

BNP doesn't believe in politics of vengeance: Moudud

BSS, Companiganj

Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Barrister Moudud Ahmed yesterday directed the local administration to take stern actions against terrorists and law-breakers and also persons who claim association with BNP after committing crime.

He was addressing a meeting of the Companiganj Upazila Law and Order Coordination Committee. Local lawmaker Mohammad Shahjahan, Deputy Commissioner of Noakhali Mohammad Abu Hafiz, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Kamal Ahmed and senior police officers were present at the meeting.

The minister said the BNP-led four-party alliance government is engaged in a crusade against terrorism and corruption to establish peace and rule of law in the society.

He said people voted BNP to power to get rid of terrorism and corruption. It was a 'silent revolution' on the part of the voters and they used their ballot papers as weapons against Awami League-backed

terrorism.

He urged Awami League MPs-elect to take oath as early as possible to help smooth functioning of the country's democratic system. He said BNP never believes in the politics of vengeance, rather it wants cooperation from all to strengthen democracy and ensure the country's development.

He alleged that instead of strengthening the parliamentary democratic system by accepting the polls result Awami League is trying to create an unusual situation in the country and its politics. It is also trying to create a law and order situation by fuelling repression on minorities in the country, the minister noted.

"All citizens of the republic enjoy equal rights, and the government is bound to support and uphold the dignity of the Constitution by protecting the fundamental rights of people of all religions," he said.

He said all necessary steps have already been taken so that the Hindus could celebrate the Durga Puja with festivity.

By-polls: AL to stay away

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ter Sheikh Hasina gave a vivid picture of terrorism in the constituencies up for by-election as well as different parts of the country.

Today is the last day for submission of nomination papers for the by-election to six parliamentary seats, including four vacated by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and one each by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and Minister Harunur Rashid Khan Monno.

With AL having nominated all the defeated candidates of the October 1 election for the by-polls in their respective constituencies, Begum Kamrunnahar Putul focused on the situation that had been and now prevailing in Gabtoli (Bogra-7).

"Nine union parishad chairmen, out of 14, are not being able to stay at home. They have been sued even on rape charges. Hundreds of Awami League workers were evicted from their houses and also sued. How come I will contest the election?" she questioned.

With her party leaders implicated in "false cases," the former woman MP told the press conference that ex-MP of the constituency Helaluzzaman Talukdar is recommending to the ejahars for their arrests.

"This is unprecedented that somebody on the ejahar will ask

police to make arrest and take punitive measures," said AL presidium member Abdul Jalil MP.

Another presidium member, Tofail Ahmed, who lost all the three seats he contested in the October 1 election, said BNP is unleashing the reign of terror across the country. "The repression on religious minorities, Awami League leaders and workers and journalists reminds us of 1971."

"We contested the repolling after we were defeated by the partisan caretaker government and its administration. Our great army who earned reputation internationally was also misguided. Even after all the misdeeds we wanted to contest the by-election. But where is the environment?" he questioned.

In reply to a question, he told the press conference that Sheikh Hasina would give reaction to the televised speech of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. "But all I can tell you, it was a speech of threat. People are ultimate judges."

AL leaders Abdul Mannan, Abdul Mannan Khan, Asim Kumar Ukil and Chhakra League president Bahadur Behary were present at the press conference.

'Terrorist' bomb rocks

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including the use of three air bases, but refuses to let the United States launch attacks from Pakistan territory.

Imam said the airport bomb "appears to be an act of terrorism" adding that police were searching for a suspect seen leaving the bag at the parking lot. He would not say however if a link to the US military campaign was suspected.

"We have beefed up security at the airport and also at other public places in Islamabad and Rawalpindi," he said.

Security has been tightened across Pakistan since the air strikes on Afghanistan began, with authorities concerned about possible retaliatory action by opponents of the attacks.

Muslim militants have staged violent rallies across the country to protest against the US strikes and Pakistan's support for the US cam-

paign.

One opposition figurehead, Islamic Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam party leader Fazlur Rehman, has been charged with treason and hundreds of militants have been arrested.

Islamabad airport has been under tight security since the air strikes started and all vehicles entering the complex are searched. All sensitive spots are already under heavy guard but police said this will increase.

