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Politicisation of EC to destroy democracy: CPB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday alleged the government has deliberately appointed two 'controversial' commissioners to Election Commission (EC) to destroy the country's democratic process.

CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan urged all the left-leaning political forces to form an 'alternative left democratic alliance' to protect the country from imperialism, communalism, militancy, bomb blasts and 'misrule' of the government.

He was addressing a party rally organised by CPB city unit at Muktangan in the city to mark the fifth anniversary of the bomb blast at a CPB rally at Paltan Maidan on January 20, 2001.

The CPB president said, "The politicisation of the Election Commission will make a deadlock which indicates destruction of the

democratic process.' CPB leaders yesterday demanded trial of all the recent bomb blasts in the country, reforms in electoral system, and putting an end to politicisation in the EC and 'misrule' of the BNP-

Jamaat-ledgovernment. CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim said the 'controversial' chief election commissioner (CEC) is preparing fresh roll so that BNP wins the next polls.

He said the two newly appointed election commissioners will be forced to resign, adding that without reforms in the election system, free and fair polls cannot

On Bangla Bhai, the CPB president said looking for him by helicopters is waste of public money, as the militant leader is under shelter

Bangla Bhai is the fifth column of the US. They have appointed him to take control of Bangladesh creating unrest in the country; he

"None of the bomb blasts in the country was properly investigated, as an international force is

Among others, Ruhin Hossain Prince, Montu Ghosh, Syed Ahmed of CPB and Selina Sultana Sumi of Bangladesh Chhatra Union addressed the rally.

The CPB will observe a countrywide demonstration on January 26 in protest against politicisation of

Shias win Iraq election but without majority

AFP, Baghdad

Religious Shia parties surged to victory in Iraq's general election but must find coalition partners after failing to secure an overall majority, according to uncertified results released yesterday.

The Shia-based United Iraci Alliance won 128 of parliament's 275 seats, the electoral commission said, almost five weeks after Iraqis went to the polls on December 15. Their allies in the Kurdish Alliance

The results, though final, still need to be certified after a new appeals period to stand.

The Shia and Kurdish formations, who joined forces in the outgoing government, were just three seats short of the two-thirds majority needed to elect a president and push through constitutional reforms.

The Sunni-based National Concord Front took 44 seats and another Sunni-based party, the National Dialogue Front, won 11

Former prime minister lyad Allawi's secular-based Iraqi National List took 25 seats and the Kurdish Islamic Party won five

The outcome of the election is seen as a crucial milestone in rebuilding Iraq, with hopes pinned on encouraging the disenchanted Sunni community to play a full role in political life and thereby dampen the raging insurgency.

However it remains in doubt to what extent the Sunnis, who dominated the regime under Saddam Hussein and form the backbone of the insurgency, will accept the

results of the poll. Preliminary results had given a strong showing for the conservative Shia alliance and their Kurdish allies, prompting calls of fraud and vote rigging from Sunni and secularpolitical parties.

US demands quick UN action on Iran standoff

The United States on Thursday demanded that the UN Security Council, which has the power to impose sanctions, promptly confront Iran over its nuclear ambitions, while Russia and China urged caution.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged Iran to scrap its resumption of nuclear-fuel research and return to talks, but said "if all else fails" the Security Council should take up the issue.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited Syria in a signal to the world that the two regional allies, each facing threats of referral to the council, will not be

"We have been very clear that the time has come for a referral of Iran to the Security Council," US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told reporters in Washington.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Chittagong Port Authority

(CPA) yesterday handed over allot-

ment letters of seventy plots to

people whose land was acquired

for the construction of the New

Mooring Container Terminal

handed over 16.8969 acres of land,

including 3.1919 acre for mosque,

grayeyard, roads and drains, to 51

families affected by the acquisition

of land from local people for the

construction of the NCT over a

Amir Khosru Mahmud

Chowdhury, MP in charge of

Chittagong district, handed over

the allotment letters to the affected

The CPA acquired 13.645 acres

ofland for the terminal.

total area of 14.275 acres.

With this the CPA formally

NEW MOORING TERMINAL

the affected

70 more plots for

this month to seek a united front, while the IAEA board is to debate Iran at an emergency meeting on February 2. So far no consensus has emerged on action.

Some members of the US Congress, growing frustrated, said they would propose steps such as reimposing a US ban on imports of Iranian carpets and caviar, worth \$150 million annually, or urging that Washington end support for Iran's World Trade Organization

The European Union had said it was mulling a Russian proposal to the International Atomic Energy Agency that would stop short of formally referring Iran to the coun-

But German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said it was time for diplomacy to "take place under a different roof."

families at a function held at the

Chittagong Port Training Institute

yesterday morning with CPA

Chairman AMM Shahadat Hossain

ers of the acquired land for their

sacrifice and appreciated the CPA

for quick implementation of the

measures for compensation and

rehabilitation of the affected peo-

Hossain Khan and Bandar

(Chittagong Port) Jativatabadi

Sramik Dal General Secretary

Sheikh Nurullah Bahar spoke at the

39,21,21,000 in damages for infra-

structure and movable properties

and Tk 7,30,14,000 in dislodgement

The port authority has given Tk

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

programme.

