

Maldives crisis

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democratic elections in 2008, has accused his former vice president Waheed of being part of the plot to turn him out of office.

Waheed told reporters that the international community "had not questioned the legality" of his presidency "but there are questions about the circumstances and I am prepared to have them investigated."

He said he would leave composition of the team to the local parliament and the national human rights commission and consult all political parties.

Blake will seek to clarify how power was transferred during his lightning visit to Male, capital of the nation of 1,200 tiny coral islands.

"Ambassador Blake will meet the president as well as the opposition during his 12-hour visit," a US official in Male told AFP.

Washington on Thursday recognised Waheed's administration but then stepped back from the declaration, saying "circumstances surrounding the transfer of power need to be clarified."

Nasheed's exit from office followed months of protests over high prices and calls for more religiously conservative policies in the nation of Sunni Muslims.

Since stepping down, Nasheed has called for fresh elections and threatened protests if police continued targeting his party members and figures in his former administration.

Rioting erupted across the country Wednesday when Nasheed said he was the victim of a military-backed coup and his party's senior members were beaten during a rally in Male. Dozens were wounded, but there were no deaths.

Caretaker system

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can be used for a specified period, says a source close to former chief justice ABM Khairul Haque. Justice Khairul Haque, it may be noted, is now in the process of writing the full judgment.

Parliament, if it wishes, may reintroduce the now defunct model of the caretaker government system or introduce a new model of it by amending the constitution. The act will be aimed at holding two more parliamentary elections under the caretaker government system, as the ex-chief justice may explain in the full verdict.

The source said Justice Khairul Haque, who led the Appellate Division into declaring the provision for a caretaker government system unconstitutional and void on May 10 last year, may explain in detail the three "age-old principles" cited in the short order with regard to holding two more national polls under the lapsed caretaker government system.

The three principles are the following: necessity makes it lawful, safety of the people, and security of the state are the supreme law.

The verdict, however, triggered widespread controversy as many jurists and politicians dubbed it self-contradictory. They questioned how the next two parliamentary elections could be held under an "illegal" system. Many feared the verdict would deepen the political crisis over the holding of the next parliamentary election.

The Awami League-led government did not wait to get the copy of the full verdict. On June 30 last year it

swiftly scrapped the caretaker government system through amending the constitution. In its opinion, an "illegal system cannot be kept in the constitution".

In the brief verdict released immediately after the judgment, the apex court, however, said the system might be retained for holding two more parliamentary elections on the three age-old principles.

The source said the hurried abolition of the caretaker government system had disappointed the former chief justice and at one stage he even declined to write the full verdict.

He, however, changed his mind, considering the significance of the verdict. He will finish writing the verdict soon, the source said.

The latest development has been communicated to the Appellate Division, according to the source.

Asked what would happen if an individual challenged the legality of the reintroduced caretaker government system, the source argued that the apex court should not entertain such petitions as it has already permitted the system to be used for two more terms.

The source said the full verdict would also suggest making the Election Commission stronger.

Some legal experts still hope the full verdict, once released, may open a window to restoring the caretaker government system in order to minimise growing public fears of possible political unrest ahead of the next electoral exercise.

A week after the 13th amendment verdict, Justice Khairul Haque on his last day in office as chief justice

on May 17 last year, told The Daily Star that there was nothing confusing or contradictory in the verdict.

"We have tried to clear the legal position on this issue in detail in our verdict. You can understand everything if you read the short order [of the verdict] properly," Justice Khairul told reporters.

In response to a query as to whether the caretaker government system would remain in place following the verdict, he said, "We have given this verdict considering all legal aspects, the country and its people and the existing situation."

Soon after the court's verdict, politics took a new turn over the caretaker government system. The caretaker formula was introduced in 1996 after vigorous street agitation in its favour by the now-governing Awami League.

Meanwhile, the parliamentary special committee on constitutional amendments drafted proposals for keeping the provision of the caretaker government system by bringing about some changes in the system. But Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is also chief of the ruling Awami League, did not agree with the special committee's proposals. Parliament on June 30 abolished the system by passing the 15th amendment to the constitution.

