

Govt, AL fail

FROM PAGE 1

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed and a few advisers represented the government side.

Issues raised by the AL at the dialogue include holding of the parliamentary election first and announcement of its date, withdrawal of all "false" and "repressive" cases against political leaders, release of detained leaders, taking effective steps to stop price spiral, trial of war criminals, withdrawal of the ban on trade union, and implementation of the Women Development Policy 1998.

Zillur Rahman asked the caretaker government to immediately withdraw all "false" cases against party chief Sheikh Hasina so that she can participate in the parliamentary polls.

The ultimate success of the dialogue and holding of a neutral and acceptable election are not possible without her participation," he told the dialogue.

"There is no logic behind continuing the state of emergency as there is no turmoil in the country now," he said, adding that the atmosphere for the election cannot be created amid fear and panic.

He said the country is in a deep crisis now with soaring prices of essentials, economic recession, crushing poverty, dipping investment, energy crisis and lack of employment making people's life wretched.

The AL leader alleged that the government has failed to prepare the ground for holding the parliamentary election, which is their constitutional mandate, and become "more enthusiastic" about holding the local government polls.

He also alleged that the roadmap announced by the Election Commission was prepared without any discussion with the political parties. "At our meetings with the Election Commission and the government prior to the dialogue we spoke many times for holding the parliamentary polls first. The move to hold elections to the local bodies first has caused confusion among the citizens," he said.

Zillur urged the government to hold parliamentary polls before December.

Thanking the caretaker government for inviting them to dialogue, Ashraf said it was the AL that gave the proposal for holding a national dialogue.

"I believe that any problem can be solved through discussion. It's also possible to hold a free, fair and acceptable election through dialogue," the AL leader said.

He said AL participated in the dialogue to facilitate handing over power to an elected government through a credible election.

"We have discussed the issue of permanent release of Hasina and other detained party leaders, including party General Secretary Abdul Jalil. We also discussed the withdrawal of false cases, including those filed during the tenure of the BNP-led coalition government," he added.

Adviser Hossain Zillur, however, said they could not make any specific statement on the matter due to legal complications.

AL demanded that its acting party leader Mohammad Nasim must be sent abroad for treatment immediately.

"We also discussed other important issues including the price spiral of commodities and crises of gas, power and water," Ashraf said, adding that they were not against elections to upazila or other local government bodies.

"The timing of the polls is a problem. But we asked the advisers

Mashhud

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suspects on health and humanitarian grounds, the ACC chairman said the commission has no disagreement with the government in this regard if law and rules are followed.

He also said there is no reason to believe that no decision or ACC has been taken to make the ACC activities questionable.

The ACC chairman said he is sure that no quarter will try to consider the ACC as opponent to the government and if this is done the greater interest will be harmed.

Responding to a query about arrests of individuals in connection with graft cases, Mashhud said the arrests are not a big deal for the ACC. "When there'll be no emergency rule, one can't be arrested until the submission of charge sheet."

To another query, he said he believes that there would be no influence on courts if the government is changed.

Asked whether the commission will launch a major anti-corruption drive if necessary because the home adviser said there will no major anti-graft campaign, Mashhud replied, "The ACC would do it with pleasure."

About the recent Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) report that corruption has increased in many sectors, Mashhud said the commission does not regard the report as a criticism of the ACC. "It's rather the reflection of practicality."

He said the TIB report will be helpful in the future activities of the commission. "We want to work as per the recommendations of the report. We won't reject the report as done in the past."

to hold the parliamentary election first. We shall discuss the matter with the government in the next phase of dialogue," he said.

Terming the election atmosphere the most important matter, he said they had told the government many times that no election can be free, fair and acceptable under the state of emergency.

"We asked them to lift the emergency before the polls. There is no instance of holding an election under the state of emergency in a democratic country," Ashraf said.

AL also asked the government to form a neutral commission to identify and try the war criminals and bar them from contesting elections.

