

No poll campaign or demo before Nov 27

Govt decision follows frequent violations of EPR by AL, BNP, Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The caretaker government will not brook any election campaign or demonstration before November 27 as such activities violate the Emergency Power Rules (EPR). It warned of taking "stern actions" for breaching the rules.

The government took the decision yesterday at a meeting of the advisory committee on law and order against a backdrop of frequent violation of the EPR by the country's three major political parties—the Awami League, BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

Chaired by Home Adviser MA Matin, the meeting asked law enforcement agencies to go tough against violators of emergency rules until 21 days before the

December 18 election date. This means electioneering will begin on November 27.

The meeting observed that a few political parties brought out processions and held rallies, and thus violated the EPR, because of a "communication gap" between the administration and them.

It said there is also a "misunderstanding" about the latest amendment to the EPR that allows political parties to campaign for 21 days before the polling date.

While briefing newsmen after the meeting, Home Secretary Abdul Karim and Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad denied that they had so far given any concession to the political parties.

Karim said the authorities

would no longer allow any violation of the EPR. "The EPR has been relaxed, not repealed," he said, warning of taking tough measures against those who violate the rules.

On agitation programmes announced by Jamaat, the home secretary said law enforcement agencies have been given orders to take legal measures against any such activities.

Within hours of his warning, however, Jamaat and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir brought out processions at different places across the country, including Dhaka, Chittagong, Barisal, Sylhet, Khulna and Pabna, demanding release of their leaders.

In the capital, police charged truncheons on Jamaat-Shibir

30 injured as cops club Jamaat men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police charged batons at a rally of Jamaat-e-Islami at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque in the capital, leaving at least 30 Jamaat workers injured.

Witnesses said police resorted to baton charge when Jamaat and Shibir activists tried to come out of the mosque premises after completing their rally ignoring police request and breaking the Emergency Power Rules (EPR) at about 4:30pm.

Around five thousands of Jamaat workers gathered on the mosque premises around 4:00pm as part of the party's countrywide protest programme demanding release of detained Jamaat leaders Matiuir Rahman Nizami and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid and BNP leader M Saifur Rahman.

The road from Paltan crossing to Dainik Bangla was blocked for about an hour causing huge sufferings to the commuters.

However, Jamaat publicity

RE-DEMARCATED DHAKA

Rivals in contrasting state

The December 18 parliamentary election in the capital might get to a new dimension as the number of constituencies in the metropolis was increased to 15 from eight.

The Awami League (AL) finds no difficulties in adapting to the

re-demarcated constituencies but the BNP is facing it hard to find out suitable candidates for "so many" seats.

The AL has already collected names of candidates for all 15 constituencies through its grassroots level committees. The BNP,

on the other hand, has neither enough candidates for these seats nor any clear picture of the new electoral map.

AL's grassroots level committees held extended meetings and recommended names to the party parliamentary board in the

last couple of days, from which the AL has got a clear picture of party candidates.

The BNP has not yet started any formal activity for picking up candidates as the party is still in a dilemma over taking part in the election.

Neat nomination by AL grassroots

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The Awami League (AL) has primarily found almost all candidates for the 15 re-demarcated constituencies in Dhaka but is still looking for more competent candidates for a number of these parliamentary seats to ensure victory.

The party has already collected recommendations about possible candidates from the grassroots level committees from the 15 constituencies.

The grassroots level committees have held extended meetings in the

Confused BNP sits on nomination

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

BNP is ill-prepared to field candidates for the seven new parliamentary constituencies added to the previous eight in Dhaka city.

Though the party has yet to decide whether to participate in the December 18 national polls, it has been working to find suitable candidates for seats elsewhere in the country, said BNP sources.

But it could not even begin the work for the capital. So far, it only has a makeshift plan ready for the 15 constituencies here.

According to the plan, those elected to previous parliament from the

European envoys meet BNP chief, stress Khaleda-Hasina unity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ambassadors of the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden yesterday emphasised the need for former prime ministers Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina working in unison to 'defend the country for its future generations'.

Bangladesh must also create a culture of consensus politics to overcome the challenges it faces, Dutch Ambassador Bea ten

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Polls must be held on Dec 18

Says Hasina at meeting with UK envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the national elections must be held as per schedule on December 18.

"We want the transition to democracy through a free, fair and credible election participated by all political parties," Hasina was quoted as saying by her special aide Hasan Mahmud after a meeting with British High Commissioner to Dhaka Stephen Evans.

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AL talks with EC on nomination, code of conduct

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An Awami League (AL) delegation yesterday discussed with the Election Commission (EC) some polls-related issues, and problems in filling in nomination forms for the upcoming national election.

"We have discussed electoral laws, code of conduct and some problems we are facing in filling in nomination forms," AL advisory council member HT Inam told reporters later.

Inam, also co-chairman of AL

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Traffic stops as Jamaat men come to a rally being held inside the Baitul Mukarram compound yesterday in demand for the release of alliance leaders Saifur Rahman, Motiuir Rahman Nizami and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid. PHOTO: STAR

Candidates have to show spend on campaign thru' cable TV

Says CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said candidates for parliament should include their spend on using the service of cable television operators for campaign purposes in their total election expenditure.

"The matter involves money; it's also business for cable

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Tension remains on Myanmar-Bangladesh Border

STAR REPORT

Tension on Bangladesh-Myanmar border continued yesterday with no sign of pull back of forces of the two countries deployed along the frontier in the last few days.

