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Hena wishes
Syed all
success

By Staff Correspondent
The outgoing chief election commissioner, Mohammad Abu Hena wished the new CEC all success in running the affairs of the Election Commission.

"Syed is a good friend of mine. We were classmates in the English Department of the Dhaka University. I wish him success in his new assignment as Chief Election Commissioner," Abu Hena said.

"He is a man of integrity and served the state in different capacities honestly and efficiently."

Replies to a query, Hena told The Daily Star "I had no prior idea about my friend's appointment."

"Syed has to secure co-operation of all concerned to succeed in the new job," said Hena.

UNB adds: Mrs Abu Hena described her husband's friend as

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Controversy will
be over now,
hopes govt

The government yesterday hailed new Chief Election Commissioner M A Syed as an honest, efficient and hardworking person competent to grace the office and conduct national elections fairly, reports UNB.

"I believe the controversy over the chief election commissioner will now end and the new CEC will be acceptable to all who believe in democratic and constitutional rule," Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister M A Samad told newsmen at a hurriedly called press briefing at his office in the afternoon.

Press secretary Jawadul Karim who was present there said the President appointed Syed as new CEC as he is an honest, sincere and hardworking former bureaucrat.

Asked whether Syed is a consensus nominee, as de-

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Amendments to 3
hill dist council
acts approved

The Council of Ministers approved the amendments to three district council acts of Chittagong Hill Tracts yesterday, reports UNB.

The acts are Khagrachhari Hill District Council Act, 1989, Bandarban Hill District Council Act, 1989 and Rangamati Hill District Council Act, 1989.

It was approved at the weekly cabinet meeting at the PM's Office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The Cabinet also approved the National Housing Authority Act, 2000, said an official press release.

Our new numbers

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May Sun Rises Sun Sets
23 6-38 pm
24 5-13 am

Prayer Timings

May 23
Fajr 4-15 4-45
Zohr 1-00 1-30
Asr 5-00 5-15
Magrib 6-38 6-40
Esha 8-00 8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

MA Syed new CEC



M A Syed talking to newsmen after being nominated new CEC yesterday.

— Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

M A Syed, a retired civil servant and now Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, has been appointed Chief Election Commissioner.

The appointment, given by the President yesterday on the advice of the Prime Minister, ended two weeks of confusion and speculations over the issue among political circles in particular and people in general.

Chief Justice Latifur Rahman is scheduled to administer oath to Syed today.

Syed would be the eighth CEC and the second bureaucrat to head the Election Commission following Abu Hena who resigned on May 8.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed gave the appointment after he received the nomination from the Prime Minister's Office yesterday morning, an official announcement said.

Previously, Syed was Secretary to the ministries of Agriculture, Home Affairs and Information. He served the World Bank as Alternative Executive Director in the early Nineties and was Chairman of the Rupali Bank. He hails from Gopalganj.

Asked about the appointment of Syed as CEC, acting Chief Election Commissioner Mostaque Ahmed Chowdhury said, "We are ready to welcome him to the office."

The appointment followed two abortive attempts to choose a CEC on the basis of consensus between the government and the Opposition over the last two weeks.

The first attempt came from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 8 when she invited Leader of the Opposition in parliament Khaleda Zia for a discussion on the issue at 7:00 pm the next day.

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Legal shop owners of Adarsha Market queue up with valid papers to enter the market yesterday.

— Star photo

Reaction

Opposition rejects new
CEC terming it
unilateral decision

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has rejected appointment of M A Syed as Chief Election Commissioner and said people will not accept it as the government has done it unilaterally.

"We do not accept this appointment ... People will also not accept this unilateral appointment," BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said. "It's a conspiracy and advance preparation of the Awami League to rig the future election."

Mannan Bhuiyan announced that the alliance would jointly organise a demonstration in the city today at 4 pm at Muktangan and nationwide demonstrations tomorrow to protest the 'unilateral' appointment.

At his office at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in the city, which he

headed until yesterday, Syed said everyone involved in elections has to be fair before questioning fairness of the Election Commission.

He said lack of fairness is the main obstacle to election processes. "In any election, a good intention is the main thing, and that is to hold fair election," Syed said.

He said power brokers play a major role in elections in the country. Their influence should be reduced, if not possible to eradicate fully. "This is possible.

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Interview

Everyone has to be fair
before questioning
fairness of EC: Syed

By M Shamsur Rahman

The newly appointed Chief Election Commissioner, MA Syed, has sought cooperation from all quarters in carrying out his new assignment he dubbed as "a big challenge".

"My first task as the chief election commissioner will be to ensure everything possible to hold a free and fair election for which the nation will be proud of," Syed told The Daily Star in an interview shortly after his appointment.

At his office at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in the city, which he

headed until yesterday, Syed said everyone involved in elections has to be fair before questioning fairness of the Election Commission.

He said lack of fairness is the main obstacle to election processes. "In any election, a good intention is the main thing, and that is to hold fair election," Syed said.

