

## No poll

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aimed at holding a free, fair and meaningful election, he said when asked if political parties will wait for another 18 months for election as some of them are already demanding a timeframe for election.

According to the EC plan, six consultants including three from abroad will start working at the EC Secretariat to prepare a project document for a voter list with photographs, national identity cards and introduction of e-governance system in next two months. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will fund preparing the project document. Counting of 18 months will begin from the day the consultants start work, the CEC said.

The EC will complete other preparatory work like appointment of enumerators, their training and procurement of materials within next six months. Then the task of implementing the project will begin and it will take 12 months. "Bangladesh army will help implement the project," he said.

Shamsul Huda went on, "We estimated that at least 8,000 computers and the same number of printers, and digital cameras will have to be procured for the massive task."

Sources pointed out that as the EC does not plan to hold any elections within one and a half years, elections to local government bodies also will not be held in time.

Tenure of the eighth parliament expired on October 27 last year and ninth parliamentary elections were scheduled for January 22 this year. But due to a volatile political situation centring the scheduled election, the president proclaimed the state

of emergency on January 11, suspending the polls.

Over 4,000 union parishads' tenure will expire between January and March next year. As per laws, elections to these local government bodies should be held within 180 days before the expiry of their tenure.

Similarly, elections to the five city corporations will also not be held in time. Tenure of three city corporations—Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna -- will expire next month. According to laws, elections to the three city corporations are to be held within 180 days before expiry of their tenure. Tenure of the two other city corporations—Barisal and Sylhet -- will expire between November and December this year.

Tenure of most of the municipalities will however expire in May 2009.

Officials at the EC Secretariat said tenure of a number of municipalities and union parishads has already expired but the EC cannot hold elections to these bodies due to court orders suspending all sorts of elections.

The CEC however made it clear that no elections will be held in next 18 months.

Replying to a query, the CEC said he came to know from an adviser's speech that the government is thinking about holding long due elections to upazila parishads.

"Parliamentary elections and local government poll can be held at the same time ...However we will think about it once electoral roll is prepared," he said.

## Second corrupt list

**FROM PAGE 1**  
after filing a graft case the commission will assign a new IO for investigation who will submit the charge sheet, he added.

The ACC absorbed more than 700 staffs from the erstwhile Bureau of Anti-Corruption including 85 first-class and second-class officers mainly responsible for enquiry and investigation.

In reply to a question, Habib said 13 officers are dealing with the investigation of 34 graft cases, 40 are engaged with the 40 taskforces of the National Coordination Committee while the rest are busy with other enquiries and official work.

"So, we need to increase the number of investigation officers," he said at a press briefing yesterday.

He also said the ACC wants to double the present number of its total staff and is preparing a new organogram for approval.

Last year the government approved the ACC organogram of 650 staffs but Habib said they want staffs more than 1200.

On March 8, the media published the second list of 50 more high profile corruption suspects.

Although no government organ including the ACC did officially claim the authority of the list, sources said the list was prepared by the National Coordination Committee headed by Communications Adviser Maj Gen (retd) MAMatin.

The 50 are Tarique Rahman, former health minister Khandakar

Mosharrar Hossain, Chittagong Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Awami League (AL) Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader, former minister and Jatiya Party (Monju) Chairman Anwar Hossain Monju, former minister Aminul Haque, AL Presidium Member Sheikh Helaluddin, former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Assistant Private Secretary AFM Bahaiddin Nasim, Rajshahi Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, former jute and textiles minister Shajahan Siraj, former commerce adviser and Juba Dal President Barkat Ullah Bulu, AL leader Kamal Ahmed Majumder, film star and BNP Ward Commissioner Manowar Hossain Dijpal, former state minister Ziaul Haq Zia, former APS to Hasina Rabiul Muqtadir, former communications minister Nazmul Huda's wife Sigma Huda, AL Religion Adviser SK

for over a year, British physician Dr Ron Hiles met Durjoy's mother Eti Rani at DMCH in February 2006.

ASF then took over the responsibility of Durjoy's treatment and sent him to Hong Kong for better treatment under its supervision.

Physicians in Hong Kong are hopeful that Durjoy will recover to a great extent if he is kept under constant observation, Dr Hiles said.

But he would have to undergo special treatment for quite a long time, because a number of his organs, which were severely damaged due to acid burn, will either have to be grafted or be developed through special treatment, she added.