The AL leaders said they asked the government to withdraw its recent decision of hiking the prices of petroleum products. They also urged the government to reduce the prices of oil, power and gas.

Zillur said both the sides attended the dialogue with an open mind and the issues of holding polls and ensuring proper election atmosphere figured prominently at the dialogue.

Commenting on lifting of the state of emergency completely, he said they are considering relaxation of a few more provisions of the EPR.

"We have already relaxed the EPR ahead of the polls to the city corporations and municipalities," he said.

He said he asked the AL leaders to inform them about the provisions AL wants to have lifted before the polls.

"We shall be able to decide together on lifting of the state of emergency some time later," he said.

Zillur said the government would organise a separate dialogue with the political community on different issues including the price hike.

"We shall let you know once we are prepared for that," he added. Both the sides rejected the allegations of reaching an "under-hand deal" ahead of the elections to the local government bodies.

When asked whether AL would participate in the polls if the state of emergency is not lifted, Ashraf said it was a "hypothetical question".

Replying to a query on BNP's boycott of dialogue, Zillur said BNP is yet to inform them about its decision. "I did not hear that they refused to attend the dialogue."

The AL earlier threatened to boycott the talks if the government did not release Hasina, who was finally freed for eight weeks on June 11.

The AL president later directed her party leaders to take part in the formal dialogue with the government.

The military-backed government has so far held dialogue with smaller political parties, business community and union parishad chairmen. Regional conferences were also held in Khagrachhari and Chittagong.

AL leaders Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury and Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser attended the dialogue and the press briefing.

Advisers Hasan Arif, Anwarul Iqbal and Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury were present at the briefing.

Correction

FROM PAGE 16

company Intertek Testing Service (ITS) played no role in the CRF certification. It's the Bureau Veritas who is solely responsible for the misdeed. So, we take no time in seeking apology to our revered readers as well as to the ITS for the mistakes.

Meanwhile, in a rejoinder yesterday, ITS also stated that it has no record of issuing CRFs (clean report findings) at USD 262 per tonne for those two firms during the period as covered in the news. Further, we have received no complaint and fine for any incorrect valuation from the customs on this matter of sugar pricing.

He added that there might be some questions over the voter list, but those can be addressed gradually.

Shujan President Professor Muzafar Ahmad observed that the August 4 elections to four city corporations and nine municipalities will be a test case for the commission.

He said, "People are now more conscious and hopefully they will elect the correct persons to represent them."

He added that there might be some questions over the voter list, but those can be addressed gradually.

Further, we have received no complaint and fine for any incorrect valuation from the customs on this matter of sugar pricing.

Shujan Secretary Dr Badul Alam Majumder said measures should be taken to disseminate information about the candidates so that people can take the right decisions.

Among others, former adviser to caretaker government ASM Shahjahan, former lawmaker Nurul Islam Nahid, North South University Assistant Professor Moshir Rahman and Prothom Alo Joint Editor Abdul Quayum spoke at the roundtable.

Earlier, the CEC inaugurated a website (votebd.org) prepared by Shujan on corruption of politicians, businessmen, government officials and others.

During yesterday's meeting a representative of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industries suggested that power tariff be hiked by 10 percent. Consumers Association of Bangladesh representatives opposed the suggestion.

Those interested to participate in the public hearing on July 20 should register their names with the Berc by July 15.

Biman's DC-10

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Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) and Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd formed two separate probe committees in this regard.

Biman sources said the 'anti-skid' system of the aircraft had not been working properly for the last few days.

Besides, the brake of the aircraft was not fully functional.

"Some of the pilots who operated the aircraft filed complaint with the authorities concerned in this regard," Captain Helal, president of Bangladesh Airlines Pilots' Association, told The Daily Star last night.

Aviation experts said such incidents do not happen too often.

Imran Asif, an aviation expert, told The Daily Star that such incidents might occur due to technical problems in the aircraft, wet runway or jammed wheel.

