

JRC: No move yet

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the meeting but his Bangladeshi counterpart when asked, had replied that it was likely to be held within the next two months, ie August last.

It is, however, learnt reliably that both New Delhi and Dhaka in the subsequent months had failed to come up with an agreed date for the reconvening of the meeting of the JRC. It is also learnt that the Indian side had come up separately with two sets of dates while Bangladesh had put forward one set of dates for the proposed JRC meeting.

Officials in the Bangladesh foreign ministry, on condition of anonymity, said that Dhaka could not agree to the two sets of dates given by Delhi and the latter could not accommodate the one set of dates given by Dhaka and for this it was not possible to hold a meeting of the JRC. In reality it was "domestic political compulsions on both sides which prevented the holding of the JRC meeting," one official noted.

It was then stated by a top official of the foreign ministry that "bringing the Indians to the negotiating table was an arduous task and we intend to move from here."

Later, former foreign minister Mostafizur Rahman, when asked about the fate talks told newsmen in early December that both countries have elections round the corner and it was not possible to arrange any meeting.

Officials of the JRC said that they did not receive any data from the Indian side for a long time and due to lack of a joint

From death row

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A Filipino tycoon has offered her 700,000 pesos (27,000 dollar); and a French group is providing one million pesos (38,500 dollar) for her education and support for her to start a business enterprise, they said.

She has been receiving fan mail and gifts ranging from apples to designer dresses, newspapers quoted Philippine diplomats as saying.

A Swiss news agency offered Balabagan an all-expense-paid trip to Switzerland in exchange for an interview, the Philippine Daily Inquirer said.

The 41,000 dollar in blood money was raised through donations from foreigners and Filipinos, here and in the Middle East.

Balabagan may be freed in July, three months before the end of her one-year sentence, according to Philippine diplomats.

AL urges CEC to restore order

Awami League leaders yesterday called on Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena and called for taking effective measures to restore order in the country, reports UNB.

Expressing concern at the deteriorating law and order situation, they said congenial atmosphere was the pre-requisite for holding election in a neutral manner and the caretaker government should take effective measures to recover illegal arms.

The Awami League delegation, led by its Acting President Abdus Samad Azad, discussed various issues relating to the coming parliamentary election, said an EC press release.

They laid emphasis on curbing violence and recovery of illegal arms.

The other members of the delegation are Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Jalil and ATM Shamsul Haq.

US firms

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Dhaka Nancy Powell. The survey had a total of 27 respondents, and its results were presented by the Forum's Executive Secretary A Gafur.

Asked about the inflation rate in 1996, almost half of the respondents felt it would be between five and eight per cent. About two-thirds of the form members believe that the exchange rate will be in the range of Tk 40 to 43 for one US dollars, which is a little different from the existing level, a change of not more than five per cent.

Asked about the greatest problems they had encountered, most of respondents referred to hartsals.

About law and order, more than 90 per cent said that it had a negative impact. "With respect to the operation of labour unions, 40 per cent reported negative impact. The degree of negative impact of unions on the ABEF members is higher than the results from the similar surveys of the entire manufacturing sector," the survey noted.

The members of the Forum found the port and the Railway unsatisfactory. On electricity supply most felt it was acceptable but some were not satisfied.

"What is clear is that the opinion on the infrastructure is not favourable. This is not the type of response that one wants if foreign investment is sought or if the economy is trying to grow rapidly," the survey noted.



The Gano Forum brought out a procession in the city yesterday in observance of its 'Franchise Day'. — Star photo

DCC commissioner arrested

By Staff Correspondent

A city ward commissioner was arrested yesterday allegedly for assaulting a maid at Dilu road Tuesday night.

Khaled Imam, the commissioner of Ward No 54 (Dilu road and adjacent locality) under Ramna thana was picked up by the police from his residence in the afternoon, police sources said.

A case has been filed with Ramna thana in this connection. He is likely to be placed before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court today.

Code of conduct after detailed study: EC

Electoral Commission (EC)

yesterday said the code of conduct for the candidates in the coming election and others concerned will be finalised after a detailed study, reports BSS.

The commission in a press release issued last night said, attention of the commission has been drawn to a news item published in some newspapers regarding the code of conduct.

"It is for the information of all concerned that the code of conduct which has been published, was only a draft meant for discussion and the final code of conduct will be published later following an elaborate study," the statement said.

The rally was followed by a procession in the city demanding free and fair election.

Khaleda's remarks irresponsible

Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman in a statement yesterday described as "irresponsible and uncourteous" the remarks made by BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia at a public meeting Tuesday in Khulna, reports BSS.

He said Begum Zia's reckless remark about the Bangladesh Awami League, which led the War of Independence, spoke of her ignorance about this party and its role during all important movements.

Zillur Rahman said father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Awami League and its thousands of leaders and workers had suffered untold oppressions caused by the Pakistani rulers only due to the emancipation of the people of this country.

He said, we had to risk our life time and again because we were fighting for the cause of the people for long 25 years.

Gano Forum

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He also assured his party's cooperation to the caretaker government in holding a free and fair election.

