

# CEC's resignation a must for fair election

## Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other election commissioners must resign immediately for holding a free and fair general election.

They said to establish an independent, neutral and effective Election Commission (EC), people who have respect for democracy, should be appointed as the CEC and other commissioners on the basis of consultations with all political parties and eminent persons.

The seminar titled 'Independent, neutral and effective Election Commission: Pre-conditions for holding a free, fair and acceptable election' was organised by Peshajibi Samannay Parishad, a platform of professionals, at the National Press Club in the city.

Presenting a keynote paper, Chowdhury Khalequzzaman, co-convenor of the parishad, said electoral reform proposals of 14-party opposition combine must be accepted as people's hope and aspirations have been reflected in them.

He said the country is now passing through a hard time as uncertainty looms over voter list and next general election.

The present CEC has no right to cling to his post anymore as he initiated the work of upgrading the voter list by misinterpreting the Voter List Ordinance 1982 and ignoring the Section 118(2) of the Constitution, Khalequzzaman added.

He put forward a 15-point recommendation on behalf of the parishad that includes establishing an independent EC free from executive control.

Prof Rehman Sobhan, chairman

of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) said the right to vote is the basic rights of people and everybody have to think how they can exercise their franchise without any fear.

"Many proposals have now been placed for electoral reforms and we should go for only realistic ones as the time is very limited," he said.

Prof Rehman said the political parties should come together in one platform in order to hold the election in a free and fair manner.

Chairman of the Board of

Directors of the Ittefaq Group Barrister Moinul Hussein said the crisis should be resolved by the political parties and the parishad can play a role of the civil society.

He said the parishad should talk to main political parties BNP and Awami League to help reach a consensus.

Mujibul Haque, former cabinet secretary, said the CEC should resign as people have lost their faith in him.

He also urged the lawyers to take legal and constitutional measures to

get rid of the CEC.

He said a successful parliamentary government must ensure neutrality of bureaucracy.

While moderating the seminar, Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud said people are now scared whether the election will be held or not.

He said the parishad demands holding of next general election in a free and fair manner.

Justice Golam Rabbani, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique and Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury were present at the seminar.



Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud speaks at a seminar titled 'Independent, neutral and effective Election Commission: Pre-conditions for holding a free, fair and acceptable election' organised by Peshajibi Samannay Parishad at National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Professor Rehman Sobhan and Barrister Moinul Hussein while on his left are Justice Golam Rabbani and Chowdhury Khalequzzaman.

# Take pvt initiatives for development

## Prof Yunus tells function

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Professor Muhammad Yunus, the pioneer of microcredit, has called for private initiatives to get the jobs done instead of wasting time by criticising the government for its failure to meet public demands.

As the government fails to work up to mark, private initiatives should come forward for overall development of the country, he said while speaking as chief guest at an education stipend giving ceremony yesterday.

The function was organised by Chattagram Samity (Chittagong Society) Dhaka to distribute stipends among the meritorious intermediate and honours students of greater Chittagong.

"We have elected the government, so we have the right to criticise it in order to make it constructive and accountable, but we cannot discharge our obligation only by criticising the government," said Yunus, also founder of Grameen Bank.

"A shuttle air service between Dhaka and Chittagong is very necessary, and I think instead of pressing the government to initiate it, the private sector can do it," he said, adding, "Money will not be a problem as it is easy to collect it by floating shares."

The ability of government is very limited comparing to collective power of people, Yunus said men-

tioning the collective efforts of his Grameen Bank.

"We started operation of Grameen Bank 30 years ago allocating Tk 856 among 42 women, but last year our bank allocated Tk 4500 crore among 65 lakh woman members across the country," he said.

He said it had been possible only

for the collective effort and inner spirit of the members of the bank, Yunus said, adding that the bank could not do so if it had wasted time demanding government or other external support.

A total of 100 students received study stipends at the function. Of them, 30 intermediate students got

Tk 5000 each while honours level students received Tk 6000 each.

Jamal Uddin Ahmed, chairman of the advisory committee of Chattagram Samity and Abu Alam Chowdhury, chairman of its executive body, also spoke at the function.



Prof Muhammad Yunus gives away certificates at a 'stipend giving ceremony' organised by Chattagram Samity, Dhaka, in the city yesterday.

# Indian govt proposes only women judges for rape trials

REUTERS, New Delhi

India has proposed that only women judges try rape cases to help sexual assault victims get justice faster and make trials sensitive to their trauma, a law ministry spokesman said yesterday.

The proposal, a bill which has to be passed by parliament, was approved at a cabinet meeting late on Thursday, SM Kumar said.

Women's groups and rights activists have for long campaigned for reforming the judicial process that deals with sexual assault in a country where a woman is raped every 29 minutes.

The national capital, New Delhi, is the most unsafe Indian city for women, accounting for 30 percent of rapes, according to government data.

"This is a very positive step and will help get justice for the rape

victim," said Girija Vyas, chairwoman of the National Women's Commission.

"Until now, male lawyers were able to threaten the victim and scare her. A woman judge will help build a sensitive atmosphere."

