

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.

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

Replies to a query, 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.

Terming 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.

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

Harris Chy

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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

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taking because they wanted "people to freely choose their representatives".

At his meeting with Nepalese PM Koirala earlier yesterday, Fakhrudin asked him to use Bangladeshi 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.

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

Koirala told Fakhrudin 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.

The ACC commissioner said after completion of the enquiry the ACC will ask the 34 corruption suspects to submit their wealth statements.

Acid brutality

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

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

Physicians in Hong Kong are hopeful that Durjy 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 Durjy grows up a little and his tissues become mature to undergo such treatment, she said adding, "Durjy is now in his post-operative stage which is also very critical."

Durjy 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."

It was reported in newspapers that Feni police seized 66,000 eggs on Tuesday as those were brought in from Dhaka. Three wholesalers of the district brought those violating a decision taken at a meeting.

The meeting had decided not to bring in poultry products from Dhaka area until further notice.

Bird flu

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chickens from Gazipur four days ago and had already sold 200 chickens.

Police raided the farm yesterday and burned the remaining chickens.

Our Khagrachari correspondent reports that the district administration has imposed a ban on entry of chickens, eggs and poultry feeds from Dhaka, Savar, Narayanganj and Gazipur districts where bird flu was detected.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Sahadat Hossain issued a circular in this regard in the district yesterday, district administration sources said.

The circular said the bringing in of all poultry, eggs and poultry feeds from confirmed avian influenza infected areas have been prohibited to prevent bird flu infection in Khagrachari.

The circular also said legal actions might be taken against those who fail to obey the instructions.

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BB alone

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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 coordination among the ministries concerned and government agencies and inadequate logistics support to the investors.

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Gen Moeen

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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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They invited each other to their respective country.

The chief adviser returned home yesterday evening.

Mamun

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The other accused in the cases are - Obaidul Karim alias Sohel, Mamun's APS Kamruzzaman, Mahbub, Hablu and Mota Tariq.

Meanwhile, Mamun was remanded for nine days in two other extortions cases.

After his confessional statement was recorded, the law enforcers produced Mamun before two other courts seeking a total of 14 days' remand in the cases filed with Dhanmondi and Kafrul police stations on April 3 and March 27.

The court, however, granted a five-day remand in the case lodged with the Dhanmondi police for extorting Tk 2.40 crore, while another four days in the case filed with the Kafrul police for extorting Tk 40 lakh.

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 extortions case filed with Gulshan Police Station on March 27.

Local speculates that Kibria might have been murdered over land related hostilities.

They also alleged that Kibria got possession of huge properties including land during previous BNP-Jamaat alliance government. He was the maternal cousin of Narayanganj BNP secretary general and former BRCT chairman Fazlur Rahman.

Kibria's autopsy was completed at Narayanganj General Hospital morgue.

No hearing

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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 or 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

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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-key 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

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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.

Cup takes a break

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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 Bangladeshi 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.

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

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