

# Truth Commission not legal

HC declares the ordinance unconstitutional, its activities illegal; govt to appeal against verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday declared illegal and unconstitutional the Voluntary Disclosure of Information Ordinance-2008 through which the government formed the Truth and Accountability Commission for voluntary disclosure of corruption-

accused.

After long hearing for six days on a writ, the HC bench of Justice Mir Hasmat Ali and Justice Shamim Hossain delivered the verdict declaring illegal Tac and all its functions done so far.

The HC bench observed that through formation of the commission, an alternative system bypass-

ing the judiciary was set up which was against the Constitution.

This system possessed scopes of exonerating the offenders without trial in the courts and interference in the judiciary, the bench added.

It also said promulgating such an ordinance is a policy decision and the caretaker government

Tac chief to stay away from task

Says it's a matter for govt to deal with

EMRAN HOSSAIN

Truth and Accountability Commission (Tac) Chairman Justice Habibur Rahman Khan has said the commission would now refrain from carrying out any official task as the High Court (HC) yesterday declared illegal and unconstitutional the ordinance under which the commission was formed.

The government constituted Tac to let the corrupt voluntarily confess to it their graft and seek

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

# Govt must hold polls on schedule

Hasina tells Jubo League meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the caretaker government to hold the parliamentary election on the announced date without caring that a party has failed to prepare for the polls.

"The caretaker government must take initiatives to hold the election on schedule," Hasina said firmly in her first meeting in public since her release on June 11.

"There are always conspiracies against the Awami League whenever there are possibilities for it to come to power," she said while

addressing the founding anniversary of her party's youth wing, Awami Jubo League, at the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh.

In her 26-minute speech, Hasina demanded release of all detained party leaders, withdrawal of all "false" charges against her sister Sheikh Rehana and other party leaders and arrest of real corrupt.

The AL chief said, "Why will the election be deferred just because they (BNP) failed to make preparations in the last two years? I do not understand why the caretaker

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Talking polls and beyond

Party to face workers' wrath for polls boycott

Says Syed Manzur Elahi

SHAMIM ASHRAF and WASIM BIN HABIB

Former adviser to caretaker government Syed Manzur Elahi hopes all parties will participate in the December 18 parliamentary elections saying the outcome of keeping off the polls will be terrible for the whole nation.

"At grassroots level, there is a strong support for election which

Find details of the interview on page 11



will be very tough to change. Any party would face serious consequences if it tries to boycott the election," he said in an interview with The Daily Star.

"I am not interested in who will come to power. But I want, at any cost, an elected government whose first task would be to address the economy," Manzur said.

Terming 2009 a 'crucial year'

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

GLOBAL MELTDOWN

# Bimstec to fight crisis together

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The Bimstec member countries yesterday accepted Bangladesh's offer to host a poverty alleviation centre in Dhaka and decided to put in place a joint mechanism to combat terrorism.

They also vowed to step up cooperation to tackle the challenges posed by global financial meltdown and food and energy security.

The call came in a joint declaration adopted at the daylong second summit of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Leaders of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec) pose for photos prior to the inauguration of the second summit of the group in New Delhi yesterday.

AL urges EC to let its allies use 'boat' symbol

Ashrafur fears unrest if polls not held on Dec 18

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Awami League (AL) yesterday urged the Election Commission to allow its alliance partners to contest the upcoming parliamentary elections with its symbol, boat, if they desire.

A four-member AL delegation, led by its Office Secretary Abdul Mannan Khan, met EC Secretary M Humayun Kabir and handed over a letter conveying their request, UNB reports.

"The Election Commission should allow if any of our allies want to contest the election with

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

AL for televised talks, BNP for exclusive

Govt ready to help hold dialogue of 2 ex-PMs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday said it is waiting on a formal proposal from the government for an agenda-based dialogue between its President Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The same day Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said the caretaker administration is ready to do whatever is necessary for talks between the two leaders. He however did not elaborate on their plans.

Meanwhile, speculation is rife that the former prime ministers might meet on November 21 at an Armed Forces Day function in Dhaka cantonment. Both the leaders have been invited to attend the programme at Senakunja.

Talking to reporters at Hasina's Sudha Sadan residence, AL spokesman Syed Ashrafur Islam reiterated that they want the discussions to be subject-specific.

"We don't want a closed-door meeting. The talks should be

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

BNP wants JS polls to be deferred for hajj pilgrims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday suggested that the government defer the parliamentary elections since many hajj pilgrims will miss the polls.

The government should consider the matter seriously as about 40 to 50 thousand pilgrims will be unable to vote on December 18, BNP Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan told reporters after a closed-door meeting with party chief Khaleda Zia.

He said it is not logical to deprive a large number of pilgrims of exercising their fundamental rights. "We ask the government to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

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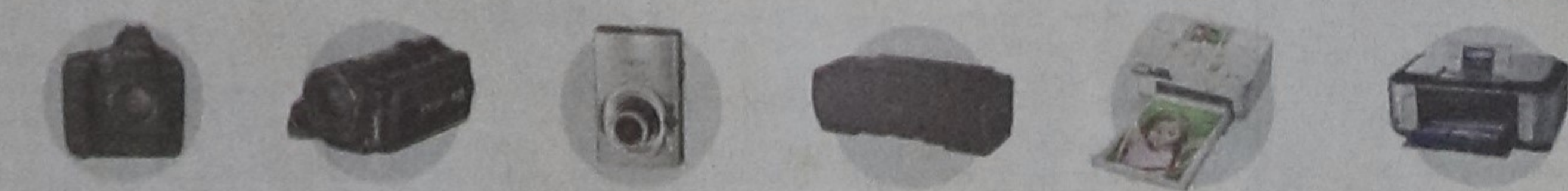
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