

## Did CEC need to say

FROM PAGE 1  
should have left it to a PSC spokesperson or better still its chairman to give such a detailed explanation) he gave a long narration of how the recruitment took place, when it was advertised, how many applied, how many passed, etc. and concluded that appointments were made on the basis of merit. (How is he so sure? Haven't political bias interfered with PSC selections in the past? Why does the CEC take upon himself to certify actions of the PSC?)

The CEC really stuns us all when he says, "Political loyalty is not our main concern." He adds that everyone is entitled to his or her political belief, as they are entitled to cast their votes. He further states that if one is meritorious one should get a job. It is immaterial whether one was a JCD leader or not. One's past is not important and what counts is if one is working well or not.

Taking the comment as a whole we are compelled to think whether the CEC is at all aware of what holding an election really means. We are forced to wonder whether he realises that election is fundamentally a political process. It is as much based on facts as it is based on people's perception. Just as a Justice has not only to be fair but also "has to be seen to be fair" so also an election has not only to be free and fair but also perceived to be free and fair. People must be able to believe that the election results truly reflected their wishes and desires. For that 'public faith' to come about the credibility of the EC has to be beyond question, above every hint of suspicion.

The CEC in his comments used words like "political ideology", "political loyalty", "political belief" and "the right to vote" as if there are no differences between them. He appears to have equated them with a citizen's right to vote. Is it his view that there is no difference between being an activist of a political party and the fact that one votes in an election once in every five years? Can "political loyalty" and deciding to vote for a particular candidate in an election be considered the same? Doesn't the CEC know that voting rights may be exercised purely on the basis of attractiveness of a candidate and not for his political affiliation. May we humbly point out that a citizen's right to vote is fundamentally different from "political loyalty", which the CEC said is not a matter of concern for him. It very much should be.

According to our reports, and no one has contradicted them yet, of the 150 UEO's recently appointed 80 are JCD leaders of Dhaka University and the rest are from Rajshahi, Chittagong, and Jahangirnagar universities, and Agriculture University in Mymensingh, Islamic University in Khulna and other different colleges. Doesn't the Chief Election Commissioner have any curiosity as to where his staffs are coming from? Hasn't it struck him as odd as to how such a concentration of meritorious students has suddenly taken place in the JCD whose proficiency is well known in most fields other than in academic matters. Doesn't the CEC know that most meritorious students do not belong to political parties? Yet he thinks nothing of going out of his way to certify a process of recruitment that he neither conducted nor had any say in.

Elections in Bangladesh have always been a contentious process. The contention surrounding it has gotten worse every time we held one. Such is the depth of mutual suspicion among our major political parties that every action of one is looked upon with suspicion by the other. Though it is a declaration of "No trust" on our political parties, yet we have found it necessary to amend our constitution and put into place, being the only place in

the world, a unique system of non-party caretaker government for three months to conduct our national elections. Given the atmosphere of such intense suspicion the Election Commission needs to be particularly careful of two fundamental things: a) How it conducts itself (including what the CEC says); b) What type of people it gets as its staff. Here the CEC has a tremendous role, both legal and moral. We understand that he had no say in what the PSC did in terms of selecting the UEO's. But he needs to have gone out of his way to certify the veracity of the process. And most importantly, we think, he could have taken a far stronger moral position in upholding and ensuring the neutrality of the EC staff. Instead, he seemed to be in a great hurry to brush aside serious questions being raised by those who know the process and the media about the recruitment of the UEO's.

We conclude with a few questions for our CEC. It is credible that those who have been activists of a political party till yesterday, and those who have immensely benefited from that association including perhaps getting the job at hand would suddenly turn into a saint and allow a free and fair election to be held? Will they permit it when a free and fair election may (but not necessarily) mean that the very party they have served all these years may actually lose that election, when they can help it? Will they permit it when losing that election may mean that they will lose the very jobs that they got during their own party's tenure? We hope the CEC will seriously think of the issues we raise. There is much at stake and he has such a pivotal role to play.

Military launches  
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committee in this connection, the well-placed official said, "There is no need to form a committee as there are many intelligence wings in all the three forces. There is also the DGF at the top. The intelligence has automatically started the inquiry."

Harun was arrested on the basis of information given by JMB cadre Obaiddullah Suman, who was arrested in Kishoreganj on September 14. Suman also named one Mohiuddin, a former honorary captain of the army, claiming that both Harun and Mohiuddin trained the JMB bomb squad.  
Both Harun and Suman, now on police remand, are being interrogated at the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) in Dhaka.  
"The ex-defence officials are no longer concerns of the defence forces. But Harun's confessions lead also to serving personnel. This demands we investigate Harun's files in the army, which we will do if we find it necessary," the official added.

