

Election Chief Warns Against Anarchy

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The top election official has warned against anarchy during the upcoming Chittagong City Corporation polls on June 17.

Chief election commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda said on Friday that any breach of law or breakdown of public order must not be tolerated.

Huda made the statement in a meeting with law-enforcing agencies and administration officials at the circuit house in the afternoon.

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He said election will be immediately suspended at the polling centres where there are problems on the election day.

The CEC urged magistrates in the meeting to perform their duties properly and hoped for their cooperation in ensuring free and fair elections.

"There was a visible lack of coordination between the law-enforcing agencies and administration officials during the Bhola by-election."

But Huda hoped that it would be better during the port city corporation polls.

The meeting was addressed by the officials concerned, including the city election chief, returning officer Jasmine Tuli and Chittagong city police commissioner Mohammed Maniruzzaman who is set to be transferred after the elections according to a government order of Thursday.

Earlier on the Thursday, Huda told bdnews24.com he had no knowledge of the Chittagong Metropolitan Police chief's transfer.

Regarding the sudden government decision ahead of the polls, the election chief told bdnews24.com: "This is the first time I am hearing about this."

bdnews24.com reported on Thursday ahead of the CCC polls, the CMP chief Mohammed Moniruzzaman was replaced by additional Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Mohammed Abul Kashem.

Announcing transfers of 35 officials in a significant administration shake-up, the government order, however, mentions that the CMP chief's transfer would become effective after the city polls.

Asked to comment about it, Huda pointed out that the electoral rule clearly stipulates that the commission takes over charge of a certain constituency after declaration of an election schedule there.

As such, Huda said, the government is obligated to inform the commission of its decisions prior to transferring officials posted to the electoral area.

He said, "Once the election schedule has been declared, the commission takes over administration of that constituency and therefore must be informed beforehand."

"But I don't know anything about it whatsoever."

Huda said since he had no clue as to the reasons behind the transfer, he would ask his secretariat to look into the matter.

"We will be looking into it."

The election schedule was declared on May 11. The tenure of the current city corporation council expires on June 25.

Jasmine Tuli, the person in charge of the Chittagong City Corporation elections, did not know of the transfer either.

The CCC polls returning officer said she did know that the police official in question had gone to Dhaka.

"But I thought that was because of a court summons regarding a case on custodial death."

Tuli also echoed her boss saying that the commission must be notified of any such changes in the administration.

"Any such decisions must be discussed with the Election Commission once the schedule has been declared."

Maniruzzaman went to court on Tuesday and apologised unconditionally for the custodial death of a nightguard, Mohammed Manik.

The court then lifted the charges against him but temporarily suspended another police official Younus.

The news of Manik's death was published in newspapers on May 11.

Source: bdnews24.com