

# President sworn in as chief of caretaker govt

Opposition absent at ceremony, Khaleda happy; Iajuddin seeks blessings, prepares to name 10 advisers

HAKHAWAT LITON

President Iajuddin Ahmed last night assumed the office of chief adviser to the non-party caretaker government in addition to his presidential responsibilities as "major political parties failed to reach a consensus on an acceptable person for the post".

The Awami League-led 14-party alliance that vehemently opposed the president's proposal on Sunday for assuming the post himself neither accepted nor rejected the new caretaker chief.

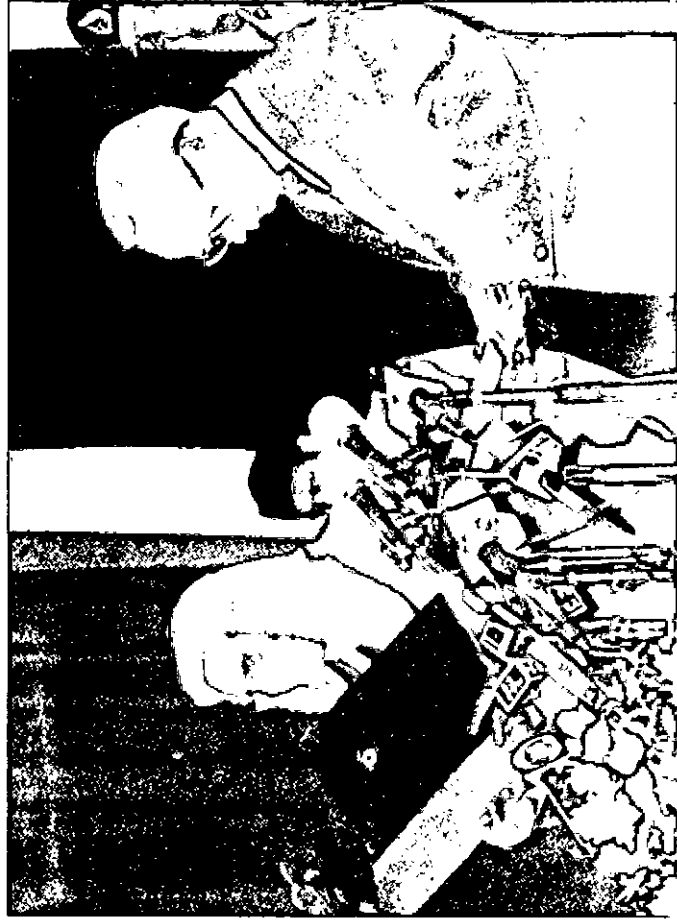
An emergency meeting of the 14-party last night observed that Iajuddin's activities will decide whether they will contest the next polls or not.

Before assuming the office of the caretaker government chief, the president expressed his deep concern "over the political violence menacing changeover of power."

"The country is in grave crisis," the president said and sought cooperation of all political parties for the restoration of law and order and continuation of the constitutional process, state-run news agency BSS reported last evening quoting a Bangladesh spokesman.

The president, elected by the BNP-led alliance in the recently dissolved eighth parliament, was sworn in as the chief adviser by Chief Justice Syed R. Mudassir Husain at a ceremony at Bangladesh Darbar Hall at 8:00pm.

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Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain, left, swears in President Iajuddin Ahmed as chief adviser to the caretaker government at Bangladesh last night. PHOTO: PID

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