

Troubled state affairs making polls uncertain

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The chief Election Commissioner has declared that the complete voter list would reach their hands by October 12 and the schedule for the elections would be announced on November 1 or 2. The Chief Adviser of the Emergency Government Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed has repeatedly been assuring the nation that the elections would be held on schedule. The Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed recently expressed the hope that in the new year the people would get an elected government. Moreover, the people are very enthusiastic about the elections because they expect that transition to democracy through the upcoming polls would put an end to their sufferings caused by the economic hardship and unprecedented spurt in the overall cost of living. But unfortunately the prospect of free and fair elections being held on schedule and participated by all parties still remains as uncertain as before. The difference between the government and the major political parties are centered on three issues such as registration of political parties with the Election Commission under the Representation of People order (Amendment) ordinance 2008, lifting of emergency before elections and guarantee for participation in the polls by the two top leaders Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia. Again while AL and Jamaat agrees to registration, BNP still remains undecided on the issue. Finally, there is still no sign of any consensus between the government and the major parties on lifting of emergency and guarantee for the two leaders participation in polls. Holding of the parliamentary elections and participation of all parties in it hinge on the resolution of these two issues as both AL and BNP are unlikely to join elections under emergency and without their top leaders. Leaders of AL are unhappy with the rejection of Sheikh Hasina's bail prayer and those of BNP with the submission of chargesheet against Khaleda Zia in the Barapukuria coal mine graft case. These have aroused questions among the rank and file of AL and BNP whether the two top leaders, though out of jail now, would ultimately be allowed to contest the polls. It is in the greater interest of the country that both the government and the political parties should be guided by reasons to pave the way for smooth holding of the elections.