The amendment would also allow the rape victim to have her lawyer with her during cross-examination. Earlier, this was in-camera, making it uncomfortable for the victim, Kumar said.

"A rape victim will also be given a female lawyer because only a woman can understand a woman," he added.

The cabinet also proposed to allow victims of crime to appoint their own lawyers instead of being forced to use government prosecutors and end the practice of witnesses making confessions to police.



## Moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged, Met Office said. Yesterday's highest temperature of 33.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Sylhet and the lowest of 23.5 degrees at Sandwip.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:39pm today and rises at 5:30am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

| City/Town   | Temperature in Celsius |      | Humidity in percentage |         |
|-------------|------------------------|------|------------------------|---------|
|             | Max                    | Min  | Morning                | Evening |
| Dhaka       | 31.6                   | 26.4 | 74                     | 69      |
| Chittagong  | 30.0                   | 25.8 | 71                     | 77      |
| Rajshahi    | 33.4                   | 26.0 | 78                     | 93      |
| Khulna      | 32.2                   | 26.2 | 88                     | --      |
| Barisal     | 30.6                   | 26.0 | 92                     | 78      |
| Sylhet      | 33.5                   | 25.6 | 79                     | 67      |
| Cox's Bazar | 30.0                   | 24.4 | 90                     | 83      |

# 'Chintito' donates Tk 3 lakh for poor cancer patients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Professor Nizamuddin Ahmed, editor of the book 'A stir is born' based on the series 'Chintito' published in the Star Weekend Magazine, donated yesterday Tk 3 lakh for poor cancer patients, collected from the sale of the book.

At a special ceremony at Liberation War Museum in the city, he handed over the cheque to MA Jalil, chief executive officer of Mosabbir Cancer Care Centre.

The money was collected through a special drive in which 300 copies of the book was sold for Tk 1,000 each to raise funds for poor cancer patients, especially those coming from rural areas.

The book is the compilation of the satire column 'Chintito' published in the Star Weekend Magazine. The column deals with national and international issues with an acute sense of humour.

MA Jalil, Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, Aasha Mehrin Amin, editor of the weekend magazine, SM Babar, vice-president of Residential Model School Old Boys' Association, and Saiful Islam, former president of DCCI, spoke on the occasion.

The function was attended by a large number of 'Chintito' readers.

# Nishorgo Arch Design Competition winners

Nishorgo, a Protected Forest Area Management Programme of Forest Department, arranged a National Architectural Design Competition for Visitor's Interpretation Centre at Lawachara National Park in Moulvibazar recently, says a press release.

The competition received overwhelming responses from the nature loving architects. Eighty one registrations were made and a total of 32 creative designs and models have been submitted.

The Board of Jurors comprising Architects Khadem Ali, Jalal Ahmad, Saif Ul Haque, Iftekhar A Khan, and Engineer Gene V George in four extensive jury sessions and by site visit decided on the winning designs.

The best designs were selected on the basis of its compatibility, Nishorgo message, buildability, building materials or technology, conservation/green approach and functionality.

The 1st, 2nd & 3rd winners are: VITTI Shapati Brindo Ltd (Ehsan Khan, Iqbal Habib, Ishtiaque Zahir & Shuvojit Chowdhury), Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury and Marina Tabassum.

Nishorgo Support Project with financial support from USAID arranged this competition to ensure that most creative and environment friendly design gets built in Lawachara National Park and subsequently would be adapted in other sites.

The competition was organised in association with Institute of Architects of Bangladesh (IAB). AMK Steels, Bay Developments Ltd & Mirpur Ceramic Works Ltd sponsored the competition.

In Bangladesh, where ecosystems are under intense pressure, eco-tourism can provide economic incentives to the local people for conservation. Visitor centres are essential tools for development of eco-tourism in the Protected Areas.

## Obituary



Qazi Amirul Hoque, former director of United Commercial Bank Ltd, passed away on August 3 at the age of 56, says a press

release. He left behind his wife, two sons, a daughter, and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

Amirul Hoque was also an industrialist and social worker.

His qulkhwani will be held at his house after Maghrib prayers tomorrow.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the qulkhwani.

## Bhabatoshu Guha



Bhabatoshu Guha, a businessman in Feni, passed away at a clinic in Chittagong on July 24 at the age of 82, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, two sons, three daughters, grandchildren and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

His Shradhha will be held at his house at Masterpara in Feni today.



Professor Nizamuddin Ahmed, editor of the book 'A stir is born', hands over a cheque for Tk 3 lakh to MA Jalil, CEO of Mosabbir Cancer Care Centre, at a special ceremony at Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday.

# Fake Rab informer gets 4 years for extortion

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court on Thursday sentenced a man to four years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for extorting Tk one lakh identifying himself as a Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) informer.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza of the Speedy Trial Court-4 handed down the sentence in presence of the convict Ali Ahmed alias Suman.

The court also fined him Tk 10,000, in default, to suffer three months more imprisonment.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 14 prosecution witnesses.

# Dhaka to write to UNSC to stop Israeli offensive

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh as well as other member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) will send letters to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) soon, urging it to convene an emergency meeting on the Middle East crisis and force Israel to halt its aggression against Lebanon.

