

Decision on making expats voters next week

Says EC Sohul Hussain

UNB, Dhaka

The Election Commission (EC) would take a decision within the next week whether the Bangladeshi expatriates would be made voters, Election Commissioner M Sohul Hussain said yesterday.

He, however, said related laws would have to be amended if the government agrees to make the expatriates voters.

"We couldn't discuss it with the government due to Sidr after we came back home from the UK. We'll discuss it with the Chief Adviser this week. We'll apprise him about how we want to accomplish the task. If the government agrees then the concerned laws will have to be changed," Sohul told reporters at his office yesterday afternoon.

If a positive decision has to be taken in this regard, he said, a method would have to be sorted out how to make the expatriates voters.

Asked about the expatriates living in Saudi Arabia who submitted a memorandum to the CA during his recent Hajj tour demanding that they be made voters, Sohul said the EC has not yet seen the document.

"They also can be made voters... We want every expatriate to make voter, but that couldn't be done this time since our time and logistics are limited... At the beginning, we had been doing it as a token job," he said.

About lifting the ban on politics, Sohul said they would ask the government for it whenever they

would be ready and the government would decide how much to relax the ban.

Asked how the electioneering would be carried out during the city corporation elections if the ban on politics are not relaxed fully and early, he said it would not be a problem since the elections would be held in limited areas.

"The campaign would have to be done within the time whatever they will have... How can we ask the government to lift the ban early when we're not ready?" he said.

About enrolling the voters living in Bangladesh enclaves inside India, the Election Commissioner said they would run their voter-listing drive in the enclaves like Dahagram and Angarpota, where

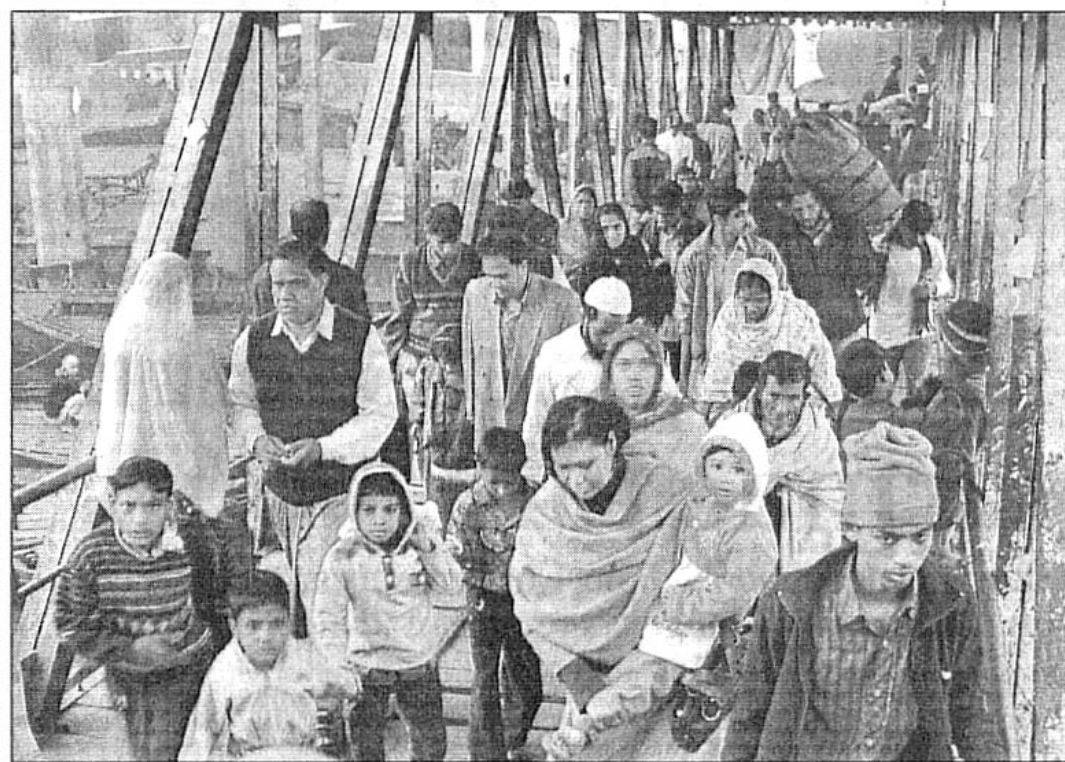
voter listing had always been done in the past.

"But, for other enclaves, discussions would have to take place between the governments of Bangladesh and India," he said.

Sohul informed that the EC is going to start delimiting the voter areas from January 2008 using the Geographical Information System.

