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CEC says he won't resign even if CG requests

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz has expressed his unwillingness to resign if requested by the caretaker government (CG) for reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC), putting the CG in a difficult situation as regards holding a free and fair election.

Aziz conveyed this to the council of advisers of the CG through one adviser who went to his residence on Thursday night to know

from him whether he will resign if the council requests him, sources said.

Following such negative response from the CEC, the council at a meeting yesterday at the Bangabhaban reviewed the latest political situation, found it difficult to carry out its move to reconstitute the EC and discussed three options.

The options are requesting the CEC on behalf of the advisers' council to step down, formation of Supreme Judicial Council to look



MA Aziz

into if the CEC is capable of holding the post and fresh appointment of election commissioners to bring a balance in the EC, the sources mentioned.

President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed, who chaired the nearly two-hour council meeting, emphasised taking any decision on the basis of a consensus. He however did not say if, as president, he would initiate any step to break the stalemate.

The council did not take any

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4-party to back Aziz

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led four-party alliance yesterday put its weight behind the chief election commissioner (CEC) and decided to urge Chief Adviser to Caretaker Government Iajuddin Ahmed not to interfere in the Election Commission (EC).

"We are drawing the chief adviser's attention to the fact that the post of chief election commissioner is a constitutional post and the incumbent CEC is performing competently and neutrally," Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid said after a meeting of the alliance at Hawa Bhaban yesterday.

Opposing any move to force CEC MA Aziz to step down, Mujahid said, "The Election

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CG to form 3 committees for smooth functioning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finally, the council of advisers to the caretaker government yesterday decided to form three committees as they observed that the reshuffle of the administration and maintenance of law and order are not being done systematically.

"The meeting decided to form some advisers' committees by tomorrow," Adviser Akbar Ali Khan told the BBC Bangla Service last night.

Sources said the matter was first discussed at the third meeting of the council of advisers on Thursday night.

to the chief adviser on how to approach those, he added.

Of the proposed committees, one will be on administration, one on law and order and the other one on economic affairs, meeting sources said.

"Hopefully we'll be able to wrap up reshuffling of the administration in a week, once the committees are formed," Adviser Akbar Ali Khan told the BBC Bangla Service last night.

Sources said the matter was first discussed at the third meeting of the council of advisers on Thursday night.

The last caretaker government had formed several committees at the first meeting of the advisers on July 16, 2001. Those were set up to make suggestions on how to go about improving the law and order and reshuffling the administration.

The then council of advisers also formed a judicial commission headed by a Supreme Court judge to review the status of political detainees and the pending cases that had allegedly been politically motivated.

This time, the caretaker government and its council of advisers

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Shots fired at Moudud's house; cop injured

Ex-minister wasn't at home during the attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown gunmen last night fired shots at former law minister Moudud Ahmed's residence in Gulshan in the capital, leaving an on-duty police constable injured.

The incident took place a few minutes after Moudud and his wife had left the house to attend a dinner party.

According to wounded Constable Kamrul Islam, who was posted at the main gate of the house on Gulshan Avenue near the Gulshan-2 roundabout, two youths on a motorcycle stopped on the other side of the road around 8:40pm.

There are two police check-posts on both sides of the road just

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BNP for 'cautious' steps in admin reshuffle

Bhuiyan asks CA to transfer only those having direct link with polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday asked President and Chief Adviser (CA) to Caretaker Government Iajuddin Ahmed not to transfer government officials having "no direct links" with the upcoming elections.

"Only those who are involved with the election tasks, and thus matter in the upcoming polls, can be transferred," BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan

told reporters at BNP party office at Naya Paltan after a meeting with the chief adviser.

"Caution should be exercised in transferring these officials," Bhuiyan advised the chief adviser, referring to the upcoming final examinations of the children of the officials.

Bhuiyan led a seven-member BNP delegation that met Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban around 12:15pm yesterday. The delegation

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JOINING 4-PARTY Ershad waiting for Rangpur JP leaders' views

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad yesterday did not turn up at a scheduled meeting with the four-party alliance in the capital to finalise his party's joining the BNP-led alliance.

