

8 banks given Tk 800cr to overcome liquidity crisis

Finance and Planning Adviser Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud yesterday visited the head office of the Bangladesh Bank and held a meeting with the governor, deputy governors and other high officials, reports BSS.

The meeting dwelt mainly on the total money circulation, foreign exchange reserve and inflation.

The meeting also discussed the liquidity problem of banks and the upward trend in the rate of interest in the call money market.

The meeting was told that in totality there was no liquidity problem in the banking sector but over Tk 800 crore re-discounting facilities were given to eight banks to cover their temporary liquidity problems.

The meeting also refuted the news that appeared in a section of the press that the Bangladesh Bank had withdrawn the re-discounting facility. It was mentioned that the re-discounting facility was still open and the facility was given, considering the necessity of the banks.

JP invites nominations

The Jatiya Party has requested the intending candidates for the coming election to collect nomination forms from the party's Banani office from 4 pm on May 1, reports UNB.

Each nomination form will cost Tk 102 and it should be submitted along with a bank draft/pay order of Tk 5,000 to the same office by May 5, a party press release said yesterday.

The interview of the candidates of Rajshahi division will be held on May 6, of Khulna and Barisal divisions on May 7, of Chittagong and Sylhet divisions on May 8 and of Dhaka on May 9, the release said.

Earlier JP acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury has expressed his satisfaction that the election schedule was announced in keeping with the 90-day timeframe for holding the polls.

Giving his reaction to the announcement of the schedule, he however regretted that JP leaders had not been allowed to meet the party chairman, former president HM Ershad, in jail.

Concern over extension of envoys' service tenure

By Staff Correspondent
Sheikh Hasina's political advisor S A M S Kibria has expressed his concern over the reported extension of service tenure of 'politically appointed diplomats.'

In a statement yesterday Kibria alleged that the President had given approval to the extension of the tenure of Bangladesh High Commissioner to London without the consent of the Chief Advisor.

'Such action (of the President) reminded us of the recent incident of resignation of Attorney General Nurullah and rejection of that resignation later', Kibria said.

Kibria also demanded an explanation how extension of the service tenure of an envoy was possible without the approval of the Chief Advisor. The incident has affected the neutral image of the caretaker government, he said.

WB report

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enterprises, IMED reports, macro-economic and project information, amount of tax exemptions and concessions provided to private and public sectors and public officials, and amount of free services provided to public officials.

The study identified the 'weak and fuzzy' accountability stretching from parliament to the class IV employees for inability to enforce financial contracts, stop theft in public enterprises or hold officials accountable for their improper judgement.

Identifying the weaknesses of parliamentary accountability, the report said these cropped up because of the heavy weighting of power in favour of the Executive and non-observance of standard parliamentary norms and procedures.

The study recommended that the members of parliament should be provided with adequate office and research facilities and parliamentary standing committees, specially the Public Accounts Committee, should be strengthened to strengthen the parliament.

The WB says lack of accountability coupled with poor pay for public servants breeds corruption in the administration.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) is too ineffective to fight corruption, the reports said, adding that ACB is 'publicly perceived as being vindictive — as a vehicle for pursuing personal and political vendetta. Even where ACB investigates properly, it averages three years to investigate cases, of which only 15 per cent actually get to the courts.'

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The meeting also noted that the liquidity problems of some of the banks are seasonal and hoped this would be overcome.

Another report adds, money in the call money market during the week ending Wednesday last ranged from 7.00 per cent to 14.25 per cent.

During the same week interest rates offered by the bank on certificate of deposits varied from 6.00 per cent to 9.40 per cent.

The bank rate, however, remained unchanged at 6.50 per cent. Bangladesh Bank said here yesterday.

Fire in Ashuganj fertiliser factory

BRAHMANBARIA, Apr 27: Some one hundred rooms of the accounts section building of Ashuganj Zia Fertiliser Factory were gutted in a devastating fire today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said fire fighters of the factory and firemen from Brahmanbaria, Baharab and Ashuganj fought for four hours to put out the fire that broke out at about 1 pm when the office was closed.

They could not save the accounts section building, but controlled the spread of the blaze to the adjacent buildings, fire brigade sources said.

Two firemen — Shafiqul Islam and Jahangir Hossain — were injured during their fight against the flame.

The cause of the fire and extent of damage could not be ascertained immediately, the sources said.

Teachers urge Chief Adviser to ensure safety during polls

A 14-member delegation of the Bangladesh Federation of Teachers' Association called on Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman at his office yesterday afternoon, reports UNB.

The delegation, led by Federation secretary general Principal Kazi Faruque Ahmed, assured the Chief Adviser of their full cooperation in holding a free and fair parliamentary election.

They stressed on improvement of law and order situation to ensure peaceful polling and urged the Chief Adviser to ensure safety and security of all concerned, including teachers, to be engaged in polling.

The delegation also requested the Chief Adviser to raise the honourarium of the teachers for election duties and arrange proper accommodation for them so that they could perform election duties properly.

Other members of the delegation were: Al Akrar Khan, Salim Bhuiyan, Mohammad Toha, Mansur Rahman, Mareda Khutun, Abdur Rob Mia, Mohammad Shahidullah, Azizul Islam, Roushan Ara Mainan, Mafizur Rahman, Muhammad Matiur Rahman, Gazzali, Mohammad Ishaq and G N R Abul Bashar.

May Day Wednesday

Biswas' call to increase output in mills, factories

By Staff Correspondent
The historic May Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the world on Wednesday with a vow to establish the rights of the working class and ensure progress of the industrial sector.

On May 1, 1886, the workers of Chicago City in America laid down their lives for realising their demand for 8-hour working day.

