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VC APPOINTMENT

Clause 11(2),
a bane for DU
autonomy

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Since the country's independence, successive governments have dishonoured a clause of the law regarding the appointment of vice-chancellors at Dhaka University, ultimately undermining the institution's autonomy.

The university is run under the Dhaka University Order 1973, and its clause 11 (f) stipulates that a VC will be appointed for four years by the chancellor, who will pick one from three individuals elected by the university senate – the highest decision-making body of the institution.

However, the governments have ignored the clause and temporarily appointed all VCs, except three, since 1976 – the year the VC was appointed through the panel election for the first time.

Some temporarily appointed VCs then convened the senate meeting to hold the VC panel election and subsequently got elected.

In most of the appointments, the governments cited clause 11 (2) of the 1973 order – “Where any temporary vacancy in the office of the Vice-Chancellor occurs by reason of leave, illness, resignation or any other cause, the Chancellor shall make such arrangements for carrying on duties of the office of the Vice Chancellor as he may think fit.”

Interestingly, documents show no temporary vacancy was created before most of the VC appointments.

The latest selection of Prof ASM Maksud Kamal as the VC is no



Schoolchildren curiously looking at the law enforcers standing guard near BNP's Nayapaltan headquarters, which has been under lock and key since October 29, a day after clashes between party activists and cops left two dead and scores injured. Law enforcers from different agencies have been regularly patrolling the entire neighbourhood, while its residents are in fear of further violence. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



Won't concede to call for caretaker
PM tells TIME magazine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The TIME magazine has featured Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the cover of its November 20 issue with a headline that reads “Hard Power/Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the fate of democracy in Bangladesh”.

The New York-based influential magazine released the cover on its website yesterday. It also carried a piece summing

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Educationists say that ignoring the senate panel elections while appointing VCs undermines the spirit of DU's autonomy, which its teachers and students earned through a mass movement in 1969.

exception as President Mohammed Shahabuddin appointed him temporarily.

With Prof Maksud, 11 of 14 VCs were appointed in a similar manner. Only three were elected from the panel nominated by the senate.

Of the 11, seven convened senate meetings to hold the VC panel election after being temporarily appointed by the government.

The remaining four could not call the senate meeting as they were either removed or had resigned months after their appointments.

Educationists say that ignoring the senate panel elections while appointing VCs undermines the spirit of DU's autonomy, which its teachers and students earned through a mass movement in 1969.

They said it has become a custom that any teacher loyal to or affiliated with the ruling party gets appointed as VC.

VCs do not want the panel elections to be held until a green signal is given from the government, they said.

“Clause 11 (2) should be applied only in emergency situations – the incumbent VC's leave, illness or resignation, or any state emergency. Otherwise, holding the VC panel election to elect VCs should be the regular practice,” Abul Kashem Fazlul Haque, a former professor of DU's Bangla department, told The Daily Star.

He said this practice was initiated by the autocratic government and carried forward by the successive democratic governments.

“If a VC is appointed by the government in this way, he or she runs the university as per the government's will.”

Prof Nazrul Islam, former chairman of University Grants Commission, said it has now turned into a “bad trend”.

“It's a violation of the 1973 order. Unfortunately, the trend has been going on for a long time though it wasn't supposed to.”

PAST VC APPOINTMENTS

The DU Order 1973 was proclaimed on February 15, 1973, with the aim to change the university's administrative system and through it, the senate was established.

The VC appointment procedure stipulated that the senate will elect a panel of three candidates, from which one will be appointed as VC by the chancellor. The participation of teachers and graduate representatives was ensured through the elections.

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NAT'L ELECTION

UN urges
all to shun
violence

UNB, Dhaka

The United Nations reiterated the call for free and fair elections in Bangladesh and urged all to refrain from violence.

Stéphane Dujarric, spokesperson for the UN secretary general, told reporters in New York on November 1 that the UN also spoke against harassment or arbitrary arrests during this period.

“I think our viewpoint on Bangladesh and the need for a free and fair election... I think we've spoken out very clearly [about those],” Dujarric said in a regular media briefing.

In a separate briefing in Washington on November 1, US State Department Spokesperson Mathew Miller said, “I have said a number of times, the holding of free and fair elections is the responsibility of everyone – all political parties, voters, the government, security forces, civil society.”

Gaza City surrounded
Says Israel military

AFP, Rafah

Israel's military said yesterday its forces have surrounded the Hamas stronghold of Gaza City after a day that saw the Palestinian territory pounded by deadly fire.

The Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, warned Israel its invading soldiers would go home “in black bags”.