All of that would be conducted after Durjoy grows up a little and his tissues become mature to undergo such treatment, she said adding, "Durjoy is now in his post-operative stage which is also very critical."

"Durjoy still needs a feeding tube, which would hopefully be removed some time after six months. He is yet to be accustomed with swallow reflection that helps him swallow food and drink. He also needs continuous physiotherapy," said Manira Rahman, executive director of ASF.

"That is why he should be kept in special arrangement which would require huge amount of money", Manira said adding, "We would welcome all kinds of assistance from individuals or organisations."

Durjoy's parents Ashutosh Tarafdar and Eti Rani, SAM Showket Hossain, acting vice president of ASF, were also present at the programme.

## BB alone

**FROM PAGE 20**  
Islam observed that there is always a discrepancy between the two figures on FDI published by the Bol and the BB. "To avoid this, only the BB will survey and publish the FDI figures in future," he said adding that the Bol's requirements will be included in the BB survey questionnaire.

The BB governor noted that although the Bol's investment policy is FDI friendly, it could not attract more investment from abroad mainly due to lack of investment policy implementation, lengthy decision-making process regarding investment proposals, lack of co-ordination among the ministries concerned and government agencies and inadequate logistics support to the investors.

These problems needed to be solved for ensuring the FDI inflow in the country, he said.

Replying to a query on Tata's investment proposal, Dr Salehuddin said that it is not possible to take a quick decision in this matter, as there is a lack of negotiation skills among the related ministries.

Termining Tata's investment proposal a complex one, the Bol executive chairman said that Tata seeks some additional facilities, which are not in the country's investment incentives package.

Nazrul Islam also observed that the officials in the one stop service should be given more power so that they can make decisions on investment related issues, such as giving clearance for utility services.

Replying to a query, he admitted that the FDI inflow during the last couple of months was a little bit slow.

## Harris Chy

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The court directed the authorities concerned to send a copy of the arrest warrants to the police stations concerned. It also directed the police stations to submit a report to the court by April 12 on the issue.

The two ACC officials along with their lawyers appeared before the court on Wednesday to file the cases against Harris and Mamun, but the court asked them to lodge the cases yesterday.

On February 18, the ACC had directed Harris and Mamun to submit their wealth statements within 72 hours, but neither they nor any representatives on their behalf submitted the statements. The anti-graft body at a meeting on March 29 gave approval for filing of the cases, sources said.

## Elections

**FROM PAGE 1**  
taking because they wanted "people to freely choose their representatives".

At his meeting with Nepalese PM Koirala earlier yesterday, Fakhruddin asked him to use Bangladesh ports for his landlocked country as Bangladesh's infrastructure and port facilities have vastly improved.

He also requested Koirala to initiate trilateral talks between India, Bangladesh and Nepal to open transit facilities between Dhaka and Kathmandu.

Fakhruddin said this will clear the way for a Dhaka-Kathmandu bus service along with expanding opportunities for trade.

Koirala told Fakhruddin that he also had to take up difficult reforms to hold the upcoming April 22 elections in Nepal. Koirala hoped Bangladesh will succeed in its efforts to hold credible and acceptable elections.

Fakhruddin asked the Nepalese PM to be a member of the Dhaka-based International Jute Study Group.

They invited each other to their respective country.

The chief adviser returned home yesterday evening.

## Tarique Rahman

**FROM PAGE 1**  
As the quashment petition is on the list of hearing, the proceedings of the extortion case should be adjourned until hearing of the petition filed with the HC is completed, the defence lawyer said.

Tarique, the eldest son of former premier Khaleda Zia, was taken to the court in a prison van at around 11:00am under tight security. He looked dejected at that time.

Earlier on April 2, a Dhaka court rejected the petition seeking stay on the proceedings of the extortion case.

The quashment petition was filed on April 4 against the rejection order. The court rejected the petition following a criminal revision filed by Tarique's counsels against the earlier rejection order of the lower court.

On March 29, Metropolitan Magistrate Abdur Rouf Khan rejected a petition filed by Tarique's lawyers challenging the legality of the investigation officer (IO) of the case submitting the charge sheet of the case.

Tarique is now serving a month's detention in Dhaka Central Jail.

