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TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS

BNP flip-flops on registration

● The party held unscheduled meeting with EC ● MK Anwar declared BNP to go for registration, polls ● Three-hour later the party vice-president claimed it to be his personal opinion

RASHIDUL HASAN

Almost like an intriguing soap opera, BNP kept everybody in suspense last night regarding whether it will get registered with the Election Commission (EC) under the new electoral provisions, following an unscheduled meeting with the commission in the afternoon.

A four-member BNP delegation

held a two-hour meeting with the EC in the afternoon and announced at 4:00pm that the party would get registered and contest in December 18 parliamentary poll.

But three hours later Vice-president MK Anwar, who had broken the good news to the media, made a somersault claiming the earlier announcement had been his personal opinion, not a

party decision.

Just before MK Anwar's recantation, at a ceremony marking the founding anniversary of the Daily Amar Desh, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain claimed what MK Anwar had told reporters earlier had been his personal opinion.

Party insiders said, MK Anwar was forced to withdraw his earlier

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ACC has no beef with TI perception

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) is rather okay with Transparency International's (TI) perception that no significant development has been made in curbing corruption in Bangladesh over the last year, considering that graft in the country has not increased.

"We could've gone backwards while conducting the drive against corruption, but we didn't. We started the drive at a time when the country was engulfed by corruption, and we arrested the graft suspects," ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal told the Daily Star yesterday in his reaction to TI's annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2008.

Hanif made several observations about the CPI which showed just 0.1 improvement in

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Bangladesh now No 10

Rank betters, corruption not down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There has been no significant success in the unprecedented anti-corruption drive in the last 19 months in Bangladesh, which has ranked 10th among the most corrupt countries this year.

Bangladesh has jumped up three positions to 147th with 2.1 points in the annual global corruption perceptions index (CPI) of the Transparency International (TI) with a mere 0.1-point increase. Kenya, Russia and Syria have scored the same.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) said the shift in position bears almost no significance in terms of reining corruption; it is rather the result of decline in other countries' status.

The international anti-corruption watchdog's Bangladesh officials blamed three factors for

Why graft didn't decline

- Hasty anti-graft drive fails to achieve target
- Sloth in trial process, inefficient probe
- Increasing petty corruption
- No administrative reform

the country's poor score—absence of administrative reforms, influence on the judiciary, and insecurity and uncertainty in business and investment.

"Point-one increase is not at all

statistically significant," Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, chairman of TIB board of trustees, said at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. The CPI 2008 was unveiled at the press conference.

Pointing to an apparent failure in maintaining the integrity of the legal process, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said, "If the oversight institutions could work properly, for example, if the judiciary were not influenced, Bangladesh's position could have been better in the index."

He said at one point of the anti-corruption drive, no graft accused got bail although they were expected to. "But in a completely opposite scene later, we saw the accused being freed from jail on bail as if it was a procession," he added.

Somalia remains at the bottom

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AL-led grand alliance meets today after 20 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a pause of about 20 months, Awami League (AL)-led grand electoral alliance is about to be resurrected again, as its key leaders are scheduled to meet for iftar today, ahead of the parliamentary election scheduled for December 18.

Leaders of the components of AL-led 14-party coalition, and of Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad), Bikalpadhara Bangladesh (BDB), Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Jatiya Party (JP-Manju), the Communist Party of Bangladesh, Misbar Rahman led Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), Zaker Party, and of some other parties which had not been in the grand alliance earlier, have been invited to the iftar in a community centre in the capital.

AL-led grand alliance was

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Digitisation must for land reforms

Taskforce also to recommend greater monitoring role by DC offices

PINAKI ROY

A high-powered government taskforce is going to recommend digitisation of the country's entire land records and turning district administration offices into monitoring bodies from their present role of service provider to ensure transparency and reduce corruption.

Led by former adviser to a caretaker government Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, the five-member taskforce said a commission should be formed comprised of government and non-government experts to spearhead modernisation of records and land registration system.

The proposal notes that the

entire reform is possible with the present strength of the government and using local resources without having to take foreign consultancy.

The government taskforce on "Modernised Land Management and Registration" finalised its proposals after seven months' work since February 12. It is going to submit the report and proposal today during a meeting of the Regulatory Reform Commission of the government.

The other members of the taskforce are: Member Secretary Apurba Kumar Biswas, Land Ministry Secretary Abu Mohammed Moniruzzaman, Law Secretary Kazi Habibul Awal, and

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Buses stuck in a severe traffic jam as they detour around the entrance to a road shut off for the construction of Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover. Dhaka City Corporation is yet to open this road to traffic.

EC may send team to watch polls even under emergency

UNB, Dhaka

The European Commission has categorically said it will send Election Observation Mission (EOM) to Bangladesh even if the state of emergency is not lifted in time, but the commission stressed the need for taking concrete legal steps to remove restrictions on the freedom of expression, association and the media by the end of October.

