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US to block efforts to undermine AI: Vance

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Can we rise back up from the abyss of corruption?

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PREPARING FOR ELECTION EC targets Dec to get all its tasks done

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

There is no hard and fast decision on when the next election will be held, but the Election Commission is making preparations to hold it in December.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus earlier said the election could be held either at the end of this year or in the first half of next year, depending on the reforms that political parties agree upon.

The work on updating the voter list is in full swing, and the authorities are amending the law to redraw the boundaries of electoral constituencies.

The tasks of registering new political parties and setting rules for international and domestic observers and journalists during polls will be done on time, he said.

EC officials say they, however, are aware that the situation may change after the government and political parties discuss and decide what reforms to make before the election.

Holding the election in December will be a practical move because Ramadan, Higher Secondary Certificate exams, and monsoon will make it harder to conduct polls between February and June, EC officials say.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (Retd) Abul Fazal Sanaullah yesterday said, "We are making preparations assuming that the election will be held in December. We have no alternative plan."

He said this after meeting envoys and representatives from the UNDP and 18 countries, including the EU, the USA, the UK, Japan, China, and South Korea.

A top EC official, requesting anonymity, said, "If we make preparations to hold the election in June [2025], and then [the government] decides to hold it in December, many tasks may remain incomplete."

DEBATE OVER POLLS DATE

Major political parties, including the BNP and its allies, want the national election with the bare minimum reforms. They believe it is possible to hold the next polls by the middle of this year.

The Jamaat-e-Islami favours national polls after all the necessary reforms are made.

The Jatiya Nagorik Committee also prefers national polls after the reforms recommended by reform commissions are made.

Besides, the BNP is against local government polls before the national election while the Nagorik Committee wants the opposite.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said on Monday that the government informed his party that it was working to hold the national election by December.

Fakhrul reiterated that the BNP would not agree to holding local government polls before the national election.

There are discussions about whether the national and local government elections can be held together, he said.

The EC says that the national and local government elections can't be held simultaneously. Past experience shows that conducting all local government elections takes about a year, he said.

Regarding this, EC Sanaullah yesterday said the national election was the EC's priority. However, if the government decides to hold local government elections first, the EC will implement that decision.

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Women demanding reinstatement of their appointments as assistant teachers of government primary schools demonstrate at Shahbagh intersection for the second day yesterday. Story on page 3.

PHOTO PRABIR DAS

TI CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX Bangladesh ranks 14th from bottom

Moves 4 notches up but scores lowest in 13yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite scoring lower in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, Bangladesh has moved four notches up since the situation worsened in other countries as well.

It scored 23 out of 100 in CPI 2024, one point lower than the previous year and the lowest in 13 years, indicating that corruption remains a significant concern.

With this score, the country ranked 151st among 180 countries. In 2023, it ranked 149th. Since 2012, Bangladesh's score fluctuated between 25 and 28, but in 2023, it declined to 24.

According to the CPI 2024 released yesterday, Bangladesh was 14th from the bottom, second lowest in South Asia, and fifth lowest in the Asia-Pacific region. Only Afghanistan is behind Bangladesh in South Asia.

The fall in Bangladesh's score proves that while the previous authoritarian regime talked about fighting corruption, in reality, it fostered, supported, and even participated in corruption, observed Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

"The performance is extremely

SOUTH ASIA RANKING

| COUNTRY | RANKING | SCORE |
|-------------|---------|-------|
| Bhutan | 18 | 72 |
| India | 96 | 38 |
| Sri Lanka | 121 | 32 |
| Pakistan | 135 | 27 |
| Maldives | 96 | 38 |
| Nepal | 107 | 34 |
| Bangladesh | 151 | 23 |
| Afghanistan | 165 | 17 |

disappointing," Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB, said at a press conference marking the publication of CPI 2024.

Bangladesh is among 122 countries with lower scores than the global average of 43. The country is also among 101 nations classified as having a "very serious corruption problem", Iftekharuzzaman said.

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KILLINGS DURING JULY UPRISING ICT verdicts against Hasina, others likely by October

Says law adviser; 1,214 politically motivated and ghost cases to be withdrawn in a week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Verdicts in three to four cases, pending with the International Criminal Tribunal over the killings during the July uprising, are expected by October, said Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul.

The accused in the cases include deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, top Awami League leaders, several police and admin officials, the adviser told a press conference at the Secretariat yesterday.

He also expressed doubts over India complying to Bangladesh's request to extradite Hasina.

Nazrul stated that given India's current stance, it appears that the country will try to reject the request on various pretexts.

He mentioned that India has been asked to return Hasina under the extradition treaty between the two countries.

Responding to a question on the issue, he said, "Our law [the International Crimes Tribunal Act] has a provision for the trial of fugitives. Even in cases of murder, such provisions exist. We are making every effort to bring her back."

Nazrul stated that over 300 complaints have been lodged with the ICT. Of those, 16 cases have been filed formally after the prosecution team scrutinised the complaints. Investigations into four cases are expected to be completed this month. After that, the trial process will

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



জাতীয় স্বাধীন তদন্ত কমিশন
(২০০৯ সালের ২৫ ও ২৬ ফেব্রুয়ারি বিডিআর সদর দপ্তর পিলখানায় সংঘটিত হত্যাকাণ্ড বিষয়ক)

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার এসআরও নম্বর ৪২৫-আইন/২০২৪, তারিখ ২৩ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ প্রজ্ঞাপনমূলে '২০০৯ সালের ২৫ ও ২৬ ফেব্রুয়ারি তৎকালীন বিডিআর সদর দপ্তর, পিলখানায় বিডিআর বিদ্রোহের নামে সংঘটিত বর্বরতম হত্যাকাণ্ডের সাথে জড়িত দেশি-বিদেশি ষড়যন্ত্র ও প্রকৃত ঘটনার স্বরূপ উদ্ঘাটন, ঘটনায় রক্তাক্ত দুটি মামলায় অভিযুক্ত ব্যক্তিবর্গ ব্যতীত, ঘটনার ষড়যন্ত্রকারী, ঘটনার সহযোগী, ঘটনার আলামত ধ্বংসকারী, ঘটনার সংঘটনকারী এবং ঘটনার অপরাধের সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয় ও অপরাধীদের এবং সংঘটিত অপরাধ প্রতিরোধে ব্যবস্থা নিতে ব্যর্থতার জন্য দায়ী ব্যক্তি, গোষ্ঠী, সংস্থা, বিভাগ, সংগঠন চিহ্নিতকরণের লক্ষ্যে একটি 'জাতীয় স্বাধীন তদন্ত কমিশন' গঠন করেছে। ইতোমধ্যে উক্ত কমিশনের কার্যক্রম শুরু হয়েছে।

কমিশন উল্লিখিত বিষয়ে নির্ভরযোগ্য তথ্য ও সাক্ষ্য আহবান করছে।

নিম্নের যে কোন পদ্ধতিতে তথ্য দেয়া যাবে:

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- ই-মেইলের মাধ্যমে: comission@bdr-commission.org
- কমিশনের হাজির হয়ে/কুরিয়ার/ডাকযোগের ঠিকানা:
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- হটলাইন (সকাল ৯ টা থেকে বিকেল ৫ ঘটিকা): ০১৭৬৯-৬০০২৮১

উল্লেখ্য, প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে এই বিষয়ে সহায়তাকারী ব্যক্তিবর্গের পরিচয়ের গোপনীয়তা বজায় রাখা হবে।

মেজর জেনারেল (অব.) আ ল ম ফজলুর রহমান, এনডিসি, পিএসসি (অব.)
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