"Every location, from village to union to street, is identified in this system. So, it would be easier to do the job," he said.

On holding electoral dialogue with BNP, Sohul said they would seek the High Court's direction as soon as it resumes with which faction of the party discussion could be held on the draft of electoral reforms.



After celebrating Eid-ul-Azha with their near and dear ones, city dwellers have started returning from their home districts as Eid holidays are over. This picture was taken at Sadarghat Launch Terminal yesterday.

RANGS BHABAN DEMOLITION RAJUK engr suspended

UNB, Dhaka

A superintending engineer of RAJUK was suspended yesterday for negligence in duty in demolishing the illegal part of Rangs Bhaban.

Md Anwar Hossain, superintending engineer (Implementation) on current charge and project director of a project titled 'Road Extension from Bijoy Sarani to Tejgaon Industrial Area East' was suspended as per its service rule, said a RAJUK press release.

More donations to CA's fund

UNB, Dhaka

Fifty-three more individuals and organisations donated over Tk 37.83 lakh, US\$ 2,000 and 5,600 Saudi Riyal to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund for the cyclone-affected people on Monday and yesterday.

Those donated in the fund included Bangladeshi expatriate in Jeddah Manjur-e-Mostafa Abdul Mannan Tk 2.73 lakh, Bangladeshi Investor Forum, Saudi Arabia Tk 3 lakh, Business Association of Bangladesh, Jeddah Tk 6 lakh, Sylhet Divisional Forum, Makkah, Tk 1 lakh, Greater Noakhali Expatriate Welfare Association, Jeddah Tk 1 lakh, Sahid Hossain Patwari, Makkah, Saudi Riyal 5,600, Expatriate Barisal Divisional Social Welfare Association, Jeddah Tk 1.62 lakh, Baticome Shaitiya Sangsrtik Goshit, Jeddah, Tk 2 lakh, Bangladesh International School, Jeddah, Tk 4.14 lakh and Zafar Ahmed US\$2,000.

The other donors are Advocate Meherunnecha Khatun of Dhanmudi Tk 1 lakh, Dr Abdullah al Mansur from Riyadh Tk 1 lakh, Bangladeshis working in the World Bank at Dhaka office and headquarters Tk 2.10 lakh, one day salary of the officers and employees of Law Ministry and institutions under the Ministry Tk 1.80 lakh and Usama R Mikdashi, London Tk 68,000.

Rabeya Khatun's 73rd anniversary of birth today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 73rd birth anniversary of eminent author Rabeya Khatun. On the occasion, a programme will be held at a city hotel in the evening. Noted litterateurs, including Editor of the monthly 'Begum' Nurjahan Begum and eminent journalists will be present at the ceremony.

Born in Bikrampur in 1935, Rabeya's first story 'Prashna' was published in the weekly 'Juger Dabi' and her first novel is 'Madhumati'.

She was the editor of the monthly 'Angana'. She also served the daily Ittefaq and cinema magazines.

She authored over 100 books in different genres of literature that include essay, novel, research, short story, religious history, travel story and adolescent novel.

Many of her works were later adapted for television and cinema.

She has won numerous awards for her contributions to the country's literature, including Ekushey Padak in 1993, Bangla Academy Puraskar in 1973, Nasiruddin Swarna Padak in 1995, Humayun Smriti Puraskar in 1989, Kamar Mushataree Sahitya Puraskar in 1994, Bangladesh Lekhika Sangha Puraskar in 1994, Sher-e-Bangla Swarna Padak in 1996 and Wrishiz Sahitya Padak in 1998.

Three stabbed by muggers in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers looted cellphones and cash injuring three people, including a taxicab driver, in three separate incidents in the city's Mirpur and Mohakhali areas in the early hours of yesterday.

The victims were identified as taxicab driver Forkan Miah, 35, garment-by-products trader Thakur Das Mandal, 40, and Nayeem Hassan, 25.

Sources said a gang of three muggers attacked Forkan on the Rokeya Sarani Road near Al-Helal Hospital while returning home after keeping his vehicle at the garage at around 2:00am.

They took away Tk 1200 from him and stabbed on his hands and abdomen when he tried to resist.

In another incident, Thakur Das was attacked by another gang at Mirpur Mazar Road while returning home at about 4:00am. The muggers took away Tk 500 and a cellphone from him stabbing at different parts of his body.

Besides, a gang of snatchers swooped on Nayeem when he came out for buying cigarette from a shop in front of his residence at 4:00am. The muggers took away his cellphone and cash.

