



Latifur Rahman supports putting defence under chief adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief adviser to the last caretaker government Justice Latifur Rahman yesterday expressed his support to the 14-party opposition combine's demand to put the defence portfolio under the head of interim government instead of the president.

"From my experience I think the defence ministry should be run by the chief adviser during the three-month tenure, not by the president," Justice Rahman told the BBC Bangla Service yesterday.

He, however, opposed the other proposals for reform of the caretaker government system including appointment of the chief and other advisers through consensus of all political parties.

On reforms of the Election Commission (EC) and electoral laws, Justice Rahman said those are

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EC to sit with political parties over voter list

Letters to be sent in a day or two

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) is going to hold a series of dialogues with the political parties to seek their opinions on the voter list for the next parliamentary elections.

The EC yesterday at a meeting decided to invite a total of 96 political parties to the dialogue to discuss whether it will go for a fresh voter list or revise the existing one.

The EC is yet to fix date for the dialogues but sources said the meetings would be completed by this month.

The EC Secretariat will send letters to the political parties in a day or two, inviting them to sit in the dialogue, the first such effort ahead

of the next election, meeting sources said.

The existing electoral laws do not allow the EC to prepare new voter list ahead of a parliamentary election, rather suggest revision of the list.

"If the political parties want a fresh voter list, then the existing rules will have to be amended,"

Election Commissioner AK Mohammad Ali yesterday told The Daily Star. "We will then ask the government to amend the relevant laws."

About the dialogue, Election Commissioner M Munsif Ali said, "We have initiated steps to hold the dialogues to settle the issue as demands for a fresh voter list has been raised. We hope to complete

the dialogues by this month."

The EC has also planned to include photographs of the voters on the list prepared for the voters of divisional headquarters to check false votes. It will also seek opinion from the political parties on this reform plan, sources said.

The EC had prepared a voter list before the last parliamentary election at a cost of about Tk 100 crore. The number of voters on the list is over 7.5 crore.

Former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Syed was against preparation of a fresh voter list ahead of the next election. He suggested updating the existing voter list that has been reserved in

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Alliance wins Sunamganj-3 by-polls

Voting held peacefully

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Four-party alliance candidate Shahinur Pasha won the Sunamganj-3 by-election yesterday by a narrow margin, according to unofficial results.

Pasha secured 42,948 votes against his nearest rival, independent candidate MA Mannan, who bagged 38,875.

Sunamganj district Election Office sources said the voting was almost peaceful and there was no report of untoward incident from

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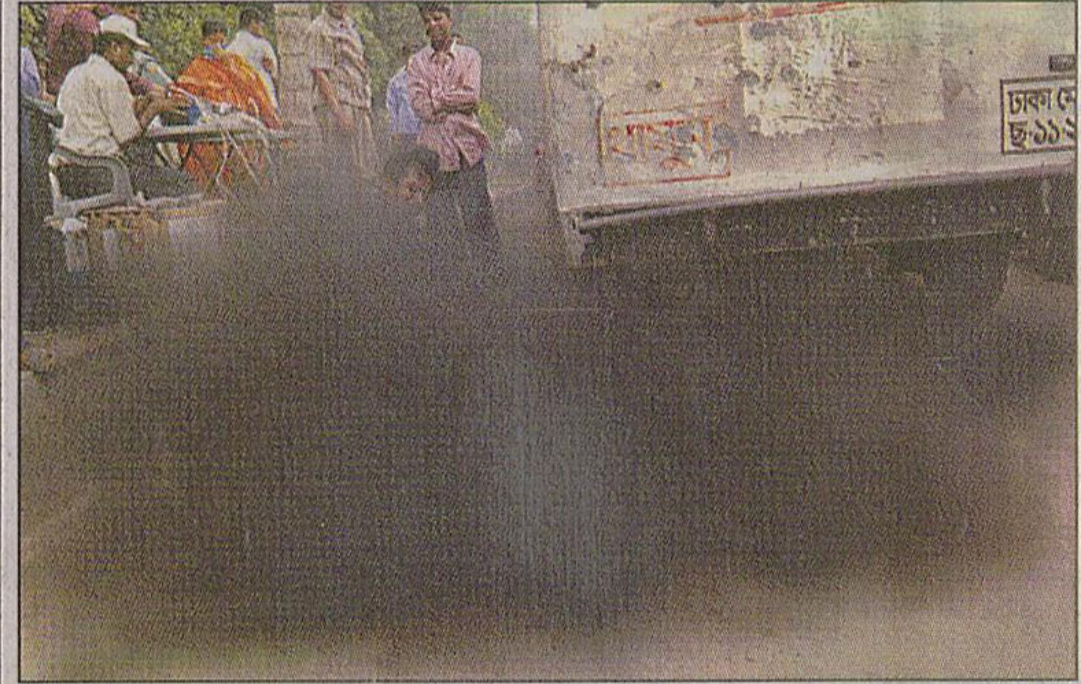


PHOTO: STAR

A team of environment department tests the level of black smoke emission from a bus on Manik Mia Avenue in the capital yesterday under a drive to detect and check air pollution.

