

Form Supreme Judicial Council to remove CEC

Eminent citizens urge President

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens at a roundtable yesterday urged the president to form Supreme Judicial Council immediately to remove the chief election commissioner (CEC) for resolving present political stalemate.

Expressing concern over the lack of congenial atmosphere for a fair election, they said the nation will plunge into an uncertain situation if a credible poll is not held.

The roundtable titled 'Necessary measures to reform Election Commission' was jointly organised by Shujan (Shushasoner Janney

Nagorik) and Reporters Forum for Election and Democracy at the National Press Club in the city.

The speakers said the president will be responsible if such situation prevails in the country as he has grabbed all election-related vital ministries instead of distributing them among the ten advisers.

They said measures for creating congenial atmosphere for free and fair election will naturally go against the interest of immediate past government which had posted its own men in all tiers of administration including the EC.

Dr Badrul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shujan, demanded reconsti-

tution of the EC by removing the CEC and other commissioners.

"Otherwise an unexpected situation like civil war will wait for the nation," he said while presenting a keynote paper at the roundtable.

Mohammad Hafiz Uddin Khan, former adviser to the caretaker government, said the president will have to change the EC for holding a free and fair election.

Dr Kazi Kholikuzzaman, president of Bangladesh Economic Association, said the caretaker government will lose its justification if it cannot resolve the present crisis.

Mir Nasir Hossain, president of the Federation of Bangladesh

Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said the whole election system will have to be reformed.

Abdul Matin Khasru, former law minister, said the president should resign from the post of chief adviser as one person cannot hold two most vital posts.

Ataus Samad, renowned journalist, urged the president to form Supreme Judicial Council to remove the CEC and take necessary measures for holding a free and fair election.

Dr Jafarullah Chowdhury, chairman of Gonoswasthya Nagar Hospital, said as the CEC will not resign voluntarily, the caretaker government should take action against him for the greater interest of the country.

Dr Atiur Rahman, noted economist, said people are happy with the performance of ten advisers, but they should be given more vital post for holding fair election.

Mujahidul Islam Selim, general secretary of the Communist Party, criticised the caretaker government for its slow pace of activities in creating a congenial environment for a fair election by making necessary transfers in the civil and police administration.

Presided over by former adviser to caretaker government ASM Shajahan, the roundtable was also addressed by human rights activist Hamida Hossain, Jatiya Party leader GM Kader, Liberal Democratic Party leader Firoj M Hasan, film artist Ilias Kanchan and lawyer Shahdin Malik.



PHOTO: STAR

ASM Shajahan, former adviser to caretaker government, speaks at a roundtable titled 'Necessary measures to reform Election Commission' jointly organised by Shujan and Reporters Forum for Election and Democracy at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are M Hafiz Uddin Khan, GM Kader and Ataus Samad.

Hearing of 6 condemned JMB men's petitions tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

Turning down the time extension plea of the state defence counsel, the Supreme Court (SC) fixed Sunday for hearing the petitions of six condemned JMB militants, seeking leave to appeal against the High Court verdict.

On August 31, the High Court confirmed the death sentences of six JMB militants awarded by the trial court in the sensational Jhalakathi judges' killing case.

A seven-member full court of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain, passed the order yesterday, court sources said.

In their petitions, the JMB militants rejected the established judicial system under the constitution terming it manmade and urged the Supreme Court to try them by constituting a court guided by Islamic laws.

The condemned petitioners are JMB chief Abdur Rahman, his second-in-command Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai, brother Ataur Rahman Sunny, son-in-law Abdul Awal and suicide bombers Iftakhar Hassan Al Mamun and Khaled Saifullah.

Senior assistant judges Sohail Ahmed and Jagannath Pandey were killed in a suicide bomb attack in Jhalakathi on November 14 last year.

CG to hand over 8 depts to CHT council

UNB, Dhaka

As part of implementation of the peace accord, the caretaker government, during its tenure, will hand over eight departments to the district councils of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Adviser Lt Gen. (ret'd) Hasan Mashud Chowdhury said this when Santu Larma, chairman of CHT Regional Council, met him at his office yesterday.