Restriction on some city roads on 31st night

UNB, Dhaka

Some city roads have been made off-limit to traffic for 10 hours from 8:00pm on December 31, says a Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) press release.

DMP said Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara and Dhaka University areas will come under the restriction on the 31st night to maintain discipline and avert untoward incidents that might hurt the cultural and religious sentiments of the people.

Drivers of motor vehicles have been asked to use Kakoli crossing, Phoenix crossing and Natan Bazar crossing to enter Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara from 8:00pm on December 31 to 6:00am January 1.

The DMP has also requested the residents of the nearby areas of Gulshan Club crossing, Wireless Gate bridge, Shooting Club bridge, Gudaraghat bridge, Jatisangha bridge and Shahjadpur bridge of Gulshan 1 and 2 and Avenue road to reach their destinations before 8:00pm on December 31.

It said no vehicle will be allowed to enter the Dhaka University Campus through Polassey.

Bakshibazar, Chankharpul, Nimtoli and Government Employees Hospital, but Shahbag crossing, Nikhet and Old High Court crossing will remain open.

The instruction will not be applicable for the vehicles of the residents of Dhaka University area, but they will be allowed to enter the six roads after security check.

All the roads mentioned above, except Kakoli crossing, Phoenix crossing and Natan Bazar crossing and Nikhet, Old High Court crossing and Shahbag crossing, will remain closed to traffic on the night.

However, people of the areas can come out with their vehicles using any roads.

Fire service vans, ambulances and other vehicles of emergency services will remain out of the purview of the restriction.

The DMP has sought cooperation of all in enforcing the restriction to maintain discipline in the city.

The DMP also called upon all to refrain themselves from the activities that might hurt the religious and cultural sentiments of the people.

Four injured in Jhenidah bomb attack

UNB, Jhenidah

Four people were injured in a bomb attack at Kuthi Durgapur village, about 6km from the district town, at 8:30pm yesterday.

Unknown criminals hurled three bombs targeting the victims who were sitting in front of a grocery of Azibar, eyewitnesses said.

Kausar Ali, 50, Abu Taleb, 48, Rabiul Islam, 40, and Ziaur Rahman Akash, 28, were rushed to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital with burn and splinter injuries in critical condition.

They are all ordinary farmers hailing from the same village. Kausar was once follower of underground communist group led by Haq but long ago settled to normal life.

Police rushed to the spot. But none was arrested until 9:30pm.

Underground communist groups who are thriving on extortion and toll in the name of class struggle infest Jhenidah and adjoining districts.



Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury was produced before a court in Chittagong yesterday in Bijoy TV scam case.

Hearing on Bijoy TV case deferred again

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Hearing on Bijoy TV scam case involving Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury and others was deferred for the fourth time yesterday, as the gazette notification about an absconding accused was not issued.

Chittagong Divisional Special Judge SM Solaiman fixed January 1 as the new date for the hearing.

Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury and CCC Chief Executive Officer Intiaz Hossain Chowdhury, both are accused in the case, were produced before the court in the morning.

The court deferred the hearing as the gazette notification about the absconding accused, CCC Chief Engineer Mokhter Alam, was not issued as of yesterday.

On Tuesday evening, Mayor Mohiuddin was brought to Chittagong Central Jail from Dhaka, sources said.

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case on May 27 and submitted charge sheet against the three accused on November 22 for launching Bijoy TV, a private channel, without prior permission from the government.

UGC to honour 20 scholars today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh will honour 20 scholars of different public and private universities in the country for their innovative researches in a ceremony today.

The scholars will receive the UGC Award 2002-2005 at a prize giving ceremony at UGC office at 3:30pm. Each winner will receive a certificate, a crest and Tk 20,000.

The UGC award covers six areas of research-- (1) arts, humanities, law and education, (2) social science, (3) physical and biological sciences, (4) agriculture science, (5) engineering and technology and (6) medical science.

No award will be given in medical science field, as qualitative research publication was not found, said UGC Member Prof Dr AHM Zehadul Karim who is also in charge of research field.

"A total of fifty-one research papers were submitted for last four years from 2002 to 2005. Based on the assessment of the 'Evaluation Committee', twenty-one paper were chosen unanimously for awards," said Zehadul Karim while addressing at a press conference yesterday.

"UGC has been conferring award since 1980. The commission had so far awarded 34 scholars in two different occasions in various fields from 1980 to 2001. The last award giving ceremony was held in April 2, 2003 where nine scholars were honoured for the period of 1992 to 2001. Before that 25 scholars were given awards for the years 1980 to 1991 on February 8, 1995," he also said while narrating history of the award.