Dollar price climbs to Tk 64.62

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dollar price rose to Tk 64.62 yesterday from Tuesday's Tk 64.50, as the greenback crisis continued in the inter-bank foreign exchange market.

Bangladesh Association of Banks (ABB) has blamed some banks' mismatch in the transactions of foreign exchange for the current dollar crisis.

The association, however, hopes the crisis will be resolved soon.

The dollar price is climbing up

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New pay scale may repel the best

Warns WB, as officers' real pay eroded

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The World Bank (WB) said the new government pay scale has awarded less remuneration and facilities to the officers than the employees, which may hinder the 'brightest and the best' candidates joining the civil service.

It also suggested giving increments and other incentives not on the basis of length of service but on performance.

"Erosion of real pay and compression of cash compensation may reduce the government's ability to attract the 'brightest and the best'"

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Mobile court fines 30 vehicles for emitting toxic fumes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A high-tech mobile court fined 30 vehicles out of 38 that were checked for emitting highly toxic fumes in the capital yesterday.

Equipped with computers and infra-red sensors, officials of the Department of Environment, Bangladesh Road Transport

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Bepza, BJMC lock horns over disposal of Adamjee machinery

REAZ AHMAD

To get 29 plots ready for foreign investors at the planned Adamjee Export Processing Zone (EPZ) by November, the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) is now locked in a tug of war with the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) over disposal of the closed Adamjee Jute Mills' machinery.

While Bepza floated tender just three days back to temporarily shift the heavy and rusting machinery of the now-defunct mills for early preparation of the Adamjee EPZ plots, BJMC sought immediate intervention from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to halt the move.

BJMC had already awarded the job of disposing of the machinery to other parties, BJMC authorities said.

In a letter sent to the prime minister's principal secretary on Tuesday, BJMC authorities asked for immediate intervention into the matter fearing legal backlash from the parties whom the BJMC had already awarded the job of removing

the Adamjee machinery.

But Executive Chairman of Bepza Brigadier General (Retd) M Zakir Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday, "There is no point of seeking the PMO's intervention into this affair as we just floated tender for temporarily shifting the machinery from one shed to other. Unlike BJMC, we're not making any arrangements for selling or disposing of the machinery."

"We're hurrying up to meet the target of getting at least 29 industrial plots ready by November as one single Hong Kong investor has asked for all these plots to set up a textile mill investing 25 million dollars. This venture will create 10,000 jobs," he added.

Besides, Adamjee EPZ has got investment offers from Canada, Australia, and Japan, he said.

When asked why Bepza did not go for BJMC-awarded parties for permanent disposal of the machinery instead of floating a fresh tender,

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700 Bangladeshis sent back from Saudi Arabia

27 detained in Bolivia for illegal entry

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Around 700 Bangladeshi nationals returned home empty-handed from Saudi Arabia yesterday when the news reached Dhaka that Bolivian police detained 27 Bangladeshis in Santa Cruz.

The foreign ministry could not provide any information about the Bangladeshis arrested in Bolivia's largest city for entering that country illegally.

Officials said 700 Bangladeshis were deported and sent back home on charge of staying there illegally.

Officer-in-Charge of ZIA Immigration Aminul Islam told the news agency that the Saudi government has sent back the Bangladeshi nationals by three flights of Saudi Arabian airlines between 11:00am and 3:00pm yesterday at its own

cost.

He said the Ministry for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and the immigration authorities received the Bangladeshi nationals at the airport according to a list provided by the Saudi government.

Quoting the returnees, Islam said these people went to Saudi Arabia in the name of performing Umrah Hajj and stayed there for 3-4 years illegally. He said many of them served imprisonment of different terms for staying there illegally.

Meanwhile, Bolivian prosecutor Jaime Soliz was quoted by international media as saying that the Bangladeshis, arrested in six separate police raids, were taken to police headquarters for interrogation on Tuesday.

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Rab nabs 2 Shibir men, seizes AK47

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) have arrested two cadres of Islami Chhatra Shibir and seized one AK47 assault rifle in separate raids in Chittagong.

The Rab has also seized 33 AK47 bullets, of which at least 17 were produced at Bangladesh Ordnance Factory (BOF), sources said.

Acting on a tip off, a Rab team on Monday night arrested listed criminal Abdus Salam from DC Road in West Bakalia.

