

One day gone, Aziz still mum on his decision

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Neither the Election Commission (EC) nor the office of the president, Bangabhaban, was able to disclose till last night the decision of the chief election commissioner (CEC) regarding the presidential initiative to resolve the political deadlock springing from a raging popular demand for his resignation.

The presidential delegation, that had met the CEC on Monday morning to persuade him to take a decision on whether he will resign or take a leave of absence in an effort to resolve the debilitating political impasse, announced after the meeting that a positive result will come in 24 to 48 hours.

But in the last 36 hours, no new development has been reported although the entire country was waiting with anticipation for news of a positive result all through the day yesterday. It was learnt from an unconfirmed source that the CEC yesterday sought a 90-day leave



Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz leaves the Election Commission yesterday under police escort avoiding a barrage of questions from journalists.

from the president, which could not be confirmed officially as MA Aziz himself kept mum and the advisers to the caretaker government also said they did not know anything about such a development. Another source however said Aziz is taking preparations to leave the office.

Election Commissioner Justice Mahfuzur Rahman however yesterday said the CEC's decision will be known today.

"You will come to know of it tomorrow," Justice Mahfuz, who attended a series of meetings with the CEC all day long, told reporters yesterday replying to a query while leaving the EC Secretariat at 5:00pm, ending the day long widespread speculations about the decision on which the country's immediate political climate rests.

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday said a solution to the ongoing crisis will come in the next one or two days.

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Small loans to poor can change world

Says Nobel laureate Dr Yunus

AFP, Washington

Declaring credit a human right, Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus said on Monday that the successful micro-lending bank he launched in his native Bangladesh showed wiping out world poverty was a goal within reach.

Prof Yunus said Grameen Bank's miniscule loans to the destitute have allowed people to launch their own small businesses and lift themselves out of poverty without any massive infusion of outside aid.

"Poverty is an artificial creation of a system. Poverty is not in the person," Dr Yunus said in a speech in Washington.

The economics professor was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last month jointly with Grameen Bank, which began with a loan of 27 dollars and now lends nearly a billion dollars a year to the poorest of the poor.

"Fifty-eight percent of Grameen borrowers have moved out of

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BNP men attack LDP motorcade

2 killed as fleeing jeep knocks them down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Gij

Two persons were killed as they were run over by a jeep of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) that came under attack of armed BNP men at Badamtali intersection of Patiya upazila yesterday.

The BNP men attacked the LDP motorcade and people preventing them from joining an LDP rally on the Patiya Upazila Parishad premises. The attack left over 20 people injured, three of them critically.

The dead were identified as Nesar Ahmed and Shah Alam.

Witnesses said the two were knocked by a jeep of the LDP motorcade while trying to escape the attackers during the chase and counter-chase and died on the way to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital (CMCH).

Local LDP leader Mohammad Ali, also former joint organising secretary of Patiya BNP said Nesar and Alam left the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and joined the

LDP recently.

The BNP, however, claimed that they are Patiya JCD leaders.

Addressing the rally, LDP Executive President Col (ret) Oli Ahmed later announced to file a case against former BNP lawmaker Gazi Shahjahan Jewel and JCD leader Rezaul Karim Nesar for the attacks and killing.

Oli and LDP central and local leaders were holding a meeting in Chittagong to decide on programmes to protest the incident as of filing of this report last evening.

According to witnesses, armed BNP men put up barricades on the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Highway at Badamtali intersection in front of Shahjahan's house since 12:00 noon, hindering processions bound for the LDP rally.

They made the first attack when a motorcade, including four microbuses carrying journalists and a private car carrying LDP leader Shahadat Hossain Salim,

tried to go past the barricade around 2:30pm.

Witnesses said led by Rezaul Karim Nesar, former leader of Chittagong south district unit JCD and Kusumpura Union Parishad chairman, and Hazi Shafi Islam, chairman of Ziri Union Parishad, the BNP men attacked the motorcade.

The microbuses carrying the journalists later reached the rally venue through a different way.

The BNP men also attacked and opened fire on people from west Patiya and the Port City forcing them to remain stranded at Manasha Choumuhani.

At one stage, a number of LDP men tried to move forward in a huge procession around 4:00pm, but the BNP men attacked them again that resulted in clashes between the two groups.

The clashes left over 20 people injured.

Of them, the condition of LDP

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CA's apathy makes advisers meet separately

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the chief adviser reluctant to hold regular meetings of the advisory council, the advisers to the caretaker government meet informally for coordinating their activities themselves.