Tarique was also shown arrested in connection with the Tk 81 lakh extortion case filed with Gulshan Police Station on March 27.

## Gen Moeen

**FROM PAGE 1**  
world leaders and global media take him from now on?

So far the armed forces had done very well in remaining behind the scene. Now that has changed. The CAS' speech told the nation, as well as the world, as to who really is running the show. Does this coming out into the open serve the interest of the nation and that of the armed forces? From now on the full responsibility for all political decisions, both good and bad, will automatically fall on the armed forces. They are now out in the open with all the attending vulnerabilities.

On the questions of the CAS' idea of "having our own brand of democracy" we want to point out that our first brush with a General in politics was with Ayub Khan back in 1958 and he wanted to "reinvent democracy according to the genius of the people" and we ended up having "basic democracy" that was thoroughly rejected by our people, though it took a while. Much later in Pakistan came Gen. Ziaul Huq who also wanted to redefine democracy. His was quite a clever ploy and very original. In order to deprive the Pakistanis from exercising their right to elect a government Zia said "I cannot accept democracy where sovereignty belongs to the people. In my book sovereignty only belongs to Allah". So Ziaul Huq ran Pakistan under his personal fiat, as accepting the sovereignty of the people was against his belief. Ask any Pakistani for the great and irreparable damage he had caused to their country.

We all remember Gen. Ershad whose own version of "democracy" gave corruption for the first time its massive and destructive character. He was truly the father of mass corruption from the curse of which we have never recovered.

Tragically, our elected leaders instead of stemming the rot only expedited it further until it became so very unbearable that we had to have emergency to save us from it.

It took our armed forces 16 years (1991-2007) to recover from the ignominy that Gen. Ershad had brought upon them. It is to their tremendous credit that through sheer professionalism, dedication, discipline and, most importantly, staying out of politics that our Armed Forces regained their reputation and the place in the hearts of our people. Their ever readiness to help during natural disasters and their services to humanity through international peacekeeping have earned them pride of place in the global community and as well in our midst.

Public respect for them got further consolidated when in 1996 the armed forces collectively fought back their own members in an attempt to capture political power.

So what is the collective experience of military interventions in politics globally, in South Asia and in Bangladesh? There are some definite short-term gains but in the long run they never work. As we see here the emergency has done wonders like arresting those who thought they were above the law, forcing necessary changes in the system that had been usurped by vested interest, catching well known criminals, etc. Emergency cannot last for long, nor can army's intervention.

It has been shown time and again that the only durable solution to political crisis is political reform and subsequent return of power to elected leaders. There is just no other way. As it is said, the only method to cure flaws in democracy is to have more of it, so also the best way to have good politics is to have pro-people political reforms and their quick implementation followed by election to restore representative government. This is the only route to

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durable solution. Everything else is short-term and any attempt to prolong it is fraught with danger.

The fundamental truth for us is that we need political reforms so that democracy can be practiced as it was meant to be. We need, in Lincoln's words, a "Government of the People, By the People and For the People". Such a government can only come from a truly free and fair election devoid of intimidation, black money and muscle power. That is what the emergency came for and that is what the emergency should stick to. As the CAS knows so very well that the best guarantor of success of any military mission is to keep its objective focused. Any widening of the objectives brings into the picture unknown factors and hidden enemies that jeopardize the whole operation.

Translated into the present scene, the objective of the emergency should be its original focus to hold a free and fair election within the shortest possible time so that true leaders of the people can run the country. The objective also was to cleanse our politics of the criminals and the corrupt and bring about fundamental political and electoral reforms so that we are no longer hostage to dynastic rules and autocratic parties.

There exists an unwritten consensus on the above reform agenda. The emergency and the armed forces behind it enjoy public support simply because people see them as a force for good, implementing the reform agenda. Any deviation from it, and widening of objectives or changing of direction will cause an immediate evaporation of public support. This may dismantle the present edifice causing immense damage to our prospect of a better future. We have missed so many opportunities to change our course for progress. We cannot afford another one.

Simply put, we strongly feel our armed forces should not involve themselves in politics. They have a mission behind which there is popular support, which they should accomplish and return to their barracks. This will tremendously enhance their moral standing and bring them far greater dividend in terms of love and respect of the general people, which is the greatest gift for any patriotic army. And ours is such an army.

