



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina being welcomed by Sri Lankan Power and Energy Minister Pavithra Devi Wanniarachchi, on her right, at Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo yesterday. She went there to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting beginning today.

PHOTO: PID

Writ plea filed against holding offices by ministers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition was filed with the High Court yesterday challenging the legality of holding offices by the recently-resigned ministers and state ministers.

The petitioner, Abdul Khaleque Moni, editor of the monthly magazine, "Saarc HIV AIDS Madak Barta", requested for the court's directives to bar the ministers from holding offices, which he said is a violation of the constitution.

The petition says the offices of the ministers have fallen vacant as per Article 58 (1) of the constitution, as they handed over their resignation letters to the prime minister on November 10 for submitting those to the president.

The article reads, "The office of a Minister other than the Prime Minister shall become vacant if he resigns from office by placing his resignation in the hands of the Prime Minister for submission to the President."

The HC may hear the appeal on November 17, said petitioner's lawyer Eunus Ali Akond.

LEVEL-PLAYING FIELD IN GENERAL ELECTION

Use of govt facilities by ministers in campaign main barrier: SHUJAN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Use of government facilities by the prime minister and ruling party men in electoral campaigns appears to be the main barrier in creating a level-playing field for the upcoming general election, said SHUJAN Secretary Prof Badiul Alam Majumdar yesterday.

The aforementioned also enjoy privileges of using the state-run media, administration and law enforcers. The Election Commission's (EC) silence in this regard and some recent amendment proposals to the electoral code of conducts will impede holding of a free, fair and credible national election, he said.

He was addressing a press conference, "Reform of electoral laws: Where are we?", Shushashoner Jannoy Nagorik (SHUJAN) organised in the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

As per the constitution, the 10th parliamentary election is scheduled to be held in 90 days between October 27 and January 25, 2014. As per the existing code, this 90-day period is the "pre-election period".

The proposed changes say the "pre-election period" is from the announcement of the poll-schedule, which is yet to be made, to declaration of the results.

"The election commission violated the constitution by shrinking the pre-election period," he said.

The prime minister is going around the country at the government's expenses, laying foundation stones of projects and simultaneously holding party rallies, seeking votes and pledging developments, he said.

The proposed changes include increasing electoral expenses from Tk 15,000 to Tk 25,000; decreasing penalty for violators in many cases and scrapping the provision making a three-year membership of a political party mandatory for the party's candidates. These changes will prompt the spread of black money in the election, he viewed. SHUJAN Executive Member Hameeda Hossain also criticised the EC for inaction against violators.

PM arrives in Colombo to join Commonwealth meeting

UNB, Colombo

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrived in Colombo yesterday afternoon to a red carpet welcome on a two-day official visit to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

A special flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the prime minister and her entourage landed at the Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo at 4:45 pm (local time).

Sri Lankan Power and Energy Minister Pavithra Devi Wanniarachchi and Bangladesh High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Md Sufiur Rahman received Hasina at the airport.

After the reception, a group of Sri Lankan artists displayed local dance in honour of the premier at the airport.

From the Colombo Airport, Hasina drove in a ceremonial motorcade to Taj Somudra Hotel where

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