Stop DCC polls process

Legal notice to CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday served a legal notice on the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) to stop the process of holding elections to bifurcated Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) until completing the legal procedures.

The Election Commission (EC) on April 9 announced that the DCC elections will be held on May 24.

Advocate Manzill Murshid sent the notice on behalf of Asaduzzaman Siddiqui, general secretary of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), saying that the EC had not followed the relevant rules of the Local Government (City Corporations) Act 2009 for holding the DCC elections.

The legal notice mentioned that as per Sections 27 and 28 of the act the EC had to determine the number of wards of any new city corporation, demarcate the areas of the wards and publish their names and number through a gazette notification for holding the election to it.

Officials have to be appointed from the public servants through a gazette notification for demarcating the areas of the wards of a new city corporation, according to the sections of the law, the notice said.

Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star that he mentioned in the notice that the EC had not executed Sections 27 and 28 of the Local Government (City Corporations) Act 2009 and it now cannot hold elections to the new DCC (North and South) without executing the sections.

He said he sent the notice yesterday to the CEC, secretary to the EC and Dhaka district election official by fax and mail, asking them to inform him within 48 hours after stopping the process of holding the DCC polls.

Maznill said he would take appropriate action against the respondents if they had failed to stop the election.

Rakhain boys and girls splash water on each other at Jalkeli Utsab (water festival) in celebration of New Year at Nabapandit Buddha Mandir in the port city yesterday. Bangladesh Rakhain Students' Association organised the festival.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

ELEVEN YEARS INTO RAMNA BATAMUL BLASTS

Trial in two cases yet to be completed

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

Eleven years have gone by, but the trials of the two cases over gruesome Ramna Batamul blasts on Pahela Baishakh are yet to be completed.

Trial of one of the two cases, filed over the killings of 10 persons on Bangla New Year 1408, is being delayed due to the non-appearance of witnesses and accused during proceedings.

Meanwhile, trail of the other remains stuck since 2009 as the Supreme Court registrar is yet to give his opinion on whether trials of both the cases could be held in the same court.

Yesterday, a Dhaka court could not record statements of two prosecution witnesses in the murder case, as jail authorities failed to produce one of the accused before it.

Judge (in-charge) Mohammad Akhteruzzaman of the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court adjourned the proceedings and fixed April 16 for the next hearing.

Two former officials of the Detective Branch and the Criminal Investigation Department were present at the court.

So far, the court recorded depositions of 52 witnesses out of 84.

But proceedings of the case crumbles often as the accused in the case cannot be produced to the court during the hearing days. Most of the accused are also accused in several other cases at different courts, sources said.

Meanwhile, the post of the court's judge is lying vacant for the last six months and the proceedings are conducted by Mohammad Akhteruzzaman.

During the traditional celebrations of Bangla New Year 1408 (April 14, 2001) at the Ramna Batamul, the blast claimed lives of 10 people while 50 others were left wounded. Following the incident, two cases were filed with Ramna Police Station.

Seven years after the incident, during the immediate past caretaker rule, the investigators found Harkat-ul Jihad (Huji) links in the blast. The CID pressed charges in both the cases against 14 top leaders of the banned militant outfit on December 30, 2008.

The charge-sheeted accused are Mufti Abdul Hannan, Mufti Shafiqur Rahman, Moulana Yahiya, Mufti Abdul Hye, Moulana Shawkat Osman alias Sheikh Farid, Moulana Abu Bakar alias Selim Hawlader, Moulana Mohammad Tajuddin, Moulana Abdul Hannan Sabbir, Arif Hasan Suman, Moulana Akbar Hossain alias Helaluddin, Moulana Abu Taher, Moulana Abdur Rouf, Hafez Jahangir Alam Badar and Shahadat Ullah alias Jewel.

Of them, Hannan, Suman, Jewel, Abu Taher, Sheikh Farid, Sabbir and Rouf are behind bars while Akbar is out on a High Court bail. The six others are still at large.

Trials of both the cases began at the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka. Later the murder case was transferred to Speedy Trial Tribunal-3. But then the Judge of the tribunal Kaniz Akhter Nasrina Khanam sent the case to Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court as it failed to complete the trial within the stipulated 135 working days.

Trail of the other case filed under the Explosive Substances Act remains stuck as the Supreme Court registrar is yet to give his opinion on whether the trials of both the cases could be held in the same court.

Ironically, the case is pending with the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka.

Masdar Hossain, erstwhile judge of the tribunal, in a letter on September 29, 2009 sought the SC registrar's opinion. Talking to The Daily Star, officials of the tribunal yesterday said they were yet to receive any reply from the SC registrar's office.

Asked, Registrar AKM Shamsul Islam told The Daily Star that he had no knowledge of the matter since he joined on June 7 last year.

He, however, said, "I shall take an initiative to give opinion on the issue."

Palestinian president to make stopover in Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas will make an hour-long stopover in Dhaka on Sunday on his way back home after visiting Japan.

A special aircraft carrying the Palestinian leader will land at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 4:45pm.

After his stopover in Dhaka, he will leave for Colombo for a two-day visit to Sri Lanka, official sources said.

Contacted, an official at the Palestinian Embassy in Dhaka preferring not to be named, however, said it is not yet confirmed whether the president will have a stopover in Dhaka.

The Palestinian leader will visit Colombo from April 15 to 17 at the invitation of Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Krishi Sramik Odhikar Mancha (a platform of agriculture workers) forms a human chain before Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanding that the government prepare a list of agriculture workers, register them, and provide them with identity cards.

PHOTO: STAR

Accused flees from court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

An accused in an arms case fled from the custody of police at a Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka yesterday.

Mohammad Liton, son of Kala Miah of Kotwali in Mymensingh, fled evading the eyes of police yesterday while they were taking him to Second Assistant Sessions Judge's Court where the trial of the case was going on.

Talking to The Daily Star Sub-Inspector Habibur Rahman, also officer-in-charge of the court hazat of the Sessions Court, said the accused managed to escape from the custody while constables -- Shah Alam and Mohammad Sultan -- were taking the accused to the trial court at about 2:30pm.

He said Liton was taken to the court from Kashimpur Central Jail-2 of Gazipur at 9:00am. Liton is an accused in an arms case filed with Sabujbagh Police Station on August 17 last year.

Habibur filed a case against Liton with Kotwali Police Station and submitted a report to the deputy commissioner (prosecution) for taking legal action against the constables for negligence in duty.

BM Ed admission begins

UNB, *Dhaka*

The admission for BM Ed under National University (NU) for academic year 2012 (Jan-Dec) began on Thursday.

A NU release said the admission would continue till Apr 30.

The students can obtain form and enroll into 2012 BM Ed course after submitting fees before April 30.

The candidates have been asked to contact Bangladesh Teachers' Training Institute (BTTI) at Board Bazar in Gazipur for detail.