

Privatisation drive flounders due to rising buyer apathy

Country's privatisation programme floundered during the last one year due to rising buyer's apathy, triggered primarily by trade liberalisation at home, according to an assessment by the Privatisation Board, reports UNB.

During the period, bidders of two big public enterprises have withdrawn halfway through negotiation while buyers of two other enterprises stopped payment even risking their bid money.

Shyampur Sugar Mills and Metalex which were processed for final approval had to be dropped as bidders subsequently lost their interest and took back their bid money with government permission.

In another manifestation of dwindling interest of private entrepreneurs to public enterprises, the authorities had to cancel Letter of Intent (LOI) for the sale of Bangladesh Textile Mills and Lira Industrial

Enterprises following failure by the buyers to pay dues.

Dilly-dally by the buyers in completing formalities also forced the government to hold up transfer of Ujala Match Factory.

Series of tenders and re-tenders for selling public sector jute mills also received poor response.

The lone achievement of the privatisation programme in last one year was that the buyer of the Barisal Textile Mill got possession of the unit.

The Privatisation Board, in its assessment, attributed the buyers' indifference to trade liberalisation which left most of the domestic market-oriented industries vulnerable to highly competitive international production.

The Board observed that most of the State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), listed for privatisation, were domestic-market oriented, money losers

and having old dilapidated machinery, and thus keeping potential buyers suspicious.

Scarce domestic capital has also been pointed out as a reason of poor buyer's response.

The beleaguered Privatisation Board, which itself drew severe criticism for failing to go ahead with the programme, has undertaken a review of the privatisation policy on the basis of experiences it gained so far.

According to insiders, the Board is considering to terminate the contract with the existing consultants and replace them with 'suitable' ones.

To infuse vigour into the privatisation efforts, the Board is also trying for closer collaboration between itself and different ministries having SOEs as privatisation candidates.

It requests the ministries to set up individual privatisation cell to facilitate cooperation. Eight ministries have so far set up such cells.



Jatiya Party parliamentary board began interviewing party nomination seekers at the Banani office of the party yesterday. — Star photo

The Midnight File

Security Council maintains sanctions against Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, May 6: The UN Security Council decided to maintain international sanctions against Iraq today for failing to comply with UN resolutions in place for almost six years, diplomats said, reports AFP.

Ensure fair voting

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Commissioner Abdur Rahman later said participants of the workshop emphasised giving the election a festive look. "If possible, complete peace would be ensured on the polls day."

According to him, the participants of the workshop also made some identical proposals to ensure a free, fair, impartial and neutral election.

Responding to a call from Home Secretary Rezaul Hayat, the DCs, SPs and other officials related to election activities also expressed their firm resolve to hold the June 12 election neutrally.

"We will do our best to offer the people a government of the people," they echoed a Deputy Commissioner who addressed the inaugural session.

One of the participants proposed prohibition of movement of all motorised vehicles, including motorbikes, microbuses and jeeps, on the election day to control the gambol of hoodlums. "The EC is considering the matter," said Abdur Rahman.

Another participant made a proposal for issuing an order for submitting the licensed arms to respective thanas on the eve of election. Decision about the proposal, according to Abdur Rahman, will be taken later.

The workshop emphasised proper training of election officials. The EC will organise training programme from thana to central level, Abdur Rahman informed the reporters.

Replying to a question, Abdur Rahman said no DC or SP complained that their activities were being hampered by any quarters.

Asked how he depends on the district officials who also made similar commitment before the controversial February 15 election, the EC said they had played a neutral role and that is why the election was not acceptable.

He told the newsmen that law and order situation had improved considerably, and "we can hope for free and fair voting on June 12."

Indonesia will buy 70000 tons jute

Indonesia will purchase 70 thousand tons of jute from Bangladesh in a bid to strike a balance in the bilateral trade, reports UNB.

