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No polls before CEC resigns

Insists opposition combine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL)-led 14-party opposition combine yesterday vowed to resist any polls before resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz and two other "politically" appointed commissioners and implementation of electoral reforms.

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WORKERS' UNREST 3 DEPZ units closed

JU CORRESPONDENT

Three garment factories in the Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) were closed since yesterday following a meeting between workers' representatives and chairman of Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (Bepza) yesterday.

The factories, A-One (BD) Ltd, Goldtex Ltd and Softex Ltd, were

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Cry for infrastructure development in Ctg

The Daily Star roundtable with business leaders bemoans govt's myopic policy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Lack of foresight of the successive governments and absence of a business and investment-friendly policy for the premier port city holds back Chittagong from contributing to the country's overall economic growth at an expected level, observed speakers at a roundtable here yesterday.

They stressed developing a leadership well aware of economic activities and growth, and forming pressure groups to press for required development of the port city in the greater interest of the nation.

The roundtable titled "Economic Growth of Chittagong: Prospects and Challenges" was jointly organised by Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and

Industry (CCCI) and The Daily Star and held at the CCCI auditorium in the afternoon.

The discussants identified some problems hindering development of the port city, such as poor physical infrastructure, lack of administrative initiative and cooperation and sluggish implementation of projects.

They demanded enhancing efficiency of Chittagong port and setting up a deep sea-port in this part of the country immediately.

They also suggested developing the infrastructure to separate port traffic from city traffic that would make transport of cargo and container to and from the port easier.

It would also put an end to the congestion of containers and consequent vessel congestion occurring at the port frequently, they thought.

The speakers regretted that the third bridge on the Karnaphuli river, which could have helped development of a huge industrial belt on the other bank of the river, is yet to be constructed.

Moderating the roundtable, renowned economist Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, also executive president of Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), said that as the country's premier port city, Chittagong needs development on the basis of both regional and national perspectives.

Addressing the roundtable with CCCI President Saifuzzaman Chowdhury in the chair, Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam observed that achievement of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1 PICTURE ON PAGE 8

Forensic expert got threat calls for days

Family suspects he was killed in planned road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A son of Prof Akteruzzaman, head of the Department of Forensic Medicine at Dhaka Medical College, filed a case with Lalbagh Police Station on Friday alleging that his father might have been 'killed' in a planned road accident.

Dr Arifuzzaman, the complainant, also mentioned in the FIR (first information report) that unidentified people had been threatening his father over mobile phone for several days, creating obstacles to his professional duties.

Akteruzzaman was fatally injured when a jeep hit his motor-bike near Eden College at about 1:00pm on Friday and dragged him around 15 yards. He succumbed to his injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital about two and a half hours later.

Meanwhile, Advocate Alena Khan, executive director of

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PHOTO: AFP

A diving Italian forward Alberto Gilardino (11) catches the USA defence flat-footed heading home an Andrea Pirlo in-swinging free-kick during the World Cup football Group E match at Kaiserslautern stadium.

Red rules bad-tempered tie

9-man USA hold 10-man Italy

REUTERS, Kaiserslautern

Italy and the United States slugged out a bruising 1-1 draw in the most controversial match of the World Cup so far in which three players were sent off in their Group E clash early today.

Alberto Gilardino's opener for Italy was cancelled out by an own goal from Cristian Zaccardo, but the real talking point of an explosive match was a World Cup record-

equalling three red cards shown by Uruguayan referee Jorge Larionda.

It is the fourth time three men have been sent off in a World Cup final match.

The US finished with nine men and Italy with 10.

The Italians, so impressive in their 2-0 win over Ghana, were hustled and harried out of their stride in the opening stages as the Americans looked to make up for

their dismal 3-0 defeat by Czech Republic.

Roared on by thousands of star spangled fans, many no doubt from the American air force bases scattered around the local countryside, the US twice went close to taking the lead but midfielders Bobby Convey and Clint Dempsey failed to hit the target.

It was against the run of play when the Azzurri took the lead after

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BB worried over sliding Oriental Bank health

Mulls options of appointing administrator, liquidating bank or taking it over

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has given the government three choices on how to deal with the ailing Oriental Bank that has gone through repeated change of ownership.

The first option that the central bank gave is to dissolve the bank's board and appoint an administrator to run it. The second is to take the bank over and restructure it and the third option is to liquidate the bank.