Ice cream  
FROM PAGE 20  
Rohan Ud Doulah fined factory owner Humayun Kabir Tk 30,000 under the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) act.  
Humayun Kabir, however, thanked the mobile court for carrying out the drive, saying it will help owners like him to be more careful about maintaining food standard in future.

IMF assures  
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The IMF managing director praised the overall macro-economic performance of the government despite unfavorable external situation. He appreciated Bangladesh's export performance particularly in textile and apparel sector despite MFA phaseout.  
Saitur said Bangladesh is in track in respect to the PRGF programme with IMF. He thanked the managing director for release of PRGF tranche recently. He said the current pressure on the external position is rendered mostly by the exogenous sources.  
He urged the IMF to consider some financing facility for low-income countries to meet the external shock due to the unprecedented rise in oil prices. Rato agreed with the minister but felt that the government should adjust its petroleum prices responding to market prices.  
Rato observed that the central bank's tightening of the monetary policy has been appropriate. He encouraged the government to strengthen tax collection drive and simplify tax system. He also appreciated the ongoing banking reforms by the government.  
He assured that IMF's programme review and release of the next PRGF tranche will be in time and IMF will continue its support to Bangladesh.

## MOMIN MURDER Family seek safety fearing further attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
An arrestee in the Mirpur Commerce College student Kamrul Islam Momin murder case yesterday disclosed before a magistrate's court the identity of the man who orchestrated the killing.

Hasibul Haque Johnny, 22, however, told the court he does not know who hired Shah Alam for the murder.  
Meantime, Kamrul's family demanded immediate arrest of the closed officer-in-charge (OC) Rafiqul Islam of Motijheel Police Station and sought security fearing further attack on them.

Johnny, whom Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested on Wednesday with ammunition in Ibrahimpur, made his confession before Magistrate Nani Gopal Biswas.  
He said Shah Alam, a cadre of slain Panu, designed the killing and engaged five men for the operation. The four others are Jewel, Tarek, Thorkata Babu and an unidentified man.  
Alam was furious with the family as they had held Panu and turned him in to the Rab, said court sources quoting Johnny. Panu was killed in 'crossfire'.

Johnny said Alam ordered the four to kill any son of Abdur Razzak at a meeting in Mirpur on September 12. They took position near Razzak's North Ibrahimpur house and Tarek and Jewel shot his son Kamrul when he came out.  
The court placed him on a two-day remand in another case filed under the Explosive Substances Act.

Razzak at a press conference at his house said the killers are threatening to kill his other sons. He termed the OC the mastermind in the killing and ongoing threats.  
The family filed three general diaries with Kafur Police Station and lodged complaints with the home ministry, Rab and Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner against the OC before the killing.

13 Bangladeshi  
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where the men were picked up.  
He said Indian fishermen had found the 13 men floating on slabs of wood from their broken boat a few hours after they had capsized.  
The rescued fishermen were now at Dhamara port in Orissa state and were awaiting verification of their nationality before being sent home, he said.

We have already asked the state home department to inform the federal government, and the Bangladesh High Commission," Jena said.  
Dhamara port is nearly 200km north of Bhubaneswar, the capital of Orissa state.  
Bangladesh was trying to confirm reports that 16 fishermen had been killed and hundreds more were missing after heavy rain and wind-whipped seas pummeled the country's 700-km coast.  
ATN Bangla TV reported Wednesday that 200 fishing boats with 3,000 fishermen aboard were missing. But on Thursday, Golam Mostafa Chowdhury, President of the Barguna Fishing Boat Owners Association, told reporters that about 60 boats with more than 500 fishermen still remained missing.

Blasts kill 6  
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Police and ambulances rushed to the site and carried the injured to hospital. The blasts broke windows of several shops and the smoke blackened nearby hoardings.  
Separately, two people were injured when two bombs exploded in the town of Kalat in the restive southwestern province of Baluchistan, police said.

BSF kills 1  
FROM PAGE 20  
Sadeq while he was working in the cropland near the border in the morning. Sadeq died instantly.  
The BSF later took away the body.  
"BDR immediately condemned the killing and asked its Indian counterpart to return the body through a flag meeting."

