

Akbar Ali Khan

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parliament without the permission of the prime minister.

Both Akbar and eminent lawyer barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud said the Election Commission should not pose as the regulatory committee to oversee political parties follow their constitutions, as reforms in political parties should come from within.

Akbar told the audience of academics, experts, civil society members and politicians that instead of undertaking gradual reforms, "it seems that they're undertaking 'big bang' reforms, which is likely to have adverse rather than positive effects on the country."

He said 'big bang' reforms entail dismantling institutions, structures, and rebuilding from the scratch – which can have dangerous consequences if carried out within a short time.

"We have to try to reconcile our emotions with hard, practical realities," he said, adding, "We cannot give in to our emotions to change everything that we disliked right away."

A constitutional amendment must give more power to the president to balance the power of the prime minister, Akbar added.

He said the president should be given more powers because the overwhelming power currently enjoyed by the prime minister under the constitution allows the prime minister to run the country almost autocratically.

Ataur Rahman, chairperson of CGS, first proposed the concept that was backed by barrister Rokan.

Rokan said the president should be given more power to dissolve the parliament without the consent of the prime minister.

Under the constitution, the presi-

dent must ask for written consent of the prime minister to dissolve a parliament.

Akbar, Rokan and former adviser Hafizuddin Khan also recommended reforms in political parties, but said the Election Commission should not regulate it, as it would embroil the constitutional body in controversy.

The political party reforms should include mandatory submission of audit reports of a party to ensure public knowledge of party funds, said Akbar, adding, "The people have a right to know who are paying the politicians and who are influencing their policy decisions."

Mir Nasir Uddin, president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), said the perception that the business-men's involvement has corrupted the politics is not correct.

"It was the corrupt politics that lured a number of businessmen [into politics], as they figured that joining politics would be a way to make money," said Nasir, adding that it was simply a case of "flies being attracted to honey."

Former BNP education minister Osman Faruk disagreed with Nasir and said, "Both sides have to take responsibility for the corruption as one side paid the bribes while other took it."

Ataur Rahman of CGS recommended parliamentary reforms and transforming the mindset of political leaders to create new political norms and institutions.

Shaila Khan, assistant country director of UNDP, Hafizuddin Khan, former adviser, and academic Mizanur Rahman Shelley were other panellists of the seminar.

ACC

FROM PAGE 1
Metropolitan Magistrate Court," a competent source told the news agency yesterday.

Eight charge sheets will be submitted against Salahuddin Quader, Dr Iqbal and his wife, former BNP lawmaker Hafiz Ibrahim and his wife, former BNP lawmaker Rashiduzzaman Millat and his wife, former CBA leader BM Bakir Hossain and his wife, former BNP lawmaker Nasir Uddin Pintu and his wife, BNP ward commissioner Chowdhury Alam and six others, and former Jamaat lawmaker Shahjahan Chowdhury for concealing information in wealth reports submitted to the ACC.

A charge sheet will be submitted against former chief conservator of forest M Anwarul Islam for recruiting people illegally by abusing power.

The ACC will submit charge sheet in the non-submission case against former prime minister Khaleda's assignment officer Dr Firoj Mahmud Iqbal for not submitting his wealth statement in due time. A first information report was filed with Ramna Police Station on August 5.

The ACC will also submit a charge sheet against a former administrative officer of the Prime Minister's Office for allegedly taking Tk 93 lakh in bribe through cheques.

Two charge sheets will be submitted against different bank officials for misappropriating money from Oriental Bank.

Delwar

FROM PAGE 16
Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, yesterday said it is not possible for the party to do anything beyond the party's policies and ideology.

Delwar yesterday said the main political parties can work together on the issue of movement but it is not possible to launch a movement at this moment. He said a united movement with any party, including the AL, could be launched once the ban on politics is lifted.

He said they would have to have dialogues with other political parties before launching any movement but it is not possible now as the BNP central office is locked.