Islamabad police chief Nasir Khan Durran said: "Bomb disposal teams have launched an extensive operation and sniffer dogs are also being used to search for explosives at important installations throughout the capital."

An airport official said: "The airport blast comes as a warning that terrorist elements are able to penetrate despite the stringent security measures in force."

BNP urges AL MPs Khaleda trying to hide future failure

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"The main objective of the meeting is to ask all BNP leaders and workers to cooperate the government in all possible way to run the country in line with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's first address to the nation," Bhuiyan said.

The minister criticised the AL government for blatantly politicising the administration from top to bottom. "There is no scope for such politicisation during the BNP regime, as only efficient people would be posted in the important positions of the administration."

The BNP secretary-general reiterated that his party did not believe in politics of vengeance and would work in full vigour to root out terrorism and corruption from the country and make it happy and prosperous. "Hundreds of leaders and workers of the BNP and its front organisations were killed and many others were jailed and harassed by the AL government, but we won't be vindictive and would like to run the country with everybody."

Bhuiyan said that the BNP would welcome the AL to parliament and was planning to ask it to choose a person from the opposition bench as the deputy speaker of the parliament.

The proposal has already been made informally, he said adding that the formal offer would come when the AL lawmakers took oath and joined the parliament.

The BNP leader said that AL presence in the parliament was necessary towards making the Sangsad a 500-strong forum and resolving the issue of reserved

seats for women.

Bhuiyan said BNP leaders and activists would help create a congenial atmosphere throughout the country so that the Hindu community could perform the Durga Puja with festivity and without fear.

In the meeting, a committee was formed with Mir Shawkat Ali as convener and city BNP president Sadek Hossain Khoka as member-secretary to observe November 7 as the National Solidarity and revolutionary Day with due respect.

In this regard, Bhuiyan castigated the AL government for cancelling the holiday on November 7. "We could not observe the day in the last five years because of the AL government."

In its meeting, the Cabinet once again declared it a national holiday and the day would be observed in a due manner, he said.

Major General (ret'd) ZA Khan, Water Resources Minister LK Siddique, Farida Rahman, Industries Minister MK Anwar, Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sadek Hossain Khoka, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, Forest and Environment Minister Shahjahan Siraj, Jute Minister Major (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Chowdhury Kamal ibne Yusuf and Syed Shahidul Haq Jamal, MP also attended the meeting that lasted for two hours.

Muktijoddha

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deteriorated yesterday. Kabir died at Gourpur on the way to Dhaka. His body was brought back to Feni sadar hospital for autopsy.

The family members and local Awami League leaders alleged that Kabir was killed by the BNP backed terrorists.

ALCWC

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October 1 general election as 'manipulated', in which they suffered a stunning defeat, the members of the immediate-past ruling party have not yet taken oath.

Meanwhile, the new parliament goes into its inaugural session on October 28.

Forest resources

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present, commercial concerns have become even more important than ecological ones. The walling off of a park is against its spirit, she said referring to the city parks.

Habibul Alam of the Bangladesh Scouts underlined dissemination of relevant information, which is referred to as an important step to create awareness among the people.

US may tag

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work and another 25 per cent are surviving on sub-contract.

Besides, the USTDA Bill-2000, which gave 72 Sub-Saharan and Caribbean countries duty and quota free access of RMG products to US market, is now affecting the prospects of Bangladesh's apparel export growth.

In this context, garment manufacturers and exporters in Bangladesh want all out government efforts to get duty and quota free access of the country's RMG products to US market.

DU halls

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When contacted, Nasiruddin Pintu who is also a ruling party MP said, "I do not stay on the campus, so I can't say anything about the happenings." He advised this correspondent to visit the campus and see what was going on there.

However, campus sources said the situation has improved slightly after the visit of Pintu.

JCD's DU unit president Manir Hossain said there will be no outsider and terrorist on the campus as the authorities are going for action against them soon.

Israeli troops

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Perlman said he had no further details.

Israeli officials would not say how long the troops will stay. "There is no ideological or strategic decision by the Israeli government to conquer these areas and stay there," Cabinet Minister Tsipi Livni told Israel radio Saturday. "Everything depends on... how the Palestinian Authority will react."

