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halting blockade

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association yesterday hailed the 14-party combine for postponing its nonstop blockade programme until Sunday.

We definitely appreciate the decision... It's a good decision, it's good for the country and the economy," FBCCI President Mir Nasir told the UNB over phone.

Nasir along with some other business leaders called on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her residence on Tuesday night and requested her to avoid any programme that ultimately affects theeconomy

"We're very happy as she has : SEE PAGE 15 COL 8 : Iajuddin Ahmed.

FBCCI, BGMEA hail 14-party for Blockade postponed

14-party pins hope on advisers' efforts, gives chief adviser 4 more days to do 11 tasks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League-led 14-party alliance yesterday postponed its ongoing countrywide blockade up to Sunday and asked the chief adviser again to meet its demands, including reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC) and removal of the chief election commissioner (CEC), by

The blockade will resume on Monday if the alliance's 11-point demand is not met within Sunday, Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina warned President and Chief Adviser

"We are giving the president neutrality and does not meet the and chief adviser time until Sunday evening to realise our demands. If he fails to prove his



people's demands by this time, the indefinite countrywide block ade programme will resume on Monday," Hasina told at a crowded press conference at her Dhanmondi office.

'We have postponed our blockade programme considering people's sufferings and having confidence in the sincerity of the advisers to the caretaker government as a discussion is going on over reconstitution of the Election Commission between them and the political parties," she said. Prior to the press conference the

AL chief held meetings with the SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

No election commissioner willing to quit

Claims EC STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) Secretariat yesterday claimed that none of the election commissioners is willing to resign now while the three election commissioners, who earlier told reporters of their unwillingness to continue their job, remained silent.

"They [election commissioners] do not have the attitude to resign from the posts. I talked to them," Secretary to the EC Secretariat Abdur Rashid Sarkar told reporters in his office yesterday.

Directed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz, the EC secretariat in a press release vesterday termed 'baseless' the report run by a section of



Ball now in CA's court Juktofront for

Advisers update Iajuddin on dialogue outcome, wait for his guideline to resolve crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All eyes are now fixed on the president and chief adviser of the caretaker government as the advisers are expecting directions from him to decide the future course to resolve the ongoing political crisis.

Wrapping up a three-day dialogue between the major political parties and the caretaker government, the four advisers who on behalf of the council of advisers opened the talks, yesterday met President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed and apprised him

The advisers have also continued negotiation with the major political parties 'behind the scene' to reach a consensus, sources said.

"We have already informed the president about the outcome of the dialogue with the political parties and the onus now lies on him. The directions will come from him," Dr Akbar Ali Khan, who led the fourmember advisory committee in negotiating with the major political parties, told reporters yesterday.

Another member of the advisory committee, CM Shafi Sami also expressed similar views.

The council of advisers to the

caretaker government is likely to sit

During the three-days dialogue that ended yesterday, the advisers' panel talked with major political parties and alliances and sought their opinion to resolve the ongoing political crisis centring the demand for reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC).

All the political parties and alliances, except BNP and its allies, strongly recommended reconstitution of the EC including removal of the chief election commissioner

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

CEC's ouster

JP (Manju) tells advisers to ensure level playing field for all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Juktofront leaders yesterday unequivocally demanded immediate removal of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and the three other election commissioners. while Jatiya Party (Manju) said if the removal is necessary for ensuring participation of all political parties in the election, the caretaker government (CG) should decide accordingly.

On the third day of bilateral dialogues between a four-member delegation of the council of SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Decision to

came from

president

deploy army

Home secy tells VOA

Home Secretary SM Jahurul Islam

categorically told Voice of America

(VOA) on Tuesday that the decision

to deploy army was taken at the

instruction of President and Chief

Meanwhile, although the gov-

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

ernment later decided to cancel its

to issue any circular in this regard.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed.

Bangla Service.

100 hurt outside Dhaka on day 4 of blockade yesterday too in Dhaka and The capital, like on the previous

STAR REPORT

The fourth day of the blockade yesterday, enforced by Awami League-led 14-party coalition, was marked by sporadic clashes in different districts across the country while the capital remained More than 100 activists of rival

14-party and 4-party alliances were reported injured in the clashes in Sylhet, Khagrachhari, Rajshahi and elsewhere in the country, while 50 vehicles were burnt and vandalised during the blockade.

Like on Tuesday, trading was on

Chittagong stock exchanges on small scale, and a little activity was noticed inside the Chittagong port.

The capital remained cut off from the rest of the country and land ports were inactive. Mongla port also remained inactive, while no goods were

transported at Chittagong port although there was a little bit of activity inside the port. Train communication was

disrupted in different places while a very few launches left Sadarghat Launch Terminal in the capital. THE CAPITAL

days of the blockade, remained peaceful. Activists of 14-party coalition as usual ruled over the streets of the city.