The main opposition BNP and its like-minded parties have strongly opposed the move, making it known that they will not take part in the next parliamentary elections, to be held in early 2014, if they are not held under a caretaker government.

Cops guarding tea garden

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imposed section-144 (a ban on gathering) for an indefinite period.

Some locals and tea garden workers said a section of Kamalganj Awami League leaders had been behind the armed attack on tea garden staff, aiming to forcefully take over the garden.

South Asian International Limited, the company that has been enjoying the ownership of the garden since 1999 through a power of attorney, came under attack allegedly by people of Sadat Rahim Chowdhury, who claimed to have leased the garden last year from Anika,

daughter of actual owner Nirmol Chowdhury. Nirmol's wife Shukla Chowdhury had leased the garden to South Asian International Limited.

The garden's general manager, Zohir Ahmed Chowdhury, declined to say whether the attackers belonged to any political party. He said Sadat's hired men had made the attack.

Sadat could not be contacted over the phone for his comments.

Siddik Ali, joint secretary of Kamalganj upazila AL unit, denied local AL men's involvement in the attack. He said the clash had been

between two groups over the ownership of the garden.

A m u l y a K u m a r Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Kamalganj Police Station, told The Daily Star that no case was filed in this connection by last evening while the garden's General Manager Zohir said filing of a case was underway.

Zohir, however, said they had filed a general diary asking for police protection and accordingly a contingent of 27 policemen was deployed in the garden on Friday. But several hundred people swooped on the garden staff that day, and law enforcers could not tackle

the situation.

Bijoy Banerjee, convener of Bangladesh Tea Labour Union and chairman of Rajghat Union Parishad of Srimongal upazila, said he on Saturday visited the labour lines (residential area of the tea labourers).

He said there were 300 labourers in the garden and all of them were safe.

Mokbul Hussain, deputy inspector general of police, Sylhet range, also visited Nandarani Tea Garden yesterday.

Moulvibazar SP Harunur Rashid said police were still on duty in the area to keep the situation under control.

Students protested

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to be incendiary and predictably led to swift and severe criticism all across East Bengal. Badruddin Umar, whose research on the Language Movement has been noted for its authenticity, has his account of the events following the governor general's speech. According to him, Nazimuddin's remarks had even Yusuf Ali Chowdhury, general secretary of the East Pakistan Muslim League, riled. Chowdhury echoed Nurul Amin's feeling that no one in the ruling party had any idea that the governor general would suddenly raise the language issue once again and in that manner.

A curious side to Nazimuddin's position on the language issue was that Bangla was not his mother tongue and he could not speak it. But the speech he delivered in Dhaka had been written out in Bangla through means of the Urdu script. And the script was prepared by Mizanur Rahman, at the time a senior Bengali government official in Karachi. Another surprise, in the post-speech period, came through the remarks of Aziz Ahmed, the non-Bengali chief secretary of the provincial government. Aziz Ahmed, who was later to be Pakistan's foreign secretary under Ayub Khan and then minister of state for foreign affairs under Z.A. Bhutto, told

Chief Minister Nurul Amin that he had not seen the text of the governor-general's speech before Nazimuddin delivered it. If he had, he would have advised Nazimuddin against it.

On January 29, 1952 the Dhaka University State Language Committee of Action called a meeting on the campus to condemn Nazimuddin's statement. Oli Ahad, general secretary of the Youth League, severely condemned Khwaja Nazimuddin in a statement that was carried by all newspapers in the province. On January 30, the East Pakistan Muslim Students' League called a meeting at Dhaka University where the gover-

nor general was pilloried over his remarks. It renewed the call for Bangla to be made a state language of Pakistan. Following the meeting, the EPMSL activists marched in a procession to Burdwan House, the chief minister's residence, where they raised a number of slogans in favour of Bangla. They also announced a strike at all educational institutions in Dhaka for February 4, 1952.

On January 30, Khwaja Nazimuddin, addressing a public meeting in Dinajpur, asked the people of East Bengal to eschew provincialism.

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