

Number of ECs may be fixed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary special committee on constitutional amendments might propose fixing the number of election commissioners to restrict the president's authority to make unlimited appointments in the Election Commission (EC).

"We discussed whether it is possible to fix the number of election commissioners," Suranjit Sengupta, co-chair and spokesman of the special committee, said at a press briefing at parliament media centre after the committee's meeting yesterday.

On condition of anonymity, a member of the committee said the number might be fixed at three -- chief election commissioner and two election commissioners.

In view of the past experience of abuse of the president's authority, the special committee members may suggest fixing the number, he added.

According to the constitution, the EC consists of chief election commissioner and such number of other election commissioners as the president may from time to time direct.

This means the constitution empowers the president to appoint an unlimited number of election commissioners.

In exercise of this authority, the then president Iajuddin Ahmed in between 2005 and 2007 appointed six election commissioners, most of whom were controversial.

The number was the highest since the EC was formed in independent Bangladesh. But that EC failed to hold the ninth parliamentary elections as it was mired in controversy.

Suranjit said the committee also discussed if it is possible to specify who will act as the CEC during his stay outside the country.



Salt being sprayed on the fish bound for Cox's Bazar to be air-dried there, as such varieties of fresh fish draw little attention to consumers. The photo was taken from Firingibazar in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

'Ensure job for challenged students'

CU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said the government should provide special opportunity to the challenged students in every sector in the job market.

Special care by the government and society can turn challenged people the assets of the country, they said.

The speakers said challenged students should be provided free education and necessary study materials so that they can carry out their studies without facing hazards.

The discussion was organised by Disabled Students' Society of Chittagong University (DISSCU) on the campus yesterday.

Prof Dr Gazi Saleh Uddin Ahmed, former dean of social sciences faculty, attended the meeting as the chief guest with DISSCU president Zahirul Islam in the chair.

First track climate fund in limbo

BSS, Bangkok

About fifteen months to go after the decision of First Track Fund taken in Copenhagen to support the developing countries particularly the most vulnerable to climate change, the process of designing of the fund is still in limbo.

Most of the developed countries, which promised to make their contribution to the fund in Copenhagen in 2009 and later in Cancun last year, are yet to make clear about their money to the UN Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC).

"I know only about the contribution of the European Union, but pledges from other developed parties are yet to come in particular," John Hey, a senior official for Information Coordination in the UNFCCC told the news agency.

The UNFCCC will report to the Chair of the Conference of the Parties (COP) next

month on the progress of the commitment of the developed country parties to the fund, he said.

In the Copenhagen and Cancun, developed countries agreed to provide new and additional resources to the developing countries to the tune of US\$ 30 billion for the period 2010-2012 for adaptation and mitigation purposes.

In Cancun, the parties agreed that the future climate funds to be governed by a board of 24 members and a 40-member committee, with 15 members from developed and 25 from developing countries, will work for designing the modalities and guidelines of the First Track Fund for transitional period.

The first meeting of the Transitional Committee, originally was scheduled to be held on 14-15 March 2011, was postponed until the latter part of April 2011, as a number of regional groups are yet to finalize their nominations.

Bangladesh and Zambia were elected members to the Transitional Committee from the Least Developed Countries (LDC) while Asia, Africa and Latin America are yet to finalize their nominations for seven members from each group.

"Once the regional groups are not finalizing the nominations, the Transitional Committee can not meet to decide about the First Track Fund," John said.

Member of Transitional Committee from Bangladesh and Joint Secretary of the forest and environment ministry Aparup Chowdhury, however, said the regional groups are considering to reduce the number of their representation in the Transitional Committee and it is expected to be finalised before the first meeting of the committee next month.

Meanwhile, international aid agency Action Aid here yesterday criticised the USA and some other industrialised coun-

tries for undermining the UN efforts to tackle climate change by channeling their funds outside the UN system.

The Climate Investment Funds, set up in 2008 by 13 developed countries have so far received more than US\$ 6 billion from donors. And, the associated Pilot Program on Climate Resilience (PPCR) alone has a budget of \$945 million.

But, the Adaptation Fund under the UNFCCC has received only around US\$ 60 million in contributions since it was set up in December 2008, it said adding this "deliberate marginalization" of the UN-run fund "is a major concern".

The Climate Investment Funds, where the USA is the biggest donor, are channeled through multilateral banks such as the Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank and World Bank and the PPCR has a separate governance structure managed by the World Bank, said Action Aid.

DIPU MONI MEETS RUSSIAN COUNTERPART SERGEI MOSCOW FOR STRONGER TIES WITH DHAKA

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, who is now on a visit to Russia, had a meeting with her counterpart Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov yesterday morning.

The two ministers discussed entire gamut of bilateral relations between two countries which includes cooperation in the field of energy, investment, trade etc, said a foreign ministry release here.

Meanwhile, Dipu Moni joined the celebration programme of the 40th Independence of Bangladesh in its Embassy in Moscow.

The embassy organised two separate receptions in the embassy hall room, one for the diplomats and the host government officials at lunch and the other for the members of the expatriate Bangladeshis at dinner.

The Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Alexey N Borodavkin attended the reception and the lunch.

In her statement, Dipu Moni recalled the contribution of Russia to the Independence of Bangladesh in 1971.

The Russian minister congratulated the government and people of Bangladesh on the occasion of the Independence Day.

He mentioned that Russia was with Bangladesh from the very first day of independence and it will remain so in the days to come. He observed that the relations between the two countries have gained momentum in recent times, particularly in the energy sector.

"We are expecting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Moscow shortly and the relations will gain more momentum through her visit," said Alexey N Borodavkin.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia addresses a standing committee meeting of the party at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: BNP

Programme
Export Promotion Bureau Bangladesh will hold a programme; Venue: Osmani Memorial Auditorium; Time: 10:30am.

Recital
Bangladesh Abritti Samannay Parishad will organise a recitation programme; Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy; Time: 4:30pm.

Seminar
Pharmacology department of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University will hold a seminar; Venue: university premises; Time: 12:30noon.

Programme
Bangladesh Sangbadik Kalyan Parishad will organise a cultural programme; Venue: Central Public Library; Time: 5:00pm.

Drama festival
Bangladesh Manobadhikar Natya Parishad will hold a drama festival;

Venue: Rabindra Sarobar, Dhanmondi; Time: 4:30pm.

Discussion
WBB Trust will organise a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

Exhibition
Embassy of Thailand will organise a trade exhibition; Venue: Sonargaon Hotel; Time: 11:30am.

Symposium
Eyeball Bangladesh Limited will hold a symposium; Venue: North South University; Time: 1:30pm.

Human chain
Sushasoner Jonny Procharavizan will hold a human chain; Venue: In front of National Museum; Time: 11:00am.

Discussion
Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation will organise a discussion; Venue: BIAM auditorium; Time: 10:00am.

Exhibition

Seven killed in road accidents

METRO DESK

Seven people were killed and two injured in separate road accidents in Dhaka, Dinajpur, Tangail, Gopalganj and Narayanganj, Savar on Tuesday and yesterday.

Staff correspondent says: A rickshaw-puller was killed and the traveler injured after a bus crashed the vehicle in Mirpur of the city yesterday.

Abdul Goni, 28, of Charfashion upazila in Bhola, died on the spot. Selim, the injured commuter, was admitted to a local hospital.

Police and witnesses said a bus of United Paribahan hit the rickshaw from behind at Senpara and run over Goni after the victim fell on the ground.

Goni was a resident of West Shewrapara in the city. His wife Josna Begum filed a case with Mirpur Police Station.

Angry people beat up the bus driver Rezoan Khan and handed him over to police.

Our correspondent from Dinajpur reports: An 11-year-old

schoolgirl was killed in a road accident on Dinajpur-Shetabganj highway at Shetabganj upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Hritu Dev Sharma daughter of Hareish Chandra Dev Sharma of Bazina village of the upazila.

Witnesses said the accident took place when a speedy truck crashed her while she was crossing the highway in front Shetabganj Brac School, leaving her dead on the spot.

Agitating villagers blocked the highway for two hours protesting the accident.

Our correspondent from Tangail adds: An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police was killed in a road accident at Ghatail upazila in Tangail on Tuesday night.

The deceased was identified as Ashraf Hossain Bhuiyan, 30, of Kalihati upazila of Tangail and an ASI of Haluaghat Police Station in Mymensingh.

Police said the accident occurred around 11:00pm when a speedy bus hit the motorcycle of Ashraf from behind in Porabari area on Tangail-

Mymensingh road, leaving him seriously injured.

He was rushed to Ghatail Upazila Health Complex and later shifted to the Tangail General Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries around 12:00am.

A correspondent from Gopalganj says: An army personnel, Waheduzzaman Shimul, 26, was killed as a bus hit him from behind while he got down from a bus on Dhaka-Khulna highway at Kashiani in Gopalganj yesterday.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Combined Military Hospital in Jessore for autopsy.

UNB from Narayanganj adds: Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Siddhirganj and Aaraihar yesterday.

An auto tempo driver was killed in a road crash at Barmashil on Narayanganj-Adamjee-Demra road in Siddhirganj.

Yasin was plying his tempo on Beri Bandh (embankment) at Barmashil. Suddenly the tempo skidded off the road and crashed against wall of Beri Bandh injuring him as he lost control over the steering.

Locals rushed him to Khanpur 200-bed Hospital where duty doctor declared him dead.

In separate accident, a Narsingdi-bound truck collided head-on with a Dhaka-bound CNG-run auto rickshaw, instantly killing the auto rickshaw driver at Chhonpara at Saatgram in Aaraihar upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Mostafa Mia, 45, son of Mohammad Shahid Mia of Dighirpar of Bajitpur of Kishoreganj.

UNB from Savar says: A motorcyclist was killed and his co-rider injured as an oil tanker hit his bike on Abdullahpur-EPZ road at Jamgora Choytola on Tuesday night.

The deceased was identified as Gias Uddin, former assistant sub inspector of Ashulia thana.



A mobile court of BSTI in a drive seized some bottles of substandard soft drinks from Maan Tower in Shantinagar in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR