

Tale of alleged manipulation of CU dean poll in 2005

CU CORRESPONDENT

Allegation of election engineering by four-party alliance-backed teachers surfaced at Chittagong University (CU).

During dean election of the university in 2005, the alliance loyalist influential teachers threatened and forced younger faculty members of Biological Science department to vote candidates endorsed by the alliance, said sources.

To ensure and keep track of how many young teachers voted their preferred candidates, the alliance teachers made them use blue-inked pens instead of black-inked pens provided by the election

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7 Pak judges quit amid call for more protests

REUTERS, Islamabad

Seven Pakistani judges resigned yesterday over government moves to sack the country's chief judge, and the leader of an opposition alliance of conservative religious parties called for more protests.

The suspension of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary on March 9 and his subsequent treatment has outraged lawyers, the opposition and many ordinary Pakistanis, and presented President Pervez Musharraf with his biggest political crisis as elections loom.

The move against Chaudhary has fuelled suspicion Musharraf feared the independent-minded judge would block any move by the president to retain the role of army

chief, which he is due to relinquish this year. Polls are due late this year or early next.

Protesting lawyers and opposition activists clashed with police in the capital, Islamabad, and in Lahore last week.

There were no demonstrations in those cities yesterday but lawyers across the country stopped work for an hour in a token protest and several hundred lawyers marched in Karachi. There was no trouble.

Judicial officials said six judges had submitted their resignations in Sindh province and one in Punjab over the affair.

The leader of the opposition Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal alliance of religious parties called for a protest outside the Supreme Court in

Islamabad on Wednesday when Chaudhary is due to appear before a panel of judges hearing accusations against him.

"It's a political issue, a political fight ... we have to intensify street protests," Qazi Hussain Ahmed, president of the six-party Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal alliance, told reporters.

"This struggle can take us to our destination," he said, apparently referring to the end of Musharraf's rule.

The United States, a majority of Pakistan, has urged both sides to show restraint. Dealers on Pakistan's main stock market said political uncertainty was putting a damper on trade.

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CI sheets seized from community centre run by Pintu's men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint forces yesterday seized 375 sheets of corrugated iron (CI) meant for government relief from a community centre in the capital run by a committee comprising close associates of former BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu.

Tipped off, the joint forces raided the community centre at Rasulpur in Kamrangirchar at 11:00am and took down the government CI sheets which had been used to make the roof of the establishment.

A 12-member development committee, which runs the community centre, used to be headed by Pintu's close aide Monir

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The army-led joint forces recover corrugated iron sheets meant for relief yesterday as those were used to build a community centre at Kamrangirchar in the capital.

COMMISSION CUT Travel agents won't sell BA tickets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local travel agents will not sell British Airways (BA) tickets from April 1 as the airline authority has decided to cut six percent commission on ticket sales.

They also decided to stop ticket bookings for travelling by BA after April 1 from today.

Association of Travel Agents Bangladesh (ATAB) took the decisions at a meeting yesterday to protest the airline authority's decision to slash commission on sales. Twenty-one out of 38 British

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Evicted only a few days ago from the railway land, motor workshop owners are setting up sheds on the proposed children's park now owned by Mirza Abbas family.

EC examining charges against SM Zakaria

Prosecution to follow if confirmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) is looking into whether controversial former election commissioner SM Zakaria was involved in any irregularity or corruption.

Directed by the EC, senior officials of its secretariat are now scrutinising a large number of files and documents of the period between April 2002 and January 2007 to find out whether there was any abuse of power by Zakaria that merits prosecution, sources said.

Being the EC secretary, Zakaria locked horns with the erstwhile chief election commissioner (CEC) MA Syed and avoided attending the commission's meetings. Irked by his attitude, the former CEC requested the immediate past government on several occasions to transfer Zakaria from the EC Secretariat, but the government appointed him as an election commissioner instead on January 16, 2006. The controversial man finally resigned from the post on January 16, 2006.

"The Election Commission will send the matter to the Anti-corruption Commission for legal actions against SM Zakaria if the allegations of misconduct against him are found to be true," a highly placed source close to the EC told The Daily Star.

The EC is determined to take

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Kiddie park land allotted to Mirza Abbas' family rented to auto workshops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some motor workshop owners, who were recently evicted from lands owned by the railway department in Shahjahanpur in the capital, are setting up their workshops again on a large piece of land owned by the relatives of now detained former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas.

Zakaria assumed the post of the EC secretary on April 1, 2002 and continued in that post till his appointment as an election commissioner on January 16, 2006.

He refused to provide the phone number of the land owner. He even started erecting the structure of his workshop without settling the rent.

"The rent for the land is yet to be fixed. First we are going to build the workshop," said Abdul.

Abdul and some other motor workshop owners yesterday were seen measuring the land to build their establishments there. Local residents said relatives of Mirza Abbas are trying to keep the land in their possession by renting it out to the motor workshop owners.

The local people want the government to establish a playground or children's park there since in the original master plan of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha (Rajuk) the large piece of land is slated for a children's park.

Mirza Abbas influenced the Rajuk authorities in 1996 to allot the children's park space to his relatives for residential purposes, which was divided into plots and allotted to his brothers, sisters and other relatives as persons who had been affected by a different government development project somewhere else in the city earlier.

On March 23, 1996 the land allocation committee of Rajuk allotted the plots to Abbas' siblings including Reni Mirza, Israt Mirza, Shahida Mirza, Rashida Mirza, Mirza Ershadul Haq, and Mirza Ekramul Haq, and to their relatives Asma Mirza, Manowara Mirza, Mirza Khairul Hossain, Saima Mirza, Mirza Abdus Salam Ranu, Muktarunnissa, Sara Mirza, Mirza Mozammel Hossain, and Mirza Farah Momtaz.

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Rajshahi chamber president sued for tax dodging

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Sonamasjid land port customs in Chapainawabganj on Sunday filed a forgery case with Shibganj Police Station against Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industries President and city BNP Vice-president Lutfar Rahman for dodging around Tk 2 crore import duties.

Clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents Mustafizur Rahman of Rupali Agency and Setab Uddin of

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Task force visits SQ Chy's area

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A six-member task force yesterday arrived here from Dhaka to investigate allegations against Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, parliamentary affairs adviser to former prime minister Khaleda Zia.

The task force comprising members of the joint forces, Anti-Corruption Commission, National Board of Revenue, Rapid Action Battalion and a magistrate visited different areas of Raozan and Rangunia upazilas where

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Prayer Timing

March 20

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-55	5-30
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrrib	6-16	6-20
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Muggers shoot at one, loot Tk 3 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

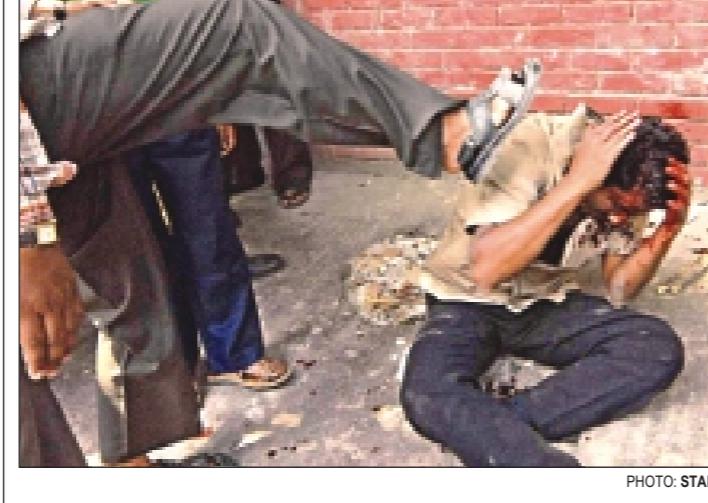
A gang of muggers shot a travel agency staff and robbed him of Tk 3 lakh near the capital's Rajarbagh Police Lines yesterday morning.

Police later managed to recover about half of the loot.

The bullet-hit person was identified as Nurul Haque, 45, an executive officer of Brahmanbaria Overseas, a travel agency at the VIP Tower at Naya Paltan in the city.

The incident occurred around 11:30am when four muggers on motorbikes halted the

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Caught red-handed, a mugger faces public wrath near Rajarbagh Police Lines in the capital yesterday.