Presided over by Gano Forum leader Mostafa Mohsin Montu, the rally was also addressed by Begum Jahanara, Saidur Rahman and Sagir Anwar.

The rally was followed by a procession in the city demanding free and fair election.

Workers threaten to gherao BGMEA office April 27

By Staff Correspondent

Garments workers have threatened to gherao the BGMEA office on April 27 unless their demands for payment of salaries and Eid-bonuses are met by tomorrow, says a press release.

Leaders of the "Combined Garments Workers Front (CGWF)" at a meeting in the city yesterday said that unless the country's 12 lakh garments workers were paid their arrears this month's salary and Eid-bonus by April 26, they would gherao the BGMEA office at Kawran Bazar the next day.

The leaders of the CGWF alleged that the owners of the factories have not been paying the salaries of the workers for the last 4 months, causing them innumerable suffering.

British navy ship in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, April 24:

HMS York, a destroyer of the Royal Navy arrived here today on a four-day visit to Bangladesh, says an ISPR press release.

It has a complement of 306 crew members including 27 officers.

Immediately after arrival Commanding Officer of the visiting ship called on the Commodore Commanding Chittagong.

WB suggestions

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eliminating the "low-priority projects".

For accelerating implementation of the existing ADP, the WB also advised the government to continue administrative actions including approval of project proposals and technical assistance proposals.

The Bank also urged the caretaker government to take appropriate measures for preventing new bad loans to maintain discipline in the financial sector. The Bank suggested review of all recent loans sanctioned by nationised commercial banks.

On food situation, the multilateral donor agency said the government should assess the extent of food shortage, resulting from short supply of fertiliser and fuel and take immediate steps to ensure adequate supply of those agricultural inputs.

Regarding privatisation, the Bank urged the government to give necessary instruction to the Privatisation Board to complete the technical aspects of projects for privatisation by the next government.

The Midnight File

Parliament to probe charges against Tansu Ciller

ANKARA, Apr 24: The Turkish parliament today decided to open an inquiry against former Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, who has been accused by Islamic politicians of corruption in the privatisation of a state-run company, reports AFP.

UN offer to train Bangladeshi polls officials

From Our Correspondent

The Secretary General of the United Nations is closely watching the political developments in Bangladesh. UNDP Resident Representative in Dhaka Eimi Watanabe said yesterday.

Watanabe while meeting Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman at his office, also mentioned the interest of the United Nations to support the electoral process in Bangladesh.

She also apprised the Chief Adviser of the offer from the world body to train the electoral officials and support the election mechanism in the country.

The UN would also support the government in facilitating the free movement of international polls observers during the forthcoming election. Watanabe said.

The Chief Adviser welcomed the proposals.

Earlier, the UNDP resident representative congratulated the Chief Adviser on his assumption of the office.

Defence portfolio

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said there is nothing wrong in placing the ministry of defense and the armed forces division under the disposal of the president.

They laid emphasis on the recovery of illegal arms for holding a free and fair election and pledged their full support to the caretaker government in discharging its solemn responsibility.

The delegation included Maulana Mohiuddin Khan of Islami Morcha, Maulana Nurul Huda Fatezi of Islami Shabtiantrik Andolon, Maulana Mufti Muhammad Wakas of Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islam, Advocate Muhammad Ayenuddin of Bangladesh Muslim League, ASM Solaibian of National Democratic Alliance, Anisur Rahman of Jatiya Ganatantrik Party, Advocate Abdur Rakib of Bangladesh Nezame-e-Islam Party and Maulana Husamuddin Chowdhury of Anjuman-e-Islam.

Launch dacoity at Homna

From Our Correspondent

NARYANGANJ, Apr 24: Dacoits looted gold, money and other valuables worth Tk 10 lakh from the passengers of a Narayanganj bound launch at Homna of Chandpur on Tuesday.

The launch, ML Ratchi, according to passengers, left Ramchandrapur for Narayanganj. Shortly afterwards, a group of 15 to 20 dacoits disguised as passengers attacked the other passengers. During the robbery, they snatched two rifles from the Ansar personnel and started attacking the passengers with rifles, axes and other arms. At least 35 passengers were injured.

Ten of the injured have been admitted to the Sonargaon health complex. The condition of one Atindra Nath was said to be critical.

I killed, 19 hurt

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storm which lashed six thanas of the district this evening. There was extensive damage to standing crops and betel leaf farms in Daulatpur thana. The tin shed of Daulatpur degree college was blown off and the Manikdia primary school was damaged.

The storm which lasted half an hour from 6:15 pm also battered large number of kutch houses and uprooted huge number of trees. It also affected many REB electric poles and disrupted electricity. The storm also damaged the building of Kushtia City College.

Dudayev

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Tantan Borovoi, who has maintained contact with Dudayev, told Russian television.

President Boris Yeltsin, on a campaign stop in the Russian Far East en route to a state visit to China, played down the impact of Dudayev's reported death.

"With or without Dudayev, we will wind up everything in Chechriya with peace," Yeltsin told Russian news agencies.

(Related story on Page 8)



A TASTE APART.