He said power brokers play a major role in elections in the country. Their influence should be reduced, if not possible to eradicate fully. "This is possible.

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Magistrate to die for killing lady magistrate

By Court Correspondent

The Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court Dhaka awarded death sentence to a magistrate yesterday for killing a lady magistrate in 1993.

Judge Rishikesh Saha handed down the death sentence to Liakat Ali Khan, a magistrate in Sherpur, in absentia for killing Shahida Chowdhury who was a magistrate in Mymensingh.

In October 1993, Shahida Chowdhury, an expectant mother, was staying at her sister-in-law's house at Kurmitola in Dhaka. Liakat met Shahida in that house on October 8 and insisted on her going with him. Liakat stabbed Shahida as she refused.

Shahida succumbed to her

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'No way to save Chandrima park'

Flaw in original PWD
layout blamed

By Special Correspondent

The authorities will go ahead with the planned destruction of a part of Chandrima Udayan at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar,

one of the three wood-parks in the city, to make room for a power station for the Bangabandhu Convention Centre being built for the Non-Aligned Movement summit in September next year.

The go-ahead was given de-

spite newspaper reports on citizens' concern over a substantial loss of greenery at a place with public buildings around. The Chinese contractors building the Centre also admitted that the power station could have been accommodated in the land

given to them.

"There could be an underground power station instead of destroying the park," said an official of the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF), sharing the citizens' concern.

MOEF has sought clarification from the PWD on the issue and an investigation into reports about the actual intention behind felling of trees, being sold at a throwaway price.

"We cannot but go ahead with the task. To save part of the park, we have to redesign the entire layout for the convention centre and that would mean the centre cannot be com-

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Banks asked to
give report
on Kajol's
accounts

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, May 22: The Income Tax Department has asked several branches of Sonali Bank to prepare a detailed report on the bank accounts of Faruque Ahmed Kajol, operator of the so-called 'Syndicate Bank' at Kotchandpur.

The Income Tax Department wants to know the extent of tax evasion which the alleged swindler committed while earning huge money allegedly through fraudulent means.

As empowered under Sections 116 and 117 of the Income Tax Ordinances, 1984, the Income Tax Commissioner, Khulna has issued an official order to managers of several branches of Sonali Bank of Jhenidah and Chittagong districts to submit correct figures of the bank accounts of Kajol, his wife and agents who allegedly lured the people by promising to give lucrative incentive interest against deposits with the Syndicate Bank.

The depositors have now little hope to get their money back as the so-called 'Syndicate Bank' is no more in existence which Kajol operated for nearly six years in connivance with a section of govt officials both in police and civil administration.

Officials of Sonali Bank branches of these two districts are reportedly feeling insecure in giving such statements of bank accounts due to threats by Kajol's accomplices, said a reliable source.

2 killed in
Nilphamari
bomb blast

NILPHAMARI, May 22: Two people were killed and another was injured when a powerful bomb exploded in the house of a retired BDR commander in Kishoreganj upazila Sunday night, reports UNB.

Another explosive device lying in the same room was defused today by army experts, police said.

Police arrested the retired BDR Nayek Subedar, Abdus Samad, from his Hajipara residence today in this connection.

Police also recovered 161 empty bullet shells from the spot.

Samad went on retirement five years ago when he was posted at Ramgarh in Khagrachhari and started living at Hajipara six months ago. His

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Star Report

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) may totally stop funding social forestry sector due to the government's poor performance in handling business and its non-committal attitude towards carrying forward reforms in this sector.

"We conveyed our message to the government that if certain reforms are not done, we may have to pull out from this sector. Presently, we have suspended funding this sector," said Phiphit Supaphiphat, resident representative of ADB's Bangladesh Mission.

Supaphiphat was talking

ability for giving fund from ADB.

Earlier, Bangladesh was tagged in the group of the most least developed countries, which enabled it to get most of its funds from ADB. But now that Bangladesh graduated from that group recently it will have to take a portion of its requirement from Ordinary Capital Resources (OCR), ADB's high interest lending window, Supaphiphat said.

About ADB's operation in Bangladesh from early '70s, Supaphiphat said earlier little effort was given on capacity

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Star Report

on "ADB Operations in Bangladesh" at the luncheon meeting of France-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIB) at Hotel Sheraton yesterday.

Earlier this month, an ADB mission while disclosing the bank's new lending scheme of 1.5 billion US dollars for Bangladesh linked the actual disbursement with good governance, reforms and implementation capacity.

Undisbursed ADB fund worth 1.2 billion US dollars for Bangladesh is currently lying in the pipeline.

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By Staff Correspondent

access of goods from 48 African and Caribbean countries. It will

create tremendous opportuni-

ties for those countries and pose

a threat to Bangladeshi gar-

ments items, the BGMEA pres-

ident said.

Bangladesh 'missed the

train' because there was no ini-

tiative from the government to