

## Inflation: Govt step worries MCCI

By Staff Correspondent

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) has expressed concern at the government's attempt to curb inflation through monetary measures alone saying that a narrow monetary approach may adversely affect investment without having any impact on inflation.

This observation was made in a write-up in the latest issue of the Chamber News, the MCCI's monthly review letter.

Pointing out that a narrow monetarist approach has serious limitations in countries like Bangladesh, it said fiscal rather than monetary policies can yield a more effective curb on inflation in such a situation.

"Immediate steps should be taken in the realm of fiscal policies to check budgetary deficits and remove supply bottlenecks so as to encourage private investments to work in tandem for bringing about a downward movement of prices," MCCI suggested.

The MCCI observed that the present inflationary pressures have been created by direct and induced effects of budgetary deficits, combined with supply bottlenecks and inadequate growth in productive sectors of the economy.

The budget deficit as a percentage of GDP increased

### CEC visits injured presiding officers

Chief Election Commissioner Justice AKM Sadeque yesterday visited the Suhrawardi Hall to see the two presiding officers who were injured in bomb attacks in the city. He expressed sympathy for the two officers and asked the physicians to ensure their proper treatment. Mohammad Sirajul Islam and Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, both Senior Assistant Secretaries at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, were injured in bomb explosions at Mohammadpur on Sunday.

## Polls: Govt officials

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Secretary the members of the civil administration urged him to advise the Chief Election Commissioner to immediately cancel the "farical election."

The administrative officials also urged him to request the President to convene a round-table conference between the government and Opposition leaders to reach an acceptable solution.

In the open letter, they also urged the Cabinet Secretary to immediately resign from his post.

Cabinet Secretary Ayubur Rahman later went to the Election Commission and had a meeting with the EC Secretary, Ershadul Huq.

A delegation of the BCS (Admin) Association also met with Chief Election Commissioner Justice AKM Sadeque and conveyed the anxiety of the members of their association.

The CEC assured the association leaders that the authorities had taken all measures to ensure security and safety of the officials engaged in election duties.

He also asked the presiding officers and assistant presiding officers to contact



Awami League president Sheikh Hasina addressing a meeting of some professional groups in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

— Star photo

### Hasina

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meeting, expressed their solidarity with the ongoing opposition movement and said they would boycott and resist the elections.

Teachers Association president Principal Mohammad Qamruzzaman, Mohila Samity President Dr Neleema Ibrahim, College-University Teachers Association president Dr M Akhtaruzzaman, Muktijoddha Command Council chairman Principal Abdul Ahad Chowdhury, Hindu-Buddha-Christian Okkya Parishad chairman Maj Gen (retired) CR Dutta, Group Theatre Federation chairman Nasiruddin Yusuf Bacchu, Nirmul Samannay Committee member secretary Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, BFUJ president Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Aijibil Samannay Parishad convenor advocate Shamsul Huq Chowdhury, SKOP leader Abul Basher, Engineer Golam Mostafa, dramatist Ataur Rahman, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote general secretary Golam Quddus and agriculturist Monirul Islam, among others, addressed the meeting.

They also submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner who is also the Returning Officer, urging him to relieve them of election duties.

Submission of memorandum followed an attack on an election training camp at the Muslim Hall in the city in the morning. Most of the presiding and polling officers of the district, and the returning officer himself could not attend the training programme due to the clashes. At a press conference at the local press club, the officials said they would not join election duty on security grounds.

The court desired to hear the Attorney General. Deputy Attorney General A F M Hasan Arif, appearing on behalf of the Attorney General, submitted that they had no instruction from the government regarding bail of the detainees.

A division bench of the HC comprising Justice Binayendu Bikash Roy Chowdhury and Justice Muhammad Abdul Mannan upon hearing both the prosecution and the defence yesterday fixed today for order.

Dr Kamal Hossain, on behalf of the detenus, submitted that they are examinees which has been certified and recommended by the Provost

### JN Hall incident

## HC decision on bail prayers of 16 today

By SC Correspondent

The High Court Division today will pass orders on the prayers for ad-interim bail of the 16 students of Jagannath Hall, Dhaka University who have been detained since January 31.

They were arrested prior to the inauguration of the Bangla Academy Book Fair by the Prime Minister on February 1.