Bapex rejects  
FROM PAGE 1  
date for the JMC meeting to approve its plan to drill the seven wells. These are an exploratory and a development well in the unexplored Chhatak east area, three development wells in Chhatak west and two development wells in Fenig gas field area.  
The blown-out Tengratia gas field is located in Chhatak west area.  
The JVA dictates that Niko cannot do any activity in the Chhatak east since it has drilled two firm wells and one optional well in the Chhatak west and brought into production 50 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) gas.  
But Niko failed to drill a single well in Chhatak west through the repeated blowouts in the Tengratia field.  
Niko also proposed for drilling two wells in the Fenig gas field in violation of its JVA. The JVA demands that Niko will conduct a "work-over" in the abandoned well of the Fenig gas field to begin gas production there.

Our Rajshahi University Correspondent reports: A mobile court in separate raids in the city yesterday realised Tk 41,500 in fines from business organisations and shops for adulterating foodstuff and deceiving people in weight.

The court led by Metropolitan Magistrate Jobeda Khatun raided Shahab bazar, RDA market, New Market and Upashahar areas of the city and realised the fine.

## Political double standards

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Muslims are by and large a pious and peace-loving community, which is spread all over the world, they observed.

Participants from home and abroad also termed Bangladesh a moderate Muslim nation and lauded its people's peaceful coexistence, communal harmony and religious tolerance.  
The vast majority Muslims in Bangladesh do not make distinction among different races, castes and communities and are maintaining good relationship with them for long.

Noted nuclear scientist, Islamic thinker and VC of Southeast University Prof M Shamsheer Ali presented the keynote titled "Islam, a Religion of Peace, Progress and Harmony; and the Image of Bangladesh as a Moderate Muslim Nation".  
Justice Dr Javid Iqbal, former chief justice of Pakistan and son of great Islamic philosopher and poet Allama Iqbal, MA Cader of Sri Lanka, Prof Dr Jamil Osman and Dr Hasina of Malaysia, Dr Soherin Saleuddin of Indonesia and Hasmim Kamarudin of Singapore addressed the inaugural session presided over by CNRS Chairman Dr Mahubullah. CNRS Secretary General Irtiza Nasim Ali delivered the welcome speech.

About 300 religious and spiritual leaders representing madrasas and Islamic institutes of Bangladesh are taking part in the three-day meet that aims to remove the wholesale blame of terrorism on Islam and the Muslims.  
Justice Rahman in his speech said a Muslim, who professes Islam as a religion in its pristine glory, cannot harbour any sort of extremism.  
"Time is ripe to undertake the scientific study and scholarly

boundaries by Aftab Ahmed (25) but had his revenge in the next ball when he had the last specialist batsman caught by Samaraweera at slip for his first wicket.  
Khaled Mashud, the only batsman to spend more than an hour on crease in each innings scoring 26 and 18 respectively, was dismissed for the second time by Muttiah Muralitharan who took his tally to highest 14 wickets in the series.  
Although Samaraweera's patient hundred that anchored the home side after a shaky start of 4-40 earned him the man-of-the-match award, his fellow centurion in this Test Tillakaratne Dilshan was adjudged man-of-the-series for two significant knocks of 86 in the first Test and 168 in the second.  
Bangladesh, who have now lost all five Tests against Sri Lanka, will fly home on September 26. Except a win and a draw against Zimbabwe at home, they have suffered nine innings losses in their last 11 Test appearances.

JMB recruited  
FROM PAGE 1  
The book containing lessons on field crafts training is available only to the Bangladesh Armed Forces, sources said.  
Police are investigating if Kawzar is a defense personnel.  
JHENIDAH  
Our Magura correspondent writes, two suspected JMB cadres Tasikul Islam Rinku and Belal Hossain, arrested in Jhenidah on August 19, were sent to the JIC in Dhaka yesterday for interrogation.  
Rinku has already given statement to a magistrate confessing to his involvement in the August 17 bomb blasts in Jhenidah.  
He, however, denied his involvement with JMB and claimed himself an activist of "Allahr Dal" (God's party). He also named Matin Mehedi, son of Enamul Haq of Gaibandha town, as their leader.  
The other arrestee Belal, who also claimed himself an activist of Allahr Dal, admitted to police to having carried out bomb blast on August 17, police said.  
Twenty activists of Allahr Dal, including Mehedi and 14 others were arrested in Arampur area in Jhenidah town on October 20, 2003. They were later released so far.