The offer came from Indonesian Ambassador Hadi Ahmad Wayarabi Alhadar when he made a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman at his office yesterday morning.

During discussion, the Chief Adviser requested the Indonesian government to buy more

goods from Bangladesh to mend the present trade imbalance between the two countries since the balance of trade is highly in favour of Indonesia.

The Ambassador said his government was willing to purchase more goods from Bangladesh and disclosed Jakarta's plan for buying 70,000 tons of Bangladeshi jute.

The current international market rate of raw jute is dir 412 dollar per metric ton.

Indonesia would do its best to further enhance cooperation in all possible fields between the two countries, the envoy told the CA.

Syed Ahmed, Principal Secretary to the Chief Adviser, was present during the meeting.

List of CPB candidates

By Staff Correspondent

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday released names of 36 candidates who would contest in the June 12 election.

Following are the candidates and their respective constituencies:

1. Dhaka-4 Shahidullah Chowdhury-2. Jamalpur-3 Manjurul Ahsan Khan-3. Khulna-1 Prof Achintya Biswas-4. Netrokona-1 Dr. Dibalok Singha-5. Thakurgaon-1 Principal Syed Merazul Hossain-6. Dinajpur-1 Altaf Hossain-7. Jaipurhat-1 Md. Badiuzzaman-8. Kushtia-4 Advocate Nurul Islam Dulal-9. Jhalakathi-2 Abdul Mannan-10. Barguna-1 Abdul Halim-11. Sunamganj-2 Probbangshu Chowdhury-12. Bakerganj-3 Advocate Nazmul Ahsan Mizan-13. Panchagar-2 Prof Selimuddin-14. Thakurgaon-2 Mubsin Sarkar-15. Thakurgaon-3 Mansurul Alam-16. Sirajganj-2 Islam Hossain-17. Nilfamar-3 Prof Zahid Ali-18. Lalmonirhat-3 Advocate Sirajul Islam-19. Rangpur-2 Shah Md. Abdul Latif Master-20. Kurigram-2 Nurunabi Babu-21. Gaibandha-1 Nur-e-Alam Manik-22. Gaibandha-2 Advocate Shadhat Hossain Laku-23. Bagerhat-1 Mirimay Mandol-24. Khulna-6 Principal Md. Rashiduzzaman-25. Patuakhali-4 Mohammad Motalab-26. Kishorganj-2 Mostafa Kamal Nandu-27. Kishorganj-3 Md. Sirajul Islam Siraj-28. Kishorganj-5 Nirmal Chandra Saha Roy-29. Manikganj-1 Abdul Hakim Master-30. Manikganj-2 Abdul Mannan-31. Manikganj-3 Abu Bakar Siddik Tulu-32. Manikganj-4 Kismat Ali-33. Gazipur-4 Md. Altaf Hossain-34. Faridpur-1 Abdul Malek Sikder-35. Shariatpur-3 Advocate Moslem Khan-36. Moulavibazar-2 Khandker Lutfar Rahman.

Electioneering wave in favour of BNP: Khaleda

BNP chairperson and former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said that the people of Bangladesh have decided to keep away from the politics of hartals, aborodhs and destruction, reports BSS.

Addressing the party representatives from Sylhet Division at the BNP office at Kakrail, Begum Zia said that this decision of the people of Bangladesh would set the most notable trend in the upcoming elections.

Begum Zia said that the senior citizens as well as the brave youths would be with BNP together in the party's forward journey to win the new century.

Begum Zia said that the electioneering wave in favour of BNP across the country has created new hopes in Bangladesh.

The BNP chairperson said that none of those who in recent times took non-cooperation and aborodh programmes to cripple the Bangladesh economy would be able to absorb themselves from the responsibility of harming the country and the nation.

Begum Zia said that those who in recent years called 170 hartals and took programmes of aborodh were not at all alert that because of such destruc-

JP interview

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For nominations

During the interview, Yousuf Hossain Humayun represented Nazim Rahman Manju, while GM Kader represented jailed JP chairman HM Ershad as members of the Parliamentary Board.

