

Controversial power projects to be on hold

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The caretaker government has decided to stall the proceedings of the controversial projects under the Power Division for the time being.

"To increase electricity production, the transparent projects would be given the go-ahead immediately, while we are still to take any decisions regarding the controversial ones," Energy and Power Adviser Tapan Chowdhury said yesterday. He was talking to the reporters at his office following a meeting with energy ministry officials.

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Iajuddin's portrait will remain in govt offices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The council of advisers to the caretaker government has decided to keep the portrait of President Iajuddin Ahmed in government offices, which is contrary to the National Portrait Law, 2001.

"The cabinet has decided no portraits would be changed," Industries Adviser Geetara Safiya Chowdhury told the reporters yesterday.

According to the National Portrait Law, 2001, the portraits of the head of the government, currently Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, is supposed to be displayed at government offices.

Asked if this spells changes for the portrait law, Geetara said the

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Elections unlikely before 6 months

Interim govt firm on preparing national identity or voter cards first

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The next parliamentary elections may delay for at least six months as the interim government will take the time to prepare a correct voter list, advisers to the caretaker government said yesterday.

The government is considering introducing either national identity cards or voters' identity cards before going for the polls and such tasks need minimum six months to complete.

The government will form a committee for preparing a guideline

to determine which would be viable—preparing national identity cards or voters' identity cards—considering time and money the task will require, Adviser Tapan Chowdhury told the press yesterday.

He said some people have

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PHOTO: STAR

Rajuk bulldozes the boundary walls of the office of Partex Holdings on Mohakhali-Gulshan Link Road in the capital yesterday during its drive to evict land grabbers of Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara Lake.

Rajuk evicts lake grabbers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) yesterday demolished a number of illegal structures on government land as part of its ongoing drive to evict land grabbers of Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara

Lake in the capital. The Rajuk officials along with police personnel and a magistrate launched the day's drive around noon on Mohakhali-Gulshan Link Road.

As the Rajuk tried to knock

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Advisers' wealth statements could be made public if council decides

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adviser Geetara Safiya Chowdhury yesterday said the council of advisers has the discretion to release statements of wealth of the advisers to the public.

"I believe in democracy. If the decision is taken collectively by the eleven advisers (council of advisers) then it (releasing statements of wealth) would be done," said Geetara to journalists at her office.

"This is not a priority for us. I do not consider this a priority for us at this point," she added.

ACC looks to CG to become functional

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) that has remained largely inactive since its inception in November 2004 now looks to the caretaker government for assistance in removing barriers to make itself functional.

ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan yesterday said, "We will soon seek appointment of the chief adviser. We hope we will be able to explain (to him) the barriers we face."

In more than two years, the ACC could not even finalise rules and

regulations necessary for it to be effective. From the outset, obstructions kept coming from the bureaucracy as the last four-party alliance government, accused of wholesale corruption, lay oblivious to the situation.

To be up and running, the ACC needs to have at least five rules finalised and approved. Accordingly, it had drafted a set of rules and sought the then government's nod. But instead of giving the seal of approval, Khaleida Zia's government had returned those for revision.

After Prof Iajuddin Ahmed's

caretaker government was formed, the ACC made a fresh move seeking approval of a draft of rules needed to file cases, frame charge-sheets and probe corruption. Titled 'ACC Case Filing Rules 2006', the draft has yet to be approved.

The ACC chairman said, "I have already talked to Law Adviser Mainul Hossain about the draft of rules. He has assured me that he will look into the matter."

Over 100 cases that have been filed so far by the anti-graft body face different legal challenges due mainly to its (ACC's) not having the

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JCD leaders rounded up in raids

STAR REPORT

Army personnel arrested five leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) in the capital yesterday as elsewhere in the country 57 people were rounded up in the ongoing anti-crime drive.

Sources said the law enforcers also raided different places at Dhanmondi and Banani DOHS in the capital in their continued hunt for Giasuddin Al Mamun, business partner of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman.

Local leaders of the BNP and Awami League (AL) and some union parishad (UP) chairmen are

among the arrestees.

According to the home ministry, police and the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested 1,968 people including 27 fugitive convicts and 1,098 facing arrest warrants across the country in the 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday.

They also seized 15 firearms, six other weapons and 36 rounds of ammunition.

During the same period, members of the armed forces arrested 74 people.

At makeshift checkpoints across the city, the army personnel searched vehicles and pedestrians

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News analysis

Admin politicised: an eye-opener

SHARIER KHAN

The case of controversial power secretary ANH Akhtar Hossain, who has been recently demoted back to his original post with the rank of deputy secretary, stands as the biggest example of how the immediate past BNP-led alliance government had politicised the administration and undermined honest and efficient officers.

While the alliance government miserably failed in the power sector by prioritising underhand

dealings over actual projects, Akhtar's performance had only worsened the situation. He left the Power Development Board (PDB) along with the Rural Electrification Board (REB) in a deeper mess -- both financially and administratively.

His actions have left the power sector with the impression that no power deals will ever be done in Bangladesh without political connections or bribery.

Holding a position in a BNP-

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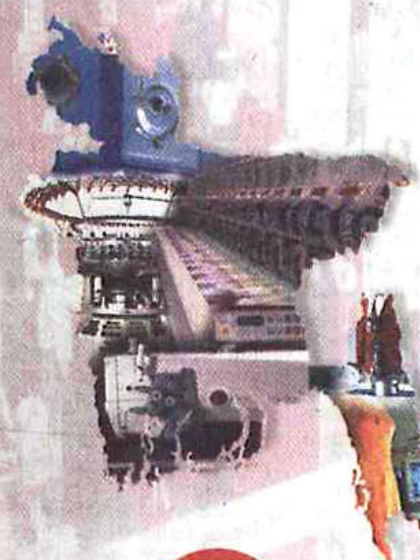
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2 more advisers take oath

UNB, Dhaka

Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and former chairman of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission Dr Chowdhury Sajjadul Karim were yesterday sworn in as advisers, completing reconstitution of the nonparty caretaker government.

President Iajuddin Ahmed administered the oath of office to the two remaining advisers at the Bangabhaban in the evening. Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed and other advisers were present.

Iftekhar Chowdhury has been given the charges of the foreign ministry, overseas employment and expatriates' welfare ministry and CHT affairs ministry.

Sajjadul Karim has been given the portfolios of agriculture, fisheries and livestock, and environment and forest ministries.

Meanwhile, the government yesterday cancelled the appointment of Faiz Khan as adviser to the

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Rejoinder, our reply

Chairman of Orion Group Obaidul Karim has sent a rejoinder to three reports published in The Daily Star headlined "Oriental Bank scam probe: Orion Group pocketed Tk 596cr using unique method" (January 12), "Oriental Bank asked to take legal actions against swindlers" (January 14) and "Oriental Bank scam case: ACC leaves out key man Obaidul Karim" (January 16). We publish today the full text of the rejoinder and our reply.

REJOINDER

The Daily Star is the highest circulated English daily of the country. A report concerning any subject matter in The Daily Star has an impact and such report entails consequences for persons and institutions that are the subject matter of the report.

The Daily Star published three reports which contains several

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