Reports received from the bordering areas said Bangladesh has to keep its forces on alert as Myanmar moved several warships in the Buchidang river near its border yesterday.

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List of 103 EPR convicts sent to EC

No move yet to collect list of war criminals

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The home ministry has sent to the Election Commission a list of 103 politicians and businessmen who are convicted of criminal offences under Emergency Powers Rules, to assist the commission in keeping them out of the parliamentary and upazila parishad races.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission (EC) has yet to collect the list of individuals who were convicted of war crimes, although the chief election commissioner (CEC) earlier announced that the commission would collect the list to keep the war criminals out of the electoral races as well, EC sources said.

The amended Representation of the People Order (RPO) and the new Upazila Parishad Ordinance disqualify convicted war criminals from contesting in the parliamentary and upazila elections.

The EC however is working hard to bar loan and bill defaulters from contesting in the polls.

According to a provision of Emergency Powers Rules (EPR), any person, convicted of corruption by a trial court under EPR, will

be disqualified from contesting in the parliamentary and upazila elections, even if the conviction is being appealed in a higher court.

The convicted under EPR will not be qualified to contest in the polls until acquitted, according to the provision.

"We sent the list to the Election Commission on November 2 for taking necessary actions," a senior official in the home ministry said adding, "The individuals on the list have already been disqualified from contesting in the polls."

The EC however did not seek any list of individuals convicted of war crimes by special tribunals immediately after the country's independence, the official added.

The commission will send the list of EPR convicts to the returning officers (RO), who will scrutinise nominations and applications for candidacies, said a senior EC Secretariat official.

"We received the list of individuals convicted under EPR. The list contains the names of individuals, the offences, and the terms of their punishments," the official added.

Most of the 103 individuals are

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'Chemicals' in milk not tested for lack of fund

BSTI returns samples to Sirajganj health dept after it failed to pay test fees

PORIMOL PALMA in Dhaka and GOLAM MOSTAFA JIBON in Sirajganj

Sirajganj District Health Department is stuck with adulterated milk being sold in Sirajganj district, as they don't have the funds required to carry out further tests to find out if any chemicals are

present in the locally marketed milk.

The health department sent five suspected samples to Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) for chemical tests, which were returned as the department could not pay the required fees for the tests.

The tests for five samples of milk

would cost Tk 25,000 at BSTI.

The stagnant situation raises questions about the lack of coordination and cooperation between different government bodies.

The fact that the district health departments and the Public Health Institution (PHI) are under the health ministry whereas BSTI is

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Elections without 4-party won't be acceptable

Says Delwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said the people will not accept any initiatives of forming a "rubber stamp" parliament or "puppet government" keeping the four-party alliance out of election race.

He however said BNP would "announce" poll participation today if the government met their seven-point demand.

"We're ready for elections. If the

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Talking polls and beyond

AL, BNP to be led in same old way

Fears Shahdeen Malik

SHAMIM ASHRAF

Noted jurist Shahdeen Malik does not think BNP and Awami League leadership will change the way they lead their parties and break with the culture of confrontational politics anytime soon.

"However, the party men will someday want a different kind of leadership, and only then things will start to change," he said in an interview with The Daily Star.

Dismissive of the 'minus-two

Find details of the interview on page 11

formula," he said, "Historically, following of a leader could not have been taken away by external means."

After around 30 years, people would naturally look for changed leadership.

He however holds out hope that politics would be much cleaner in five to 15 years. "Definitely, the process has started very vigorously, and I hope two more elections under a strong

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MILK TEST Govt waits for HC order copy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government did not take any step yesterday to comply with the High Court (HC) order regarding test of powdered milk as it could not collect certified copy of the court order.

"We sent our lawyer to the court (HC) but he could not collect certified copy of its order. We hope we can get the copy tomorrow (today) and will start work as per the order," said Azmal Hossain, director general (DG) of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI).

The HC on Monday directed the health ministry to send samples of the already tested eight brands of powdered milk to chemistry department of Dhaka University (DU), Bangladesh Atomic Energy

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Licensed arms have to be submitted by Dec 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry yesterday asked all to submit their licensed firearms to respective police stations across the country between November 20 and December 3.

"The small firearms will be in government custody until January 5, 2009, in order to keep the ninth parliamentary elections and upazila elections, scheduled for December 18 and December 28, violence free.

The decision was made during a meeting of the advisory committee on law and order held at the home ministry with Home Adviser MA Matin in the chair.

No new firearms licences would be issued to any individual until the elections are over and the sale of all types of firearms and ammunition

will be suspended until further notice. Arms dealers and traders will have to seal-off their firearms and ammunition and send a list of their stock to the home ministry, said the home secretary.

Banks and financial institutions, however, are exempted from the order considering their security.

From November 20, carrying arms will be banned till January 5, except for security workers of financial institutions including banks, Home Adviser Abdul Karim told reporters after the meeting.

Around 2 lakh licences for firearms have been given but there are only 1.24 lakh firearms against those licences. Among the licensed firearms 17,000 are pistols and revolvers.

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নামই বলে দেয় বৈশিষ্ট্যের অসংখ্য ধারা
চারদিক থেকে এসে মিশেছে এই জনপদে - চৌমুহনীতে

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