Commissioner for External

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Results of 27th BCS exams published

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Public Service Commission (PSC) published the results of the 27th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examinations yesterday, recommending 3,239 candidates for appointment at cadre posts.

The results came after over three years thanks to legal hassle and allegations of irregularities all through the preliminary test, written exams and viva voce.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3 RESULTS ON PAGE 6

GP CEO resigns

MD HASAN

Anders Jensen, chief executive officer of Grameenphone, resigned from the company on Monday, ahead of the scheduled end of his tenure in October 2010.

In a statement to The Daily Star, Grameenphone said, "Anders Jensen has recently decided to shorten his tenure as the CEO of Grameenphone primarily due to family reasons."

Meanwhile, the company officials have made an assurance that Jensen's departure will not hurt the IPO issue.

Grameenphone has finalised its plan to raise \$300 million (Tk 2,058 crore): \$150 million from the stock market and the rest through private placement or pre-IPO.

In October 2007, Jensen replaced Erik Aas when the company had enjoyed tremendous growth.

But later the Jensen days in

Grameen had been marred by different unlawful incidents such as VoIP business conducted by his previous management.

The Grameenphone board appointed the Swedish national to head the largest mobile phone operator for three years until October 2010. But Jensen decided to leave his position by December 2008.

Jensen's decision came at a time when the shareholders of the company Grameen Telecom and

Norway's Telenor are battling each other over owning majority stake of the company.

Besides family reasons, Jensen's cost cutting strategy, shareholder's conflict and a VoIP scam have become apparent challenges for him from the beginning to run the \$3.2 billion company.

The company is a joint venture, owned 62 percent by Telenor and 38 percent by Grameen Telecom.

FULL STORY ON STAR BUSINESS

Education held back by political tangles

None of recommendations by 7 commissions made public or implemented as yet

SURANJITH DEABNATH

Development in education sector remains stagnant despite formation of seven education commissions and committees since independence and three others during the Pakistan regime, as none of their reports or recommendations has been implemented due to

political tangles.

Millions of public money were spent in the process of formulation of the reports, but no report has been made public, let alone being implemented.

Every political government

formed at least one education commission or committee during their tenure, but no report has been made public, let alone being implemented.

The seven education reports were submitted successively by the Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission-1972, Kazi Jafar Commission-1978,

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Public hearing from today on proposed 65pc gas price hike

Decision by Oct 30

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) will hold public hearings from today on proposed hike in gas prices ranging up to 65 percent.

On conclusion of the hearings, the commission will announce its final decision by October 30.

The state-owned Petrobangla has proposed the price hike. Earlier, BERC in an initial hearing had accepted the proposal placed by the Petrobangla subject to eliciting public opinion about the raise.

BERC sources said the hearings may continue for two days as the commission will hear the views of different stakeholders alongside

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City mayors against holding JS, upazila polls within a week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mayors of five city corporations yesterday said holding of parliamentary elections and upazila polls within a short span of time would hamper both.

It would be difficult to ensure coordination in electoral activities as well as in administrative and security duties in holding the elections with such narrow gaps as announced, they said.

The mayors were talking to journalists after attending a meeting of the urban primary healthcare project held at the LGRD ministry with LGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal in the chair.

"Not only the national election but also elections to the local gov-

ernment bodies will be hampered if held within a week," said Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, also former city BNP chief.

"If upazila elections are held within a week of the national polls, the polls might be affected," said Sylhet Mayor Badruddin Ahmed Kamran.

There would be a lack of coordination in activities of officials engaged in holding the elections within a very short time, said Kamran, also a former Awami League (AL) leader.

Khulna Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque, Barisal Mayor Shawkat Hossain Hiron and Rajshahi Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton -- all

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Police beset with limitations: IGP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad yesterday said the police department is beset with limitations and if police serve people up to their expectations, people will raise their voice to remove the limitations.

The IGP, who expressed frustration on Monday about the delay in promulgation of the Bangladesh Police Ordinance 2007, however said they are hopeful about the promulgation of the ordinance.

The IGP said this while inaugurating two new police stations -- Darussalam and Kadamtoli -- in the city yesterday that raised the total number of police stations in the city to 35. Six more police stations will be set up in the city soon.

On Monday, the IGP said, "We are saying that we will correct ourselves. Give us a chance to reform. You are not giving us the chance. I must say that it is not being done because it might affect someone's interest somewhere."

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Govt considering promulgation of police ordinance

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is considering promulgation of Bangladesh Police Ordinance 2007, Home Adviser MA Matin yesterday said.

"This is a big task and a sensitive issue. We've got to go through some steps. We'll try to promulgate it after that," he told reporters after a meeting of the monitoring cell on sensational cases at the home ministry.

He ruled out any dithering over

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