Prof Dr Ayesha Begum, Salma Akhter, Prof Dr Md Anwar Hossain, Prof Dr M Bahadur Meah and Prof AS Md Abdul Haseeb were selected for the UGC Award-2002. Prof Monsur Musa, Dr Gour Gobinda Goswami, Prof Dr Md Shamsul Alam, Mohammad Abdul Hasnat, Dr GM Tarekul Islam and Prof Dr MM Shahidul Hassan for UGC Award-2003. Dr M Tofazzal Islam, Prof Dr Md Samsul Alam and Prof Dr Md Saidur Rahman for UGC Award-2004 and Prof Dr Nurul Absar, Prof Dr MM Shahidul Hassan, Prof Dr Mohammad Asadullah, Dr Swarochish Sarker, Jamila Ahmed Chowdhury, Prof Dr Dilara Choudhury and Prof Dr Tajmeri SA Islam for UGC Award-2005.

Vice Chancellors of different public and private universities and Chairman of UGC will be present on the prize giving ceremony.

Obituary



Darul Ihsan University Trustee Board Chairman Dr Naimur Rahman passed away due to a cardiac arrest at city's Square

Hospital in the early hours of yesterday at the age of 75, says a press release.

Naimur Rahman, also a physician, industrialist and former chairman of Bangladesh Jute Mills Association, left behind his wife, three sons, a daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at Azimpur graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at his residence yesterday.

Vice Chancellor of Darul Ihsan University Prof Monirul Haque expressed deep shock at his death.

His qulkhwan will be held at his residence at 5, Circuit House Road, Ramna on Friday afternoon.

Gopal Chandra Roy

Gopal Chandra Roy, father of Krishna Pada Roy, superintendent of police in Sherpur, passed away on December 14 at the age of 77, says a press release.

He had been suffering from diabetes for a long time.

His Shraddha (post-funeral rites) will be held at his home at Tamalpur village in Nabiganj, Habiganj, on January 13.

Ali Ahmed Bhuiyan



Ali Ahmed Bhuiyan, a retired government official, passed away at Comilla CMH on December 14 at the age of 80, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three sons and two daughters.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Aganagar in Barura, Comilla.

Haji Md Fulu Mia



Haji Md Fulu Mia, father of Alhajj Md Atiqul Islam, editor of the Daily Ajker Bani and the Weekly Shachitra, passed away at Shikdar Medical Hospital in the city yesterday, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, six sons, two daughters and host of admirers to mourn his death.

India missile tests to trigger arms race

Says Pakistan

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan yesterday said that recent missile tests by neighbouring India would lead to a new arms race in the region.

India on Friday announced a final successful test of its surface-to-air Akash missile before starting mass production under an ambitious plan to build a national missile defence shield.

"We are not in favour of introducing the new weapons systems in South Asia," Pakistani foreign ministry spokesman Mohammad Sadiq told a news conference.

"Because introduction of any new weapons system by any party would lead to an unnecessary armament race which South Asia cannot afford."

Pakistan carried out nuclear weapons tests in May 1998, following similar tests by India, with which it has fought three wars.

The neighbours were on the brink of a nuclear conflict in 2002 over tensions about disputed Kashmir, but began a slow-moving peace dialogue in 2004.

Pakistan test-fired a nuclear-capable cruise missile on

December 11. It previously tested the missile in March and July.

Theft of artefacts condemned

Leaders of Chhatra Sangram Parishad in a joint statement yesterday condemned the theft of the valuable artefacts, says a press release.

They also demanded punishment to the people responsible.

Coordinator of central parishad Mahmud Hasan Ripon, acting General Secretary Abul Kalam Azad, Bangladesh Chhatra League President Shariful Kabir Swapan, General Secretary Ali Hasan Torun, President of Bangladesh Chhatra Maitree Rafikul Islam Shujan, General Secretary Mukter Hossain, President of Jatiya Chhatra Dhara Bijoy Shankar Talukder, General Secretary Jakirur Rahman in the joint statement also demanded withdrawal of the acting French Ambassador from the country.

They alleged that the theft of the artefacts was pre-planned and that's why they turned a deaf ear to the opinion of the experts.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 28.3 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 10.6 degrees Celsius at Jessore.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:19pm today and rises at 6:40am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	26.0	13.7	86	67
Chittagong	24.8	15.4	76	75
Rajshahi	24.0	11.3	100	90
Khulna	25.6	14.0	93	86
Barisal	26.6	12.6	95	77
Sylhet	26.5	15.2	77	78
Cox's Bazar	28.3	16.0	76	72