The adviser told Larma that the Horticulture Centre, Chief Cotton Development Officer's office, Family Welfare Inspection Training Institute (Rangamati), Project Officer's (secondary education) office, Primary Training Institute (Rangamati), Nursing Institute (Rangamati), District Education Officer's office and Vocational Training Institute (Khagrachhari) would soon be handed over to the district councils.

He said the interim government was trying to create a congenial atmosphere in Chittagong Hill Tracts as elsewhere in the country.

Larma expressed satisfaction with the discussion he had with the adviser on implementation of the peace accord and arrangements for holding free and

fair election in the hill tracts, said an official handout.

Govt to procure 2.12 lakh tons of foodgrains

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government would procure rice at Tk 16 per kilogram and Aman paddy at Tk 10 per kilogram during the current Aman season.

A total of 1,75,000 tons of rice and 37,000 tons of paddy would be procured during the drive beginning on December 1. It will continue until February 28.

Food Planning and Storage Committee took the decision at a meeting yesterday, with Adviser Hasan Mashud Chowdhury in the chair.

The Adviser instructed all concerned to make the drive a success.

Adv Ayeenuddin passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Veteran politician advocate Muhammad Ayeenuddin passed away due to renal failure at a city clinic yesterday at the age of 70.

Muslim League Leader Ayeenuddin left behind his wife, two sons, one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

One of the pioneers of the League Movement in 1952 Ayeenuddin was elected to the East Pakistan Assembly in early 60s and served as parliamentary secretary. He was also elected to the Jatiya Sangsad in 1986.

His namaz-e-janaza was held on the Supreme Court premises after Zohr prayers, which was attended by lawyers and judges including Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain.

He will be buried at his ancestral home in Rajshahi city.

Md Khalilur Rahman

Eminent lawyer Md Khalilur Rahman passed away yesterday at Bashundhara Apollo Hospitals in the city at the age of 76, says a press release.

He left behind his wife and two daughters.

His qulkhwani will be held at his residence at House # 33, Road # 18, Block # J at Banani in the city tomorrow.

Admirers have been requested to attend the qulkhwani.

Obituary

Md Mizanur Rahman, former Deputy Registrar of Bangladesh Cooperatives Society, passed away due to brain hemorrhage at the age of 78 yesterday, says a press release.

He left behind four sons, three daughters and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at Azimpur Graveyard.

His qulkhwani will be held at his residence at House No-110, Road-17, Sector-14 at Uttara in the city after Zohr prayers tomorrow.

Death anniversary

Today is the 30th death anniversary of Mir Abdul Aziz, a retired district magistrate and IGR, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and prayers will be held in Dhaka.

Abdul Aziz hailed from Narayanpur village in Nabinagar, Brahmanbaria.



PHOTO: STAR

Trucks wait in a long queue to be loaded at the Chittagong Port yesterday as full operations of the port resumed on Wednesday night following postponement of the 14-party's countrywide of blockade programme.

4 killed, 38 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least four people were killed and 38 injured in separate road accidents in Chittagong and Brahmanbaria yesterday.

Our Correspondent from Chittagong: Three people were killed and three others injured in two separate road accidents in Chittagong yesterday.

An unidentified boy, 13, reportedly a garage worker, was killed and four others were injured when a speeding truck ploughed through several rickshaws and pedestrians at Bayezid Bostami Sarak under Bayezid Police Station in the city at around 11:30am, sources said.

The accident occurred when the truck loaded with wheat trying to overtake an inter-city bus on its way to Rangamati from the city, said police and witnesses.

The truck smashed at least four rickshaws under its wheels.

The injured were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where rickshaw passenger Marium Begum, 40, succumbed to her injuries at around 4:00pm, said the sources.

Marium's husband Farid Ahmed and two other rickshaw passengers identified as Abdul Matin, 50, and Amin Uddin, 32, were undergoing treatment at CMCH, sources said.

The truck was seized while the driver managed to flee.

Meanwhile, one speeding Chittagong-bound truck knocked Rakib, 20, a van driver, on Hathazari Road at Chowdhury Hat under Hathazari upazila at 12:30pm.

Rakib, son of Ibrahim of Sandwip Colony under the same upazila, succumbed to his injuries on the way to hospital, said the sources.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Lutfar Rahman, an eminent photographer, will be held at his city residence at Mohakhali and at Fudkipara in Rajshahi today, says a press release.