Sources said Ershad refrained from finalising his party's joining the alliance as he failed to convince the JP unit in his hometown Rangpur about the share of tickets

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Civil society calls for EC reconstitution

Seeks amendments to RPO

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers in a dialogue yesterday underscored the need for an independent election commission for ensuring free and fair general elections.

They said the system of caretaker government is a temporary measure and giving full power to the Election Commission (EC) separating it from the executive branch of the government is the

only way out of the existing political impasse.

They also observed that the present chief of the EC and other election commissioners must be removed or at least made ineffective for gaining confidence of the people before the upcoming election in 2007.

They suggested formation of vigilance teams in every constituency to ensure that the people of

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2 advisers didn't take CA's permission

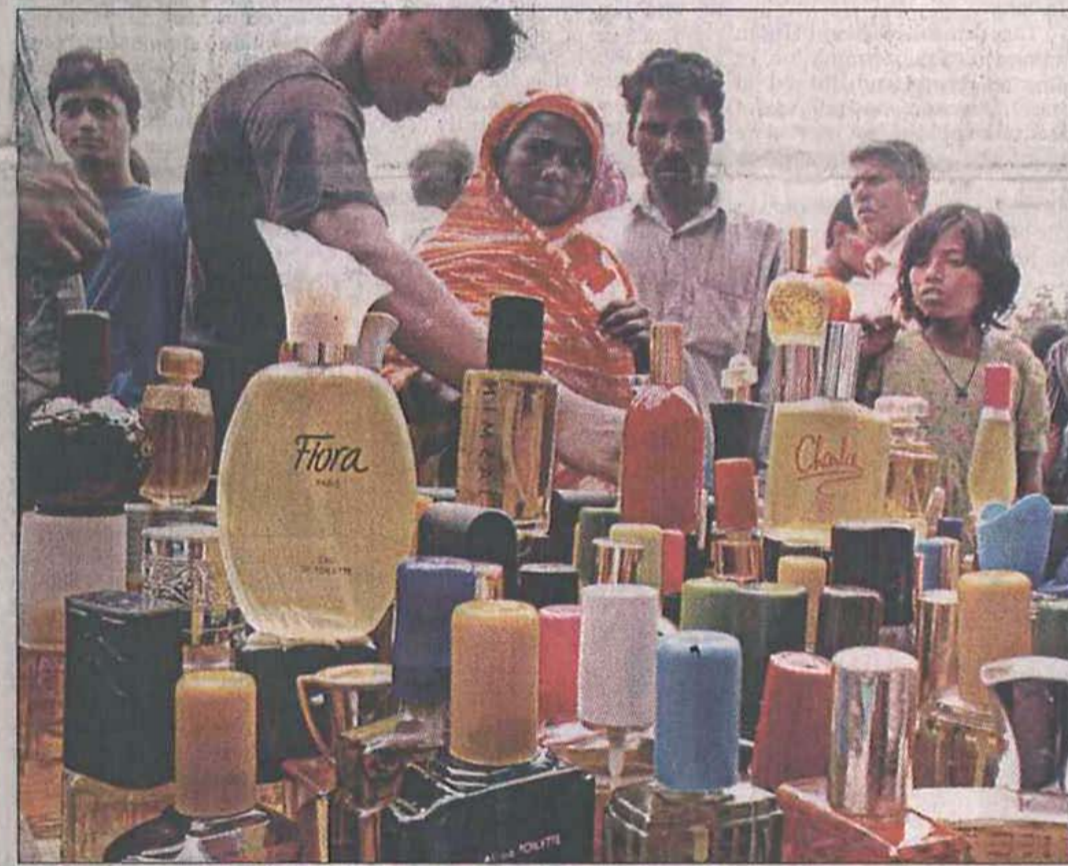
Bhuiyan says about their meeting Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday alleged that advisers Sultana Kamal and CM Shafi Sami had met Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina on Thursday without the permission of the chief adviser.

