



VOL. X NO. 109 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA TUESDAY MAY 9, 2000

Wishing the
BEST
for the
3rd Millennium

BAISHAKH 26, 1407 BS

SAFAR 4, 1421 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE : TAKA 6.00

New CEC: PM invites Khaleda for opinion

By Special Correspondent
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday invited Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia for discussion on appointment of a new Chief Election Commissioner following resignation of Mohammad Abu Hena.

A letter from Hasina inviting Khaleda for a meeting at her office at 7 pm today to have her conscientious opinion regarding appointment of the new CEC was delivered by an aide to the PM, sources close to her said.

Ibrahim Hossain Khan, APS to the PM, delivered the letter to BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan at 9:15 pm at the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition.

At 10:30 pm Khaleda Zia summoned available members of the BNP Standing Committee to discuss the issue. They included Saifur Rahman, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Oli Ahmed and Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed.

The meeting ended at 11:20 pm. Khaleda, while leaving at 11:25 pm, declined to make any comment.

Saifur Rahman said, "Does it require a meeting with PM to appoint a CEC?"

Mannan Bhuiyan said they would give reply this morning.

"I hope leader of the four party alliance Khaleda Zia will consult the three other component parties before taking a decision about meeting the PM," Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad told The Daily Star over telephone.

Houses of three agents of hundi trader Kajol set afire

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, May 8: Houses of three agents of much-talked-about 'hundi' trader Kajol was set on fire while 14 shops, owned by other agents, were looted here today by a mob.

Some 500 police were deployed at Kotchandpur thana headquarters this afternoon as people cheated by Kajol became unruly, vandalized the shops and laid a siege to Kajol's village home at Solaimanpur.

Police said that houses of Shahjahan, Nuru and Enamul were damaged badly by the fire this noon.

Local people feared further

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Our new numbers

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by Praful Bidwai

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May Sun Rises Sun Sets
9 5:19am 6:31pm
10 5:18am

Prayer Timings

May 9	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:15	4:45
Zohr	1:00	1:30
Asr	5:00	5:15
Maghrib	6:35	6:38
Esha	8:00	8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star

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TOSHIBA
FRIDGE
With Compressor MADE IN JAPAN
-TOSHIBA FRIDGE guarantees best Performance
RANGS GROUP

CEC resigns on 'health ground'

By Nurul Kabir



CEC Md. Abu Hena

Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena has resigned.

Abu Hena, who became the seventh CEC on April 9, 1996, sent his resignation letter to President Shahabuddin Ahmed at 12:30 pm yesterday. He also sent a copy of it to the Prime Minister's Office.

He cited 'health ground' as the reason for resignation. His term was scheduled to expire on April 8 next year.

In the resignation letter, Abu Hena said that for him it has 'completely uncertain' to resume his work 'in the near future'. 'As the Chief Election Commissioner, my prolonged absence is by no means desirable or beneficial for this institution of national interest. I am all the more concerned because it is no longer possible for me to do justice to the grave responsibility entrusted with me for such a prolonged absence.'

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CU not reopened

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 8: Chittagong University was not reopened today despite the withdrawal of strike by Opposition-backed student bodies.

Campus sources said that the University faced a fresh stalemate as the ruling party's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) began a siege programme yesterday.

BCL is demanding withdrawal of expulsion order against four of its activists.

University bound train and buses did not ply today because of the siege programme.

Chittagong University Syndicate expelled four BCL activists and a Shibir worker in connection with clashes on the campus on May 15 and December 19 last year.

Meanwhile, the university authorities have started informal talks with the leaders of

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Corruption, lack of transparency and bureaucratic tangles blamed again

8 envoys of EU countries call to speed up reforms

By Staff Correspondent

All the seven envoys of European Union countries and the Head of Delegation of EC in Dhaka yesterday said corruption, lack of transparency and bureaucratic tangles are the major obstacles to foreign investments in the country.

They urged for creation of a conducive atmosphere for

growth of trade and business and attracting foreign investment. A congenial atmosphere and reforms will widen the scope for Bangladesh's economic co-operation with EU members.

The envoys were exchanging views with reporters of national dailies and news agencies at a "Meet the Reporters" programme, organised by the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) at its auditorium yesterday.

The envoys of the EU mem-

ber states included ambassadors Finn Thilsted of Denmark, Uwe Schramm of Germany, M F Pini of Italy, A Johnson of Sweden, British High Commissioner Dr David Carter, Charges d'Affaires Jan A Mass of the Netherlands and J G de Wargny of France and

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Felling of trees in reserved natural forests banned till 2005

The government has banned felling of trees in the reserved natural forests up to year 2005 with a view to maintaining 'bio-diversity' in the country, reports UNB.

An official announcement said the decision on the moratorium was taken in a regular Cabinet meeting yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The cabinet also approved in principle the draft Bangladesh Handicapped (Welfare) Special Bill 2000.

The Cabinet also endorsed proposed amendment to the Insurance Act 1938 for streamlining the outmoded insurance industry.

It also approved a draft bill on Appointment and Terms and Conditions of Services Act 2000 for the first and second-class gazetted officers (Tax, Excise and VAT) outside the cadre services.

Javed elected CCCI president

From Our Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, May 8: Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed has been elected president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and industry.

The board of directors of the CCCI at a meeting here today elected Javed, acting president of CCCI, as the president.

The meeting also elected S M Nurul Haq and M A Latif as senior vice-president and vice-president of CCCI respectively. The meeting was attended by 18 out of 24 directors. It entrusted the newly elected office-bearers with the responsibilities of holding the CCCI election by July 30 as per directive of the High Court.

Earlier, Javed resigned as acting president on April 27.

He was made acting president at a meeting of the CCCI board of directors. The directors' meeting also removed the incumbent president Kamal Uddin Ahmed on a no-confidence move on March 14.

Feni Jubo Dal leader shot dead

From Our Correspondent
FENI, May 8: A Jubo Dal leader, abducted by gunmen from Jamia Mosque Road, was murdered at about 9:30 last night.

Abdul Mannan, 26, joint secretary Kalidun union Jubo Dal, was abducted by terrorists at about 7:15 pm.

Police found him in a critical condition in a paddy field and rushed to Sadar Hospital where attending doctors de-

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SUST to reopen on May 16

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, May 8: The Shahjalal University of Science and Technology will reopen on May 16.

The residential halls will open on May 15, said registrar of the university Jamil Ahmed Chowdhury.

The university was closed sine die on February 22 this year after disturbances over the naming of its different buildings and dormitories.

The 3000 students, the teachers as well as the people in Sylhet heaved a sigh of relief after the announcement.

The announcement came after meetings involving the district administration, university officials, district Awami League and All Party Action Committee (Opposition), which was agitating against the naming.

Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet Ali Imam Majumder presided over both the meetings which were addressed by the treasurer Prof. Abdul Aziz, registrar Jamil Ahmed Chowdhury, provost of Shahporan

The meetings expressed deep

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From Our Correspondent
MADRASAH, May 8: A high-profile meeting chaired by the Home Secretary yesterday acknowledged deterioration of law and order in the capital in recent days.

Sources close to the meeting told UNB last night that they stressed proper coordination between the police and the magistracy to reduce incidents of crime that shook the city with a number of horrendous killings.

Law & order reviewed

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