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Badrul Haider Choudhury non-partisan, says Hasina

Opposition meet ends without positive vote commitment

Star Report

None of the opposition parties represented in parliament besides the Awami League and its allies with the strength of 99 votes, has made any positive commitment to support former Chief Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury as presidential candidate.

At a meeting of the opposition MPs yesterday Badrul Haider Chowdhury sought cooperation to be elected president for the sake of greater national unity.

He was introduced by the Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina at the meeting.

After the meeting Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury, determined to contest the election, said at a press conference that there should be a consensus on choosing a president of the republic. To achieve this goal the election date could be deferred to provide time to choose a consensus candidate, he added. The meeting held at the conference room of the Opposition in Parliament was presided over by the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina.

The meeting of the Opposition MPs was attended by Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury MP, Amir Hossain Amu, Tofac Ahmed MP, Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim of the Awami League, Manirul Haq



People of some city areas would now perhaps prefer dinghies as mode of transport during the monsoon. Water-logging haunts them very often as it was yesterday when hours-long heavy rains submerged the city roads paralysing the normal activities. Picture shows the New Market Road. — Star photo

WB, IMF meet today on funding support for Bangladesh

By Moazzem Hossain

The two key multilateral institutions—the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—will consider today the funding support for Bangladesh under the on-going economic reforms programme, at a meeting of the Committee of the Whole in Washington. The committee is a joint forum of the policy makers of the IMF and the WB.

The meeting will review the Policy Framework Paper (PFP), prepared under the IMF-supported Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF). The government finalised the PFP in May jointly with the staffs of the IMF and the WB.

The PFP incorporates specific reform proposals in different sectors of the economy for 1991-92 with some concrete performance criteria set under it. This will be the second annual PFP under the three-year ESAF programme which was approved for Bangladesh in early part of fiscal 1990-91.

The PFP for 1991-92 was due for consideration by the Committee of the Whole on August 23. But the Committee postponed the consideration of the same following the announcement of the new national pay scales by the government for its employees.

Both the IMF and the WB then expressed fears that the implementation of the pay scales in 1991-92 would have serious budgetary constraints and cause wider financial and economic imbalances, leading to problems for funding the development or investment programmes.

Meanwhile, a joint IMF-WB team visited Dhaka early this month and held discussions with the government officials about the implications of the announced pay scales on overall budgetary resource management and also other related issues.

The committee of the whole in its meeting today in Washington will consider the PFP along with the appraisal report by the joint IMF-WB team which came to Dhaka.

The IMF board meeting will take up on its agenda the PFP under ESAF for Bangladesh for 1991-92 in its meeting on September 30, after the clearance of the same by the Committee of the Whole.

Official sources in Dhaka are hopeful about approval of the PFP. The approval will make about 100 million dollar IMF credits available to Bangladesh in current fiscal year for the balance of payment support. What will be important is not merely the availability of IMF credits under ESAF following the approval of the PFP, the sources noted while stating that the endorsement of the reforms programme would also improve the credentials of the government with the donor community in general.

Nomination papers of all presidential candidates found valid

Nomination papers of all three candidates for election to the office of President of the country under parliamentary system of government were found valid, reports BSS.

The Election Commission Secretariate declared Abdur Rahman Biswas, Alhaj Mokbul Hossain and Badrul Haider Chowdhury to be candidates for election to the office of the President as their nominations were found valid after examination.

As per the schedule, the Chief Election Commissioner, who is the Nurbachani Karta of the presidential election Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf examined the nomination papers at his office at Sher-e-Banglanagar on Thursday morning.

The proposers and seconders of the candidates were present during the examination. — Star photo

Release of detained ship at Singapore port costs BSC Taka 3 crore

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 26: Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) had to pay again for the detaining of one ship of its at Singapore port recently.

According to a BSC source, the loss incurred by the organisation to get the detained vessel 'Banglar Sourav' released, amounted to over Taka three crore. Banglar Sourav was detained at Singapore port for nine days since September 13, following a case lodged by a Singaporean repairing company for nonpayment of the

BNP questions non-partisan image of Justice Chowdhury

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar Thursday expressed his shock and surprise at the statement of Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury and said, "We along with the people are dismayed that a wise and courageous person like him was speaking the language of a certain quarter."

In a press statement he said, "Could there be any logic in regarding Justice Chowdhury a strong supporter of national consensus after his acceptance of nomination from a particular party particularly when there could be no national consensus by bypassing the party which has obtained a majority in parliament through free and fair election?"