ZA Khan of the so-called pro-reformist faction of BNP talking to reporters at Mannan Bhuiyan's Gushin home yesterday said it is not the proper time for a movement and they would consider it when the time comes. He said it appears that the pro-Khaleda faction has an agenda to break up the party.

Coming heavily down on the pro-Khaleda leader Hannan Shah, who expected more pro-reformist BNP leaders' name on the Anti-corruption Commission's list of corruption suspects, ZA Khan said no BNP leader could be happy to see problems of any party leader.

He, however, said if allegations brought against any party leader is proved in court, the party would take action against them.

Asked about the reforms within the party, he said work is going on in this regard.

Be sympathetic

FROM PAGE 1
planning to meet the government this week to discuss the matters including especially treating the detained teachers on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, sources said.

Four teachers and at least five students of the university were arrested following last month's violence on the campus.

A senior teacher of political science, Aftab, died from bullet wounds on September 26 last year.

Undisclosed money

FROM PAGE 1
considered had there been a good response from the undisclosed money holders to the opportunity given by the government, he added.

Meanwhile, NBR Chairman Badir Rahman yesterday visited some tax offices in the capital to see if taxpayers are harassed by the tax officials.

The opportunity was granted on June 5 for people who earned money legally and did not disclose that for various reasons. The previous time limit for availing this opportunity was July 31 but the NBR extended it following requests from different sections of people.

Taking this opportunity, former prime minister Khaleda Zia and former finance minister M Saifur Rahman declared their undisclosed earnings.

2 army men die

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The injured army personnel are Selim Miah, Abdullah-al-Mamun, Mohammad Habib, Abu Zafar, Mohammad Humayun, Saiful Islam, Salam Miah, Iqbal Hossain, Mohammad Babul, Mizanur Rahman, Jahangir Hossain, Mohammad Shahidullah and Corporal Kalam.

Of the injured, private Selim Miah, private Abdullah-al-Mamun, and private Habib were in critical condition. However, around 26 more soldiers were injured in the accident and they were released after receiving first aid, Kumudini Hospital sources said.

Mirzapur police rushed to the spot, recovered the bodies and sent them to Tangail General Hospital morgue for autopsy. They also seized the truck and arrested its driver.

The soldiers were travelling on five private buses requisitioned by the army, police sources said.

BBC Sanglap told

FROM PAGE 1
Kamal Hossain, AL Organising Secretary Mahmudur Rahman Manna and Professor Mahbub Ullah of Dhaka University were the panellists.

Mahmudur Rahman Manna said democracy will remain alive without any particular person or group. "But why we will exclude Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia from politics forcefully?"

Dr Kamal Hossain said democracy will of course remain unharmed without Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia. "Country's 14 crore people are owners of the democracy and power. Why we will have to wait for Hasina and Khaleda. Is there no qualified person in Bangladesh without them?"

Replying to a question on joint movement by AL and BNP, Hannan Shah said the country's political parties should start inter-party dialogue immediately to find out ways to get rid of the present "political crisis".

"In the past, we defeated autocrat Ershad through joint movement. So if needed we can launch a joint movement to save the country's democracy," Hannan Shah said.

Mahmudur Rahman Manna said right now, there is no possibility from AL side to launch a joint movement with BNP on any issue.

Responding another question from the moderator, whether AL and BNP want to start a joint movement to free Hasina and Khaleda in the name of democracy, Hannan Shah said, "Why we will go for movement for release of Hasina and Khaleda as now they are undergoing trial. But we can move jointly for democracy."

Manna said AL has no desire to

go for a movement for freeing Khaleda Zia. "We can work for Sheikh Hasina's release as she is our leader."

Replying to audiences whether the caretaker government would be able to hold a free and fair election by 2008 as per the commitment of the chief adviser and the roadmap of the Election Commission, the speakers hoped that the caretaker government will be able to keep its words as people want an elected government in power.

Dr Kamal Hossain said accident may take place in the way of holding the election within the timeframe. "But we are hopeful about the government's success. Now we will have to work unitedly so that no accident can foil the roadmap."