Earlier on May 4, a Biman Airbus went onto the grassland beside the tarmac at ZIA after the pilot reportedly lost control of the aircraft when it was entering the taxiway from runway. The 153 passengers and crew onboard flight BG-118, however, escaped injuries.

"After landing at ZIA at 11:15am yesterday, the pilot applied hard-brakes as the anti-skid mode was not working due to wet runway," a Biman high official told The Daily Star.

As a result of hard-brakes, heat was generated and six of the 12 wheels of the aircraft burst and were damaged completely, the official added.

"When the pilot realised that one side of the aircraft was leaning towards ground, he sought help from control tower, which immediately informed the engineering department and firefighters," an official told The Daily Star.

"All wheels were removed and the aircraft was taken to hangar with the help of tow trucks."

He also said besides those six wheels, four others were damaged partially.

"The passengers were unhurt and there was no damage to other parts of the aircraft," a Biman official said.

"Aircraft landing and takeoff resumed as the aircraft was taken to the hangar at 1:50pm," the official added.

Biman formed a probe committee headed by its Director (customer service) M Aminul Huq, while CAAB formed a four-member committee headed by Wing Commander (flight safety) Kamrul Hasan.

High officials of Biman and CAAB visited the spot.

Upazila polls

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will have to start preparing for the parliamentary election."

The number of the upazilas going to polls however has yet to be finalised. It might be between 250 and 300, depending on completion of the voter lists.

The EC will soon make a list of the upazilas that will have election in the first phase, continued the polls chief.

"We shall hold the local elections as per the electoral roadmap. We are not imposing anything. There was no controversy when we declared the roadmap."

He questioned why local government elections under the present caretaker government would be illegal, if the national election is not.

Huda said he toured six divisions for hearings on delimitation of the constituencies and everywhere people spoke in favour of local government polls. Even former lawmakers were among them.

Referring to some political parties' observation that redrawing the constituency boundaries was part of a conspiracy to hamper the national polls, he said, "We don't know what's there for conspiracy. We are not running in the elections. We are only doing the job for the betterment of the country."

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He added that there might be some questions over the voter list, but those can be addressed gradually.

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CA for Saarc pressure

FROM PAGE 1

ministerial meeting on climate change at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, the head of the caretaker government said Saarc can occupy a high moral ground on this issue and put pressure on the developed countries and must remind them individually and collectively that procrastination is not an option.

The CA urged the Saarc ministerial meeting to recommend specific measures taking into account the five principles agreed upon by all countries of the regional forum.

These are deeper cuts to greenhouse gas emission by developed countries with effective timeframe for the forthcoming second commitment period, provision of adequate additional resources by developed countries to tackle climate change adaptation needs in addition to regular Overseas Development Assistance arrangements, compensation for climate victims and development of insurance mechanism as a tool of risk reduction, facilitating effective access to and funding assistance for the transfer of environment-friendly technologies to the developing countries, as well as for adaptation and mitigation and sharing the environmental burden equitably.

"To demonstrate the world that together they can tackle the threats of climate change through a cooperative and collaborative arrangement in South Asia and let Saarc be a model of cooperation for combating climate change," he told the meeting.

Eight boys and girls on behalf of Saarc member countries appealed to the Saarc leaders at the inaugural session for taking steps to make greenery pollution-free safe world.

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Saarc Secretary General Shree Kant Sharma and Secretary to Environment Ministry AHM Rezaul Karim also spoke at the function.

Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser for Environment and Forest Ministry Raju Debashish Roy chaired the inaugural session.

Environment ministers from eight Saarc member countries -- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, the Maldives and Sri Lanka -- and other delegates are participating in the meeting.

Advisers, special assistants to the chief adviser, environment experts, diplomats, representatives from international organisations and development partners, environment personalities, government officials and distinguished personalities were present at the function.

"This Saarc ministerial meeting," the CA said, "takes place at a critical juncture when we're confronted with new and undeniable scientific evidence of climate change and how it threatens our very existence."

The South Asian region is particularly vulnerable. This meeting should strive to uphold our basic right to climate-resilient development in the Saarc region."

