

Bangladesh elections to be delayed

by UPI

DHAKA - The head of elections in Bangladesh says it will be at least 18 months before elections for a new parliament can be held.

Bangladesh is currently under a military-backed caretaker government which was appointed in January when elections were to be held. Those elections were put off following widespread and prolonged protests and violence, the BBC reported. The government has also barred all political activity in the country and arrested several senior politicians and others on corruption charges.

The government is under pressure from the United States to set a time frame for election reform and restoring democracy. But Bangladesh chief election commissioner A.T.M. Shamsul Huda said that at least 18 months were needed to prepare new voting lists and draw up electoral laws, the BBC reported.

Earlier this week, Lt. Gen. Moeen U. Ahmed, the head of the Bangladesh army, was quoted as saying the country should not return to being an "elective democracy" as that had only encouraged corruption and human rights violations. The BBC report said Ahmed did not spell out an alternative.

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