

# Normal democratic life to be restored thru' Dec 29 polls

Hopes Commonwealth observer group leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Head of the visiting Commonwealth election observer group Cassam Uteem yesterday hoped that normal democratic life would be restored in Bangladesh through December 29 elections.

Democracy and good

governance are the core Commonwealth principles and the restoration of representative democracy in Bangladesh is as important to the Commonwealth as it is to the people of Bangladesh, he said at a press briefing in the city.

This team will consider all the factors impinging on the

credibility of the electoral process as a whole, and assess whether the elections have been conducted according to the standards for democratic elections," Cassam, also a former president of Mauritius, said in a written statement.

The team would also consider the transparency of the process, whether the state

apparatus and state media remained impartial and whether candidates are free to campaign and voters' will is respected, he added.

The poll observers would cover as many areas as possible in liaison with other local and international observers, he said. "We are going to deploy observers in two days."

"We have met the Election Commission (EC) officials who assured us of a good peaceful election. They told us that everything has been done rightly, everything is on target," Cassam said, adding that his team would verify the assurance on the ground.

Team members Isham M. Mohamed, head of Transparency Maldives, Ahmed Mehboob of Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, Gambia's former opposition leader Halifa Sallah, Australian shadow minister for citizenship and immigration Dr Sharman Stone, Canadian election expert Judith Thompson, Sashia Mohammed, a journalist from Trinidad and Tobago, former chief election commissioner of India BB Tandon and Dame Jennifer Smith, an MP of Bermuda, were present at the press briefing.

Noorani said he also held a press conference a day after the filing of the case to reveal the fact that he, as a consultant, made all arrangements to take permission from the government to set up the barge-mounted power plant and that Tajul was not involved in the process. So, there was no scope for Tajul to give bribes to Hasina.

He also said that the men of Tajul started giving him threat following the press conference, forcing him to go into hiding.

As a result, he could not run his business, which is now on the wane, Noorani said.

Meanwhile, Tajul Islam withdrew the case against Hasina on Tuesday.

WESTMONT POWER CO  
Consultant  
alleges  
harassment  
by chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ali Akkas Noorani, the local consultant of Westmont Power Company (Bangladesh) Ltd, yesterday alleged that its Chairman Tajul Islam Farook did not pay him the consultancy fee of one million US dollars.

At a press conference in the city, he said that Tajul Islam, who filed an extortion case against Awami League President Sheikh Hasina on April 9 last year, also harassed him in the last 20 months as he opposed the filing of the case.

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# Distorted history may mislead young generation

Speakers tell SCF rally

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a Mukti Joddha Janata (freedom fighters and people) rally yesterday said the real history of the liberation war has been distorted which might mislead the young generation.

Many had written the history according to their views and considering their gains. But it is still not clear to the young generation, they added.

Sector Commanders' Forum (SCF) organised the

rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city which was attended by sector commanders and a good number of freedom fighters.

Mukti Joddha Ethas' (history of the liberation war), a book written by noted writer Prof Muhammad Jafar Iqbal, was also launched at the same venue which was organised by Mukti Uddoyog.

Sector commanders Maj Gen (retd) KM Shafullah, Maj Gen (retd) CR Datta, Lt Col (retd) Abu Osman Chowdhury,

former army chief Lt Gen (retd) M Harun-ur-Rashid, former adviser to a caretaker government Sultana Kamal and cultural activist Hasan Imam took part in the two sessions.

Sector commanders reiterated their call on the people to vote down war criminals and anti-liberation forces in the ensuing parliamentary elections.

Shafullah said it would be considered an insult to the 30-lakh martyrs of the liberation war if war criminals and anti-liberation forces win in the polls and enter the parliament.

War criminals and anti-liberation forces have no right of gaining an entry into the parliament. The next elected government should take initiatives for the trial of war criminals. The issue has already become a public demand, he added.

Jafar Iqbal said it is not possible to complete the full history of the liberation war in this 24-page book. It is just an effort and young generation would be proud of the war and become keener to know about it reading the book.

