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Bush names Zoellick as WB chief

AFP, Washington

US President George W Bush yesterday nominated former diplomat and trade chief Robert Zoellick to head the World Bank after a favoritism scandal that forced Paul

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WB hails reform bids, okays \$200m credit

Says uncertain polls timing poses risk to public support

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Appreciating the government's initiatives for reforms, the World Bank (WB) board on Tuesday approved \$200 million Development Support Credit (DSC) for Bangladesh.

Referring to the present political situation, the WB said the caretaker government is making good efforts to create conditions for free and fair elections before 2008.

It, however, said the timing of the elections remains a bit uncertain, which may pose risks to present public support.

"The caretaker government enjoys widespread public support, but there is risk that it may erode

with uncertainty regarding the timing of the elections," the bank's programme information document (PID) report said.

According to a press release of the World Bank, the \$200 million aid will be spent for macroeconomic stability, trade liberalisation, better functioning of financial and power sectors, and reforms in core governance functions such as public financial management, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and tax administration.

Earlier, the bank released \$700 million as part of its DSC programme.

The approval of \$200 million was discussed during the tenure of

last four-party government. But the bank agreed to provide half of the amount in instalment as it assumed that reforms would be hampered during the time of political transition.

However, the WB shifted from their previous position as the present caretaker government brought out a number of long standing reforms in energy and banking sectors and judiciary as well as made the Anti-Corruption Commission active.

To keep the reform programmes to be continued, the government has requested speedy assistance from development partners, including the World Bank group.

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Foreign adviser confirms Tripura arrest

Juba League denies report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday said he received a report from the Bangladesh mission in Agartala, Tripura regarding arrests of two Bangladeshi politicians including a former lawmaker.

"I have received a report from the Bangladesh mission in Agartala just before coming to this conference about the arrests of two Bangladeshi," Iftekhar told the press conference at the Press Information Department.

The two Juba League leaders—Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak and General Secretary Mirza Azam—were reportedly detained at Sonamura in Agartala on Monday.

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Edible oil importers pledge 'no-profit' for 3 months

BSS, Dhaka

The edible oil importers in a meeting with Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) yesterday promised to run their business "without profit" for the next three months to face the current "crisis situation".

"We promise that in the greater interest of the people we will not make any profit until the Ramadan," president of the Edible Oil Refiners and Importers Association MA Rouf Chowdhury told newsmen emerging from a meeting with BDR Director General Major General Shakil Ahmed and officials concerned of the paramilitary troops.

Rouf said his association will also monitor import situation and sales of edible oil at wholesalers

level to ensure price stability and urged the media and the law enforcers to oversee price at retailers level.

The BDR chief said they will continue to hold meetings with chambers and business associations concerned to take decision on the prices of other essentials.

He said the paramilitary troops were monitoring the local and international prices and intended to make minor intervention in the markets just to facilitate the supply lines and competitiveness.

"We are not on the scene to affect your business as a competitor," he told the edible oil importers.

In the meeting, the BDR and the oil importers and refiners also fixed

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Milam sees govt working hard to make country more democratic

UNB, Dhaka

Visiting former US ambassador to Bangladesh William B Milam yesterday said the people now in the current caretaker government are working hard to make the country much more democratic.

Milam said this while talking to reporters after a meeting with Law Adviser Mainul Hossain in his office at the Ministry of Information.

The former US envoy also assured the caretaker government of all assistance to restore democracy in Bangladesh.

He said, "It was a very good discussion but I didn't discuss any specific issue as that's not my business. I would like to know how the new government is working and handling each thing."

Mainul Hossain told the reporters that the former US envoy appreciated the present government's

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JATBARARI FLYOVER Experts' team quits over non-payment

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Buet experts team appointed by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to examine the construction of the Jatbarari-Gulistan flyover is leaving its job as it had not been paid for the last one year.

The team had already served a termination letter to the DCC authorities early this month, but is yet to get a reply.

The letter would be effective from June, if the DCC does not respond by today (May 31), Dr Alamgir M Hoque, a professor at the Civil Engineering Department and head of the experts team, told The Daily Star on Monday.

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Tales of the 'untouchables'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is hard to believe but even today some people get sacked from jobs or are not allowed to drink water from the same glass other people use just because they belong to the lower caste.

"At most restaurants they put a coloured mark at the bottom of the glass so that everybody knows the glass is fixed for us...They do not give us good cups for taking tea," said Asim Rabidas.

"We are the untouchables...If we touch them by chance, it seems they will wash their body for the next one year to 'purify' them," said Sandhya Rani.

The idea of such discrimination

and hatred has even spread among the children. In some regions children of the lower caste families cannot continue studies as other children do not want to sit beside them, members of the lower caste said.

"Our main concern is not money but having a dignified life like other citizens," Asim told an audience silenced by the unbelievable accounts of the lower caste people.

Asim and Sandhya, both of whom came from Satkhira, were speaking at a seminar on poverty and the adverse situations the lower caste people face everyday. Research Initiatives Bangladesh

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Bodies of two jewellers found in city dustbin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered bodies of two jewellers dumped in sack and drum from a dustbin near the Daira Sharif shrine at Azimpur in the capital yesterday morning.

They are identified as Sumon Das, 28, and Ashish Chandra Shikder, 25. Both owned separate jewellery shops at Manik Market and Hanu Market in Azimpur respectively.

Sumon's family members also found in the morning that his shop was robbed and around Tk 3 lakh worth of gold and silver jewellery and Tk 76,000 in cash were looted.

"Early in the morning we saw a goods-laden truck slowed down near the dustbin. The labourers on

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Prayer Timing		
May 31		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-43	6-47
Esha	8-05	8-35

Source: Islamic Foundation

Frequent power outages amid scorching heat in the capital have become a nuisance for the city dwellers. They have to face load-shedding for several hours every day. The photo taken yesterday shows a staff of City Bank Ltd at Lalbagh working in candlelight.

PHOTO: STAR



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