UNB adds: Five forms were submitted on behalf of HM Ershad and three for his wife Begum Rausan Ershad, a presidential member.

JP acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju submitted one form each, party sources said.

5 inter-district dacoits held in city

By Staff Correspondent

The Detective Branch during raids in Gulshan and Cantonment thana areas arrested five members of a gang of inter-district dacoits yesterday.

During the eight-hour raid from 4 am, the police also seized a stolen microbus and recovered some gold ornaments from them.

The gang was involved in lifting motorbikes and vehicles in the Dhaka Metropolitan and adjoining areas for a long time, police sources said.

The arrested persons were identified as Tofael Ahmad alias Kozol, Shamsul Huq, Sharif Hossain, Shahid and Sukkur Ali.

Meanwhile, Mouljee police on Sunday night recovered electronic goods and other items worth about Tk three lakh. One person was also arrested.

The recovered goods include VCRs, wrist watches, cookers, telephone sets, toasters and perfumes, police said.

Third phase of India's polls today

NEW DELHI, May 6: The third phase of India's Lok Sabha (Parliament) elections for 183 constituencies in 12 states of the 545-member house will be held tomorrow in the face of threats of poll boycott by militant organisations of Tripura, Nagaland, and the troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir, reports BSS.

At least thirty people lost their lives in the pre-poll violence during the last three days, reports said. Of those killed, ten were in West Bengal.

Six lakh strong security forces took their position in 183 Lok Sabha constituencies, spread over 12 states involved in tomorrow's elections and a total of three lakh potential trouble mongers have been taken into preventive custody.

BNP demands full recovery of illegal arms

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has demanded full recovery of all illegal arms, but resented what it called the harassment of its leaders and workers in the name of arms recovery, reports UNB.

A party spokesman, responding to the request by Chief Election Commissioner for comments on arms-holders, told newsmen yesterday that no leader or worker or activist of BNP possess any illegal arms.

"And we do not have any connection with any such arms-holders," BNP office secretary Nazrul Islam Khan said. "BNP announces clearly that the party does not believe in the politics of arms."

He said BNP is doing politics with unshakable faith in almighty Allah and also with confidence on the support and strength of the people.

CPB manifesto

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would represent people at the Parliament on the basis of total percentage of vote bagged by each party instead of the present system where MPs are elected individually.

"This would, in the future, check political corruption, floor crossing and flow of black money in elections," Mujahidul Islam Selim said.

The party would encourage true industrialists and entrepreneurs while it plans to strengthen the economy by cutting down import of luxury items, maintaining a frugal economic policy and creating new jobs, he added.

In order to check corruption, the party plans for publishing regularly the income and expenditure of all high officials and political leaders, he said.



Wahidul Huq presenting a solo performance of Tagore songs and recitation of poetry at a Rabindra Jayanti function organised by Kanthashilon at the British Council auditorium in the city yesterday. — Star photo

2 killed in road accidents

From Our Correspondent

Two persons including a minor boy were killed in road accidents in Sylhet and Sunamganj.

Our Staff Correspondent from Sylhet reports: An 8-year old boy was crushed to death by a speeding Motorcycle on Sylhet-Tamabil Road Sunday afternoon.

Arifur Rahman, son of Abul Hashim, met the tragic end of his life while crossing the road at Islampur.

The motorcyclist managed to escape.

UNB adds: A middle aged woman was killed when a pick-up van hit her on the Sunamganj-Sylhet highway at Ahsanmara in Sadar thana yesterday.

The victim was identified as Asia Begum.

Police seized the vehicle but the driver fled the scene. A case was filed with Sunamganj thana.

In another incident, an old man, Abdus Shahid, was critically injured when a bus hit him on the highway near Jaykalah yesterday afternoon. He was admitted to Sadar hospital.

