

JS polls in 3rd week of Dec

CA says in his address to nation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed last night announced that the long-stalled ninth parliamentary election would be held in the third week of December.

Addressing the nation, he also said the government would either suspend or relax relevant provisions of the emergency power rules to create an environment congenial to electioneering.

Besides, it would open a formal dialogue with the political parties on May 22, and for that his office would start sending out invitations today.

In the 26-minute speech broadcast on radio and television, Fakhruddin declared withdrawal of the countrywide ban on indoor politics with effect from today. He said the decision has been taken to help the political parties gear up for the election.

"I hope this will dispel all questions and doubts over the general election," he said referring to the announcements in his address.

"The government is resolved to do everything necessary to make the election free, fair and meaningful," he said adding that the provisions of the emergency rules pertaining to election would be relaxed or suspended at an appropriate time.

"It is essential to have a national charter to



among the government, political parties and representatives of people from all walks of life. A proper and sustainable election infrastructure will be put in place through this charter," Fakhruddin said.

He stressed the need for an agreement among the organisations to shun negative and destructive politics. "Hartal, blockade and violent demonstrations must come to an end once and for all. The nation does not want to see anarchy in the name of political activities in future."

A consensus should be reached before the election also on making parliament effective, observed the chief adviser, adding that a proposal to that end has already been discussed.

"It must be ensured that no-one would reject the election results

- Suspension/relaxation of related provisions of EPR
- Dialogue with parties to begin May 22
- Indoor politics allowed countrywide
- A National Charter to be formulated
- Consensus before polls for making JS effective
- Flunkey politics should end to ensure quality
- Hartal, blockade, violent demo should end

would attach due importance to the issue.

He was scathing about the culture of servility that enshrouds front organisations of the political parties.

He said a qualitative change in politics is a must. "We will have to understand these significant issues and work out solutions through the dialogue."

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It is everyone's duty to make the dialogue successful, he continued. "There is no scope for failure. The entire nation is united in terms of aspirations and that's where lies our main strength."

Hoping that the political parties will join the talks with an open mind, he said: "I can assure that the government does not have any pre-

In his speech, Fakhruddin also outlined steps and achievements of the military-backed government since taking over on January 12 last year.

He claimed his administration has already achieved considerable success in its measures to do away with the use of black money and muscle power, contain corruption and establish the rule of law—all to make the elections truly free and fair.

He said the election would be held any day in the third week of December and a specific date would be set up by the Election Commission (EC) later.

He said polls to local government bodies are crucial to strengthening those, and the EC has already announced it would hold election to some municipalities and city corporations before

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the parliamentary polls.

"They [EC] have plans to hold upazila elections as well," said the chief adviser.

He however assured that in no way would those polls hamper the parliamentary election.