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, the CA said, Bangladesh could lose as much as one-third of its landmass due to the rise in sea level and the Maldives could disappear entirely. The floodplains of India and Pakistan could face permanent inundation, he added.

"Millions of our citizens could be permanently displaced. These are not scientific conjectures. They're cautious predictions -- often the best case scenarios -- based on rigorous data analysis and simulations," he said.

Fakhruddin said it is not the question of 'if', rather the fear is when and how soon the climatic meltdown might hit us with full fury. "There is, however, a silver lining in this doom and gloom. The world is increasingly united to address the challenges of global warming and climate change," he told the inaugural session.

He said the adverse effects of global warming would derail all our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. "It'll unleash the tragedy in human history, far graver than the 'Black Death' or the atrocities of World War II. We cannot, and must not, sit idle and let this happen to us," Fakhruddin asserted.

Referring to Bangladesh's good performance in adaptation, he said

Dulu, Salim sued

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Judge Azizul Haque took it into cognisance after the hearing and directed the jail authorities to produce Dulu before the court on July 8.

In his complaint, Asad mentioned that Dulu evaded a total of Tk 10,37,522 in income tax.

Dulu gave false information about his real income and expenditure to the income tax department, the complainant added.

Dulu surrendered before the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge's Court on February 20 last year, seeking safe custody after six cases were filed against him the same year.

He had been earlier convicted of patronising outlawed militant outfit Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and other criminal activities.

SALIM CASE
NBR Assistant Tax Commissioner Moniruzzaman filed the case against Salim, also the chairman of private TV channel Channel 1, with the Dhaka Senior Special Judge's Court for committing the offence.

NBR said Salim evaded tax upon his income of Tk 375,010,937 from 1993 to 2006.

the country is actively seeking to establish an international adaptation centre in Dhaka to share its knowledge and the best practices and expressed the confidence that Saarc members will extend their full support to the country's endeavour in this regard. "On the adaptation front, we can do much on our own."

He said adaptation is, in fact, the codename for resilience. Many developing countries are already pursuing effective adaptation strategies to cope with climate change. Bangladesh is one such example. "We've made a significant progress in achieving climate-resilience with various adaptation measures. Our experience could serve as a model for many others facing similar challenges."

But adaptation is often a costly proposition, he said adding that the Saarc countries should speak in one voice to ensure that the developed countries commit new and additional resources to support our adaptation efforts. "We should also remain vigilant against any attempt to make adaptation support contingent upon our commitment in mitigation."

The CA said the industrialised economies must provide adaptation funds and facilitate technology transfers without any conditionality, and hoped that the current meeting would make headway in implementing the recommendations that the Saarc leaders made at the New Delhi summit last year.

Fakhruddin said the IPCC also forecasts that global warming would result in sea-level rise, with resultant increase in coastal flooding and salinity. "In 2007, two successive floods ravaged Bangladesh as well as parts of India. The rise in frequency and intensity of cyclones are ominous testimonies of climatic shifts in our region."

Asia Cup cricket

FROM PAGE 16

Dhoni notched five boundaries and a six while Raina managed three boundaries. But with 75 needed, India suffered the first of two setbacks when Raina was run out.

Two overs later, off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran produced a beauty to bowl Dhoni with 56 still needed for victory but Yuvraj and Rohit saved India through.

Sri Lanka, who rested spearhead Chaminda Vaas and fast rising spinner Ajantha Mendis as they had already qualified for the final, failed to stop Indian openers Virender Sehwag (42) and Gambhir who smashed 71-ball 92 for the opening wicket.

Schwag fell in the 12th over, missing a drive off Kulasekera, while Gambhir was trapped leg-before by Muralidaran.

Earlier Sri Lanka were lifted by three half-centuries from Chamara Kapugedera, Mahela Jayawardene (50) and Chamara Silva (50).

The 24-year-old Kapugedera added 78 for the third wicket with skipper Jayawardene (50) and another 68 with Silva (50) to bolster the Sri Lankan innings after they won the toss and decided to bat.