AL may have instigated my arrest: Maj Akhteruzzaman

By Staff Correspondent

Major (ret'd) Akhteruzzaman, a former BNP member of parliament, who was released on bail Sunday from Kishoreganj jail, insinuated here yesterday that the Awami League was behind his arrest.

Akhteruzzaman was arrested at Kottiyadi, Kishoreganj, on May 1 following a clash between police and local BNP activists over detention of a Jubo Dal leader there.

At a press conference at the Jatiyo Press Club, expressed his suspicion that the AL had instigated his arrest for refusal to join the party.

"I was approached by the AL to join the party, as they want to ensure all the seats from Kishoreganj for themselves. But I refused to switch parties. I clearly told the person who approached me that I would stay with BNP, even if I don't get nominated this time. Needless to say, they weren't too happy with my reply," he said.

When asked if the AL leadership was directly involved in his arrest, Akhteruzzaman said, "I don't believe they had any direct hand in the matter." Those officials, whose neutrality is in doubt, should be prevented from doing election work, as they are likely to influence election commission officials and members of security forces conducting the elections," Akhteruzzaman claimed.

VCs assure help to recover arms from campus

A delegation of the Bangladesh Biswabidyalaya Parishad (Association of Universities of Bangladesh) comprising the Vice Chancellors called on Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman at his office yesterday, reports UNB.

They discussed matters relating to law and order situation, academic and administrative problems of the universities.

The Vice-Chancellors assured their all-out cooperation to the government in the recovery of illegal arms from the campus. They said the law enforcing agencies could act at any time for the purpose.

The delegation comprised BUET Vice-Chancellor Prof M Shahjahan, Jahangirnagar University VC Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury, Rajshahi University VC Prof Muhammad Yusuf Ali, Bangladesh Agricultural University VC Prof Shah Mohammad Faruq, Chittagong University VC Prof Rafiqul Islam Chowdhury, Islami University VC Prof Mohammad Inam-Ul-Huq, Shahjalal University of Science & Technology VC Prof Syed Mohibuddin Ahmad, Khulna University VC Prof Golam Ali Fakir, Bangladesh Open University VC Prof M Shamsur Alam and Prof SM Safuddin, Member-Secretary of the Association.

Adviser for Education, Youth and Sports, and Cultural Affairs Prof M Shamsul Huq, Principal Secretary to the Chief Adviser Syed Ahmed and Home Secretary Syed Rezaul Hayat were present in the meeting.

WP finalises first list of candidates

The Central Election Committee of Workers Party at a meeting yesterday finalised the first list of its 47 candidates, reports UNB.

The meeting, presided over by the party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon, decided to finalise the second list of its candidates on Wednesday.

The first list is as follows: Barisal-2 Rashed Khan Menon, Sirajganj-6 Abdul Matin, Narail-2 Bimal Biswas, Dhaka-6 Abul Bashir, Rajshahi-2 Fazle Hossain Badsha, Chuadanga-2 Anisur Rahman Malik, Dhaka-2 Khondaker Ali Abbas, Khulna-5 Hafizur Rahman Jhenidah-4 Abdus Salam, Gaibandha-5 Aminul Islam Golap, Nilphamari-2 Prof Nur Mohammad and Natore-1 Anwar Ali Dulal.

Jessore-6 Advocate Abu Bakar Siddique, Bagerhat-3 Advocate Mohiuddin Ahmed, Kishoreganj-6 Prof Yakub Ali, Tangail-5 Wahiduzzaman Mati, Mymensingh-5 Abdul Hye Master, Dhaka-1 Karam Ali, Narshingdi-4 Shamsuzzaman Nilshon, Rajbari-1 Prof Manzurul Alam Dulal, Chuadanga-1 Mokhesur Rahman, Dhaka-11 Kamrul Ahsan, Gopalganj-2 Sheikh Mohammad Ilias and Dinajpur-6 Suvasn Mondal Sharen.

