

President

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Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) came to an end.

Now, the polls for the bifurcated DCC must be held within 90 days, by the end of February next.

On Tuesday, parliament hurriedly passed the bill on splitting DCC into two zones by bringing changes into the Local Government (City Corporation) Act, 2009, ignoring widespread criticisms and protests.

The changes in the act took effect soon as the president gave his consent to the bill yesterday afternoon, said a senior official of the parliament secretariat, adding that the copy of the law was sent to press in the evening to have it published in the official gazette.

On the day the bill was passed, Local Government Minister Syed Ashraful Islam announced that the government would appoint administrators to the DCC offices.

However, it is still to unravel whether the government will appoint the administrators now or wait till the disposal of a writ petition filed by Khoka. The outgoing mayor on Wednesday filed a writ petition with the High Court (HC) challenging legality of the amendments brought to the city corporation law.

In response, the HC issued a rule upon the government and the Election Commission to explain in four weeks why the bill should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

The HC bench of Justice Farid Ahmed and Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif, however, kept from ordering a status quo on holding of the offices by the mayor and councilors.

Although the tenure of the DCC mayor and its councilors expired in 2007, the government could not hold polls for the city corporation. One of the major reasons behind this is the state of emergency in 2007-2008.

Meanwhile, President Zillur Rahman yesterday also signed into laws five more bills, including the one for bringing amendments to the Upazila Parishad Act.

Climate fund

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some other Latin American countries want an informal session to settle this issue.

"As the situation is now, I feel that everything is very fluid," said Dr QK Ahmed, co-ordinator of the Bangladesh delegation. "The US has not made it clear what issues need to be reviewed. I don't think anything on the fund would happen in the Durban conference."

But that would mean a major setback for countries like Bangladesh and other climate vulnerable nations.

"Right now, we need a global figure like Bill Clinton who would intervene and get things straightened out," said Dr Asaduzzaman, a negotiator of the Bangladesh team. "Unfortunately, we don't see anyone at this moment."

Against such a backdrop, the EU has made a positive statement that it wants to see the Green Climate Fund board in operation as soon as next year.

"In the context of a satisfactory outcome on the green climate fund as well as the overall package from Durban, we want to see the board start as early as 2012," said the chief climate negotiator for the EU and Poland Tomasz Chruszczow, at a press briefing.

Meantime, Mishba-ul-Alam, environment secretary, told the media that Bangladesh has proposed to set aside 50 percent of the GCF for adaptation, a big increase from the original plan of 17 percent.

This proposal has been incorporated in the form of 'balanced distribution' in the transitional committee's report.

Despite such pessimism, some progress is being observed in the areas of other financial mechanism under subsidiary body for implementation (SBI) for the LDCs. It would take a long time for the LDCs to know whether they are getting funds under LDC fund. But now talks are in progress to shorten the time for accessing the funds. A set of criteria is being discussed for easy and smooth fund availability.

The 15-metre Agni-I, weighing 12 tonnes and carrying payloads up to 1000 kg, has already been inducted into the Indian Army.

'Enough is enough'

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spilling even a single drop of any civilian or soldier's blood," The News newspaper yesterday quoted Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar as telling a Senate committee on foreign affairs.

"Pakistan's role in the war on terror must not be overlooked," Khar said, suggesting Pakistan could end its support for the US war on militancy. Despite opposition at home, Islamabad after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

The US Embassy released a video statement on YouTube by Ambassador Cameron Munter in which he expressed regret for the attack.

He said the United States took the attack "very seriously" and pledged "a full, independent investigation."

"Pakistan and the US have stood together for over 60 years," he said. "We have weathered previous crises together. I'm certain we will weather this one too, and emerge, together, as stronger partners."

But events seemed to be working against lowering tensions. Two Pakistani men were killed in Afghanistan early yesterday and Pakistani border guards said Nato may have been responsible.

The officials said the two men, who were from the town of Chagai in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan, were gathering wood 30 km inside Afghanistan. They said Nato helicopters fired on their vehicle.

Nato helicopters and fighter jets attacked two military border posts in northwest Pakistan on Saturday in the worst incident of its kind since 2001.

The precise sequence of events surrounding the incident remained in dispute. While Islamabad says there was no provocation to justify firing on two Pakistani outposts, Afghan and Western

74 people

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said they were accompanying their kids. But we got suspicious of their gestures and movements," the official said, requesting anonymity.

On questioning, they admitted that they were flying in the hope of finding jobs in Malaysia.

All of them were released later in the night, immigration police told The Daily Star.

Those children who had their genuine guardians accompany them were allowed to fly.

A company named UCMAF arranged their visas, immigration police said, adding that they were yet to collect further information about the company.

An organised gang took the chance to send them following the Malaysian government's announcement relating to a legalisation of illegal Bangladeshi workers in the country, the official said.

Officials, however, could not immediately identify the "gang".

They said they had alerted the Special Branch of police about the matter and sought its help in ferreting out the culprits.

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2 trampled to death by elephant

FROM CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

officials have reportedly accused Pakistani forces of firing first.

The top US military officer denied allegations by a senior Pakistani army official that the Nato attack was a deliberate act of aggression.

General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the US military's Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Reuters in an interview: "The one thing I will say publicly and categorically is that this was not a deliberate attack."

Protests have taken place in several cities every day since the Nato strike along the poorly-defined border, where militants often plan and stage attacks.

Pakistan military sources said Islamabad had cancelled a visit by a 15-member delegation, led by the Director General of the Joint Staff, Lieutenant General Mohammad Asif, to the United States that was to have taken place this week.

Delhi reassures

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project as two advisers to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday met the Indian ministers for water resources and power, and the National Security Adviser in New Delhi.

Hasina's advisers Gowher Rizvi and Mashru Rahman are in the Indian capital as part of regular consultations to review the status of bilateral relations.

They had discussions with Indian Water Resources Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal and Power Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde about ways to implement the decisions the two countries had taken on water sharing of common rivers and the power sector.

Tipaimukh figured prominently during the advisers' meeting with Bansal, Shinde and National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon, said sources.

The Indian ministers and Menon told the advisers that the Tipaimukh project on the Barak river would in no way harm Bangladesh's interests, as it is only a power plant and does not entail diversion of river water, said sources.

She will visit Gems Museum, Pyithu Hluttaw (parliament house) and the historic Uppatathandi Pagoda and White Elephant.

Hasina will leave Myanmar for Indonesia on December 7 to reach Bali in the evening.

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The two advisers declined to give details of the meeting, and described it as a "mere courtesy call".

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25 ministers, MPs complicit

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following October 2001.

Sahara said of the 5,571 complaints lodged with the commission, 3,625 complaints of major offences had been probed.

Sources in the commission said of those, 355 incidents involved political murders while 3,270 involved rape, arson, looting and other crimes.

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