In addition to Qalqilya and Tulkarem, Israeli troops have entered and sealed the towns of Ramallah, Jenin, Bethlehem and Beit Jalla since Thursday. In Beit Jalla and Bethlehem, there were reports of new gun battles yesterday.

The incursions into Beit Jalla and Bethlehem were triggered by shooting on the Jewish neighborhood of Gillo, built on war-won land on the outskirts of Jerusalem. On Friday evening, Palestinians fired three mortar shells at Gillo, damaging cars but causing no injuries.

Israeli troops have repeatedly entered Palestinian towns in the past year, but the raids launched Thursday marked the broadest Israeli military strike so far.

Constitutional changes

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"We will not govern the country or run the parliament just by force of brute majority. We would like to evolve politics of by partisanship in the country on every national issue, we would like to arrive at a consensus in consultation with the opposition. We will apply the principle of due process of consultation with the opposition and other significant political parties in major policymaking decision."

Barrister Moudud Ahmed, however, categorically stated that the controversial Public Safety Act (PSA), framed by the Awami League government, would be scrapped and the process to this effect had been initiated.

About another law that is also castigated by critics as draconian - the Special Powers Acts -- he said it lost its efficacy and the government will review if it has any necessity.

The Law Minister dismissed the idea of enacting any new laws to curb terrorism, saying that existing laws are enough to tackle this problem. "There is always a chance of abusing a special power and PSA. There is a glaring example of fusing it to suppress the opposition instead of curbing terrorism."

Moudud observed that provided a government has political will add the administration extends full cooperation, it is possible to root out terrorism, a problem that is plaguing social life and posing a threat to economic activity.

The Law Minister said as per commitment, the government would initiate a move in parliament to separate the judiciary from the executive and restore the provision of women's reserved seats in Parliament.

He said a great task had been done in this regard by Barrister

Ishtiaq Ahmed during the last interim government as the Supreme Court in its judgement some time ago has issued directive along with 12-point guidelines to implement the matter of separation of judiciary.

Without mentioning any timeframe he said that the separation of the judiciary would be finalised as soon as possible.

"We are now waiting for parliament to sit and would like participation of the opposition before finally placing the bill before parliament," he said, adding that it needs public opinion, start of public debate on it and discussion with media and civil society before final placing.

However, he said two aspects would have to be examined: firstly whether it needs constitutional amendment or not to make separation of judiciary fully effective and secondly whether the present structure of Supreme Court will be in position to take the additional load of magistracy.

It will be a gigantic task for which the SC will need a massive financial and logistic support to fully implement the scheme of separation.

He also stated government's willingness to appoint Ombudsman in consultation with major political parties.

Regarding a 500-seat parliament as committed by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia during electioneering, Moudud admitted its necessity but was not precise about expansion of the 300-member House.

About the jail killing and other killings he said all cases will proceed according to law. But, here the minister had an observation about the procedural dilemmas.

He said, "There has not been substantial progress in the jail killings trial -- some of the accused

have been languishing in prison for over three years without any bail."

To another question about any possibility of cancelling the special security act that provides security and accommodation in Ganobhaban for Sheikh Hasina, Moudud who filed a writ against the law said, "It's not on the agenda of the government at the moment, we may look into it later."

In the exclusive interview with UNB he said they would like to discuss with opposition various issues and arrive at national consensus, particularly in parliament, on introducing a system acceptable to all.

To justify his remarks the law minister said, "Say, for example, we have to amend the Constitution to ensure participation of women in parliament. There are so many options and we would like to discuss all options with the opposition."

On the issue of disposal of pending cases in courts Barrister Moudud said "it is a longstanding problem -- we will seriously consider bringing in adequate judiciary reforms to remove unnecessary delays in disposal of cases."

Son BNP MP

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tion, sources said. The officials who interrogated the 'said son of MP' confirmed the incident.

When contacted, Salauddin Ahmed MP from the Dhaka-4 constituency told The Daily Star that his son was now in the US and did not return home.

When contacted, the airport police said Tutul was handed over to the NSI.

The civil aviation authorities are now looking into the matter, they said.

US suffers first war dead

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number two at the embassy in Islamabad, told Reuters.

"The casualties may be more than two," he said.

Muttaqi said the helicopter may have crashed after being crippled by Taliban fire. "We don't rule out the possibility of shooting it down," he said.

The claims and counterclaims could not be independently verified.