Bogra-5 Master Mozahar Ali, Natore-2 Advocate Ashrafur Alam Dulal, Tangail-4 Hazera Sultana, Brahmanbaria-4 Akshir M Chowdhury, Sylhet-3 Shaifur Khan, Rajbari-2 Abdul Kyum Khan, Thakurgaon-3 Sorhab Hossain, Dinajpur-5 Abdul Majid, Rangpur-1 Chand Miah, Rangpur-4 Nazrul Islam Hakani, Gaibandha-1 Sadequul Islam Dulal and Pabna-3 Aatur Rahman Rana.

Jenaidah-1 Rabiul Islam Khokon, Jessore-3 Harunur Rashid, Satkhira-2 Keshob Chandra Samaddar, Sunamganj-1 Tarek-Al-Moyeen, Sylhet-6 Nesar Ahmed Kaiser, Brahmanbaria-2 Shahrar Mohammad Feroz, Noakhali-6 Anwar Hossain, Chittagong-2 ATM Nizamuddin, Cox's Bazar-1 Haji Bashirul Alam, Jessore-4 Zakir Hossain Hobi and Tangail-7 Golam Nazab Chowdhury Paor.

A briefing session of the WP candidates will be held on Wednesday at its central office at 10 am where the party's election manifesto and strategy will be discussed.

All candidates are requested to attend the session in due time with two copies of their photographs and biodata.

Bangladeshi dies in road mishap in Saudi Arabia

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, May 6: A Bangladeshi national, Abdullah alias Babul of Jaintapur thana was killed in a road accident in Saudi Arabia on April 27 last, according to a message received yesterday over telephone.

Abdullah, 25, son of the late Shamsul Haque of village Satar Khan went to Saudi Arabia on January 16 this year on a Free Visa.

He met the tragic end of his life while going to Yanboon from Jeddah in a car with two companions, one Indian and the other Saudi.

Ershad's appeal

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party heard one can be disposed of within this month and as such the question of granting bail to the appellant till disposal of the appeal does not arise at all.

Earlier Ershad had filed an application for quashing the charges of accumulating wealth beyond known source of income brought in connection with the funding of the construction of Janata Tower in the capital before a High Court division bench but the application was rejected on September 23, 1992.

Against the High Court division verdict he filed leave to appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court but it was rejected by the Appellate Division upholding the high court division verdict on November 26, 1992.

Ershad and his wife Begum Rowshan Ershad and 17 other co-accused including former minister MA Satter and ex-chairman of Rajuk Mohammad Rahmatullah were found guilty under the Prevention of Corruption Act and sentenced to seven years simple imprisonment each for abuse of power and corruption.

Special Judge Anwaruddin Sikder passed the judgement on June 7, 1993 and also ordered confiscation of the property of Janata Publishers including the 15-storied Janata Tower building at Kawanbar.

Advocate Khondker Mahbub Hossain, Barrister Moudud Ahmed and Advocate Golam Kibria appeared for the appellant.

Imports rise

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In February alone, L/Cs worth Tk 526.01 crore were opened for textile fabrics and accessories for garments followed by petroleum products (Tk 145.07 crores) and rice (Tk 140.65 crore).

BNP list

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Hossain Khoka, Nazmul Huda, Brig (ret'd) Hannan Shah, Keramat Ali, Nurul Islam Moni, Nasim Biswas, Altaf Hossain, Ilias Ali and Haris Chowdhury.

Requests are still being made to BNP chairperson and former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia to contest the coming polls from different seats, Nazrul Islam Khan told the newsmen. He said no final decision was taken as yet regarding the seats the party chief would contest from.

Khaleda Zia is expected to contest the polls from five seats.

Interviews of the applicants from Rajshahi and Khulna divisions is scheduled to start at 9.30 am today at the party's Kakrail election office.