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Govt, EC fully ready to hold fair polls: CA

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhrudin Ahmed yesterday said the government and the Election Commission are now fully ready to hold a credible election on December 29 with the participation of all political parties.

The head of the caretaker government said this when the visiting UN delegation, led by Frances Vendrell, former director of Asia Pacific Division of UN Department of Political Affairs, called on him at his office.

The CA told the UN team that two major political parties have accepted the election schedule and are preparing to contest the polls.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Thai protesters defy orders to quit airports

Repatriation of thousands of foreign passengers to take one month

AFP, Bangkok

Defiant protesters ignored orders to leave Bangkok's besieged airports and faced off with Thai police yesterday, raising fears of clashes as crippling anti-government demonstrations resume.

Tensions mounted with Thai television showing angry demonstrators arguing with police on a road to the main Suvarnabhumi airport as officers tried to set up a checkpoint to stop more people flocking to the protest site.

Despite Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat's declaration of emergency rule at the airports on Wednesday, pro-

testers trying to topple his elected government remain entrenched, barricading themselves in with barbed wire and tyres.

"If we have to die today, I am willing to die. This is a fight for dignity," said Sondhi Limthongkul, the founder of the People's Alliance for Democracy protest movement, said on his private television station.

Police said they had given formal warnings overnight to protesters at both Suvarnabhumi international airport and the smaller, domestic Don Mueang airport to leave immediately or face action to evict them.

"Police have already issued two warn-

ings since last night (Friday) to ask them to leave," Major General Piya Sorntrakoon, deputy commander of Thailand's central region, told AFP.

At Suvarnabhumi, demonstrators headed inside as rumours of a police raid circulated. Protesters set up a medical corner to treat anyone injured if clashes broke out, while water and other supplies were stacked up.

Some women carried pink helmets, readying themselves for any action. Children are also among the crowd.

Suvarnabhumi has been shuttered since Tuesday, and every day the siege

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BERC decision on gas price hike today

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) is set to announce its decision today on enhancement of natural gas prices, endorsing a maximum raise up to 15 percent.

According to sources, BERC has already completed evaluation of Petrobangla's proposals for raising the gas tariffs and also the opposite view expressed by other stakeholders and consumers in the gas sector.

The sources said the BERC may allow the state-owned Petrobangla to raise gas prices by 10-15 percent for different types of consumers with effect from the first quarter of next year.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Khaleda, Hasina to vie for 3 seats each

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, who had reportedly been pressed to quit politics, are finally going to contest the December 29 parliamentary elections -- from three constituencies each.

Khaleda will contest the national polls from Bogra-6, 7 and Feni-1 constituencies while Sheikh Hasina will stand from Gopalganj-3, Bagerhat-1 and Rangpur-6 constituencies.

The BNP chairperson got registered as a voter several hours after her party announced the names of its candidates in a few constituencies yesterday, a day before the deadline for the former premier to enrol her name on the voter list expires.

Election Commission (EC) officials went to Khaleda Zia's cantonment residence in the afternoon and completed all formalities to register her as a voter.

In her voter registration form, Khaleda Zia mentioned August 15, 1947 as her birthday.

The EC officials also completed the task of taking her photo and thumb impression on official document.

Khaleda early this year refused to get registered as a voter while being in prison. Khaleda's political archrival Hasina got registered as a voter in June this year and received her national ID card in November.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Donors' policies come under lens

People's tribunal hears petitions tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A people's tribunal is set to hear tomorrow eight petitions against three lending agencies in connection with prescribing policies and frameworks detrimental to the economic development of the country.

The allegations are against the World Bank, ADB and IMF's policies that have implications in sectors like agriculture, banking, industry, energy, education, health and environment.

A seven-member bench headed by former Justice Ghulam

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Hundreds dead in polls clashes in Nigeria

AFP, Lagos

Hundreds were killed and thousands forced to flee their homes in the central Nigerian city of Jos when Christians and Muslims clashed over the result of a local election, witnesses said yesterday.

"I was at the central mosque this afternoon and I counted 378 dead bodies but just as I was about to leave, three more bodies were brought in," a correspondent for Radio France Internationale in Jos, Aminu Manu, told AFP, adding that families were coming forward to claim their dead relatives.

"Hundreds of people have been killed in the

last two days since the riots started. Remains of burned bodies litter some parts of the town; it is so terrible," Christian clergyman Yakumu Pam said.

Local Radio Plateau said the governor of Plateau State, Jonah Jang, had placed four districts of the city under a curfew and ordered police to fire on anyone who broke it following the clashes on Friday.

There was no confirmation of the death toll from any official source.

Aminu Manu said violence was still being reported in the city Saturday. He said he saw around 300 youths, a mixture of Muslims and

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Tiger dies in Rajshahi zoo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The lone Royal Bengal Tiger of Rajshahi Central Zoo Samrat died in his cage yesterday.

Refuting allegations of poor care, zoo officials said the 17-year-old tiger died of old age related diseases.

Samrat was weak during last three days and the tiger reduced its daily meal of 12kg meat, said zoo veterinary surgeon M Forhad Uddin. "Captive tigers usually live less than 20 years, the average lifespan of tigers in the wild," he said.

Samrat was living without a companion since June, 1997, when he was brought to the zoo.

Prayer Timing

November 30

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Indigenous Cultural Festival 2008



Indigenous Handicrafts Exhibition & Sale

30 Nov (12 pm to 8 pm)
1 & 2 Dec (10 am to 8 pm)



Indigenous Cultural Show

30 Nov & 2 Dec
(6:30 pm to 8:30 pm)
Hall of Fame, BCFCC



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