

## President asks EC to complete poll tasks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday asked the Election Commission (EC) to complete all preparatory tasks to hold the ninth parliamentary election by 2008, the time frame announced by the present caretaker government.

"We informed the president of our activities and progress achieved in the last three months," Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda told reporters at the EC Secretariat after returning from Bangabhaban.

The president asked the EC to work according to the caretaker government's declared time frame so that the parliamentary election can be held by 2008, Huda said.

The CEC went to Bangabhaban with two other election commissioners at the president's invitation to lunch.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin

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## Playing with projects

IMED report detects govt had to fork out extra Tk 2,800cr as authorities pushed up costs of 74 projects up to 300pc

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

Various government agencies in the recent past pushed up the costs of 74 completed projects up to 300 percent under the Annual Development Programme (ADP), while failing to implement them according to the original expectations, said a government report.

Such malpractices in 74 projects burdened the government with an additional cost of Tk 2,787 crore, said the evaluation report on 175 completed projects under the ADP for fiscal 2004-05.

The Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Department (IMED), which prepared the report, found that the duration of at least 109 projects were increased by 750 times.

IMED sources said although the government approved the addi-

tional costs of implementing the projects, there were rampant misuses of money, and completed projects were found to be plagued by corruption.

IMED recently prepared a detailed evaluation report on completed ADP projects for 2004-05 fiscal.

The report said time to time expansion of original projects, inclusion of new items, changes in engineering designs, appointments of consultants, and frequent changes in the posts of project directors are the main reasons for the delays in completing the projects and for the additional costs.

During visits, especially to the communication ministry's projects, IMED teams found low quality work and partially completed projects although the service providers had withdrawn the total bills

for the projects.

Citing an example, the summary of the IMED report said its team did not find out the actual expenditure for the Kapashia Bridge project over the river Sitalakha, implemented by the communication ministry. Besides, the IMED teams found low quality work on Tulshikhali and Maricha bridges on Jinjira-Dohar road in Dhaka.

Low quality work was also found in the project of constructing the Rajshahi city bypass road, which was damaged only a year after completion.

"Such damages to roads are not accepted within a year of construction," the report said.

It also said the inspection team found the soil in some portion of the road to be too fragile even for walking on it.

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## EU reiterates support to CG

Says HR situation improves slightly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

European Union (EU) envoys yesterday reiterated support for the current military-backed government citing the administration's progress towards holding free and fair elections and what one envoy said was a slightly improving human rights situation.

"We would like to see Bangladesh return to democracy and elected government provided the conditions are there to hold free, fair and credible elections," said Stephan Frowein, EU ambas-

sador in Dhaka, at a press conference to mark Europe Day at a city hotel.

German Envoy Frank Meyer, representing the current EU presidency, said the EU is encouraged by the Election Commission's (EC) proposed electoral reforms, particularly the move to register political parties and ensure intra-party democracy.

EU is currently the largest development cooperation partners of Bangladesh, disbursing well over Tk 3,900 crore in 2006 alone.

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## OKAYING 5 CONTROVERSIAL POWER PROJECTS

## Not a question of 'clean chit' but of urgency

SHARIER KHAN

The experts' committee on power sector formed by the caretaker government cleared five controversial power deals earlier this week not because they found these to be "clean" but because in the persisting power crisis, the country cannot afford to sit on new power projects.

The committee headed by former vice-chancellor of BUET Prof Abdul Matin Patwari found various

irregularities in the tender process for each of the projects. But these irregularities were all legitimised through approval by cabinet bodies of the past government.

While clearing these projects, the experts' committee emphasised strict monitoring of implementation of these so that the country does not end up having dysfunctional power plants like Tongi 80 megawatt unit.

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## Govt out for transparent, healthy trend in politics: CA

UNB, Dhaka

Recalling poet Rabindranath Tagore's stand against social injustice, Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said the nation is committed to setting a transparent and healthy trend in politics and economy to establish a progressive society.

"The philosophy and thought of Tagore have become very important in this 21st century when the world has turned into a global village. In this conflict-stricken world, peace and prosperity are now the dreams of globalisation," he said.

The CA was addressing a function organised by the cultural affairs ministry marking the 146th birth anniversary of Nobel laureate

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## High security around Hasina's house

Up to 3,000 AL men sued for procession in airport area; 3 top Uttara cops closed, one inspector suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday beefed up security around Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina's Sudha Sadan residence while airport police filed a case against two to three thousand party leaders and activists for bringing out procession in airport area on Monday defying the state of emergency.

Dharmadip police were also preparing to file a similar case accusing another two to three thousand AL leaders and supporters until 10:00pm, duty officer of Dharmadip Police Station said.

Sub-inspector Shahriar Hossain

of Airport Police Station filed the case at 8:00pm under the Emergency Power Rules. In the case statement, he mentioned that the AL leaders and workers gathered at the airport and brought out procession defying the state of emergency.

The police administration also came down hard on three top Uttara cops -- Deputy Commissioner Tanveer Haider, Assistant Deputy Commissioner Iqbal Hossain and Assistant Commissioner MM Salahuddin-- for 'neglect of duty' during Hasina's homecoming celebration. The three were closed

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## PALTAN KILLING Nizami, 9 others get bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted ad interim bail to Jamaat-e-Islami chief Matiur Rahman Nizami and nine other leaders of the party and its student front in a case for the killing of a Workers Party activist in the capital on October 28 last year.

Meanwhile, another Dhaka court placed Khelafat Majlish Nayeib-e-Ameer and former member of parliament Mufi Shahidul Islam on a five-day remand for his alleged ties with militant organisations in the country.

In the case for killing Workers Party activist Russell Ahmed Khan during a demonstration in Paltan area, Judge Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's

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PHOTO: STAR

Developers of a housing project filled up a canal that once used to flow into the Buriganga river near Kamrangirchar, rendering the bridge on the canal useless.

## Concern over Dastagir's fate

No trace after he was picked up 5 days ago

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of 16 freedom fighters expressed deep concern yesterday over the whereabouts of Gazi Golam Dastagir, a freedom fighter, successful businessman and an eminent sports organiser.

Family sources said Gazi Golam Dastagir Bir Pratik was picked up from his residence by a group of armed men identifying themselves as members of the joint forces early Friday.

In a joint statement, the freedom fighters expressed concern as five days had gone by without any news of his whereabouts.

They said since the government did not deny media reports that he was detained they thought the government would notify his

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