"Only the chief adviser could

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Vendors sell fake perfumes using labels of world famous brands to low-budget consumers at very nominal prices on footpaths at Gulistan in the capital. These vendors have been carrying on their business by regularly bribing the police.

Manpower market shrunk for policy failure

PORIMOL PALMA

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment failed to explore new labour markets, while overseas employment to traditional markets like the Middle East experienced a sharp decline in the five years of BNP-led alliance rule.

The ministry also failed to control recruiting agencies, which continuously involved themselves in an unwholesome competition in overseas recruitment process. This led to the increase in migration cost, which ultimately became a setback for promotion of manpower export.

Bangladesh as a labour surplus country has ample opportunities of earning foreign exchange by sending its workforce to the developed countries under the framework of General Agreements on

Trade in Services (GATS), a section of World Trade Organisation (WTO). But the country was unable to deal with the global issues to promote its cause.

The ministry even could not manage manpower employment in some labour-hungry Asian countries including Malaysia and South Korea just because of syndication of some recruiting agencies and uncontrolled migration cost. EXPLORING NEW MARKETS While neighbouring India and Nepal made great success in opening new labour markets in the developed European countries and America, Canada and Australia, Bangladesh has miserably failed to gain any foothold there, even those thrown into its lap.

For example, in the beginning of the BNP-led government, Italy

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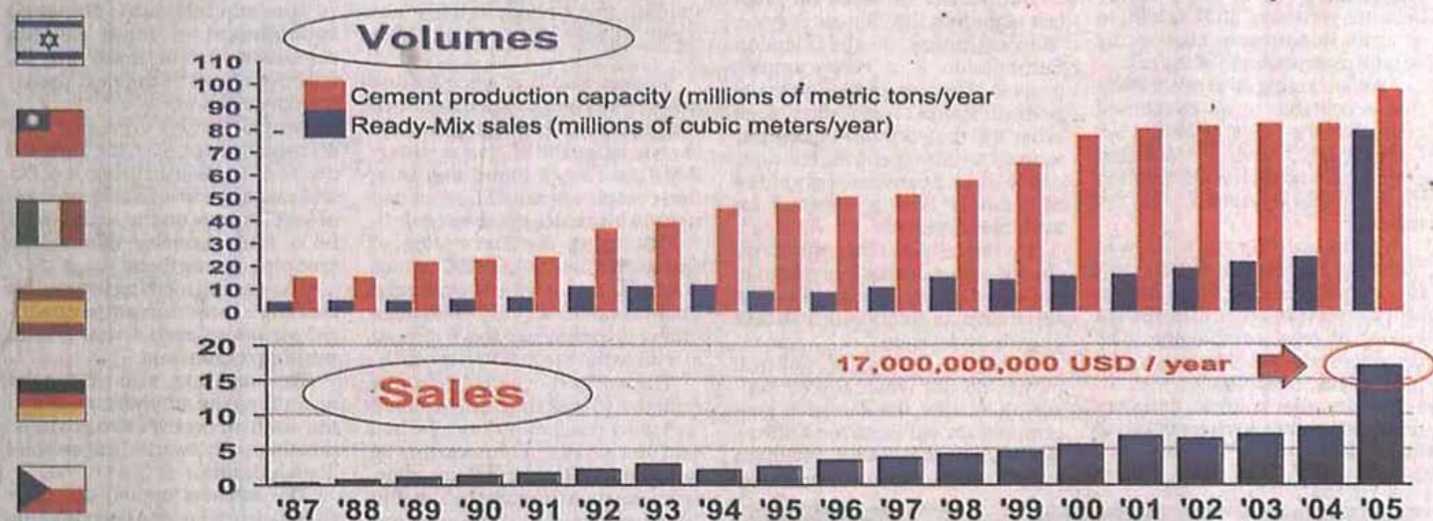
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