A division bench of the HC comprising Justice Binayendu Bikash Roy Chowdhury and Justice Muhammad Abdul Mannan upon hearing both the prosecution and the defence yesterday fixed today for order.

Later, Attorney General M Nurullah appeared before the Court and reiterated the submission made by Hasan Arif.

But Deputy Attorney General Mujibur Rahman, who is also the Secretary for youth and students of the BNP central committee asserted that he had instructions to oppose the bail prayers.

### IEH management not cooperating with probe body

Star Report

The management committee of the Islamia Eye Hospital (IEH) is not cooperating with the second probe committee on the hospital, headed by Abdul Mannan, Minister of State for Civil Aviation and Tourism. It was alleged.

The second probe committee, formed about two months back, held several meetings with the hospital administration to resolve the alleged irregularities in it. But the chairman of the hospital management committee, Dr Matin Patwari did not attend any of the meetings, it was alleged by meeting sources.

Abdul Mannan, talking to The Daily Star yesterday said that he proposed formation of an "electoral college" with participation of some prominent citizens, doctors of the IEH and representatives of the Ispahani family, founders of the hospital.

According to the Mannan formula, the "electoral college" which will elect the management committee must not exceed 100 members, including 10 from the Ispahani family.

When contacted, Dr. Matin Patwari declined to give his comments about the meetings.

### 24 Tamils killed in army shelling

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Feb 12: Soldiers defending a military post fired shells that struck a nearby rice paddy, killing at least 24 Tamil civilians and wounding 30 today, a police official said, reports AP.

Dozens of people were working in the field around dawn when the shells fell near the eastern village of Kumarapuram in Trincomalee district, the official said on condition of anonymity.

A military spokesman in Colombo denied that civilians were killed by military shelling, but acknowledged that fighting broke out in the area after Tamil separatists attacked the post late Sunday.

Replies to the question of debate between Begum Zia and Sheikh Hasina, the BNP leader said that the Awami League did not come up with any proposal on this. She said she had known about it from newspapers, but there never was any formal proposal for such debate.

Without mentioning the name of any party, Begum Zia said: "If the party can sit with the Pakistanis to resolve political problems then why can't they sit with me. I am a Bangladeshi. What is the problem to sit with me."

The Prime Minister said that her party along with the opposition parties in Parliament had passed the 12th amendment to the Constitution and introduced parliamentary system to stop the illegal taking over of power through violating the Constitution. "Now there is no scope to occupy the post of Prime Minister by an unelected person."

But the opposition parties deviated from the 12th amendment and wanted appointment of an unelected person as the head of the government.

"We have been strict to our principles and we will remain so in future. We will maintain parliamentary system and no unelected person would be allowed to assume the powers of an elected Prime Minister," she said.

Replies to a question, she said no party ever brought any bill on caretaker issue in the parliament. She clarified that a bill from Jamaat-e-Islam that came was not placed as per parliamentary process and was not a complete one. The Jamaat MPs did not reply on the notice given by the parliament secretariat on their bill.

Editor of Bangladesh Ob-

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am by hurling seven cocktails. Motor bike of a police SI has damaged there.

In another incident at Khashikawlia, AL activists foiled a scheduled election rally of BNP nominee from Sirajganj-6 constituency, Ansar Ali yesterday evening. Five persons were injured in the incident. After foiling the BNP rally, the AL held a rally there.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reported that anti-election activists hurled a bomb at Barisal Auditorium where an election training was being held. The DC and other officials were present. Two JP workers were arrested in this connection.

An independent candidate from Bholia-3 constituency was reportedly stripped in front of the Deputy Commissioner's residence at Blhola Saturday night. The candidate was going to meet the DC.

Our Correspondent reported from Comilla that at least 10 people were hurt in a clash between the Opposition and BNP activists at Blhola Saturday night. The candidate was going to meet the DC.

Our Correspondent reported that at 11 am yesterday, a motor bike of a police officer was damaged in a clash between the Opposition and BNP activists at Blhola Saturday night.

At about 11:30 am, the AL and BNP brought out a procession in Nalitabari and foiled a meeting of election officials at the TNO office. Two buses, two trucks and two motor bikes were damaged by the activists.

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