"We have accepted the roadmap and the timeframe for holding the election. Now it's the government's duty to keep its words," Hannan Shah said.

Discussion also took place on the recent demonstrations following the printing of a cartoon in the daily Prothom Alo's weekly supplement "Aalpin".

Replying to a question from the audience that why a group of people are still agitating for closure of daily Prothom Alo even after its editor apologised, Mahmudur Rahman Manna said, "People who don't want to see Bangladesh as a progressive country are doing these."

Prof Mahbub Ullah said a vested group is active to brand Bangladesh as a fanatic country in the world.

Govt firm on ending

FROM PAGE 1
Court and the Appellate Division.

The chief adviser dispelled the notion that the political parties in Bangladesh will disappear in the wake of the arrests and convictions of senior leaders. He said new leaders will take the responsibilities of their parties and the reformed parties and the reformed administration will yield positive results and help establish good governance.

Asked why Khaleda and Hasina have been kept in sub-jails, Fakhruddin said the sub-jails have been set up in accordance with the jail code as it happened in the past too to accommodate the prisoners.

In reply to a question about the detention of people at an unknown place by military intelligence, the head of the caretaker government said the arrests were made in accordance with the law and the accused were produced before the court.

He said after the arrests both Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia were produced before the court and then sent to jail.

Asked about his own income tax, the chief adviser told a questioner that he has submitted his income tax return.

Director of Southern Asia Institute Mrs Vipya J. Behejia moderated the session.

Earlier in his written statement, the chief adviser said democracy is a necessary but not sufficient condition for good governance. Citing examples, he said democratically elected governments in Bangladesh in the past 15 years failed to promote good governance and protect citizens' rights.

"We must accept that while democracy may take various forms and manifestations, its ultimate objective is always the same - the rule of law by the will of the people."

Referring to Westminster type parliamentary democracy practised in Bangladesh, he said, "Winner-takes-all" system of politics implies that winning an election brings nearly absolute power in a given district.

He said the caretaker government is doing its best to purge the malady of corruption in order that the promise of democracy can be fulfilled and elected governments in the future will act for the public good instead of pursuing their own interests.

Rejecting the argument that "corruption increases efficiency", Fakhruddin, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, said such argument do not account for the negative externalities of corruption or its wider impact on productivity.

The chief adviser whose government launched a war on corruption said, "Our government is thus working hard to develop zero tolerance against abuse of power and corruption."

In his exhaustive speech, the chief adviser touched on Bangladesh's success in alleviating poverty through micro-financing, reaching targets of MDGs, labour migration, increases in remittance and over all economic growth.

He said labour migration stimulates development in the countries of origin, but it also benefits the recipient countries by meeting labour shortages in critical areas.

By some estimates, he said, the origin countries of temporary labour migration would enjoy a return of up to \$ 200 billion if the EU, Canada, Japan and the US allowed migrants to make up just 4 percent of their labour forces.

The chief adviser said Bangladesh government believes

that both source and recipient countries should work to promote temporary labour migration and to protect the interests of migrant workers.

He said temporary labour migration and remittances will continue to play an important role in poverty reduction in the foreseeable future.

Referring to the plight of migrant workers in destination countries, the chief adviser said migrant workers often face prejudice, discrimination and marginalisation. "The lack of a fuller understanding as to how migration can benefit all often breeds these negative reactions. The challenge is to dispel such negativity."

He said while Bangladesh has made a commendable progress, the country still faces formidable challenges.

He said agricultural production is showing signs of diminishing marginal returns. Given the finite amount of land and a growing population, land use is approaching an upper limit. This severely limits the ability of many poor people to earn a livelihood from farming. "New investments and innovations in agriculture to boost productivity will remain a key to maintaining our food security," he noted.

Referring to the garment sector that employs more than two million women, he said the future of this important sector will depend heavily on its ability to compete with other garment producing countries. It will also depend on the outcome of the Doha Development Round, in the areas of special and differential treatment.