The helicopter had been in the air, its crew ready for an assistance to the first US commando raid launched in southern Afghanistan overnight, a US defense official in Washington said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"It was an accident," Gen. Rashid Qureshi, Pakistan army spokesman said. "This helicopter was on standby... for any rescue attempt if it was needed."

Pentagon said the US commandos clashed with Taliban troops in southern Kandahar. The US forces, which are on 'hit-and-run' missions inside Afghanistan, have since returned to their bases on US warships stationed in the Arabian Sea.

Residents fleeing the relentless air raids in southern Kandahar reported seeing US troops north of Kandahar.

Noor Mohammed, who arrived earl yesterday in southwest Pakistan from Kandahar, said US special forces battled Taliban soldiers at Qila Jadeed, a garrison of the Taliban, some 30 kilometers northwest of Kandahar.

According to Mohammed, 25 Taliban soldiers were killed.

There were earlier reports that the Taliban's reclusive leader Mullah Mohammed Omar had left his home east of Kandahar soon after the US-British air campaign began on Oct. 7 for safer territory north of the city. His location was not known, but the Taliban say he is safe.

Asked how he could know that the US troops hit Qila Jadeed, Mohammed said, "We know what is happening in our city."

According to the Taliban's official news agency, Bakhtar, four US helicopters landed at Kohi Baba, a mountain range northwest of Kandahar.

Another report says, Afghan opposition forces yesterday moved hundreds of extra troops to positions 50 km north of Kabul as US warplanes stepped up attacks on Taliban positions along the frontlines.

In a sign of the opposition Northern Alliance's growing confidence amid news that US ground forces were now inside Afghanistan, some 400 men from Parwan and Kapisa provinces gathered on a hill overlooking the Jabal Seraj opposition base near the mouth of the Panjshir Valley.

Some still wore civilian clothes, while others had uniforms and weapons. "The Taliban's morale has gone," a commander overseeing the mobilisation said. "Kabul will soon be ours."

The opposition reinforcement north of Kabul meanwhile coincided with a sustained attack by US warplanes on Taliban frontline positions in the northern province of

Samangan.

It was believed to be the first direct US attacks on Taliban frontlines in the area and only the second confirmed raid on frontline positions anywhere in the country.

"Since 6:00 am this morning, US planes have been bombing the Taliban positions," opposition spokesman Mohammad Ashraf Nadeem told AFP by satellite telephone from the Dara-e-Souf valley in Samangan.

US warplanes struck Taliban positions north of Kabul on Wednesday but those raids were dismissed by the opposition as purely symbolic.

The United States has said it will target airstrikes to help the Northern Alliance gain ground against the Taliban.

Since the air campaign began on October 7, Alliance forces have captured the central province of Ghor but otherwise made little headway.

A push for the strategic northern town of Mazar-i-Sharif earlier this week ran out of steam when the Taliban mounted a counter-offensive which it said had reclaimed the Marmul district south-east of the city.

Mazar-i-Sharif is capital of Balkh province and close to the border with Uzbekistan. Its capture by the opposition would make it easy for hundreds of US combat troops now in Uzbekistan to enter Afghanistan.

Expectation for more transparency growing

People for quick dispensation of cases

BSS, Dhaka

A three-week training course on judicial administration was inaugurated in the city yesterday with a call for quick dispensation of justice.

Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury, senior most judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, made the call while opening the 27th Judicial Administration Training Course for Assistant Judges.

Addressing as the chief guest on the occasion, Justice Chowdhury reminded the participants that people want quick dispensation of justice as expectation of more transparency from the judiciary has been growing throughout the world.

A total of 40 Assistant Judges from across the country have been taking part in the course, organised by the Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI), at its old High Court Building conference hall.

Chaired by Director General of JATI Justice Md Badruzzaman, the inauguration was also addressed by Course Director Hasan Sharif Ferdous.

The chief guest hoped the participants would be professionally better-equipped through exchange of ideas and experience during the course.

World Congress

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reporting of the relevant issues at the national and regional level.

The need for people to know more about solutions, rather than just the problems. The need for information to go where it is needed most, i.e. from the grassroots to the decision makers.

The need to strengthen indigenous information capacity.

Environment governance: Role of media and the future of regional institutions in the Asia Pacific.

