

Donors to discuss polls issues with CEC Apr 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Representatives of donor countries and agencies would discuss various issues related to the country's upcoming general election with Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed on April 3. Election Commission sources said.

Mission chiefs in Bangladesh of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Japan and the European Union have sought appointment with the CEC for the talks, the sources said.

Earlier, the Ambassador of the European Union had called on the CEC twice and discussed the EC's ongoing reforms programme to ensure free and fair election in the country.

BBC agrees to probe Mahmud Ali's role in '75 coup

BSS, Dhaka

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has assured Bangladesh government of investigating the activities of Syed Mahmud Ali, Chief of BBC Bangla Service, for his reported involvement in the 1975 coup and subsequent events as contained in an interview published here last month, highly placed sources said yesterday.

Greg Dyke, Director General of BBC, in reply to a letter of the Bangladesh High Commissioner in London has said that his organisation "will carry out an investigation into the interview of Syed Mahmud Ali".

The sources said Dyke had instructed the Head of BBC's Asia and Pacific region to carry out the investigation.

A H Mahmud Ali, Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK, in his letter to Greg Dyke dated March 13 reminded the DG of BBC of how "deeply the people of Bangladesh were hurt by the interview" of Syed Mahmud Ali, head of Bengali section of BBC, published last month in Janakantha.

The High Commissioner also mentioned that the said interview published on February 21 has "called into question the credibility and role of BBC Bengali Service".

BBC, however, in a statement on March 1 said Syed Mahmud Ali was "misrepresented" in the interview and that it had "full confidence in the impartiality and objectivity of the Bengali section and its head".

The High Commissioner in the letter also said the government felt that in the "interest of restoring the confidence and trust of the people of Bangladesh in the BBC Bengali Service and also in view of the special and unique relations between Bangladesh and BBC, it is advisable that Syed Mahmud Ali is removed from BBC Bengali Service."

Besides informing the high commissioner of the investigation to be carried out, DG of BBC also

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Misappropriation of Tk 1.5 crore: Dr Fazlur Rahman sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Dr Fazlur Rahman, Project Director of Ministry of Education, arrested allegedly for misappropriating Tk 1.50 crore, was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

The Court of Metropolitan Magistrate, Mohammad Shahidul Islam, passed the order after hearing the two petitions, submitted by police and defence lawyers.

Rahma police produced Dr Rahman before the CMM's court, Dhaka yesterday at about 3:30 pm with a prayer for seven days' remand.

Advocate Shah Elias Ratan and Monir Hossain submitted a petition for his bail and cancellation of the prayer for remand. The prosecution side opposed the bail petition.

After hearing both the sides, the court rejected the petition for bail but granted the petition for cancellation of remand.

Dr Rahman, while in office, allegedly misappropriated Tk 1.50 by misusing his power.

Abul Bashar, Manager of Computer Department of Universal Traders at Motijheel in the city filed a case against Dr Rahman on March 27 in this connection.



Never mind the size, a procession is a procession, good enough to create traffic congestion for hours together, as the handful of processionists proved yesterday on one of the busiest roads in the city that connects Matsya Bhaban and Shahbagh crossings.

Some illegal firms issuing fake ISO certificates

STAR REPORT

Some unauthorised firms are issuing fake ISO certificates to Bangladeshi companies ignoring regular procedures, according to an official of a UK-based certification company.

"There are now around 50 Bangladeshi companies which have ISO certification, but at least ten of them have absolutely false certificates," said Rashid H Mehr, Director and Regional Chief of the Moody International Certification Ltd. (MICKL).

The MICKL which operates in around 100 countries formally launched its operation in Bangladesh yesterday.

Non-accredited certificates are not internationally acceptable and are harmful to local companies, Rashid said and suggested the government take steps to check inauthentic certification in the country.



Members of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad (Women's Council) sport placards demanding direct election to and increase of the number of reserved seats for women in the Jatiya Sangsad as they form a human chain in the city

BCS interview on June 3 & 4

UNB, Dhaka

The interview of the 21st BCS scheduled for April 1 and 2 have been postponed due to unavoidable reasons.

The interview will now be held on June 3 and 4 at the time and venue given earlier. No letter would be issued for fresh date, said an official handout.

Bangabandhu Murder Case Counsel backs acquittal of 2 condemned convicts

UNB, Dhaka

Counsel for Risalder Moslemuddin and Captain Kismat Hashem in the third-judge bench yesterday support the acquittal of the two condemned convicts by one of the two judges of a High Court bench, saying they are "innocent".

Both the accused were awarded death sentences by the trial court along with 13 others for their involvement in the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib on August 15, 1975.

But, the HC division bench comprising Justice Ruhul Amin and Justice AB M Khairul Huq that heard the death reference and appeal, gave a split judgement in which the senior judge acquitted both Risalder Moslemuddin and Capt Kismat Hashem along with three others.

On the hearing over the split judgement at the single-judge bench of Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim, the lawyer appointed by the state for these two fugitives appealed to the court for upholding the judgement of

Ruhul Amin claiming that those two are innocent.

Md Abu Bakar Siddiqui, counsel for Risalder Moslemuddin, told the court that a witness had said that he saw Major Aziz Pasha take a stungun from Moslemuddin and kill Begum Mujib and three others. "But, the same witness said Major Pasha was seen climbing stairs firing on the door of Begum Mujib's room."