Spokesman Abu Obeida said: “Gaza will be the curse of history for Israel.”

The Hamas warning came after Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari said troops had completely surrounded Gaza City after days of expanding ground operations.

“Israeli soldiers have completed the encirclement of the city of Gaza, the centre of the Hamas terror organisation,” Hagari told journalists.

“The concept of a ceasefire is not currently on the table at all,” he added.

Amid growing fears of the conflict spreading, Israel and Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon exchanged fire after a salvo of rockets slammed into a northern Israel town.

As he left on a new Middle East visit, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he would work to avoid escalation of the Israel-

Hamas war.

Hundreds more foreigners and dual nationals managed to escape war-torn Gaza for Egypt Thursday as Israel's forces bombarded and fought ground battles in the besieged territory where thousands of people have died.

Egypt said it eventually plans to help evacuate 7,000 foreigners through the Rafah crossing with the Gaza Strip.

The Hamas-run Gaza health ministry says more than 9,000 people have died, mostly women and children.

Three Palestinians were killed Thursday by Israeli fire in the West Bank, the ministry said, and an Israeli was killed in a Palestinian shooting attack, according to first responders.

In northern Gaza, ground fighting flared again overnight as Israeli troops battled Hamas.

Israeli army chief of staff Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi said troops were inside Gaza, besieging Gaza City and “deepening infiltration” of Hamas-held areas.

“Israeli soldiers are fighting face-to-face with a brutal enemy,” he told reporters.

Hamas's assault on October 7, which Israel says claimed 1,400 lives, was the bloodiest in the country's 75-year history.

- 9,061 Palestinians, including 3,760 children, killed
- Egypt plans to help evacuate 7,000 foreigners
- Three Palestinians killed in West Bank violence

BUSINESS

Export
falls 14%

Exports earnings fell to \$3.76 billion in October, the lowest in 27 months, as shipment of apparel items became the last major victim to the falling global demand.

The receipts were 13.64 percent lower year-on-year, the first decline since April, according to the Export Promotion Bureau. Readymade garments, which make up more than 80 percent of total earnings, slumped around 14 percent to \$3.17 billion last month.

STORY ON BI

11th JS ends
last session
before polls

RASHIDUL HASAN

The incumbent parliament held its last sitting yesterday.

Lawmakers from the Awami League and the Jatiya Party made emotional speeches recalling their activities in the House over the last five years.

With yesterday's last sitting of the 25th session, the 11th parliament concluded assembly as there will be no more sessions before the next general election.

Interestingly, three more candidates who would be elected MPs in parliamentary by-polls cannot sit in the session for a single minute.

By-elections to Brahmanbaria-2 and Laxmipur-3 will be held on November 5 and by-polls to Patuakhali-1 on November 27.

The incumbent Jatiya Sangsad saw record deaths of 31 MPs, mostly from the ruling AL, according to sources at the Parliament Secretariat.

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THE PHAYRE'S PERILS ... The family of a Phayre's leaf monkey, locally known as “Choshma Bander”, resting on the branches of a tree in Habiganj's Satchari National Park. This arboreal primate, native to India, Bangladesh and Myanmar, find shelter mainly in tropical, deciduous and evergreen forests, where it feeds on mostly leaves, shoots, seeds, flowers and fruit. Generally, quiet and shy creature, it will flee when threatened by predators. However, an alpha male can often get violent when it comes to protecting his tribes. Unfortunately, these precious creatures have been under major threat due to habitat destruction, fragmentation, logging, roadkill, ecotourism, electrocution and hunting, earning them a spot in the “Endangered” category in the IUCN's Red List.

PHOTO: TIMU HOSSAIN

Huge ‘blobs’ inside
Earth are from
another planet

AFP, Paris

Scientists has proposed a novel idea that could solve two of the world's mysteries at once – one that passes over our heads every night, and one that sits far below our feet.

The first mystery has puzzled everyone from scientists to inquisitive children for millennia: where did the Moon come from?

The leading theory is that the Moon was created 4.5 billion years ago when a would-be planet the size of Mars smashed into the still-forming Earth.

This epic collision between early Earth and the proto-planet called Theia shot an enormous amount of debris into orbit, which formed what would become the Moon. Or so the theory goes. Despite decades of effort, scientists have not been able to find any evidence of Theia's existence.

New US-led research, published in the journal Nature, suggests they might have been looking in the wrong direction.

Around 2,900 kilometres (1,800 miles) below Earth's surface, two massive “blobs” have baffled geologists since seismic waves revealed their existence in the 1980s.