He passed away at a city clinic on October 11 at the age of 85.

Our Correspondent from Brahmanbaria adds: One person was killed and 35 others injured in a road accident on Brahmanbaria-Comilla highway at Shilaur Fatirhatha village under sadar upazila yesterday.

The dead was identified as Md Nurul Haque, 45, of Urshuira village of Sadar upazila in the district.

The accident occurred when a Brahmanbaria-bound bus from Kuti Chaumuhani turned upside down and fell into a roadside ditch at around 12:30 pm at Shilaur Fatirhatha village, leaving 36 people injured, police and witnesses said.

Of the injured, Md Nurul Haque, 45, succumbed to his injuries on the

way to hospital.

Critically injured Md Muslim Mia, 30, Md Abul Kalam Chaudhury, 30, Ily Akter, 18, Omar Ali, 25, Md Nasir Mia, 25, Fatema Begum, 27, Md Abu Thaher, 60, Md Fuad Babu, 4, and Md Kahar Mia, 60, were rushed to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital. The rest were given first aid at different local clinics.

The driver and helpers of the bus managed to escape.



PHOTO: PID

Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Fakhru Azam meets President/Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

Call to step up movement to remove CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jukta Front yesterday called on all to step up the movement to remove the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and reconstitute the Election Commission (EC).

Most political parties and the people are in favour of the removal of the CEC and reformation of the EC, and even the advisers to the caretaker government are no exception, said Jukta Front coordinator Abdul Malek Ratan at a meeting at its

office in the city.

If the Chief Adviser shows respects for the opinions of the Advisers, the CEC can be removed anytime, he added.

He also warned that the President/Chief Adviser has to shoulder all the consequences for any untoward incidents that may arise during the movement to remove the CEC.

Nurul Amin Bhuiyan, Sharif Mohammad Khan, Nurul Akhter and Kamal Uddin Ahmed also spoke at the meeting.

Croc farm sees first of eggs

FROM PAGE 16 Ahmed and Dr Sheikh Muhammad Abdur Rashid jointly launched the farm investing Tk 5 crore with 49 per cent financial support as interest free loan from the Equity and Entrepreneur Fund (EEF) of the government.

Initially, they imported 75 saltwater crocodiles from Malaysia including 15 males on December 23, 2004 at a cost of Tk 1.25 crore.

One croc died on its way to Bangladesh and six more died later after reaching the farm leaving the total to 68 that included 14 males.

The crocodiles in the farm are between 10 to 24 years of age. Farm sources said there are 25 types of crocodiles in the world, the saltwater one being the largest of the species. Saltwater crocs can also be reared in freshwater.

The imported reptiles were released in 12 specially designed curved ponds and in two lagoons in the project area, which covers 13.4 acres of land.

Two crocodiles laid 69 eggs during wet season this year. The eggs resemble swan eggs and are being incubated in Dhaka, said Dr Sheikh Muhammad Abdur Rashid, a biologist and chief scientific officer of the farm. "It takes 80 to 90 days to hatch the eggs and we hope to get babies from the eggs this month."

"Moderate rainfall is needed to stimulate the crocodiles for reproduction and we hope to get 2,500 to 3,000 eggs next year, provided favourable weather conditions," said Mushtaq Ahmed, managing director and chief executive officer of the farm. "We would get more eggs this year, but reproductive activities of crocodiles were affected due to almost 50 per cent less than usual rainfall in this region."

There are commercial crocodile

rearing farms in some 40 countries of the world including China, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam, said farm sources.

Crocodile meat is consumed widely in Australia, Japan, Singapore, China and the Americas. One kilogram of crocodile meat is sold between seven to eight dollars in international markets, added the sources.

Crocodile teeth, scrap hide and other by-products could be used for making fashionable commodities, garlands, ornaments or showpieces, which are in high demand in both local and international markets. Women's purse made of

crocodile skin is sold at Tk 20,000 apiece in Australia, said Mesbahul Haque, chairman of the farm.

Charcoal made from crocodile bones is used in manufacturing perfumes throughout the world, sources said.