Nine advisers gathered at the office of Information Adviser Mahbubul Alam over lunch yesterday while five advisers held a similar meeting at Adviser Sultana Kamal's chamber on Monday.

The previous caretaker governments, however, would hold regular meetings and the advisers discussed with the chief adviser every latest development in the

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Activists dance, sing to second day blockade

80 injured in clashes in Bogra, Chittagong, Gazipur

STAR REPORT

Spontaneity and festivity were evident on the streets of Dhaka as people's participation in and support for the blockade increased further yesterday when the whole country reeled under the road-rail-waterways blockade enforced by the 14-party combine.

Although enforcers of the blockade on the second day after its resumption on Monday were peaceful, the BNP-led four-party alliance loyalists clashed with police in Bogra, leaving 50 injured and attacked Bangladesh Chhatra

League (BCL) activists in Chittagong that left 15 wounded.

However, with the sign of 'light at the end of the tunnel' as seen by CG Adviser Mahbubul Alam, leaders of the 14-party boosted the morale of their men by infusing festivity into the demonstration. The activists, who increased in number day by day, were found singing parody and burning the effigy of Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz at all the blockade points.

The number of motorised vehicles on the streets increased with the passage of time as people had a feeling that there would be no vio-

lence. Train service was disrupted in several areas of the country.

Activities at the land ports were hampered.

Despite the political turmoil, share prices in Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) recorded significant gains yesterday.

"We're waiting for victory," was what the blockade enforcers and common people were heard saying at different blockade points in Dhaka. They mainly implied reconstitution of the EC, which they think is a precondition for holding a free and fair election.

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Hasina, Khaleda join Senakunja reception

Not a single word exchanged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The distance between them was hardly 15 yards, but the two major political figures did not even exchange looks.

Neither did they greet each other, although the two former prime ministers, Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, attended the same programme after a long time on the occasion of Armed Forces Day yesterday.

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Don't take any step beyond constitution

Bhuiyan urges CA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday urged the chief adviser (CA) to the caretaker government not to take any step which would violate the constitution.

Bhuiyan in a sudden late night visit to CA Iajuddin Ahmed also expressed his dissatisfaction over the 'unnecessary transfers' of

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BGMEA sit-in near Bangabhaban if CA fails to end deadlock by today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) yesterday said they will hold a sit-in in the Bangabhaban area tomorrow if President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed fails to break the current political stand-off by today.

The BGMEA decision came after the advisers to the caretaker government on Monday night said they are hopeful about finding a solution to the crisis within the next 48 hours.

Earlier on Sunday, the garment factory owners issued a 12-hour

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PHOTO: STAR

The 14-party alliance holds a rally at Zero Point in the capital yesterday evening demanding removal of the chief election commissioner.

Iajuddin seeks all-party support for timely polls

UNB, Dhaka

President/Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday sought cooperation of the political parties and all concerned in holding the next general election in time.

"We've already taken various steps to hold a free and fair election in the country. I expect cooperation of the political parties and all concerned in holding the election as per constitution," he said.

The president was addressing a reception at Senakunja at Dhaka Cantonment arranged on the occasion of the Armed Forces Day in the evening.

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Blockade Scanty transports bring plight for patients

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

People seeking treatment of illness and injuries caused by accidents had to undergo extra agony to get to the hospitals in the capital yesterday, as they faced extreme difficulties finding suitable transports due to the ongoing blockade programme.

Those who were in need of immediate medical attention had to depend mainly on rickshaws and the number of those who finally made it was also very few. Some fortunate ones

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Mufti Hannan details his blueprints of militancy

Narrates to magistrate how Huji planned gruesome grenade, bomb attacks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islamist militant leader Mufti Abdul Hannan of Harkatul Jihad (Huji) in his confessional statement on Sunday narrated in detail the workings of his organisation and admitted to being involved in several gruesome bomb attacks and in planning of some others including the Udichi blast in Jessore and attempts on the life of Sheikh Hasina.

In the 19-page long confessional statement, a copy of which is

now available to The Daily Star, Hannan, one of the most dreaded Islamist militants, also confessed to having roles in the bomb attack at Ramna Batamul, the grenade attack on the British high commissioner, and several other blast incidents.

He made the confessional statement to Metropolitan Magistrate Shafiqe Anwar. In the statement, he gave detailed accounts of his background, education, his involvement in Afghan war and

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CONGRATULATIONS

Heartiest Felicitations to
Mr. Ahmed Akbar Sobhan
Chairman, Bashundhara Group and
Ex-Chairman of **SIBL**
for having been elected as
President
of
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