Major Samsuzzoha of Rab Headquarters, Dhaka, who was present during the drive, said that this was the largest haul of VoIP equipment in the port city so far.

In the name of providing nationwide internet service, Dominox Technology had been running the illegal business and thus evading huge amount of tax per day, he added.

The seized items were being removed from the building in the afternoon yesterday.

The joint team raided other offices of KDS Group yesterday to identify any link with the illegal business, sources said.

None could be arrested during the raid. However, the Rab officials were interrogating several engineers who had been found working at Dominox Technology during the raid.

The joint team also seized an illegal VSat from ISPos, an ISP, at Badamtal in Sheikh Mujib Road area on Thursday.

Asia Tel was involved in the illegal VoIP business run by ISPos, Rab sources claimed. Major Samsuzzoha said that they are investigating about a deal between Asia Tel and ISPos regarding the VoIP business in Chittagong.

Besides, the team arrested Mahbulul Inam, manager of BBTS, an ISP, during a raid at the Ishpani building at Lalkhan Bazar on Thursday on charge of providing bandwidths to different people for illegal business. BBTS is a concern of Ishpani Group.

A case was also filed with Bandar Police Station in this connection.

The team also found that Innovate Online, an ISP firm, had been running the illegal VoIP business with their equipment on the rooftop of Hotel Saint Martin in Agrabad.

Mirza Aziz

FROM PAGE 1
He informed that the government has formally requested the World Bank for their help while Bangladesh Bank has requested the central bank of Malaysia in this regard.

But, he said our claim must have to have specific evidence that our money had been smuggled out to other countries.

Turning to the conference, the adviser said the main focus of the moot was on market access of products from LDCs. But the conference stressed the need for improving export capacity of the LDCs.

The LDCs have reached a consensus that the developed and developing countries should consider "Aid for Trade" as an additional support to the poor nations. They decided to make a formal recommendation in this regard to the WTO.

The adviser said the least developed countries urged the conference that the developed and developing countries should not provide aid for trade in a fashion which would not force LDCs to compromise their market access facilities.

They also called upon the developed countries not to step back from the Doha Round of WTO.

Asked about the World Bank's flood support of \$ 75 million, the advisers said: "It's not too much."

He said he had meeting with the ADB President Haruhiko Kuroda and sought support for post-flood rehabilitation. He assured the support but did not make any specific pledge, said the finance adviser.

Balance of power

FROM PAGE 1
by Neeli Goshelona Kendra Trustee Sk Tawfique M Haque, Prof Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman of Department of Public Administration at DU, Jatiya Press Club President Shawkat Mahmud, Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman, former director general of the now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption Shahidul Alam and former secretary AHM Nurul Islam.

For eliminating concentration of power in one hand and establish balance of power, Jamali advocated for ensuring accountability of every person whoever they are, social responsibility, and effectiveness of anti-corruption bodies.

On the ongoing anti-corruption drive, he said if the people want, the drive will continue even after the state of emergency is withdrawn.

Prof Emajuddin Ahmed suggested that the research organisations might pick 10-20 corrupt persons and conduct research on why and how they got involved with corruption. He said he hopes that the path of corruption could be traced then.

Prof Salahuddin said, "We have been receptive to corrupt practices since the last 20 years." Reducing the level of corruption requires change in our socio-cultural mindset, he observed.

Shahidul Alam said bureaucrats, politicians and businessmen are responsible for spreading the corrupt practices throughout the society and accountability of this group of people should be ensured to combat corruption.

VoIP equipment

FROM PAGE 1
secret room of Dominox Technology, also a sister concern of the KDS Group, located on the second floor of a four-storey building in the factory compound.

During the six-hour-long drive, the team seized eight quantum gateways, 250 mobile SIMs (subscriber identity module) and many channel banks with the capacity of two to eight SIM insertion.

They also found a VSat with modem and accessories used in generating overseas calls from the rooftop of the building.