Reacting to the statements of Justice Chowdhury, a former Chief Justice of Bangladesh in a section of the press, the BNP leader said the contention that

3,000 more attacked Diarrhoea death toll rises to 550

By Staff Correspondent

About three thousand people were attacked by diarrhoea on Thursday in the different areas of the country. Official sources confirmed 39 more deaths from the disease in the flood affected districts raising the death toll to 550.

Outbreak of diarrhoea was also reported from the districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts where the disease claimed 30 lives in a week.

In Nilphamari district, 611 people were attacked by diarrhoea Thursday and eight deaths were reported. Another four persons died in Gaibandha where 203 people were attacked by the disease. In Kurigram 401 persons were attacked, but no death was reported.

Five hundred people in Ruhija union under Sadar upazila of Thakurgaon union were attacked by the disease Thursday. A medical team was rushed to that union.

Deaths reported from other districts during the 24 hours till Thursday morning are: Tangail-6, Pabna-5, Thakurgaon-5, Naogaon-4, two each from Rangpur and Kushtia, and one from Panchagarh, Dinajpur, Lalmonirhat, Joypurhat, Sirajganj and Chapainawabganj district.

So far 1,736 medical teams have been working in the affected areas. Our Kishoreganj correspondent reports: eight persons died of diarrhoea Thursday and over 500 people were attacked by the disease during last three days in the district. The death toll now stands at 83 while the number of people attacked by the disease since September 1 is about five thousand. Eighteen medical teams along with a special team are now working in the district.

UNB report from Khagra. — See Page 12 Col. 3

Downpour swamps city

By Staff Correspondent

A heavy downpour on Thursday submerged many areas of the metropolis. The rainfall, caused by the influence of a late monsoon spell, continued for four hours beginning at eight in the morning.

The Dhaka Met Office recorded 53 mm rainfall in the city, the highest in the country on the day. The highest rain fall was recorded at 120 mm on September 15.

There was severe water-logging in the city as usual. Main thoroughfares in Shantinagar, Malibagh, Kakrail, Minto Road, Naya Paltan, Khilgaon, Maniknagar, Muggdapara. — See Page 12 Col. 4

Shahabuddin hopes as 3 services bid by Armed forces will help grow democracy

The Armed Forces bade ceremonial farewell to Acting President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, on Thursday, reports BSS.

Addressing the senior officers of the three services at the Army Headquarters in Dhaka Cantonment, the Acting President recalled the services rendered by members of the Armed Forces during his tenure for ensuring law and order during the February 27 parliamentary elections and subsequent referendum. He also mentioned their contributions in the relief operation following the devastating cyclone and tidal surge in the coastal areas.

Justice Shahabuddin hoped that members of the Armed Forces would make positive contributions towards the continuation of the democratic process set in motion. He called upon them to concentrate on training and uphold the highest example of professional excellence and discipline.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan also spoke on the occasion. He — See Page 12 Col. 4

Biswas may get support of Jamaat, 6 independent MPs

Star Report

Behind-the-scene lobbying has been geared up by both the ruling party BNP and the Opposition Awami League to owe the support of parliament members for their respective presidential candidates.

Indications were clear on Thursday that the BNP would get the support of the Jamaat parliamentary party and at least six members of parliament from among the independents and the small parties.

The BNP commands majority in the house with 170 members and the combined opposition strength is 160. The BNP strength will increase further with the support of Jamaat for Abdur — See Page 12 Col. 8

Palestinian delegates about to endorse US ME peace plan

ALGIERS, Sept 26: Palestinian delegates today neared tentative endorsement of US Middle East peace plans after hearing from two prominent Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, sources said here, reports AFP.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, trying to win support for a peace conference the United States wants to hold in October, summoned Faisal Husseini and Hanan Ashrawi, community leaders from the Israeli-occupied territories, to address the Political Committee of the Palestine National Council (PNC).

Husseini and Ashrawi spent 90 minutes with the committee late Wednesday, outlining details of their recent talks in Jerusalem with US Secretary of State James Baker.

The two Palestinians who have met Baker eight times in recent months, are also expected to travel soon to Washington for further talks with the Secretary of State.

Palestinian sources said the Political Committee of the PNC — the Palestinian parliament in exile — was moving toward a statement approving the conference proposal and re-asserting the principles on which the PLO believes peace should be based.

Arafat on Wednesday told the Political Committee the United States had improved its position on the proposed conference, referring to the Palestinians as a 'people' and thereby suggesting they have national rights.