Cost for rearing a crocodile for four years till maturity is estimated at Tk 20,000 and it is expected to bring in Tk 40,000 to Tk 50,000 in revenues from export of each croc.

The crocodiles at the farm are fed with beef, fowl or other meat twice a week. On an average, each crocodile takes two kilograms of food at a time. The pond water has to be changed every month.

In the vast area of the farm, some

30th anniversary of Bhasani's death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 30th death anniversary of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, a veteran political leader, will be observed today.

Born in 1880 at village Dhanpara in Sirajganj, Bhasani dedicated his life to establishing the rights of the oppressed and downtrodden.

Bhasani passed away in 1976. He was buried at Santosh in Tangail.

Different socio-political organisations will mark the day with elaborate programmes across the country. They will place wreaths at his grave at Santosh. Milad mahfil, discussion, painting competition and a fair will also be held in Tangail.

Outlaw killed in crossfire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A leader of New Biplobi Communist Party (NBPC) was killed in "crossfire" during a "shootout" between police and his accomplices at Bharatia of Dumuria upazila in Khulna yesterday.

The victim, Sujit Kumar Mondol, 40, was arrested Wednesday night at Prashadpur of Tala upazila in Satkhira.

Police said Sujit returned to Dumuria from India on Tuesday with a view to regroup the armed cadres of his underground party and carry out subversive activities taking advantage of the current political situation. He had fled to India during Operation Clean Heart.

A police team around 4:00am yesterday took him to Bharatia in a bid to recover hidden firearms. But as the team reached the spot, Sujit's cohorts opened fire on the team in an attempt to snatch Sujit.

Police retaliated which led to a 15-minute-long gun battle. Sujit was caught in the line of fire during the battle. Police took injured Sujit to local health complex where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Police recovered two pipe-guns, seven bullets and a large dagger from the spot. Three policemen including Sub-inspector Abdul Majid sustained bullet injuries. Sujit's accomplices, however, managed to escape.

A large number of people brought out a procession around noon in Dumuria upazila yesterday celebrating Sujit's death. City Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami and former lawmaker Mian Golam Parwar led the procession.

According to Officer-in-charge Abdullah of Dumuria Police Station, the slain outlaw was wanted in 23 criminal cases, including eight murders cases recorded with different police stations of Khulna and Satkhira. He was the prime charge-sheeted accused of Dumuria BNP leader Siraj Mollah murder case, Abdullah said.

Woman killed in train mishap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A woman was killed as a speeding train ran over her at Razabari area under Kalihati upazila in the district yesterday.

The victim was identified as Chhaleha Begum, 45, wife of Mohammad Shahar Ali of Razabari village of the upazila.

Witnesses said a Dhaka-bound inter-city train from Sirajganj run over Chhaleha at around 6:00am when she was crossing the Razabari rail crossing at Razabari area, leaving her died on the spot.

2 rapists get 30-yr jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday gave 30 years' rigorous imprisonment to two people for raping a 16-year-old girl Salma in April 1997.

Judge Nurun Nahar of the Third Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression handed down the sentence in presence of one of the convicts.

The convicts are victim's uncle Awlad Hossain and Babu of Daiya village of Dhamrai in Dhaka. Awlad was present in the court during the verdict while Babu was tried in absentia.

The punishment of the fugitive will be effective from the day of his arrest or surrender, the judge said.

Earlier, the prosecution and defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 10 prosecution witnesses.

According to the prosecution, Awlad and Babu raped Salma and dropped her at a paddy field on April 23, 1997.

After the incident, victim's father Abdur Sattar filed a rape case against the two with Dhamrai police station under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

The investigation officer pressed charges against Awlad and Babu on August 21, 1997.

Police arrested both of them but Babu became fugitive after getting bail from the court.



Light fog likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light fog is also likely over the country's southwestern and north-eastern parts and the river basins during the period, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged night temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 32.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 18.0 degree Celsius at Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5.12pm today and rises at 6:15am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	30.8	19.2	75	61
Chittagong	32.0	22.8	72	76
Rajshahi	30.3	19.2	75	78
Khulna	30.0	20.3	83	83
Barisal	30.5	19.4	86	-
Sylhet	32.2	20.4	58	61
Cox's Bazar	32.4	24.4	68	73