Early last month, Bangladesh Bank sent these proposals to the finance ministry depicting the Oriental Bank's situation.

Sources in the finance ministry

said scrutiny of the proposals is going on and the ministry is examining the possible repercussion of going for any of the options. A final decision is going to be made very soon, the sources added.

Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman during a question-answer session in parliament on Tuesday last said, "The government is considering the formation of new bank companies, merging two or more banks as their financial conditions declined seriously."

Sources said the government might signal the central bank to go for appointing an administrator to run the bank. There is however pressure on the finance ministry not to go for such drastic action

ahead of the general elections. But if the government chose to intervene, it will be pressed for keeping the bank's existing board intact.

On contact, the bank's Managing Director CM Koyes Sami told The Daily Star on Thursday that it is very much possible to bring the bank back to track if the bank was provided with Tk 200 crore by the owners. The bank management had already talked to the owners and they responded positively to the management's suggestion, Sami added.

But it will have to be done following certain procedures and it is a time consuming method, Sami said.

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Petrobangla to stay in grip of controversial contractual top brass

SHARIEF KHAN

The government is set to extend contract service of one director and give contractual appointment to another director of Petrobangla ignoring allegations of corruption and incompetence against them.

Both the officials are accused of pushing Petrobangla to a financial suicide last year, while promoting and protecting the interest of a foreign oil company.

Moreover, the government is filling the vacant posts of three more directors in Petrobangla by promoting three officials, superseding two senior-most ones. Both of them are freedom fighters.

The sources said the superior selection board (SSB) last week okayed promotion of three officials

superceding two seniors under political pressure. "There has been gross violation of rules in the SSB and everybody is aware of that," said one source. The three officials will take charge as directors of operation, mining and planning.

The posts of director of operation and mining are lying vacant for a year and that of director of planning for five months.

Establishment ministry sources said that despite reservations expressed by the Petrobangla chairman, pressure came from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to extend contract job of the director of finance and give contractual appointment to the director of Production Sharing Contract (PSC).

The director (finance) retired last year and was on contract job till

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PHOTO: STAR

A huge billboard fell on a filling station on Biswaroad at Kuril during the storm on Friday night. The photo was taken yesterday.

One killed in billboard collapse

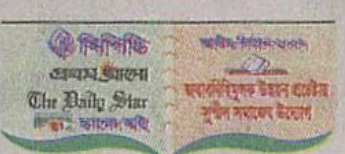
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One person was killed in Friday night's storm in the capital when a billboard collapsed on a filling station at Pragati Sarani.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Hazrat Ali, 46, a security guard of CNG and Fuel Filling Company.

The billboard collapsed around 10:00pm and damaged a number of cars parked at the station. An employee of the station claimed the huge billboard was set up on a weak structure.

'Neutral EC must for electing honest candidates'



RAFIQ HASAN, from Sylhet

Speakers at the fifth round of regional dialogue of civil society initiative for accountable development at Sylhet yesterday said honest and competent candidates cannot be elected without a proper

voter list and a neutral Election Commission.

They said there should be a consensus between the two major political parties for removal of uncertainty now looming large on the next general elections.

They felt that the caretaker government would no longer be required if the Election Commission is neutral and powerful. The speakers also asked the organisers of the dialogue to reach the message up to the grass roots level.

The speakers suggested introduction of voter identity cards with photograph, bringing necessary amendments in the Election Commission and the existing election process for a free and fair general election.

The election cannot be free and fair without eradication of muscle power and fake voters, they said. They also spoke in favour of strengthening the local government and reducing the involvement of

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BDR, BSF exchange fire in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

The Border Security Force (BSF) of India and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) traded gunfire on Gazipur border in Sadar upazila during early hours yesterday.

The BSF of Pakirdanga camp at Basirhat police station under 24 Parganas district, West Bengal fired five bullets at its counterpart BDR of Bhomra camp under Gazipur sadar upazila, Bangladesh at

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Morshed calls for tolerance to defuse border tension

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday called for tolerance and patience to defuse tension on the Indo-Bangladesh border in the wake of skirmish in the past few weeks.

"Both sides have repeatedly committed to maintaining peace

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Dr Wahiduddin for merger of bad private banks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted economist Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud yesterday suggested merging of bad performing private banks with others to save the depositors.

"The bad performing banks should merge with other banks before creating panic among the public and any delay will put pressures of depositors and bad loans on the government," he told reporters after addressing an award-giving programme

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