While continuing to shun any reference to Palestinian self-determination, according to Arafat, Washington now agrees that West Bank and Gaza residents should have the chance to control their own affairs and manage their own natural resources.

Unusual low causing late monsoon rain

By Mostafa Kamal Majumder

The heavy downpour of the past few weeks that worsened the flood situation in Bangladesh has been caused by an unusual phenomenon — a trough of a low extending from the Arabian Sea to Bangladesh and Assam across India.

Weather experts are puzzled that in a marked departure from the normal the late monsoon rainfall is not being induced mainly by any system (low or depression) from the Bay of Bengal.

Hamduzzaman Khan Chowdhury. — See Page 12 Col. 7

Medical College in Rangpur closed

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Sept 26: Rangpur Medical College was closed since die today following armed clashes between rival student groups late Wednesday night, which left one dead and another three seriously injured.

College authorities announced the closure this morning and asked students to vacate the hostels by 10 am the same day. Many students had already left the campus and the rest vacated the hostels this morning.

Habibuzzaman Habib, a first-year student of the mathematics department of Carmichael College, died on the spot when a group of gunmen opened fire inside room No.64 of the Pinnu Hostel in the medical college campus at around midnight, witnesses said. He was an activist of the JSD (Inu)-backed BCL.

BCL alleged that activists of the BNP backed JCD were responsible for the attack.

Gunfire and cracker explosions continued for more than half an hour, witnesses added. — See Page 12 Col. 5

Mrs Thatcher wishes Khaleda success

NEW YORK, Sept 26: Former British Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, has wished the new government of Bangladesh headed by Begum Khaleda Zia all success, reports BSS.

Talking to Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman at a function organised by US Business Council for the United Nation here on Tuesday, the former British Prime Minister said she was happy to meet the minister after ten years.

Mrs Thatcher, who attended the function as the guest of honour said she was happy that BNP had formed the government again. She expressed the hope that the new government would continue the good work done by president Ziaur Rahman.

Ambassador Humayun Kabir, permanent representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, accompanied the Foreign Minister.

Iraq to free UN inspectors if they catalogue files

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 26: Facing increasing pressure from the United States and its Gulf War allies, Iraq has offered to free UN arms inspectors if they catalogue documents they took from the files of Baghdad's nuclear programme, reports AP.

As of Friday afternoon Baghdad time, however, scores of President Saddam Hussein's soldiers continued Friday the siege of the 44-member UN team. "Nothing has changed," the team leader, David Kay, said in a telephone interview with the Associated Press from Baghdad.

The Iraqi offer came in a letter Wednesday from Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Amir Al-Anbari to Security Council President Jean-Bernard Merimeed, the French Ambassador.

British Ambassador Sir David Hannay told reporters that based on the letter it appears as if a settlement has been reached on the release of the UN inspectors.

A UN translation of Iraq's letter concerning the inspectors asked the chief UN weapons official, Rolf Eusebi, to "go to Baghdad to work only the details of remedying the situation."

"The Iraqi authorities insist that the Iraqi side and the inspection team jointly draw up a record of all the documents and photographs taken by UN inspectors before it is authorised to remove anything from the site."

There were reports that the stand-off had ended, but they turned out to be premature.

A UN official in Vienna said the inspectors had been permitted to leave their buses and cars and move into a building to catalogue their finds. David Kay, chief spokesman of the Atomic Energy Agency, said based on telephone contact "the inspectors had gone into the building after rejecting the Iraqis' offer of safe passage back to their hotel."

But a few minutes later, Kay said, "Nothing changed at all."

"I would be more than happy to go back into the building and finish the inventory," he said early Friday afternoon.

Earlier Thursday, he said the team's morale was good. "Everyone's up, moving around," he said. "Sleeping on pavement isn't exactly normal for most of us," but he added: "We have adequate food and water being delivered" by other members of the UN team who were not detained.

The inspectors have been camped in a bus and six cars outside the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission building since Tuesday, when Iraqi authorities demanded they surrender documents detailing the country's secret nuclear weapons programme.

Kay said the documents were secured in a car.

The siege has been the most serious in outbreak of conflicts between Iraq and UN inspectors trying to determine the extent of Iraqi weapons programme.

The Security Council is attempting to force Iraq to comply with the Gulf War ceasefire resolution, which orders Baghdad to destroy its weapons of mass destruction and desist from building or acquiring new ones.

The United States on Wednesday began moving Patriot anti-missile units to the Gulf.