In the past both the political parties and their sycophants saw our critical views as antagonistic ones. As a result, arguments made out of genuine effort to help were taken as attempts to weaken, to damage or even to destroy them. So instead of examining what we said, we were harassed for having said them. Given the professionalism, the high level of education and global exposure of our armed forces and especially of their leaders, we hope our sincere attempt to help will be seen as such.

## Cup takes a break

**FROM PAGE 20**  
The Bangladesh team made the 30-minute drive on Wednesday morning to get a first hand look at the match venue, the Providence Stadium. They had training in mind too but it was obvious that practice won't be possible in the rain.

So it was a case of taking a quick look at the dressing room, viewing area and obliging photo requests from Indian National Guards troops on World Cup duty before boarding the bus again and heading for the gym.

The Tigers arrived at the gym only to find the New Zealand team already there and as there was not enough room for two teams to use the facility at the same time it was decided that the session would be put back by a couple of hours. In the afternoon coach Dav Whatmore had one to one interviews with the squad members.

The Bangladesh team is scheduled to train at the Bourda, the traditional Test venue here on Thursday morning but no guarantees or signs that it will not be another wash-out. Perhaps the only comforting thought is that the main venue at Providence apparently has excellent drainage system and the outfield becomes ready in a flash once the rain stops. South Africa and Ireland got a full game on Tuesday despite the rain spell which locals say was unexpected as the rainy season doesn't arrive before another month.

## Shops allowed

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Dhaka Metropolitan Police will submit a report in this regard as early as possible.

Shops in the shopping malls are now shut down at 7:00pm following a government-business decision made recently as an austerity measure in the wake of a severe power crisis.

Labour and Employment Secretary Ashfaque Hamid, Power Division Secretary Zafarullah Khan, Labour Director Shamsul Alam, Bangladesh Shop Owners Association President Amir Hossain Khan, Dhaka Metropolitan Shop Owners Association President Helal Uddin Helal and General Secretary Masud Kader Mona, among others, attended the meeting.

## No hearing

**FROM PAGE 1**  
accused under the Penal Code will be made within a short time.

Lawyers, litigants and others concerned have urged the government to take immediate steps for further amendment regarding bail matters.

The amendment contained in the March 21 gazette notification was given retrospective effect from February 13.

According to the amended rules, an accused will not be able to file a bail petition during the investigation or trial of a case.

Copies of the gazette notification were later sent to all courts across the country.

In the bail-related section, the amended rules say, "Regardless of whatever is stated in sections 497 and 498 of the Criminal Procedure Code or any other law, an accused under the Emergency Powers Ordinance will not be released on bail during the enquiry, investigation and trial of the case against that person."

Crimes under the amended rules include those relating to illegal weapons, explosives, drugs, sabotage, hoarding, adulteration of food or medicine, forgery of currency or government stamps, black marketing, smuggling and other crimes considered a threat to security of the state, people and the economy.

## 3 NCBs asked

**FROM PAGE 20**  
When the central bank's reform programmes have improved the performance of the private banks, the NCBs lag far behind thanks to government control and political interference in loan disbursement, observes a BB source.

Low-yield investments in the sectors prioritised by governments often result in defaulting on loans. Political leaders pressure banks to disburse loans against projects that are mostly evaluated to be unfeasible.

In order to do away with the problems, both the WB and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) proposed wide-ranging reforms in the banking sector, the first being the corporatisation of the NCBs with plans for full privatisation.

The WB and IMF have made it one of the major prerequisites for Bangladesh to receive Poverty Reduction Growth Facility loans.

The last BNP-led coalition government also had agreed in principle to gradually privatise the state-owned banks.

## Munda community

**FROM PAGE 20**  
They sought intervention of the law enforcers to ensure the security of the Munda people's lives and properties and demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to the culprits.

On contact, Monzur Rahi and Kamrul Islam denied the allegations and claimed that a section of people are hatching conspiracy against them to tarnish their image in society.

## Marine fish

**FROM PAGE 20**  
though somebody has cut it into halves.

Several elderly fishermen of the area said seeing the fish is a new experience for them.

Raguib said he observed the same species of fish nearly 130 feet below sea surface in coral-reef habitat of Tulamben Bali, Indonesia in October 2002.