CPA Chief Engineer Dr Safayet

Amir Khosru thanked the own-

A referral would mean Iran

West's suspicions it is pursuing a nuclear bomb. Tehran says it needs atomic energy for civilian use.

Germany, Britain and France have been the keyWestern negotiators with Iran, but the EU broke off talks last week after Iran removed UN seals on uranium enrichment

They should not escalate. They should not press ahead with their nuclear-fuel research," Annan told

Asked how the Security Council could become involved, he said, "When I say all else fails, I mean once we have exhausted the atomic-agency process, which is still ongoing, it may well end up here and the council will have to

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov took a cautious line, saying his country's position at the IAEA SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

yesterday.

around 10:40am. The AL leader was rushed to Chittagong Medical College and

Sadeq Chowdhury, also an assistant vice-president of National Bank at Jubilee Road branch, was returning to his resi-

at Badurtali. Son of Obaidur Rahman

kills Ctg AL leader

Sadeq Chowdhury, 52, senior vicepresident of Awami League (AL) Chittagong north district unit, died in a road accident in the port city A speeding bus of City Special

Service knocked Sadeq while he was crossing the road at Bahodderhat intersection at

Hospital (CMCH) where he succumbed to his injuries at around

dence in Chandgaon A block area after visiting an ailing fellow leader

Chowdhury, president of the SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Pipes for underground gas line kept on the road near Science Laboratory for the last one week block the footpath and

Horrifying tales of plights of 48 fortune-seekers

Forty-eight Bangladeshi youths stuck in the Sahara desert for at least ten months came back home on Thursday and told horrifying tales of their plights on their way to the "lucrative" European job mar-

Lured by middlemen of emigration to Italy and Spain, the fortuneseekers had sold their properties and borrowed money at high interest, but all their hopes have shat-

Most of the youths, who were university graduates or at least passed SSC, were flown from Dhaka to Mali on tourist visa between the last quarter of 2003 and early 2005, a few of them told The Daily Star yesterday.

In Mali, the middlemen forced them to stay at a dark house for at least seven months to evade arrest.

One night they were boarded on the sun during the ten-month stay pickup vans for a journey across the Sahara to Morocco from where they were scheduled to sneak into

"We [the 48 Bangladeshis] were on three vans during the 15-day journey and suffered a lot as we carried very small amount of food and money," said Qaiyum Sikder of Manikganj. As soon as the vans reached the

Morocco border, the border security attacked them forcing the drivers to go back. "After driving around 25km backward, the drivers abandoned us in the desert," he The hapless Bangladeshi youths

looking for shelters in the vast desert finally discovered some sort of tents used by the rebels of Mali.

We were not allowed to go out of the tents during day time. I cannot even remember if we ever saw

ASIAN HIGHWAY ISSUE

in the Sahara," Qaiyum said. "We would work for the rebels

like fetching water and carrying loads in exchange of a few pieces of bread. Extreme heat during the day and chill at night were also unbearable for us. We were afraid we would not live that way and see our relatives again," said Ariful Islam of Keraniganj.

Many people of different South Asian and African countries died in the desert of malaria and other diseases. "We heard that two Bangladeshis of another group also died," he said.

After about 10 months, a UN official of the Sub-Saharan region named Captain Mahmud learnt about these Bangladeshis and went to inquire about them.

Mahmud and later another official contacted the International SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

US still sees problems in nuclear deal with India

AFP, New Delhi

India and the United States still face difficulties before a landmark nuclear deal can be sealed giving the south Asian giant access to previously forbidden technology, a senior US official said yesterday. "There is no question that we've

made some progress over the last six months but that much further progress has to be made and that there are some difficulties ahead of us," US Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burnssaid. "But I've spent 25 years in diplo-

macy thinking that with goodwill and dedication countries can reach agreement and I have the same feeling about this agreement," Burns told reporters after two days of talks in New Delhi. He met Indian foreign secretary

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Expat experts term it a big failure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Benapole-Teknaf route's not being included in the Asian Highway is a big failure of the government, expatriate Bangladeshi communications experts yester-

The travel distance for the eastwest traffic can be reduced to a significant extent by use of Benapole-Teknaf route, said a paper prepared by New York-based senior transportation engineer Shoaib Chowdhury. Read out at a press conference

at Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium, the paper also said the route should have been included for the best interest of Asian nations including India, Bangladesh and

Scholarsbangladesh.com, a

website-based organisation of the expatriate Bangladeshis, organised the press conference.

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain was the chief guest at the press conference addressed also by ME Chowdhury Shameem, founder and president of scholarsbangladesh.com, and Dr Anowar Karim, a Washingtonbased Bangladeshi transportation All the eastern and southeastern

nations including China could possibly expand their business with the Middle East, Europe and East African nations by taking advantage of the Asian Highway network and existing Indian seaports and the Chittagong Port, it But poor initiatives, slow

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

AL demands are illogical, says Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

pate in the next election under the existing caretaker government system and Election Commission, as its demands for reforms in the caretaker government and removal of election commissioners are illogical, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said.

