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Election by end of 2008

Fakhruddin unveils roadmap in address to nation, says steps to be taken for honest, competent candidates' poll participation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said the ninth parliamentary elections would be held before the end of 2008 as the present caretaker government is committed to handing over power to an elected government.

"I would like to categorically state that we [the present caretaker government] will not stay in power a day longer than it is necessary. I strongly believe, it will be possible to hold the much-awaited parliamentary elections before the end of 2008," he said in his second address to the nation since being sworn in as the CA three months ago.

The ninth parliamentary elec-

tions, previously scheduled for January 22, were cancelled following the declaration of the state of emergency on January 11.

- Parliamentary election will be held before end of 2008
- Govt, Election Commission are thinking about upazila elections
- Full independence of EC has already been ensured
- Sustainable framework for free, fair and neutral election
- Public Service Commission will be thoroughly reformed
- Zero tolerance on corruption, abuse of power and serious crime
- No alternative but to keep patience in facing power crisis
- Armed forces will continue assisting govt's reform programmes
- Reforms in financial sector will be continued
- Efforts will be made to bar political parties from using student, professional bodies as party wing

OTHER HIGHLIGHT

The CA said the government and the Election Commission is currently mulling holding upazila elections to make local government more effective.

Stressing the government's commitment to fighting crime and

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Fakhruddin Ahmed addressing to the nation yesterday.

RAMNA BLAST Case brought out from hibernation

SHARIFUL ISLAM and
EMRAN HOSSAIN

Jihad Al Islami (Huji) chief Mufti Abdul Hannan last year admitted to carrying out the heinous attack that left 10 people dead and scores injured during Bangla new year celebrations at Ramna Batamul on April 14, 2001.

In his confessional statement, Hannan named 10 Huji leaders and activists to have been involved in the blast. Besides him, former Huji leader Moulana Abdur Rouf is behind bars now. Rouf however had split off from Huji and formed a militant outfit during the intervening years.

Investigators said they have already submitted a prayer for Moulana Rouf to be remanded for

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The investigation into the Ramna blast took a new turn after Harkatul

Khaleda stares down the barrel

Her leadership challenged; she is reportedly under pressure to leave country

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

forced to leave the country.

Most of the leaders and activists also believe the rumour that her 'forced' departure from the country is only a matter of time. Sources said Khaleda does not want to leave the country under any pressure

Some leaders opine in privacy that the BNP would be better off without Khaleda, who lost popularity inside the party in the last five years so much so that the rebel leaders feel little support the once iron-lady

would get from the party if she is

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ACC to glean info about Hasina

Declines to confirm any such move against Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is going to start collecting corruption and wealth-related information about former prime minister and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, and if necessary will ask her to submit wealth statement, ACC Commissioner Abul Hasan Manzoor Mannan told journalists

yesterday.

But he declined to reply when asked if the ACC is taking a similar move concerning immediate past prime minister and BNP chief Khaleda Zia.

Tajul Islam Farook, chairman of Westmont Power Company, filed an extortion case against Hasina on Monday.

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No plan to send Khaleda, Hasina abroad: Matin

UNB, Dhaka

Dispelling widespread speculations, Communications Adviser Major General (retd) MA Matin yesterday said the government has no plan to send BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina abroad.

"The government has no plan to send the two leaders (Khaleda, Hasina) abroad," the adviser told reporters at his office.

On controversy over the filing of an extortion case against Sheikh Hasina, he said the taskforce will



A student of Fine Arts Institute of Dhaka University makes masks ahead of the Pahela Baishakh celebrations.

PHOTO: STAR

JMB tops suspect list in PP murder

Bomb like the one used in killing of Jhalakathi judges recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) is on top of the law enforcers' list of suspected killers of Jhalakathi district court Public Prosecutor Hyder Hossain although investigators did not find any clue to the murder as of last evening.

Meanwhile, the joint forces yesterday recovered a powerful live

bomb--identical to the one used for killing the two Jhalakathi judges on November 14, 2005--around half a kilometre off the scene of Hyder's murder.

"Hyder Hossain's conducting of the Jhalakathi judges killing case against the militant kingpins might have triggered the murder," said Lt

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