"The executive committee of the 57-member OIC at its meeting held in Malaysia on Thursday decided that all member states would send letters to the UNSC individually, requesting it to take actions for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Lebanon," said Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin while briefing the journalists at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

He said Bangladesh in line with the decision taken by the executive committee of the OIC will send a letter to the UN body in this regard.

The foreign secretary said Bangladesh's stand on the Lebanon issue in the special summit of the

OIC was highly acclaimed by the member states.

About the outcome of the special summit on the Middle East crisis, he said all member states have strongly condemned the Israeli attacks on Lebanon.

He said the extraordinary session of the OIC has also adopted a 14-point declaration charging Israel with full responsibility for the consequences of its aggression on Lebanon and demanded compensation for loss of lives and property.

The foreign secretary said the Putrajaya declaration demanded immediate steps by the UNSC to restore peace by enforcing unconditional ceasefire in Lebanon.

He said the OIC leaders called for convening a special session of the United Nations Human Rights Council as well as a meeting of the high contracting parties to the 4th Geneva Convention to address the violation in Lebanon.

Hemayetuddin said the leaders welcomed all efforts taken towards ending the violence and bringing about lasting peace in Lebanon.

They stressed the important role of the UN in this regard, underlining the importance of the consent of parties concerned on any future settlement, he added.

The foreign secretary said the OIC leaders urged the international community, especially the member countries of the OIC, to generously contribute to current humanitarian relief efforts.

He said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in her speech called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Lebanon, with total cessation of violence and deployment of an international force for stabilising the Israel-Lebanon border under the United Nations.

"The prime minister's call was widely appreciated in the meeting and included in the declaration," the foreign secretary said.

Hemayetuddin said on the sidelines of the special OIC session, the prime minister of Malaysia and the prime minister of Lebanon separately met Khaleda Zia and thanked her for her country's strong support for the cause of Lebanon.

# Police foil garment workers' meeting in Ashulia

JU CORRESPONDENT

A meeting called by the combined platform of 16 Garments Sramik Federation (GSF) in Ashulia could not be held yesterday as law enforcers did not allow anyone to enter the venue to attend the meeting.

Leaders of the combined platform became infuriated at the move to foil the meeting and vowed to announce tougher programmes in the meeting of the steering committee to be held tomorrow in Dhaka.

The cancelled meeting, supposed to be held at 4:30pm at Bashundhara field at Baipal in Ashulia, was aimed at informing the workers about the agreement signed between the platform and

the government and mobilising workers to implement the decisions in a peaceful way, sources said.

Since noon, huge contingents of police, riot police and armed police have taken position at every thoroughfare leading to the meeting venue and prevented both the general people and workers from entering the area. Even the journalists were barred at several points.

Meanwhile, leaders of the platform claimed that the death news of Liton, a worker of Scandex Garments Ltd (SGL), is not true and he is still alive.

The identity card of Liton, recovered by police on Thursday with a body of an unknown person, was taken away by the gang that alleg-

edly kidnapped Liton several days back identifying themselves as members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), leaders alleged.

They further alleged that police did not accept the abduction case in full details filed by Liton, organising secretary of Savar unit of Swadhin Bangla Garments Sramik Karmochari Federation (SBGSKF), and also omitted the incident of snatching of identity card.

"We will hand over Liton to BGMEA today (Friday) to ensure his security as he feels insecure," said Shamima Nasrin, president of SBGSKF, adding, "The death news is a conspiracy".



Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) forms a human chain at Shahbagh in the city yesterday protesting move to construct pillar bridge on Karnaphuli river in Chittagong.



## Soft Fair

The closing ceremony of 7th Soft Fair 2006, organized by North South University Computer Club, will be held. Venue: Bashundhara City (level 7, block b). Time: 6:00pm.

## Discussion

Bangladesh-Bharat Sampriti Parishad will hold a discussion on 'Strengthening Democracy through Institution-building in Bangladesh'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

## Regular meeting

The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.

## Human chain

National Home and Domestic Workers' Union will form a human chain

to protest price hike of essentials. Venue: Mukhtangan. Time: 4:00pm.

## Digital exhibition

Development Research Network (D.net) will organise a digital exhibition entitled 'Information technology and human rights'. Venue: Brac Centre Inn. Time: 10:00am.

## Monthly meeting

Association of Diploma engineers, Bangladesh (ADEB) will hold its monthly meeting. Venue: ADEB office. Time: 10:00am.

## Memento handing ceremony

Mementos will be handed to Liberation War Museum authorities. Venue: Liberation War Museum. Time: 5:00pm.

# BJP (Matin) conference on August 8

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP-Matin) will hold its conference at Engineers' Institution at 10:00 am on August 8.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Khondaker Mosharrif Hossain, Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, and Chairman of Islami Oikya Jote Mufti Fazlul Haque Ameeni will address the conference, a press release said.

Chairman of Bangladesh Jatiya Party Prof MA Matin will preside over the function.

All leaders and workers of the party have been requested by Secretary General of the party Noor Mohammad Khan to make the conference a success.