

Emergency no problem for next polls

Says Hafiz

UNB, Dhaka

Reformist BNP leader Maj (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed yesterday said he sees no problem with the next elections being held under the state of emergency.

The state of emergency could be a problem for the candidates who want to use black money and muscle power in elections. I think there would be no problem if the state of emergency remains in place during the elections, he told reporters at his Banani residence.

The statement from Hafiz, a former BNP lawmaker, came at a time when major political parties, including BNP, have renewed the demand for the withdrawal of emergency in the run-up to the next elections.

Hafiz referred to the recent statement of the chief election

commissioner that they did not get clean and competent candidates as expected in the August 4 elections. "Black money had an influence on this election. But, I hope, it won't have any influence on the next elections," he said.

He echoed similar views expressed by reformist BNP leader Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan recently that their party has fallen behind because it avoided taking part in the August 4 elections to four city corporations and nine municipalities.

I think the BNP has fallen behind for not taking part in this election. I personally think the party should contest all elections, Hafiz said.

The BNP leader also said he wants the national elections to be held first, as all major political parties have been demanding so.

Release Khaleda, send Tarique abroad for treatment: JCD

DU CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of BNP, staged a demonstration on Dhaka University (DU) campus yesterday demanding unconditional release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

They also demanded that the government send Tarique Rahman abroad for better treatment.

JCD leaders and activists brought out a protest procession from Madhu's Canteen at around 12:00 noon that paraded different streets on the campus and held a rally at the footstep of Aparajeyo Bangla.

Leaders at the rally alleged that despite their repeated

demands for the release of Khaleda and Tarique, the government is yet to take any specific step to this end, rather it is hatching conspiracy against BNP and Khaleda.

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JCD General Secretary Saiful Bari Babu, DU unit President Hasan Mamun and General Secretary Saiful Islam Feroz also took part at the programme.

Disaster Management Act Give priority to earthquake issue: Adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food and Disaster Management Adviser Dr AMM Shawkat Ali yesterday stressed the need to give priority to the earthquake issue while formulating the Disaster Management Act-2008.

An earthquake is now frequently jolting the country, this issue should be considered with priority during the formulation of the act, the adviser said at a national workshop on 'Disaster Management Act-2008' at Biam auditorium in the city.

He also said that the draft law has too many provisions, which should be curtailed.

The Disaster Management Bureau (DMB) in association with UNDP organised the workshop.

Director General of Disaster Management Bureau KH Masud Siddiqui said a national disaster volunteer force would be formed under the act who would help the victims during anydisasters.

Joint Secretary of Food and Disaster Management Ministry Md Shafiqul Islam and Assistant Country Representative of UNDP Md Tariqul Islam also spoke.

Mobile courts fine food outlets Tk 2.35 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five mobile courts, jointly operated by Dhaka City Corporation and Bangladesh Standard Testing Institute (BSTI), yesterday in several drives in business establishments realised Tk 2.35 lakh as fine for adulteration in food and cheating in weight.

The mobile courts conducted the drives at various shops, hotels, restaurants and bakeries at Gulshan, Khilkhet, Cantonment area, Kamrangirchar, Jatrabari, Kotwali, Mirpur, Kafrul and Tejgaon in the city.

Senior military and civil officials, and students of MIST attended the seminar.

Shah Alam's Tk 498cr

FROM PAGE 1
agency is authorised to dig into the wealth corrupt-suspects have whitened so far.

Almost every corrupt-suspect accused by ACC has been benefits under the sections and SROs and we're unable to take action against them. The government offered them a chance and they utilised it, says ACC Public Prosecutor Mir Ahmed Ali Salam.

You'll find varied interpretations of the laws passed with the spirit to encourage investment in business and create employment opportunities.

The governments offered the opportunity and people just seized it, comments another ACC Public Prosecutor advocate Syed Shamim Ahsan.

We can't do anything when different governments gave them opportunities to whiten black money and they did it legally, ACC Director Col Hanif Iqbal told The Daily Star.

We're following the existing laws. We can't bypass the law when it restricts us to go into some matters, Hanif said, adding they don't have any plan to go to the higher court to get direction in this regard.

Lawyers however underline the necessity of directives or interpretations by the apex court to deal with the issue of corrupt-suspects facing investigation.

Another problem in dealing with cases relating to NBR is that it's the first time people are ever charged with issues concerning tax. And some confusion still lies with the NBR laws. Even in India example of dealing with such cases is rare and very few of such examples can be found in the subcontinent, adds Salam.

So it has become a must to get direction from the apex court to reduce confusion and ensure that the issue is dealt properly.

Investigations show black-money-whitening schemes only came in as help to the corrupt to have their ill-gotten wealth clean. The schemes encouraged them everyday.

Speaking anonymously, an ACC investigator says: It's not possible to come out successful in the drive against graft when various governments over the years passed laws helping the corrupt whiten ill-gotten property instead of investigating sources of their income.

Soon after the money-whitening schemes were announced on different occasions, income of many corrupt-suspects, businesspersons, former ministers as well as lawmakers shot up a mile. They even introduced imaginative income sources like donors and tax-free businesses, according to ACC investigations and tax returns submitted to the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

The ACC investigations also reveal how the high-profile graft-suspects amassed property by illegal means with assistance from high-ups in the government over the years and finally got everything whitened covered by laws.

Investigators say documents and papers seized so far show a section of NBR officials, bankers and lawyers were linked to graft-suspects and made quick bucks using the money-whitening laws.

The case of the Bashundhara Group chairman can be cited as an example.

SHAH ALAM
The ACC on Sunday submitted charge sheet against Shah Alam accusing him, his wife and four sons of accumulating about Tk 107 crore beyond known sources of income. However, ACC investigations found him guilty of amassing Tk 606 crore beyond known sources of income.

Alam had whitened Tk 498 crore ill-gotten wealth by making investment in business and establishment purposes during the rules of both



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed presides over the sixth meeting of National Taskforce on ICT Affairs in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 3)

PHOTO: PID

Sri Lankan navy chief passes busy day

UNB, Dhaka

Sri Lankan Navy Chief Vice Admiral Wasantha Karannagoda passed a busy day by participating in different programmes yesterday.

The Sri Lankan Navy Chief laid wreath at Shikha Anirban to pay tributes to the memory of the members of Armed Forces martyred during the War of Liberation in 1971.

Wasantha called on Navy Chief Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam at Naval Headquarters, said an ISPR press release.

He exchanged discussed matters of professional interest with the Bangladesh navy chief.

Earlier, on his arrival at the Naval Headquarters the Sri Lankan navy chief was presented a guard of honour by a smartly turned-out naval contingent.

Wasantha paid a courtesy call on Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal S M Ziaur Rahman at Air Headquarters and Principal Staff Officer of Armed Forces Division Lt Gen Md Abdul Mubeen at AAF.

Later, Vice Admiral Wasantha visited Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation and Training (BIPSOT) at Rajendrapur Cantonment in Gazipur.

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