The Manila congress will be organised by Environmental Broadcast Circle, Philippines, the University of the Asia and the Pacific and Asia Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists and supported by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), US-AEP, Asian Development Bank (ADB), AUSAID and several development agencies.

Delhi may ask

FROM PAGE 12

Industry sources in New Delhi say the concessions given to Pakistan could also affect garments exports from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

The Indian textile industry fears that garment exports worth Rs 2,200 crore would be lost to the EU during the current fiscal year following the EU concessions to Pakistan.

The Apparel Export Promotion Council has in a letter to Vajpayee said if similar facilities were extended by the US to Pakistan it would lead to diversion of another Rs 7500 crore worth of garment exports from India.

The council says India should immediately lobby with the EU and the US to get duty-free access to its garment exports to these countries. The Indian government should also raise duty drawback by 15 per cent to garment exporters due to high transaction cost, it added.

Sorry tale of a worker

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Milon, with left half of his body paralysed, is now at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Milon, eldest among five siblings who hails from a Munshiganj village, went to South Korea on February 18 last year and started working at a small factory as an 'undocumented' worker.

Official sources in Dhaka said that it has always been tricky for the government to recognise any of its national living abroad as 'undocumented' workers and therefore difficult to render any help through official channel.

Lee, however, questioned justification of such a policy when 'undocumented' workers outnumbered 'legal' workers in Korea. "There are some 220,000 illegal (undocumented) foreign workers in South Korea. Total strength of Bangladeshi migrants stands around 20,000, many of whom are undocumented too. But when it comes to question of life and death, how could a government remain so indifferent to its national just on the pretext of his or her legal status?"

In addition to free treatment for last six months and free air ticket, Lee yesterday handed over 2,287 US dollars in cash to Rehana Begum, Milon's wife, as a token of Korean people's love and sympathy to the poor Bangladeshi migrant.

Fund raising for his airfare and hospital expenses was done through various ways including media coverage starting from August 9 this year. Milon's case got wide coverage in Ohmynews (Internet news), Christian Broadcasting System (CBS), Munhwa Broadcasting Centre (MBC), Kyongnam Newspaper, Damin Daily and many other Korean print and broadcast media.

Doctors in Korea said that Milon was first found in coma after some time he had his brain blood vessel

Justice Md Badruzzaman urged the Assistant Judges to act in accordance with the law rising above fear or favour.

He hoped the participants, in course of their training sessions, would be greatly benefited through interactions with legal luminaries of the country and learn better techniques of court administration.

Power supply in city disrupted

BSS, Dhaka

Power supply in different parts of the capital city was disrupted yesterday due to a temporary fault in the Ghorasal-Tongi Double Circuit 230 KV transmission line, PDB sources said.

Electricity supply to Basundhara, Uttara, Banani, Gulshan, Mirpur and Tongi went off at 5:15 pm when a fault was developed in the transmission line.

The authorities, however, took immediate steps to repair the transmission line, and restored normal power supply to the areas after more than one hour.

Meanwhile, a four-member probe body headed by A N M Rizwan, managing director, PGCB, has been formed to inquire into the incident of power disruption. Other members of the committee are Harun-ar-Rashid, chief engineer (Transmission), PDB, Mohammad Ruhul Amin, director, Load Despatch Centre, and NG Shaha, director (Technical), PGCB.

The committee has been asked to submit its report today.

Former AL MP

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conveyed her heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family members and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, in a separate condolence message, condoled the death of former party lawmaker Mustafizur Rahman.

She conveyed her profound sympathy to the bereaved family members and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Mohammad Abdul Hamid also condoled the death of former MP, Mustafizur Rahman.

BNP nominees

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and Major (Ret'd) Syed Ishkandar -- Feni 1 constituency.

Bogra-7, Khulna-2, Feni-1 and Laxmipur-2 constituencies vacated by Khaleda Zia and in Molvibazar-3 and Manikganj-2 vacated by Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman and Harunur Rashid Khan Monno respectively.

The Election Commission announced schedule for the by-election on October 12. It has taken all preparations to conduct the polls peacefully.

According to the schedule, today is the last day for filing nomination papers and scrutiny will be held tomorrow. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is October 27.

damaged by high blood pressure. He had been in coma for three months after the surgery