Defying a police ban, the activ-

ists continued demonstrating and

held rallies at the previously announced 22 points. They also set fire to tyres and burnt effigies of Chief Election

Commissioner MA Aziz at different A taxicab was vandalised and set on fire on Panthapath yesterday

afternoon, but no one was injured.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

The decision to transfer the 42 SEE PAGE 15 COL B

Transfer process

of 42 police

officers halted

in last moment

The Advisory Council for

Administrative Affairs last night

approved transfer of 42 police

officers, including 35 superinten-

dents of police (SPs), but the pro-

cess was halted in the eleventh

While the process was on for

getting President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed's signature on the

transfer order, a "politically appointed" official of the former

prime minister's office intervened

and halted it, well-placed sources

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Islami Chhatra Shibir set fire to several motorcycles of 14-party men at Chondipul in South Surma, Sylhet, on the fourth day of blockade yesterday.

4 robbers killed in | EC security upped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Four robbers were killed during a gunfight with police while two others lynched by locals in Raozan upazila of the district early yester-

The dead were identified as Azad, 27, Absar, 27, Khokan Barua, 26, Afsar, 24, Salahuddin, 27, and Alamgir, 25. All the six hailed from kadalpurin Raozan.

Police recovered two light guns, two pipe guns, seven cartridges, one camera, two mobile phone sets and three torchlights from the spot.

Sources said a contingent of 40 cops, led by the officer-in-charge (OC) of Raozan Police Station, took position in Bibirchhara area near Shamshernagar at midnight Tuesday on information that a

gang of 35 robbers was fleeing to the hilly region of Raozan after committing a robbery at Pomra village under Rangunia Police

The robbers reached the area at around 5:00am. Sensing presence of the policemen, they opened fire on the law enforcers, prompting them to retaliate.

Both sides traded around 45 bullets during the gunfight that left four robbers--Azad, Absar, Khokan and Afsar--dead on the spot, while others managed to flee.

Later, locals found two bulletinjured robbers, Salahuddin and Alamgir, in a hilly area and beat them to death

Two cases were filed with Raozan and Rangunia police sta-

gunfight, 2 lynched amid attack report In the morning, DMP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Security was beefed up at the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat and in adjoining areas yesterday following intelligence information of 'possible attack on Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) due to his rigid stance on not stepping down.

Several hundred additional law enforcers, uniformed and plainclothes, were deployed on the EC secretariat premises after the intelligence report about an organised threat to the security of the CEC and the three other election commissioners, sources in the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP)

Security of the residences of the CEC and the election commissioners was also tightened.

Commissioner ABM Bazlur Rahman held a two-hour long meeting with CEC MA Aziz and informed him about the intelligence information on 'serious threat to his security' in the wake of growing political crisis centring the demand for his resignation, sources said.

At the meeting, a proposal for restricting the frequent movement of journalists at the EC Secretariat was also discussed so that no miscreant can enter in guise of journalists. If this plan is implemented, the journalists may not be allowed to step into the building where the offices of the CEC and other three election commissioners are situated, sources said

The meeting even went as far as SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Ctg port springs to life as lockdown suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Full operations of Chittagong Port resumed last night following postponement of the 14-party's countrywide blockade programme. Delivery of goods from the port

and other activities started in full "I want to make it clear that I did swing, reports received in Dhaka not take the decision on my own. It was a decision of the government, I All activities at the country's just carried out my duties by virtue of my position," Jahurul told VOA

premier seaport remained suspended for two days -- Sunday and Monday -- due to the blockade, and partial operations resumed decision to deploy the army, it is yet Tuesday morning. Although limited activities at

the port continued till yesterday

evening, delivery of goods leaving around 60 vessels waiting at the outer anchorage, according to sources.

Of the vessels, 16 are container carriers and the rest are general cargo carriers and oil tankers.

Unloading of general cargo, particularly essentials like salt, wheat and sugar and cement was going on as usual last night. Unloading of bulk cargo through inland cargo vessels also continued at the outer anchorage.

But operation of four gantry cranes for handling containers was SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

4-party extends its counter agitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led four-party alliance yesterday decided to continue its counter programmes across the country protesting 'killings, anarchy, terrorism and vandalism' by the 14-party combine

The alliance extended its sit-in programme at divisional headquarters and rallies at district towns also for today.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a statement yesterday called upon city, district and upazila-level liaison committees of the four-party coalition to make the programmes a success in their respective areas. Meanwhile, the four-party held

rallies and brought out processions in different areas of the capital SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