JS body  
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expressed its displeasure as violation of labour law in many factories was found during inspection.  
The meeting suggested actions, including cancellation of licence, against the factories that will fail to improve the situation.  
It also asked the authorities concerned to continue the ongoing inspection drive to improve the existing situation in garment factories and give a boost to RMG export by ensuring international quality.  
It asked all concerned to take effective steps to reduce child labour.  
Chaired by Mosharraf Hossain Mongu, the meeting was attended, among others, by committee members State Minister for Labour and Employment Anan Ullah Aman, Shahjahan Khan, Mufti Mohammad Wakkas, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, and Nawaz Mahmud Khaiyam.  
Senior officials concerned and BGMEA representatives were also present.

## Saarc energy ministers

FROM PAGE 1  
Saarc Energy Ring.  
Saarc energy experts will sit for a two-day meeting on Sept 29-30 to decide the agenda of the ministerial meeting in Islamabad.  
Official sources said projects concerning cooperation in energy trade, independent power producers, efficiency standards, fuel efficiency for road transport, CNG, rural electrification, micro-hydro electric and wind energy plants will be discussed in the meeting.  
The Saarc Energy Centre, which is now under consideration, will act as a catalyst for economic growth and development in the region. It will concentrate on the sharing of information, technological expertise and hardware.  
Sources said all member countries would benefit from Nepal's efforts at fuel conservation, like battery powered rickshaws and solar water heaters as well as Bangladesh's promotion of rural cooperatives for electricity generation and distribution.  
Saarc is seeking the cooperation of

## Blair's blind support

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activists worried the party could become more right-wing, saying he would not turn the Liberal Democrat into "yet another conservative party in British politics".

The speech saw the Liberal Democrat leader harden his rhetoric on Iraq as he derided Blair's attempts to "move on" from debate on the Iraq war.  
He said: "You cannot move on, when the prime minister remains in denial."  
"You can't move on when people are dying every day. And you cannot move on when our British troops are still in the firing line."  
"After this week's events in Basra we cannot sustain the myth that Iraqis see coalition troops as liberators. What they see is an occupation."  
"The prime minister's pride should not get in the way of finding a solution for the people of Iraq."  
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These people are already scouping the market to find real power plant developers to whom they can "sell the deals".  
Other interested ruling party people, however, got angry over the list. A source said, "They view this as an insult. Those who got the deal are clearly put on the list of the top favourites of the ruling party and those who have been left out view this as their status demotion."  
The feud put heavy pressure on the PMO, resulting in halting the process, the source added.  
To halt the process officially, the Berc on Wednesday issued a letter addressing the power ministry, saying the Eol form needs some amendments. The power ministry decided to halt it yesterday.  
The PDB said the amended Eol would demand the Engineering Procurement Construction contractors letter assuring the commercial operation date. The parties also must provide bank guarantee for the project cost. The plants will be given marks on the basis of their efficiency and other issues.

## BB asks

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In the letter, the three wanted militants were identified as Moulana Obaider Rahman ibne Abdullah, son of late Moulana Abdullah ibne Fahsal of Jamalpur, Moulana Abdur Rahman ibne Abdullah alias Shaikh Abdur Rahman, and Siddique Islam Ramrak alias Bangla Bhat, son of Nazir Hossain alias Master Shamsheer Ali of Gabtoli upazila in Bogra. The letter also mentioned Azizul Islam, Ornor Ali and Litu as other three aliases of Bangla Bhat.  
The BB sought information on the opening dates, transactions and current deposits of these accounts.  
Earlier on September 11, the government announced reward for information leading to the arrest of Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhat, accusing them of August 17 serial bomb blasts across the country.  
The BB move to collect information regarding the bank accounts of the three militants came after a government advice, which many considered to be a delayed action.  
According to BB sources, they were aware of some of the bank accounts of the three militants but could not take any steps as there was no instruction from the government.  
Earlier, on request of the BB on September 1, some commercial banks sent account details of arrested Moulana Farid Uddin Masud, which are yet to be compiled into a report.

CEC rules  
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"How can I investigate this when no allegations came up while police verifications were on?" he asked.  
The CEC said the allegation will not leave an impact on forming the new voter list.  
"The new voter list will not be created immediately due to a lack of funds," he said. "We will be able to complete the list before the next election if we start the process in next two months."  
Several national dailies published a few days ago that at least 150 activists of Jatayatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of ruling BNP, and relatives of BNP lawmakers were appointed UEOs.