Pointing to the contradictory

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One shot dead at Mohammadpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young man was shot dead and his wife injured by unidentified miscreants at Tikkapara in the city's Mohammadpur area yesterday evening.

The dead was identified as Mohammad Babul, 30, Babul's wife Nadira, who was also shot by the armed gang, was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Babul, a resident of Kallyanpur area recently married Nadira, mother of two children and wife of his gang leader Sentu.

Babul and his wife Nadira went to Gausia market for shopping yesterday evening. Babul received a call through his mobile phone.

Accordingly they went to a house at Tikkapara by a red car. They came out of the house after five minutes, sources said.

Babul and were shot while they were about to board the car. They were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition where the attending doctors declared Babul dead at about 8:30 last night.

A pistol loaded with six rounds of bullets was recovered from the body of Babul.

Babul was a listed criminal and accused in more than 25 cases including murder, police said.

2 jurors resign, another walk out over 'fixed' Indian film awards

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Announcement of India's national film awards for 2000 yesterday was marred by controversy amidst allegations of "rigging" and "political bias."

Two members of the 16-strong jury for the awards resigned, one of them staged a walkout and another, well-known Bengali actor-director Dhritiman Chatterjee, gave conditional signature to the citations for the awards.

The controversy centred mainly on selection of Hindi stars Anil Kapoor and Raveena Tandon as the best actor and actress for their performances in feature films Pukar and Daman. Pukar deals with a discredited army officer's fight against terrorism and Daman tells the story of a wife subjected to torture by her husband.

Questions have also been raised about the choice of Pandavas as the best English language film. Chairperson of the jury Vijayantimala Bali, star of yester-years, rebutted the charges and said no award was "fixed."

Besides, reservations were voiced against presence of certain persons on the jury who were considered ideologically inclined towards the ruling BJP and its spiritual head RSS. Interestingly, criticism of the selection of Anil Kapoor and Raveena Tandon and impartial

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11-party presents 26-pt demand to President

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A delegation of 11 left-leaning political parties called on the President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmad at Bangabhaban yesterday to express grave concern over the confrontational course national politics has taken in recent times.

President gave them a patient hearing during the 75-minute meeting, which began at 11:30am, sources said.

After the meeting, Mujahidul Islam Selim, general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), told The Daily Star that the President had expressed a strong desire to see the country overcome the confrontational situation.

During the meeting, the 11-party leaders expressed their concern at the exchange of 'ultimatum' and 'counter-ultimatum' by the BNP-led

opposition alliance and the ruling Awami League.

"We gave our view that the process of power transfer and formation of a caretaker government is not a bilateral affair between the AL and the BNP," said Selim. "Rather, the Constitution has clear provisions for these issues to be resolved."

The 11-party put forward to the President a 26-point charter of proposals, including arrest of terrorists and loan defaulters, recovery of illegal arms and ban on communal propaganda, for holding of free and fair elections.

The leftist delegation also suggested that the Election Commission should be recast and the voters' list rid of all irregularities for the sake of free and fair polls.

They apprised the President of the slow progress of investigation

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'Gidita was murdered as she protested growing atrocities'

Adivasis to hold rally in city tomorrow

NAIMUL HAQ, back from Madhupur

A group of Bengali settlers killed a young Garo mother in the Madhupur forests in Tangail district on March 20, leaving others in her tribe panic-stricken.

Led by Hobibur Rahman, an influential man in the Garo village in Magantinagar, some 60 kilometres west of Tangail town, 15 assailants stabbed Gidita Rema to death on the spot.

The local Union Parishad chairman allegedly patronised the attackers.

Gidita's youngest brother Harano Manik Rema also fell victim when he protested, having heard his sister cry out for help. However, he narrowly escaped death.

"I went to save my sister. When I reached the spot, I saw four persons holding my sister and beating her. I jumped to free her, but one of them hit me on the head with a ramdao (machete), and I ran away for life," said Manik.

Villagers said Gidita was killed due to her protesting the cruelties by the Bangalees in the village where the Garo grow pineapples and other seasonal fruits to earn their livelihood.

The Bengali money lenders would often come and demand back

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Harano Manik Rema stands by his sister Gidita's grave at Magantinagar, a small village of Madhupur in Tangail. Gidita, a Garo woman, was stabbed to death on March 20, allegedly by a group of Bengali settlers.

Miscreants damage 2 houses, 50 shops in N'ganj, loot valuables

BSS, Narayanganj

Two dwelling houses were burnt and over fifty shops damaged in two separate acts of violence by unidentified armed miscreants at Bolai under Fatullah police station here on Tuesday night, police and eyewitnesses said.

Police arrested two persons Mohaiminul and Abdur Rahim for their alleged involvement in the incidents.

Sources said a group of hooded miscreants numbering about 20 to 25 equipped with fire arms, hockey stick, iron rod and other sharp weapons swooped on fifty shops at Bolail market.

The hoodlums exploded about 25 crackers to create panic and fired gunshots at the shopkeepers leaving one Butto, 30, injured. Market committee president Mohammad Hasan Ali filed a case with Fatullah police in this connection.

In the other incident, the miscreants set fire to two dwelling houses of one Abdul Qader, 40, at about 8-30 pm at West Bolail. They looted a 14 inch black and white television and a tape recorder, cash money and gold ornaments from Momtaz Begum, one of the inmates of the houses.

The attack could be a sequel to previous enmity, the sources said.

A case was lodged with Fatullah police in this connection.