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Electoral reform talks

FROM PAGE 1
behalf of the two parties to coordinate further dialogues between them on the matter. At the meeting AL placed a set of reform proposals to WP, which will also give AL its proposals, sources said.

At the meeting Mahmudur Rahman Manna said it would not be right for them to decide on AL's participation in the next election yet. Rather he told the meeting that AL will sit in the dialogue with the EC and tell the commission that AL is an election oriented political party which believes in democracy.

Although AL did not take any firm decision on going to the dialogue with the EC till yesterday, the party wants to sit with all the components of 14-party coalition and other like-minded political parties in a bid to hammer out a common position for sitting with the EC for the dialogues.

The initiative was launched yesterday with the meeting between AL and WP. AL will meet Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) on October 1 and Sammyabadi Dal on October 3.

Similar meetings will also be held with Ganotantri Party, National Awami Party (NAP-Muzaffer), and other components of the coalition, the dates of which are yet to be fixed.

AL leaders Zillur Rahman, Tofail Ahmed, Mukul Bose, Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed, Akhtaruzzaman, Advocate Rahmat Ali, Abdul Latif Siddiqui, Dr Abdur Razzak, Dr Dipu Moni, Dr Mostafa

UN envoy

FROM PAGE 16
The regime deployed large numbers of soldiers near the Sule Pagoda downtown on Saturday, where up to 100,000 protesters led by Buddhist monks took to the streets earlier in the week, the witnesses told AFP.

The two Yangon-based army divisions which have spearheaded the crackdown have now been joined by 66 Division from Pago, which lies northeast of the city.

As well as the tight security and vicious beatings that have deterred protesters, buses and taxis had abandoned the streets, making it difficult for people to travel to the city centre.

Eyewitness accounts have also related how ordinary people caught up in the onslaught of the military crackdown have been bashed, kicked and shot at with rubber bullets.

Meanwhile, a UN special envoy arrived in Myanmar Saturday for talks with the ruling junta, which has locked down the nation's biggest city in a violent campaign to choke off mass demonstrations.

The United States has called on Myanmar's generals to also allow Ibrahim Gambari to meet with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, the democracy icon who is being held under house arrest.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon dispatched the Nigerian-born Gambari to broker negotiations between the military and its pro-democracy opponents, who have mounted two weeks of mass nationwide rallies.

Gambari said before arriving in Myanmar that he was looking forward to "a very fruitful visit" and that he expected to "meet all the people that I need to meet."

After arriving in Yangon he flew straight to the new capital of Naypyidaw where he is expected to meet with regime leader Senior General Than Shwe.

Gambari has visited Myanmar twice before, and on one occasion was allowed to see Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been under house arrest for most of the past 18 years.

FROM PAGE 16
the bus," Hasas said. "Whenever they see a stranger's face, they should prevent them from getting close."

The theatre, a restaurant and a pharmacy were among several shops that were badly damaged. A woman who lives nearby was woken up by the explosion, which shattered her bedroom window, cutting her feet. The blast's force sprayed a chunk of scalp onto a nearby rooftop.

Sulahidin, an army officer at the scene who goes by one name, said about 50 people were on the bus. Abdul Karim, a witness, said several people in the back of the vehicle survived.

Taliban attacks typically target international and Afghan military and police, though civilians are often killed or wounded as well. The Taliban have launched more than 100 suicide attacks this year, a record pace.

More than 4,500 people have been killed in insurgency-related violence this year, according to an Associated Press count based on figures from Western and Afghan officials.

Meanwhile, the International Committee of the Red Cross has established contact with the armed group that kidnapped four of its workers but no progress has been made, officials said Friday.

The four ICRC employees a national from Myanmar, one from Macedonia and two from Afghanistan were seized Wednesday in the central province of Ghazni while trying to secure the release of a German captive.

"We have established contact with all parties concerned with the aim of resolving this situation as quickly as possible," said Graziella Leite, an ICRC spokeswoman in Afghanistan.

