



ICT ACT AMENDMENT Accused barred from election if formally charged

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Those accused in cases filed with the International Crimes Tribunal will not be able to hold or run for public office once formal charges are pressed against them.

They will be disqualified even before the tribunal takes cognisance of those charges, according to a gazette notification amending the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act, 1973.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin on Monday promulgated an ordinance adding section 20C to the act.

According to the new section, anyone against whom formal charges have been pressed with the ICT under section 9(1) will be deemed disqualified from being elected as, or serving as, a member of parliament.

The same restriction applies to those seeking election or appointment as a member, commissioner, chairman, mayor, or administrator of any local government body.

This amendment clearly violates the most basic principle of justice: a person is innocent until proven guilty.



SHAHDEEN MALIK, eminent jurist

In addition, such individuals will be ineligible for appointment to or for holding of any service of the republic.

However, the ordinance makes it clear that the disqualification will no longer apply if the individual is later discharged or acquitted by the tribunal.

The amendment takes effect immediately.

Explaining the reasons for the amendment, ICT Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam told journalists yesterday that the amendment was "the necessity of the time" as the state is "undergoing reconstruction in a post-revolution environment".

Eminent Jurist Shahdeen Malik, however, sharply

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The locomotive and several coaches of the Udayan Express derailed in Sylhet's Moglabazar area around 7:00am yesterday, leaving several passengers injured. Sylhet's rail links with Dhaka and Chattogram were restored after the lines were cleared nearly three hours later.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

JULY CHARTER IMPLEMENTATION Commission may propose dual role for next JS

MD ABBAS

The National Consensus Commission is planning on two proposals to implement the July National Charter.

One will be to hold a referendum on proposals related to the constitution that all parties have agreed to. The referendum will not be on all the 84 points of the charter.

The other proposal will suggest that the next parliament act as a constitution reform assembly as well as a parliament.

This would give the next parliament a clear

responsibility and timeframe to carry out the reforms, said Prof Ali Riaz, vice-president of the commission.

The commission met constitutional experts yesterday to review progress and discuss the proposals "as well as how the referendum would be phrased and conducted", said Prof Riaz.

Earlier, experts said article 106 of the constitution could be optional for the government to adopt. However, since political parties no longer want it, the experts agreed it is not necessary, according to sources in the meeting.

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India risks irking people if it keeps backing autocrat Tarique tells BBC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman has said there is nothing Bangladesh can do if India chooses to back an autocrat and fall out of favour with its people.



"If they choose to shelter an autocrat and become unpopular with the people of Bangladesh, there's nothing we can do. The people of Bangladesh have decided to keep their distance, so I must stand with my people," he told the BBC Bangla that released the final segment of his two-part interview yesterday.

In the first interview to media in nearly two decades, Tarique said that if his party comes to power in the upcoming polls, its foreign policy will be based on the

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No referendum before the polls BNP draws a line in the sand

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP will not agree to a referendum before the general election. It believes it should not have agreed to a referendum to secure public consent for implementing the July Charter. But since it has agreed, it must ensure that the referendum is held on the same day as the national polls.

Party leaders are adamant that the referendum has to be held on the same day as the general election, using the same polling stations, officials, and ballot boxes -- or else it could disrupt the electoral process and have political consequences for the party.

They believe that Jamaat-e-Islami, which wants the referendum before the polls, will use the result against BNP and run a negative campaign.

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Pacer Marufa Akter gave Bangladesh hope with a two-wicket burst in her opening spell after Sobhana Mostary's 60 and an unbeaten 27-ball 43 from Rabeya Khan had helped them to a challenging total of 178. Leg-spinner Fahim Khatun then took three wickets as Bangladesh reduced England to 103 for six. However, Heather Knight's unbeaten 79 ensured the four-time champions chased down the target with four wickets in hand.

PHOTO: AFP

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY ICT launches probe into AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) has formally begun an investigation into allegations of crimes against humanity against the Awami League as a political party, the first in history, said Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam yesterday.

The investigation was initiated after issuing a complaint registration number based on a previously lodged complaint, he told reporters on the premises of the ICT in Dhaka.

The assigned officers will try to complete their task as soon as possible.

"Upon receiving the investigation report, appropriate legal steps will be taken regarding the Awami League as a party."

Asked whether testimonies presented earlier before the tribunal would have any bearing on the case, Tajul said: "Witnesses have already mentioned the party's involvement during their depositions before the tribunal. These statements are now part of judicial records. Hence, those testimonies will serve as vital evidence in the upcoming investigation against the party."

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Growth outlook brightens, but risks persist: WB

It warns political instability surrounding election may cloud economic prospects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's economy is showing signs of recovery after months of political uncertainty, with the World Bank forecasting growth to rise to 4.8 percent in the current fiscal year from 4 percent a year earlier, as inflation moderates and private consumption begins to strengthen.

However, the Washington-based lender warned of downside risks to the near-term economic outlook, including continued political transition risks, banking sector woes and international trade disruptions.

"Further weakening of the banking sector and heightened political instability surrounding the election -- potentially persisting into the post-election period -- could depress investment more than anticipated," the World Bank said in its Bangladesh Development Update released yesterday.

The report said the interim administration faces limited fiscal space and institutional capacity to advance reforms agreed under the International Monetary Fund-supported programme.

Despite these challenges, however, Bangladesh's GDP growth remained resilient in FY25, supported by strong remittance inflows and steady garment exports. Industrial output recovered modestly in the second half of the year, while construction and investment activity remained subdued.

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