A NAUI (National Association of Underwater Instructors, USA) licence holder deep sea SCUBA (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus) diver, Raguib dives at the Bay of Bengal and other seas and oceans for about ten years.

Over-fishing, destruction of coral-reef around the St Martin's Islands and further down, use of environment unfriendly fishing gears have now become threats to the existence of fishes, especially the rare ones.

The research cell of the proposed marine museum and park aims at providing better information about such creatures and help conservation of valued natural treasures of the Bay of Bengal.

## Mirza contradicts

**FROM PAGE 20**  
adviser said no decision has been made yet about increasing the existing tax-free income slab.

"There are two views to be considered before increasing or decreasing the tax-free income slab—per capita income and purchasing capacity," Aziz said.

The next budget will focus on three aspects—investment in the power sector, improving human resources, and alleviating poverty, he told the BEA representatives at the discussion.

BEA President Kholiquzzaman urged the government to reconsider the prices of kerosene and diesel as the increased prices will affect the poor worst.

"The country's agriculture will also be hampered because of the recent fuel price hike," he told reporters after the discussion.

He also suggested setting an employment generation target for next one year and forming an "employment commission" to achieve that target.

## Poll reform proposals

**FROM PAGE 1**  
All kinds of documents to be submitted with the nomination papers will be posted on the EC website.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda at a press briefing announced the draft proposals and said those would be finalised after a series of dialogues with the political parties and civil society members, and an inter-ministerial meeting.

The EC has proposed to have the authority to cancel candidature on grounds of gross irregularities. It also wants to make mandatory registration of the political parties with provisions seeking to ensure financial transparency and democracy within the parties.

It also proposed restriction on retired military or civil servant, loan defaulters, utility service bill defaulters, NGO officials and independent candidates with regard to participation in the national election.

Besides, none will be allowed to contest from more than three constituencies at a time.

The CEC said the proposals are aimed at creating an atmosphere favourable for participation of the honest and dedicated political leaders.

"The objectives of the proposals are also to free the electoral process from muscle power and black money," Huda said.

He said the EC would start dialogue with political parties soon after withdrawal of the ban on indoor politics.

"I have already expressed our anxiety to the government. We hope they will lift the ban by May 8," the CEC said referring to his meeting with the law adviser on Wednesday.

Once the proposals are finalised, they will be sent to the council of advisers for approval.

The CEC said no unregistered organisation would be permitted to field candidates in the elections. "Even an individual won't be allowed to be a candidate of a registered political party unless three years have passed since his enrolment," he said.

An independent candidate will have to come up with signatures from at least one percent of his constituents supporting him.

If anyone wants to contest from more than one constituency, he or she will have to deposit Tk 5 lakh for each constituency. In case of a woman winning all three seats, deposits for two will be forfeited, said a proposal adding that it will help the EC meet the expenditure for holding by-elections.

The commission proposed measures to dispose of the election

disputes within six months. "If a High Court bench is reconstituted with an election case pending before it, the time limit cannot be extended. If a petition for leave to appeal is filed with the Appellate Division against a High Court judgment, it will have to be resolved within two months and if the petition is granted, the appeal will have to be disposed of within four months," one of the proposals said.

A civil or military bureaucrat will not be allowed to contest a parliamentary election before three years since retirement from service. Similar provision was proposed regarding the officials of NGOs that receive foreign grants.

The EC also recommended that appeal against acceptance of candidature by the returning officers should also be allowed.

According to the proposals, a political party that had won at least one parliamentary seat in elections since 1973 will be considered fit for registration. The organisations not meeting the condition will have to have offices and committees in at least 32 districts and upazilas under those. They must have at least one thousand members at a district unit and 200 members at upazila.

A registered political party will have to follow its constitution and have bank accounts to maintain its fund, the proposal said. No unregistered party shall join an alliance led by a registered political party.

If a registered political party violates a provision, its registration will be cancelled.

## Extortion case filed against Tarique's APS

A CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A schoolteacher yesterday filed a cheating and extortion case against BNP Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman's Assistant Private Secretary Sajjadur Rahman Knight and his brother ABN Sweet with Bogra Sadar Police Station.

Complainant Abbas Ali in his case statement said Knight and Sweet took Tk 3 lakh from him with assurance to give his two sons jobs at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College in Bogra.

"They took Tk 2 lakh in cash on