On the eve of the day, President Abdur Rahman Biswas, Chief Adviser Justice Habibur Rahman, Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia issued separate messages.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will hold a discussion meeting at its central office here at 4 pm on Wednesday.

Returning officers

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commissioner of Dhaka has been appointed as the Returning Officer for the five constituencies of Dhaka district, while the DCs of 63 districts have been appointed the Returning Officers for the rest 285 constituencies under their of law.



A partial view of Mount Arafat during Hajj yesterday.

— TV photo

Hajj

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outside Makkha in sight of Mount Arafat where they spent the night.

On Saturday, the pilgrims, who came from as many as a 100 countries, performed the noon and afternoon prayers in Mina. They then were to spend the night in the air-conditioned tents of Mina, in preparation for Hajj's final rite Sma — stoning three monuments representing the devil.

Later Sunday, they celebrate the Eid ul-Azha, commemorating Prophet Ibrahim's readiness to offer his son's life to God.

Tragic end of a 7-yr old

JESSORE, Apr 27: A minor boy was run over and killed by a bus in Gauhati area of Jessore today, while returning home with his father after buying a sacrificial goat for the Eid ul-Azha, reports BSS.

Witnesses said Sakkhar, 7, a student of class one, was holding the rope of the goat which suddenly tried to flee away. While chasing the goat, he was crushed under the wheels of the bus.

BCL activist shot dead in Raozan

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 27: A Chittagong League activist was shot dead this morning at Cudhakune village under Raozan thana when supporters of a rival political party attacked him, police said.

Emdadul Hoque Kokan, 23, identified as BCL activist, was called out from his house at around 11 am today by some youths who then opened fire on him and hurriedly fled away, police said.

Emdadul died on the spot and police recovered the body later.

BCL blamed the activists of National Democratic Party (NDP) for the killing but NDP denied the charge.

Meanwhile, tension rose high at Raozan after the incident and police were deployed to prevent any outbreak of violence.

Zaker Party to contest from 300 seats

By Staff Correspondent

Zaker Party will contest the forthcoming general elections from all 300 constituencies of the country.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the executive committee of the party held yesterday with party Chairman Pirzada Mostafa Amir Faisal in the chair, says a press release.

The meeting also formed an 11-member "Central Election Conducting Cell" to monitor overall election activities of the party.

Advocate Abu Bakar Siddique has been appointed as the Chief Election Agent of the party.

Addressing the meeting Zaker Party Chairman Mostafa Amir Faisal said that his party would create such alternative political stream which would not fight for power only but struggle to establish rule of law.

Both Rao's Congress Party and the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) claimed they would win a majority despite opinion polls signalling they would both fall well short of the requisite 273 seats.

The Hindu-revivalist BJP, mounting its most serious bid yet for national power, claimed

UNCTAD needs reform: Ghali

halfway between Johannesburg and Pretoria.

The central issue at the conference is its future role after the World Trade Organisation (WTO) took over the task of trade regulation from UNCTAD, formed 32 years ago at the height of the Cold War.

Boutros-Ghali, opening the two-week UNCTAD IX meeting, said that while the organisation will have to reform its operation, it still has a critical role to play in promoting development through trade.

Like all organisations, UNCTAD must undergo reform and keep adapting to the realities of the world ... but UNCTAD's basic mission has not changed, he said.

"UNCTAD is certainly the irreplaceable ... forum for the global community. Now more than ever, it is an essential organ of the United Nations action in the field of trade, development, equity and social justice," he said.

President Nelson Mandela earlier delivered the keynote address to the conference — the first major UN meeting to be held in South Africa — at Gallagher estate at Midrand.

Commerce Secretary and leader of Bangladesh delegation to the ninth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) A H Mofazzal Karim was elected one of the vice presidents, according to a message received here yesterday. The election was held on Friday at the senior official level meeting, reports BSS.

Dhaka made UNCTAD vice president

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CHITTAGONG, Apr 27: Three people were injured in a clash between rival factions at Cuddapah in Andhra Pradesh and crude bombs were exploded in at least three other villages, causing no casualties, it added.

The election passed off smoothly in most other areas, officials said.

Polls have been held in a free and peaceful manner, election commissioner GV Krishnamurthy said. This is an historic day in the annals of our national democracy. The next parliament will take India into the 21st century.

He said fears that turnout could be low after a lackluster campaign, remarkable for the absence of a single campaign theme, had proved to be unfounded.

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He urged officials and employees at all levels, including the district and thana levels, to carry out their election duties without fear and ignoring threat or intimidation.

Abdul Hena also directed them to ignore all undesirable influences and unjust demands.

He further directed the officials to counter all conspiracies designed to making the journey to democracy thorny through evil influence on the electoral process.

Laxity, misconduct and cooperation to unfair means will under no circumstances be tolerated, the CEC warned. He said: "The Election Commission is determined to take drastic action against such lapses."

He called for people's cooperation to the Election Commission to enable it to discharge its onerous responsibilities imposed on it by the nation for holding a free and fair election.

Indian elections

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The victim was identified as Naib Ali, a rickshawpuller and resident of Syedpur area of the town.

The wife of Naib Ali said he had left the house for Dhaka in the morning of April 25 and did not return.

Police recovered the body when information from local people.

Police said there were bullet injuries in his chest.

A case was filed with Narayanganj thana in this regard.

Besides, a young woman allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself with the ceiling of her room in Kadamtali area under Siddhirganj thana.

Family sources said Nilufar Yasmin, 20, committed suicide because family dispute.

She was buried without autopsy.

Inflow of Rohingya refugees continues

From Monayen Khan

COX'S BAZAR, Apr. 27: The fresh inflow of Rohingya Muslims into Bangladesh from across the Tek