



PHOTO: STAR

Rights activists stage a demonstration at Shahbagh in the city yesterday protesting a Supreme Court order staying the High Court verdict that compels the Election Commission to collect and make public vital information about election candidates.

SC stay order obstacle to right to know about polls candidates

Speakers tell rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With his hands tied and mouth gagged, a voter sat in front of the National Museum in the city yesterday to protest a Supreme Court order staying a High Court verdict that compels the Election Commission (EC) to collect and make public some vital information about election candidates.

His fellow voters, covering their mouths with black cloths, also lined up there to symbolically express that the voters' right to know information about the candidates has been undermined following the stay order.

The protesters were carrying a

banner that reads 'We are deaf, we do not see and we do not need to know'. Supra (Campaign for Good Governance) organised the symbolic protest.

In May 2005, the High Court issued an order making it mandatory to make public eight kinds of information about the candidates such as educational qualification, any criminal records, candidates' profession and source of income and the status of their bank loans.

But the Supreme Court recently stayed the High Court order upon a writ petition filed by one Abu Safa.

"Every voter has the right to know about the person they are voting for," Supra Secretary Rezaul

Karim Chowdhury said at the protest programme. But now the voters would be in the dark about the track records of the candidates, he added.

Other speakers said that the stay order would create an obstacle to establishing the people's right to know, thereby encouraging criminalisation of politics.

Supra also announced that it would stage such protests in 46 districts in the country from January 6, 2007.

Supra Executive Director Aminur Rashid Babul and member Rafiqul Islam and Chairman of Jago Nari Foundation Nurunnahar Merry also spoke.

CA urged to work impartially

DU CORRESPONDENT

A citizens' rights body has urged the President/Chief Adviser (CA) to the caretaker government Prof Iajuddin Ahmed to ensure a free and fair election acceptable to all by working impartially.

The Civic Watch Bangladesh (CWB) urged the president to ensure that the Election Commission acts neutrally and any violation of electoral rules must be dealt with immediately, a press release said.

The CWB placed its demands to the president when a four-member delegation led by its Chairman Muslehuddin Ahmad met him at Bangabhaban on Wednesday.

The other members of the team were Ambassador ABMA Salam, Advocate Alena Khan and Mominul Haque Khan.

They requested the chief adviser to stop the use of illegal muscle power and black money so that people can vote freely without any coercion.

The CWB also urged him to deploy army in support of civil administration and recover all illegal arms from across the country.

US embassy closed for three days

UNB, Dhaka

The American Embassy offices, including the American Centre, Archer K Blood American Center Library, the student counselling service and the Consular Section will remain closed for three days from Sunday on the occasion of Eid-ul Azha and New Year's Day.

US Embassy in Dhaka in a release asked American citizens in need of assistance on an emergency to contact the Embassy duty officer.



PHOTO: STAR

(From left) Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman, singer Firoza Begum and Mazedur Rahman launch a CD containing Nazrul songs at a ceremony at Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday. Bank Alfalah Limited released the CD to pay tribute to poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

5 bank officials sued

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed five separate cases against six people, including five employees of Agrani Bank, on charge of misappropriation of funds from Green Road Branch of the bank, says a press release.

The defendants of the cases are Principal Officer Muhammad Ullah, Officer Muhammad Salim Ullah, former Senior Officer Ikhwanul Islam, Senior Principal Officer Muhammad Amjad Hossain, Store Keeper Md Hafizur Rahman and Md Nurul Huda, a subscriber.

ACC Assistant Commissioner Abu Bakar Siddiquee filed the cases against the people for their involvement in drawing Tk 40 lakh from a fake bank account.



PHOTO: STAR

Family members of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria and civil society members form a human chain at Sat Masjid Road in the city yesterday as part of their 'Blue for Peace' programme demanding trial of the killers of Kibria.