Kapugedera and Jayawardene steadied the innings through their 89-ball partnership after Sri Lanka lost opener Kumar Sangakkara (seven) and Sanath Jayasuriya (43) with the score reading 71.

The Sri Lankan skipper hit four boundaries while Kapugedera hit seven boundaries and a six during his 78-ball knock.

Silva then took over, hitting two boundaries and a six off 56 balls before he was run out with five overs to go.

Jayasuriya batted in the same vein as he did during his 130 against Bangladesh in the Super League match on Saturday, driving and cutting with power.

He hit eight boundaries during his 37-ball knock before he was caught behind off Sharma who finished 2-55.

BRIEF SCORES
SRI LANKA: 308 for 8 in 50 overs (Kapugedera 75, Jayawardene 50, Silva 50, Jayasuriya 43, Ishant 2-55)

INDIA: 310 for 4 in 46.5 overs (Gambhir 68, Dhoni 67, Raina 54, Sehwag 42, Muralidaran 2-44)

Result: India won by six wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

Toss: Sri Lanka.

Umpires: Simon Taufel and Brian Jerling.

100-day job

FROM PAGE 16

period--from mid-October to mid-January and from mid-March to mid-May.

People receiving benefits from other safety-net programmes like vulnerable group feeding (VGF), vulnerable group development, gratuitous relief and test relief will not be eligible for the programme.

"It will be ensured that one does not get benefits from different sources," Mirza Aziz said.

According to the policy, the government will invite applications from the unemployed rural poor.

Upazila-level committees comprising upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), union parishad representatives and government officials will decide who will get the jobs.

"Jobs for 20 days a month will be created for each poor person, thus providing the poor with 100 days' job over five months," Food Secretary Molla Waheduzzaman told The Daily Star.

If the government fails to ensure jobs to an applicant within 15 days of receiving application, it will pay them unemployment allowance--one-third of the daily wage for the first 30 days and half of it for the remaining days, said sources.

Those who will not appear for the job they are registered for will not get the unemployment allowance.

Fourteen lakh people will be picked from the 44 districts while six lakh people will be picked from upazilas, unions or villages in the rest 20 districts, the finance advisers said.

A steering committee led by the food and disaster management secretary will monitor the programme, the allocation for which was announced in the budget for fiscal year 2008-09.

According to government sources, Tk 1,246 crore retrieved through the anti-corruption drive would be spent on the project.

WB chief

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mean malnutrition, reduced resistance to disease and too often death."

"Record oil prices and high and rising food costs threaten a growing number of countries with rising poverty and social instability. Already we have seen food riots in over 30 countries, and unrest over high fuel prices is spreading. The urban poor are especially affected by the double hit of food and fuel," he warned.

In his letter, Zoellick urged the G-8 to consider two new measures to "improve the world's ability to cope with an on-going food crisis."

The first was UN assessment on guaranteeing a portion of funding for the World Food Programme. The second was to study the merits of an internationally coordinated "virtual" humanitarian strategic reserve system for food emergencies.

The international community is facing an unprecedented test in this new era of globalisation. The question is whether we can act swiftly to help those most in need," he said.

Pay Commission

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Asked about a date of formation of the pay commission, Mirza Azizul said, "Maybe within a month or so. I can't give a specific date."

"The government is now thinking how many members will be there in the commission and who will be there," he said, adding: "We'll have to draft the terms of reference."

Asked when the commission will submit its report, Mirza Aziz said they were yet to decide it.

The first pay commission was formed in 1972. Thereafter, four other pay commissions were formed in 1976, 1984, 1989 and 1996.

MiG-29 case

FROM PAGE 16

the day before.

"The case does not stand since the High Court ruling, following a writ petition, has declared valid both the agreements relating to the purchase of MiG-29 and the Bangladesh-Russia Defence Technical Co-operation," he said.

According to the HC judgment, both the agreements were made in accordance with the law, the defence