30 killed

FROM PAGE 16
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Jalal Mohiuddin, and Habibur Rahman Siraj attended the meeting among others.

While from Workers Party, Rashed Khan Menon, Bimal Biswas, Haider Akbar Khan Rano, Anisur Rahman Mallik, and Qamrul Anwar were present.

TOFAIL WANTS TO QUIT
At the beginning of the meeting, Tofail, who is the coordinator of 14-party coalition, wished to give up the post as his name had appeared on the last list of corruption suspects.

But the insistence of the leaders of both the parties, including Zillur and Menon, convinced Tofail to stay on.

"I wanted to give up the responsibilities of the coordinator of 14-party coalition on moral grounds," Tofail told the reporters.

The veteran AL leader said he must clear himself from the allegations before taking up the responsibilities.

NEWS BRIEFING
Briefing newsmen, Zillur said his party will hold discussions with all like-minded parties regarding the dialogues with the EC.

Regarding inclusion of Tofail's name on the new list of corruption suspects, Zillur said it does not mean that he is corrupt or charged.

Termining Tofail a dedicated and courageous leader, Zillur hoped that no proof of corruption will be found and no case will be filed against him.

Tofail said although there are some similarities between their 31-point reform proposal and the EC's draft proposal, there are a few differences on important issues.

"The main goal of the dialogue with the Election Commission will be to resolve those differences," he said.

Six ex-secs

FROM PAGE 16
communications secretary Nazrul Islam, former finance secretary Dr Zakir Hossain Khan, deputy secretary of the communications ministry ATKM Ismail and former additional secretary of the Prime Minister's Office Nurul Islam.

On September 2, ACC Deputy Director Golam Shahriar Chowdhury filed the case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, her younger son Arafat Rahman Koko and 11 others for alleged irregularities in awarding the container-handling contract to a particular company.

Musharraf

FROM PAGE 16
were at the Election Commission during the scrutiny. Television footage showed some of them watching the violence from the lobby of the building.

Protesters at one point pulled Deputy Information Minister Tariq Azeem from a car as he tried to leave the commission and hit him several times, before police stepped in and whisked him away.

At least two lawyers and a journalist were seen with blood coming from head wounds, one of them apparently after being hit by a stone thrown by the police. Several ambulances rushed to the scene with sirens blaring.

Police later clashed with a group of around 100 journalists.

Altiz Ahsan, the main lawyer for Pakistan's Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry during Chaudhry's battle against Musharraf's attempts to sack him earlier this year, said he was among those beaten.

"The brutality of General Musharraf is being seen worldwide. Only the blind governments of the United States and Britain cannot see it," Ahsan told AFP.

"I was targeted, the police were waiting for an opportunity. I tried to crouch down for safety but they started beating us viciously with batons," added Ahsan, who was a minister under Benazir Bhutto in the 1990s.

Police said the crackdown was justified.

"There is a ban on gatherings of five or more people in the capital territory and we are not going to allow anyone flout this law," a senior Islamabad police official told AFP.

Police fired teargas at another 500 lawyers who rallied in the eastern city of Lahore to protest the beatings of their colleagues in Islamabad. Eight were arrested, officials said.

Musharraf filed his nomination papers for the elections on Thursday and is almost certain to win, given that the election involves the national and provincial parliaments, in which his allies hold a majority.

Musharraf, a key US ally, has been on a collision course with lawyers and the judiciary since his botched bid to oust Chaudhry as chief justice in March, a move that sparked mass rallies across the country.

But the Supreme Court on Friday dismissed opposition petitions challenging Musharraf's right to seek another five-year term in power while he still heads the army.

In another development brother of ousted Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif said in a television interview that he will make another attempt to return to Pakistan from exile around October 18, even if the risks expulsion again.

Shahbaz Sharif, president of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), told Al-Jazeera television's English-language service on Friday that his brother is "going to return very soon after the month of Ramadan."

The Muslim fasting month began in mid-September.