BPC to stop  
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bills amounting to around Tk 500 crore by September 15, which has already been expired.  
But the two state-owned organisations are at loggerheads over the amount.  
Biman said the amount as claimed by BPC is not based on facts and the arrears will not exceed Tk 250 crore.  
The BPC chairman in the letter also advised Biman to procure jet fuel at its own arrangement after the time frame.  
BPC also issued a similar letter in the middle of last year that prompted the authorities to hold an inter-ministerial meeting on June 7, 2004 chaired by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman.  
As per decision of the meeting, Biman had been buying jet fuel from BPC in cash in addition to paying Tk 5 crore towards the arrears in each month.

EU backs down  
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demand in the interest of getting a unanimous resolution approved by the IAEA board, which meets this week.  
Iran's official IRNA news agency confirmed the diplomats' statements, citing Germany's ambassador to the IAEA, Herbert Hohnsowitz, as saying: "The EU has withdrawn its request to send Iran's case to the Security Council."  
Western countries suspect Tehran is developing atomic weapons under cover of a civilian nuclear energy programme. Iran insists its program is peaceful and intended to meet its energy requirements.  
The main point of the new draft, diplomats said, was for the IAEA board to pass a resolution this week declaring Iran in "non-compliance" with the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but not explicitly calling for a Security Council report.  
Technically, the IAEA board is required to report NPT non-compliance to the Security Council, but EU diplomats said it was possible to delay this indefinitely.

## Top terror

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Court, Dhaka handed down the sentence at 4:15pm yesterday, around four hours later than the scheduled time.  
Police produced Arman before the court in the afternoon bringing him from Kashempur jail in Gazipur. Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Arman at his Dhanmondi residence on June 2004 with three firearms and 146 bullets.

The judge declared the verdict at a packed courtroom where Arman's father SM Anul Haque was present.  
Arman burst into tears hearing the verdict while Anul termed the verdict a political harassment and told reporters that he would appeal to the higher court.  
Assistant Public Prosecutor Shahidul Islam Sardar moved for the government while Advocate Mahbub Ahmed counselled the defence. The prosecution and the defence had completed their arguments earlier and the court recorded statements of 16 prosecution witnesses including statement of the complainant, Sub-inspector (SI) Abdur Rof Rab-4.

Arman had been on remand for 31 days. The first 10 days for an arms case and the remaining 21 days for three murder cases filed with Motijheel, Khilgaon and Mirpur Police Stations.

## 15 more down

FROM PAGE 1  
were released yesterday, Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) sources said.  
The sources also claimed that the DCC authorities have stepped up mosquito control activities, as people from more areas of the city, including Dhanmondi, Azampur, Mirpur, Mohammapur, Tejgaon, Moghbazar, Shantinagar, Shahjahanpur, Khilgaon, Mughla and Sabujbagh, are falling victim to the virus.

Moreover, the DCC is collecting the addresses of the newly infected patients and conducting special spraying and fogging activities in around 1,000 yards of those patients' houses to kill larvae and adult mosquitoes.  
The DCC officials also suggested that the people should keep the flowerpots, unused cans and containers, including those of freeze and refrigerators, clean and empty, so that clean water, the breeding ground of Aedes, cannot remain stagnant for a long time. In this way people can protect themselves from the danger of the deadly disease, they added.  
According to the control room of the health directorate, 404 dengue patients have been admitted to the hospitals since June this year and 351 were released so far.

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Several national dailies published a few days ago that at least 150 activists of Jatayatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of ruling BNP, and relatives of BNP lawmakers were appointed UEOs.

BPC to stop  
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bills amounting to around Tk 500 crore by September 15, which has already been expired.  
But the two state-owned organisations are at loggerheads over the amount.  
Biman said the amount as claimed by BPC is not based on facts and the arrears will not exceed Tk 250 crore.  
The BPC chairman in the letter also advised Biman to procure jet fuel at its own arrangement after the time frame.  
BPC also issued a similar letter in the middle of last year that prompted the authorities to hold an inter-ministerial meeting on June 7, 2004 chaired by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman.  
As per decision of the meeting, Biman had been buying jet fuel from BPC in cash in addition to paying Tk 5 crore towards the arrears in each month.

EU backs down  
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Iran's official IRNA news agency confirmed the diplomats' statements, citing Germany's ambassador to the IAEA, Herbert Hohnsowitz, as saying: "The EU has withdrawn its request to send Iran's case to the Security Council."  
Western countries suspect Tehran is developing atomic weapons under cover of a civilian nuclear energy programme. Iran insists its program is peaceful and intended to meet its energy requirements.  
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