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Revealing a man who commanded respect as an innovator but was questioned on his honesty

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### CIVIL SERVICE

# Reform initiative runs out of steam

Officials say govt reluctant to go ahead with draft law for fear of losing partisan influence on bureaucracy

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The government's move to modernise the civil service through reforms has been stalled as the ruling party feels that a reform will slash its political interference, said many civil service officials.

A section of the bureaucrats also feel that a reform will make their jobs harder.

When the Awami League-led government assumed power in 2009, it initiated a process of reforming the civil service. It prepared a draft Civil Service Act in May last year, and took an initiative to replace the annual confidential report (ACR) with a performance-based evaluation mechanism for promotions and postings of officials.

The steps were initiated to depoliticise the civil administration, make the bureaucrats accountable to the people, and reduce abuse of power.

But the initiatives never took concrete shapes and the government now says it will seek more opinions from different cadre services and other stakeholders to make the proposed act acceptable to all.

"This is just a trick to waste time as the government has taken lots of opinions

from the cadre services and other stakeholders in the last two years," said a mid-ranking official on condition of anonymity.

He said the draft Civil Service Act was finalised and sent to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in December last year, but she sent it back asking the public administration ministry to seek more opinions.

"The government couldn't finalise a draft law in three years, it is highly unlikely that it will be able to do so within the remaining less than two years of its tenure. So, the planned reform is still a distant reality for us," added the official.

A top government official said, "The partisan government has become uncertain whether, after promulgating the act, the bureaucrats can be controlled the way they are now being controlled by it. On the other hand, there are many bureaucrats who are not confident that they will get promotions and favourable postings under the new system as easily as they do now."

But HT Imam, public administration affairs adviser to the prime minister said, "We have made good progress in formulating the civil service law. It is being

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The government signboard in the photo marks the boundary of the river Turag at Gabtoli in the capital but sand, coal and brick traders who occupy the river to conduct their businesses are still there. One of the concrete pillars marking the land of the river, inset, appears to be shabby, old and broken but the fact is it was installed last December.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## 2 killed in clash over control of tea garden

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

At least two people were shot dead and 25 others injured in a clash between two groups in Kamalganj upazila of Moulvibazar yesterday afternoon over control of Nandarani Tea Garden.

To avert any untoward incident, local administration around 10:00pm imposed a ban on gatherings at the tea garden at Patrakhola of the upazila and adjacent areas for an indefinite period.

The deceased were Fakhrul Islam, 65, and

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## MARCH 12 RALLY IN DHAKA BNP to go tough if govt obstructs

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

As BNP prepares to make its March 12 rally in the capital a hit, its policymakers are at once considering measures to take on any possible government obstruction on and before the rally day.

The main opposition party might go for tougher programmes like instant sit-in and hartal if its supporters are kept from joining the showdown, BNP sources said.

On January 9, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia from a Chittagong rally declared the March 12 rally titled "Cholo cholo, Dhaka cholo" (Let's march towards Dhaka) in efforts to mount pressure on the government to restore the caretaker government system.

The government in June last year scrapped the caretaker system and amended the constitution, allowing instead the incumbent political administration to oversee general elections.

BNP maintains it will not participate in polls unless it is held under a non-partisan caretaker government. The party has also threatened to compel the Awami

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## Cancel Dhaka rally, place demand in JS AL urges BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League yesterday urged BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to withdraw her party's March 12 grand rally programme in the capital and return to parliament.

"Awami League will not take to the streets on that day with any counter political programme," Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbub-ul-Alam Hanif said at a press conference at the party chief's political office in Dhanmondi.

He said the law will take its own course if there is deterioration of law and order centring the

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# No respite from river grabbing

Demarcation of Turag with pillars hardly makes an impact

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A signboard fixed to a pole stands as the only visible proof of the government move to demarcate the Turag river area at Gabtoli.

It reads, "Installation of boundary pillars of the river implemented by the Dhaka district administration, the BIWTA and the Department of Public Works."

Small boundary pillars put up to demarcate the river area can hardly be noticed amid piles of bricks, coal and sand, and toll collection booths with tin roofs.

Many of the pillars installed by Dhaka district administration have already got damaged. They were installed on December 21 last year.

Apart from the newly installed signboards and small pillars, very little has changed on the banks of the Turag river at Amin Bazar and Gabtoli.

Although the High Court in 2009 ordered the government to evict the encroachers and protect the river, sand and brick traders still occupy large portions of the river banks at Gabtoli and Amin Bazar.

River grabbing still goes on although the Department of Environment conducted several drives last year to demolish illegal settlements on the Turag river.

The Dhaka district administration has been installing boundary pillars from December 21 last year after demarcation of the river area at Gabtoli and Amin Bazar

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## Section 144 imposed at Hathazari after clashes

STAR REPORT

Hathazari upazila administration in Chittagong yesterday afternoon imposed Section-144 following clashes between two groups of locals over a trivial matter.

The order, which prohibits assembly of five or more people, will be in force until normalcy returns, said Farid Ahmed, Hathazari upazila nirbahi officer.

A brawl between the two groups broke out on Thursday centring a religious event and escalated into a fully-fledged clash that continued in phases

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## Nazimuddin fuelled the flames

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

Pakistan faced a fresh crisis when Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated on October 16, 1951 at a public meeting in Rawalpindi. Happening three years after the death of the country's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the assassination created a sudden vacuum in the national leadership in the sense that after Jinnah and Liaquat, hardly any politician of similar stature was around. A curious development then took place. Khwaja Nazimuddin, who had been governor general since Jinnah's death, quickly took over as prime minister in succession to

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Fans of Barisal Burners cheer their team on against Sylhet Royals during the opening match of the Bangladesh Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Barisal thrashed Sylhet with a 10 wicket win. Story on Star Sport.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## TEESTA DEAL Dhaka, Delhi exchange data of water flow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Five months after India and Bangladesh failed to ink Teesta water-sharing deal, the two neighbours yesterday resumed efforts for revisiting the proposed treaty as officials of both sides exchanged data on water flow of the common river.

The technical experts exchanged the data at a meeting of the inter-governmental Joint Rivers Commission in Kolkata, official sources in India and Bangladesh said.

The meeting mainly discussed the water flow of the Ganges river, a biennial exercise since the treaty on it was signed in 1996, and the two sides took the opportunity to exchange the data on

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