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Commentary

Stop crossfire killings, now

It amounts to govt's no-confidence in judiciary

MAHFUZ ANAM

Each time a person is killed by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) or the police, the government, in effect, casts a vote of no confidence in the judiciary. Each time a person is denied trial, the legal system of the country is undermined. Each time the law enforcing agencies are

allowed to randomly 'kill' a suspect, the government creates a Frankenstein. Each time police or Rab take(s) a person's life without the due process of law, the government itself becomes a lawbreaker and reduces itself, in a sense, to the level of those that it is trying to punish. An inevitable consequence of this process is that the legally

constituted government greatly loses its moral authority to govern.

The core feature that distinguishes a civilised society from an uncivilised one is that the former is governed by law and the latter is not. A vital corollary of that feature is the principle that "no one is above the law", from the highest office holder to the

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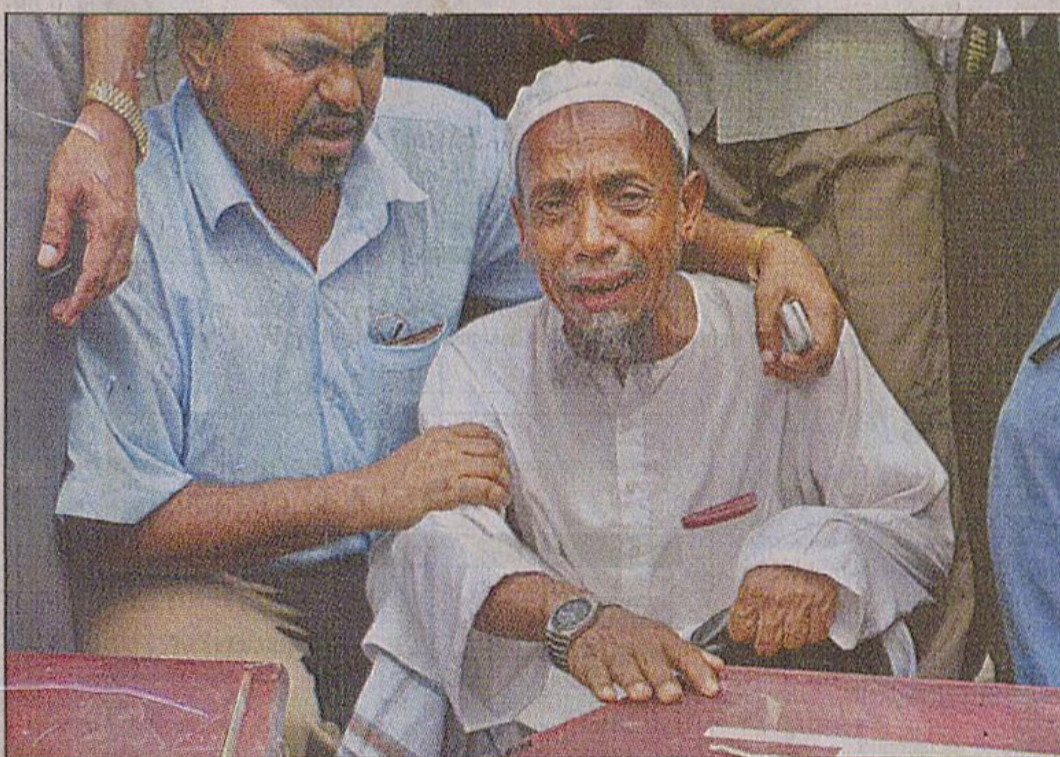


PHOTO: STAR

An inconsolable Abu Saleh breaks into sobs seeing the coffin of his son Nezam Uddin killed in a recent fire in Saudi Arabia arrive at Zia International Airport yesterday.

FAIZEE'S CERTIFICATE, AGE ISSUES Law ministry sits on president's order to resolve controversy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The law ministry is yet to act to resolve the certificate and age controversy of High Court Additional Judge Faisal Mahmud Faizee even 21 days after the president's office asked the ministry to take necessary steps.

Bangabhaban, the president's office, sent a letter to the law ministry on June 30 asking it to take steps, a month after the Supreme Court

Bar Association (SCBA) asked the president to intervene to resolve the controversy over Faizee.

Asked about the ministry's move following the move of the president's office, Law Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed told The Daily Star: "I'll have to check it (letter)."

SCBA Secretary Enayetur Rahim, who sent the letter to the president, meanwhile, noted the ministry is dilly-dallying to act on the issue.

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SAUDI FIRE Bodies of 7 Bangladeshis arrive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The dead bodies of seven Bangladeshis who were killed in a recent fire accident at a sofa manufacturing factory in Saudi Arabia, reached Dhaka yesterday.

Secretary in charge of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment AKM Shamsuddin formally received the bodies at the Zia International Airport after a Bangladesh Biman flight carrying them landed at 9:00am.

The expatriates' welfare ministry took initiative to bring the bodies home.

The owner of the sofa factory gave Tk 40,000 against each dead

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