Sultana Kamal said the real history of the liberation has fallen into confusion. Many people are writing it according to their will.

A procession was also brought out after the programme that paraded different streets and ended at Muktagon. Hundred of people took part in the procession. People also vowed to form a new parliament free of war criminals by rejecting them in the polls.

Different pro-liberation organisations, including Projonmo Ekattur, Jubo Sanghati, Mukti Joddha Sangsads, Mukti Joddha Council and Bangladesh Chhatra Moitri, also took part.



PHOTO: STAR  
Sector Commanders' Forum takes out a procession in the city yesterday calling upon the people to reject war criminals in the upcoming elections.



Head of the visiting Commonwealth election observer group Cassam Uteem speaks at a press briefing in the city yesterday. On his left is Dame Jennifer Smith and on his right are Dr Sharman Stone and BB Tandon.

# BMDC inactivity creates scope for unethical practice of docs

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Inactivity of Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC) for the last 11 years has deteriorated the standards of medical education and quality medicare as well as created scope for unethical practices of doctors.

As the BMDC council, which is the implementing authority and gives approval of the works of the committees, could not sit for the last 11 years following the pending order on a court verdict, it becomes inactive virtually.

BMDC is the central accreditation body to control medical education and watch the ethical issues in medical practices.

Though the executive, standing recognition and disciplinary committees

have been continuing the routine work, investigation reports of these counselling committees remain unimplemented for not having the approval of the council.

"The BMDC becomes a medical council with no council at all," said former president of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) Prof Rashid E. Mahbub, adding that the day-to-day activities of the council such as recognising the foreign degrees have been hampering due to the non-approval of the council.

He further said that at the same time, it has not been monitoring the medical examinations and courses that thwart the standard of medical education.

Inspecting the medical

and dental institutions, withdrawal of recognition of medical and dental institutions, taking action against the medical and dental practitioners who use false title, etc prescribing a uniform standard of courses of training and prescribing minimum requirement for the content and duration of courses of study are also the functions of the BMDC.

Talking to The Daily Star, BMDC Registrar Dr Basunia said it is completely active, adding that doctors who should uphold ethical practice and it is not possible to stop their unethical practices by forcing them.

He, however, said due to the non-functioning state of the council, its annual general meeting cannot take place for the last few years and problems arise whenever it needs a directive actually.

"Above all, it becomes difficult to comply with the act that said a new council should be formed in every three years," he added.

According to the university rules, nobody above the age of 65 years can be a teacher of a private medical college. He or she cannot be a councillor or president of BMDC. So, the then president of the council Abu Ahmed Chowdhury filed a case against the government in 1997. The court then ordered to hold back the council election until the issue is settled. Since then, the BMDC council is non-existent resulting the statutory body from taking all policy decisions.

As the health ministry did not take any initiative to vacate the case during the period of the previous governments, it was not possible to start the council election, said Prof Iqbal Arslan, secretary general of Swadhinata Chikitshak Parishad, adding that it certainly hampered medical education and service in the country.

However, it is good that the caretaker government took the initiative and the health ministry has recently vacated the case.

Process has already been started for formulation of a new council, sources said, adding that representatives of public medical colleges have been elected by this time. But the divisional nominees of the government, parliament and chief justice are yet to be nominated.

The government also has amended the BMDC Act on June 18 this year to make it an active organisation for controlling the quality of medical education as well as its services.

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Identify HR  
violation areas  
President tells HR  
Commission

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday asked the newly formed Human Rights Commission to identify all areas of human rights violation in the country for taking "prompt action".

He made the call when the three-member commission led by its Chairman Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury paid a courtesy call on him at Bangabhaban.

The delegation told the president that the commission has already started its activities from December 1.

They sought cooperation from him to have their own office with adequate staff.

Iajuddin hoped that "the poor and distressed section of the population would be benefited hugely by the commission".

Two other members of the Commission are Munira Khan and Prof Dr Niru Kumar Chakma.

Secretary of the President's Office Md Sirajul Islam, Military Secretary to the President Major General Mohammad Ruhul Amin and President's Press Secretary Abdul Awal Howlader were present.

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