from attending the oath-taking ceremony of the newly appointed chief adviser to the caretaker government, Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, yesterday evening without showing any reason.

Sources said after getting invitation from the Bangabhaban the BNP high command failed to decide whether or not they should attend the programme as they have been totally upset over the latest political development.

The top BNP leaders have been frustrated and worried over Thursday night's army and police

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## EC's poll activities come to a halt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday stopped activities for January 22 elections following the proclamation of state of emergency by President Iajuddin Ahmed on Thursday night.

Meanwhile, a number of district election officers sealed off the election-related documents and materials allocated for their region in presence of a magistrate, sources said.

Deputy Secretary to the EC Mihir Sarwar Morshed yesterday told newsmen that the EC has decided to postpone all election related activities following the president's address to the nation on Thursday night.

"The EC is not sending election

related materials to the respective districts and upazilas," Mihir told reporters.

Mihir talked to reporters after an informal meeting at the EC. Acting Chief Election Officer (CEO) Justice Mahfuzur Rahman had the informal meeting with election commissioners Mahmud Hasan Mansur, Modabbir Hossain Chowdhury, Mohammad Saiful Alam and EC Secretary Abdur Rashid Sarkar.

The ninth national parliamentary elections were supposed to be held on January 22 amid Awami League-led grand alliance's boycott of the polls. They had also decided to resist the polls. A total of Tk130 crore has been spent so far for the January 22 elections.

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## Civil society hails new CA, but fears fresh problems

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Congratulating the new Chief Adviser to the caretaker government (CG) Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, some civil society leaders have expressed fear that a major alliance may not support the new CG, and it may face legal complications.

They gave their views on the situation in the country following the declaration of emergency and until Fakhruddin's swearing in yesterday evening, when contacted by The Daily Star.

Referring to a major alliance that did not attend the oath-taking ceremony at the Bangabhaban, former adviser Hafiz Uddin Khan

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## Mokhles' last dirty trick

The controversial man was removed after he hoodwinked the media with fake censorship threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mokhlesur Rahman Chowdhury was removed yesterday from his post of adviser to the president after he tricked the country's private television channels into sus-

pending broadcast of their news bulletins under a censorship threat in the first hours of the state of emergency.

Mokhles, whose trick however did not work for the print media,

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## Outlaws gun down 2 rivals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Outlawed Gono Mukti Foj (GMF) gunned down two of its rivals belonging to outlawed New Biplobi Communist Party (NBPC) at Sailogari in Kushtia Sadar upazila on Thursday night.


The slain NBPC cadres were identified as Moazzem, 45, son of

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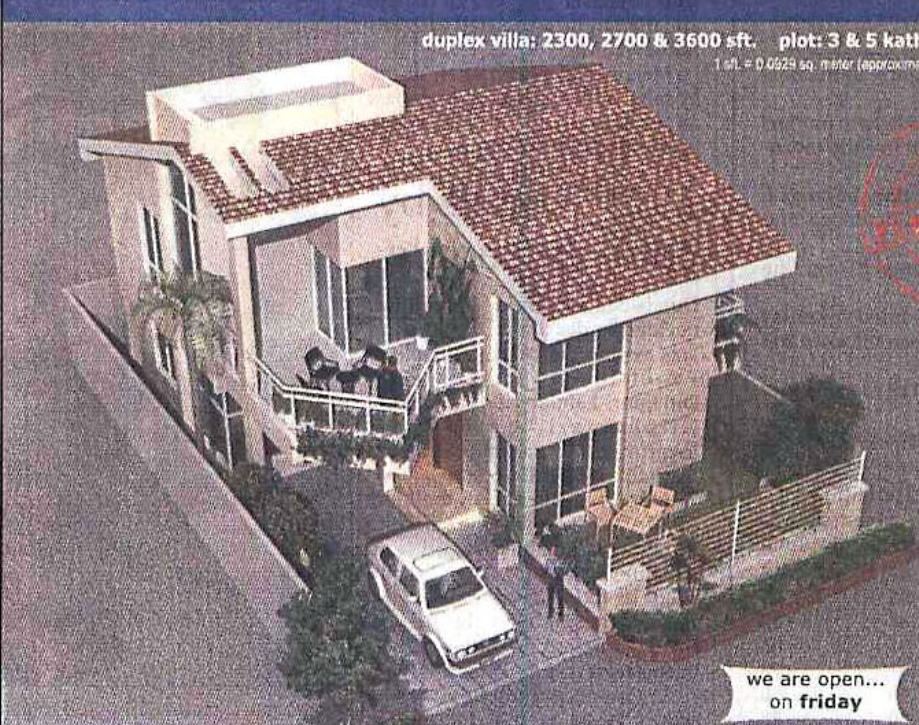
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