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Student protesters on the way to padlock administrative buildings of Kuet yesterday. Their five-point demand includes the VC's resignation.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Khaleda Zia's legal woes end

She's cleared in all 37 cases as court acquits her of Niko graft charges

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is now cleared of all the 37 cases filed during the 2007 caretaker government and the Awami League regime as the court acquitted her in the Niko graft case yesterday.

"There is no case pending against Khaleda Zia," Zakir Hossain Bhuiyan, one of her defence lawyers, told The Daily Star.

Yesterday, Judge Md Rabiu Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka cleared Khaleda, also the former prime

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'ROLE IN RIGGED POLLS' Govt going after officials involved

33 more ex-DCs made OSD; many likely to be forced to retire

BAHARAM KHAN

The government has decided to take disciplinary action against 110 officials, including former deputy commissioners (DCs) and divisional commissioners still in service, who played significant roles in the engineered elections during the Awami League's rule.

So far, 45 former DCs, serving as joint secretaries, have been made Officers on Special Duty (OSD), a position deemed a punishment in the civil service.

A list of around 50 former DCs would be sent to the Anti-Corruption Commission so that their actions can be probed. On top of this, 23 additional secretaries and four to six secretaries may be forced to retire soon.

At least three senior government officials currently serving in key positions, including at the Chief Adviser's Office, revealed these to The Daily Star.

LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan in a social media post around 9:00pm yesterday said that all DCs involved in the "nighttime

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Star INTERVIEW

Election schedule likely by Oct

Adviser M Sakhawat Hussain tells Star

With the interim government having completed its first six months in office, all eyes are now on the series of dialogues with political parties to reach a consensus on reforms to be carried out. At this crucial juncture, The Daily Star's Wasim Bin Habib and Baharam Khan sat down with Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain, adviser to the ministries of shipping and labour and employment, to discuss various issues. Below is the full interview.



Star: When will the election take place?

MSH: If I am not mistaken, the election schedule will be announced around October, and the election may be held in December. We might have a new government formed by January. Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has already said if we want to go to polls after urgent reforms, it will be held at the end of this year, and if we wish to do extensive reforms, the election may be held in the first half of next year. Reports from the reform commissions have started coming in, and there will be discussions with

political parties soon regarding the reform proposals. We believe that political parties' opinions on reforms are the most important as no reform will last without their participation.

Star: Based on your experience as Election Commissioner, who actually conducts elections

in Bangladesh: the Election Commission or the government?

MSH: Nowhere in the world can an Election Commission conduct an election alone — it requires the involvement of six to seven lakh people.

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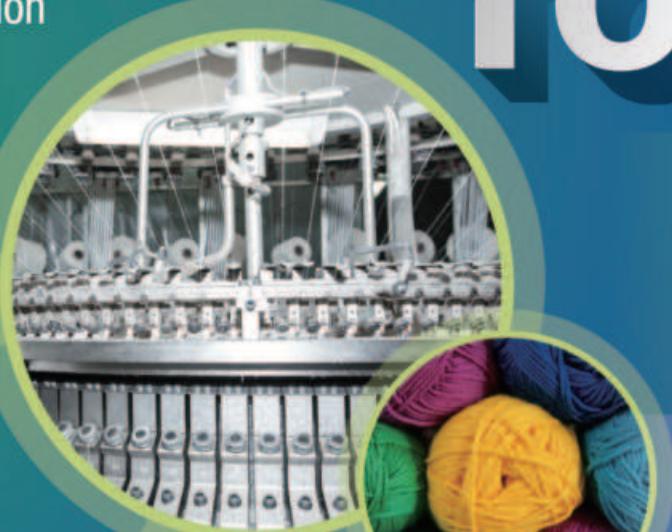
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Zelensky a dictator: Trump

Tells him to move fast for peace or lose Ukraine

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday denounced Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as "a dictator without elections" and said he had better move fast to secure a peace or he would have no country left.

Trump spoke hours after Zelensky hit back at his suggestion that Ukraine was responsible for Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion, saying the US president was trapped in a Russian disinformation bubble.

"A Dictator without Elections, Zelensky better move fast or he is not going to have a Country left," Trump wrote on his Truth Social media platform.



In response, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiba said no one could force his country to give in. "We will defend our right to exist," Sybiba said on X.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Trump calling Zelensky a "dictator" is "false and dangerous", German newspaper Spiegel reported.

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