Moudud also said no government even that of the AL had ever consulted the opposition parties to appoint the election commission-

"The Awami League led 14party does not want to go to the next election as its leaders already know that they will not win the election if the BNP led four-party alliance remains intact," Moudud said at a discussion held at the National Press Club.

Swadhinata Forum Kendriya Sangsad organised the meeting to mark the 70th birth anniversary of late president Ziaur Rahman.

Awami League stands no chance of winning the elections if they are held in a free and fair manner," said the minister adding that all previous elections under the existing caretaker government system were fully free and fair.

He also said the last AL government did not discuss with us the appointments of election commissioners and chief adviser of the caretaker government.

"How come the party now demands reforms in caretaker government and electoral systems when it did not do those while in power for five years?" asked

Swadhinata Forum President Abu Naser Mohammad Rahmatullah presided over the meeting addressed among others by Adviser of the commerce ministry Barkat Ullah Bulu, Dhaka Mahanagar BNP General Secretary Abdus Salam, Dhaka Sangbadil Union President Elahi Newaj Khan Saju, Prime Minister's Assistant Press Secretary AKM Mahiuddin Khan Mohan and Sarkari Karmachari Samannay Parishad President Abdul Mannan.

Koirala, many others under house arrest

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Soldiers and armed police enforced a curfew in the Nepali capital yesterday and placed leading politicians under house arrest, thwarting a planned protest against the king, who seized absolute power last year. Armoured personnel carriers

mounted with machineguns were stationed across Kathmandu, while thousands of soldiers and police in green and blue camouflage fanned out to guard almost everystreet, square and junction. Police said about 200 people had been detained for violating the

Former prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala and other leading

politicians were put under house arrest before dawn on Friday, hours before the rally was due to take place to press King Gyanendra to restore democracy.

The crackdown was effective and the ancient square due to host the demonstration was deserted throughout the day. Police armed

Future of 6000 Rohingya kids at camps bleak

Bikkhubdha Nagarik Samaj brings out a procession carrying national flags from the Central Shaheed Minar protest-

No access to higher education

ing fundamentalism, communalism, and militancy yesterday.

PORIMOL PALMA, Back From Cox's

Future of at least six thousand teenage Rohingya boys and girls living in the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar for more than a decade is uncertain, as they have no access to education after completing primaryschool.

Living for years in 10 feet by 12 feet congested accommodations housing 10 to 15 members per family, the boys and girls who were supposed to bloom in their talents, now see no hope for the future.

They have nothing to do other than loitering in the walled camps at Kutupalong in Ukhia and at

Nayapara in Teknaf which are approximately 1.25 square kilometre in size and where more than 20,000 Rohingya refugees have been living since 1992.

"What shall we do...we don't even have a playground. We want to go back to our country, but the government there (Myanmar) does not recognize us. The police torture us and so we don't dare to go," an 18-year boy told The Daily Star that recently visited the Kutupalong He requested not to mention his

name saying that the police

deployed in the camps to maintain

law and order would torture him

and might even put him in jail if

they found out that he was giving information to the press. Several hundred children encircled an EU-UN team when it visited the camps on November 8 and gave an account of the sufferings

they go through in their daily lives. "I want to study, but there is no way to it ... what will be our future if we don't get higher education... or learn any trade," said Akbar Hossain, 21 of Nayapara camp who had come to Bangladesh in 1991 with his parents following religious

Arakan state of Myanmar. Several boys of Nayapara camp told The Daily Star that many of SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

and political persecution in the



First Pluto mission blasts into space

REUTERS, Cape Canaveral

The world's first mission to Pluto blasted into space on Thursday after its launch aboard an unmanned Atlas 5 rocket to begin a 9 and a half-year journey to the only unexplored planet in the solar

"It's now our job to be good stewards of the spacecraft, and to learn to fly it in the real environment that it was built for," Alan Stern, the mission's lead scientist from the Southwest Research Institute in Boulder, Colorado, told a post-launch news conference.

The launch team did a great job of getting us on our way," added project manager Glen Fountain, with the Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics

Laboratory, which designed the

After two days of delays due to oor weather and a power outage, the 197-foot-tall (60-metre-tall) rocket, built by Lockheed Martin Corp., lifted off at 2 p.m. (1900 GMT) from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.

The launch team remained on edge until 45 minutes later when the plutonium-powered spacecraft finally and successfully separated from the Atlas' second and last upper-stage rocket booster. The engine firings made the probe, called New Horizons, soar at more than 10 miles per second, or 36,000 mph (58,000 kph) -- the fastest man-made object ever to leave Earth's orbit.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

No hartal in Ctg tomorrow

BDNEWS, Ctg

Chittagong port city will remain out of the purview of tomorrow's countrywide hartal marking the centenary of Maizbhandar Urs

The two-day urs will be held at Fatikchhari on Sunday and Monday. The decision came from an urgent meeting of the 14-party

alliance yesterday with Chittagong Awami League President Abdul Mannan in the chair. **Prayer Timing** January 21

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-43	5-47
Esha	7-15	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

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