

TIME TO TURN A CORNER

PART-2: REVISITING THE CARETAKER GOVT



DHAKA TUESDAY FEBRUARY 24, 2009

Iajuddin --- a flash-back on his presidency

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that, of Iajuddin Ahmed is perhaps the namely, foisting himself on the countance to create an atmosphere condupoint where we can begin to understand the travails the presidency has regularly gone through. When he was elected to the office of head of state during the period of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party-led four party alliance government in 2002, the general expectation was that while he would not be a remarkable president, he would at least be one who would end his term on a generally dignified note. After all, his predecessor AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury had only days earlier been run out of the presidency by his own party. And that was of course the BNP.

But a dignified exit for Iajuddin Ahmed was not to be. And the earliest sign of it emerged when, once the BNP-Jamaat government finished its tenure in office and prepared to hand over power to a caretaker government in October 2006, President Iajuddin unabashedly skipped the necessary constitutional provisions relating to

the appointment of a chief advisor tell anyone interested in that scandal When the advisors protested, the and with alacrity took over the job of a caretaker government, lajuddin press secretary was conveniently N these nearly four decades himself. There was a clear violation of would leave meetings of the council of elevated to the rank of a minister of since the liberation of the constitution here, for the simple advisors at some point, ostensibly (as state and so authorised to attend the Bangladesh, the office of the reason that where the President was it later emerged) to consult with the meetings. country's president has gone required to explore a number of Bangladesh Nationalist Party on what through vagaries of various and some- options, four in all, in his search for a action he needed to take! Four of the And the country was headed towards times an unanticipated sort. The just- chief advisor, he readily dispensed advisors, frustrated with the presi- anarchy with the decision by the concluded era, if it can truly be called with them and went for the fifth, dent-chief advisor's patent reluc- Awami League to withdraw from the

Outside, politics was in free fall. January 22 elections. And then came

Bangladesh's presidency has been a victim of political manipulation. Paradoxically, it has been responsible for some of the biggest blows that have been hurled at the political system. It has been an emasculated institution at certain points in national history. And at other times, it has been a terrifying symbol of the arrogance of the state.

to wide --- and widening --- chaos.

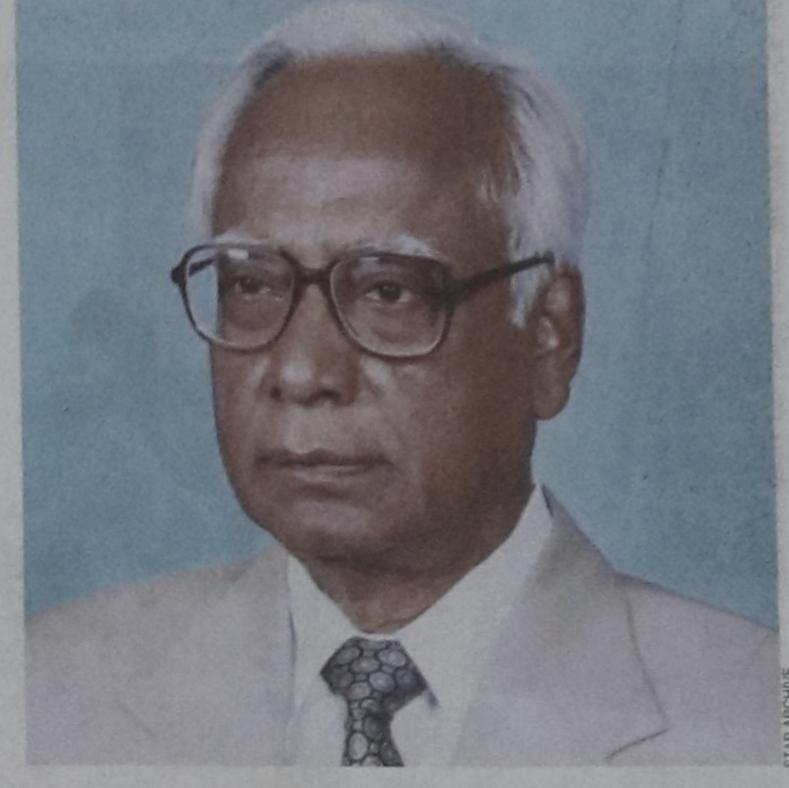
caretaker administration would later meetings of the council of advisors.

try as president-cum-chief advisor. cive to the holding of free and fair When he took that step, it was not elections, walked out of the council in difficult for many to suspect that the protest. It was, in simple terms, a general elections scheduled for bizarre situation that developed January 22, 2007, would eventually between the end of October 2006 and end up as a stage-managed affair and, early January 2007. The president was worse, would likely push the country suspected to be in constant touch with the BNP, especially with its pow-The events of the subsequent few erful young elements at Hawa weeks were to give credence to such Bhaban. And then there was the matfears. As one of the advisors in his ter of his press secretary sitting in on

the state of emergency on January 11, 2007, with all its ramifications.

Going back into presidential history

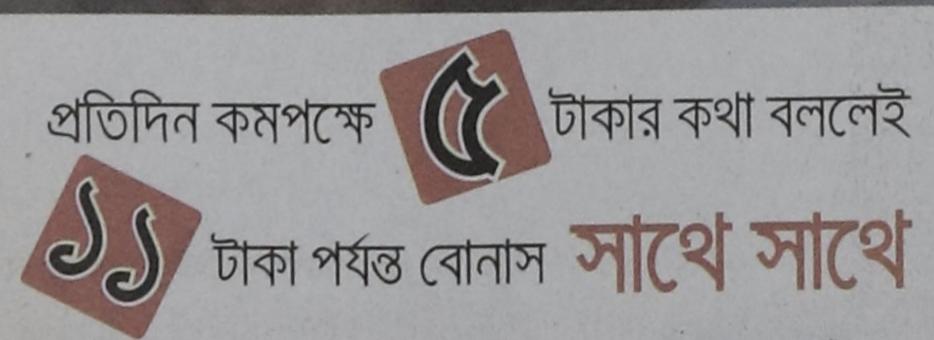
The Iajuddin assumption of the office of chief advisor in October 2006 was clearly without precedent. It left the constitution reeling; and it forced a situation where an extreme measure, in this case the emergency, could not be avoided. But go back to the past, to



how the presidency has fared in Bangladesh since the day Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury took over from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur as head of state. That was January 12, 1972. Chowdhury's ascension to the high office was acclaimed across the country because of the integrity he brought to bear on it. Unfortunately, Justice

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৫ টাকা	১ ঢাকা
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৩০ টাকা	১১ টাকা



•২৫ পয়সা কল রেটের ক্ষেত্রে কোন বোনাস প্রযোজ্য হবে না • প্রাপ্ত বোনাস ২৫ পয়সা কল রেট, আইএসডি/ইআইএসডি এবং ইন্টারন্যাশনাল এসএমএস-এ প্রযোজ্য হবে না •এই অফার সীমিত সময়ের জন্য ⊕ customerservice@waridtel.com.bd | www.waridtel.com.bd | Helpline: 🖬 786 🕿 +88 016 78600786