

Delwar demands

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yesterday visited the party office but the law enforcers prevented him from entering the office.

On the other hand the government yesterday hinted at its intention of not allowing anyone to enter the office until the internal conflict of the party, over which faction is the mainstream, is settled.

"How can the government allow opening of the office until they themselves decide which group will go to the office?" Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain told reporters at the ministry.

"Permission for opening the office was not granted as there was a possibility of clashes if the two factions had been allowed to go there. Should we assist them in confrontation or stop it?" Mainul asked saying that is the reason why the government had asked the parties to take permissions prior to having meetings of their forums.

Criticising Hossain's comment on BNP, Hannan said the interim government should not comment on political parties' internal affairs.

Khandaker Delwar Hossain on the other hand asked why the authorities are barring them from opening the BNP office while all the other parties have their offices already opened.

"Why do we have to settle with them? There is no reason for a conflict... the leaders and workers are not with them," he said adding that the pro-Bhuiyan faction is just

scrambling to survive.

"The ban on indoor politics hasn't been lifted yet. Politics must be allowed in districts, upazilas and in unions also. If not, it will not be acceptable to the people," he said.

Replying to a question he claimed that most of the leaders of BNP are with his faction and said former finance minister Saifur Rahman, also a member of the party standing committee, does not intend to be involved in politics for now for health reasons.

"I hope Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman will not attend any more meetings called by Bhuiyan as he did not attend the last meeting called by him," Delwar said adding that all members of the standing committee, except one or two, are with him.

He also said the party standing committee will meet soon with permission from the detained chairperson. "If the permission to open the office is not available from the authorities, the meeting will be held in a hotel or a restaurant," he said.

Terming Delwar's attempt to enter the party office an act of 'encroachment', Ashraf Hossain said, "We on the other hand can't encroach upon the office as it is our own party office and we will go to the office under the leadership of the secretary general [Bhuiyan] once the crisis is resolved."

"We don't believe in violence," he added.

BNP office secy Tripti expelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday expelled party office secretary Mofiquel Hasan Tripti from the party for his alleged involvement with "anti-party activities".

"The secretary general expelled Mofiquel Hasan Tripti from all posts and cancelled his primary membership as he broke party disciplinary rules by sending a letter opposing party chairperson's decision and for his involvement with anti-party activities," a party press release signed by Rizvi Ahmed, newly appointed acting office secretary, said.

Tripti, who is working with expelled BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan to implement reforms in the party, rejected the expulsion order saying his eviction is totally illegal.

"According to the party constitution, only the chairperson can expel a member of the party's national executive committee and they did not even hear my part of the story before expelling me, even though I have the right to defend myself," he told The Daily Star last night, adding that no one has the right to cancel his membership from the party except the chairperson.

Twenty20 WC

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uppermost tier of the ground as he cruised to 40 off only 19 balls.

Gayle's partner Devon Smith gave him good support, picking the singles as he moved to 10 off 15 balls. Smith struck one boundary in his knock.

Umpires Mark Benson and Daryl Harper were wearing red shirts, apt for the occasion and signalled one boundary after the other.

Packed with all-rounders, Smith decided to stick to the gameplan of chasing late in the evening to make sure that there is a target in place for his batsmen.

Earlier, fireworks exploded all around the Wanderers as the South Africans kicked off the tournament with a music-heavy opening ceremony. The fans are in fabulous spirits – hoping they have more fireworks to get stuck into later.

Twelve teams are taking part in this competition, split into four groups. All ten Test playing nations are in the tournament with Kenya and Scotland making up the number in this first-ever competition.

Bangladesh are in the same group as West Indies and hosts South Africa. They play their first match against West Indies on September 13.

TEAMS
SOUTH AFRICA: Graeme Smith (captain), Mark Boucher, Abraham de Villiers, Herschelle Gibbs, Justin Kemp, Albie Morkel, Morne Morkel, Makhaya Ntini, Vernon Philander, Shaun Pollock, Johan van der Wath.

WEST INDIES: Ramnaresh Sarwan (captain), Dwayne Bravo, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Fidel Edwards, Chris Gayle, Daren Powell, Denesh Ramdin, Ravi Rampaul, Marlon Samuels, Devon Smith, Dwayne Smith.

Joint forces

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were present at the meeting held at the Karwan Bazar wholesale market.

"The joint forces will patrol and sit at different kitchen markets from tomorrow to keep an eye on the prices of essentials," Col Abdul Halim, chief co-ordinator of Trade and Commerce Monitoring Cell (TCMC), BDR said.

The officials from the law enforcement agencies also assured the traders of solving their problems like extortion and police harassment.

The kitchen traders sought permission so that the vehicles carrying perishable goods can enter the capital in the daytime.

Col Halim assured the vegetables traders of assistance if criminals or any members from the law enforcement agencies demand toll from them. He also assured the traders that they can carry more than the capacity on a five-ton capacity truck.

Maj Imran, who had worked at Karwan Bazar posing as a labourer for a long time, submitted his observation on the market price to Col Halim.

Col Halim also vowed to take stern action if any trader does not maintain voucher while doing business and against those found responsible for the hike in prices of essentials. He also asked the traders to be reasonable while making profit.

The traders at the meeting agreed to make a profit of Tk 4 to 5 per kg of vegetables at the retail level.

In addition, the joint forces will monitor the wholesale markets at Shyampur, Jatrabari and Aminbazar.

City bogs down

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...We are already lagging two years behind the plan."

Sources at Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) put some of the blame on the managers of the traffic system. "On the one hand the vehicles do not follow the traffic signal. On the other hand, the traffic police are reluctant to use the automatic signal – they prefer to use their hands to guide the vehicles."

M Sayedur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's traffic wing (South) for Ramna, Dhanmendi, Kotowali and Kamrangirchar areas, said his department was helpless under the circumstances. "Well...we are trying with our limited resources. We have to manage the vehicles on a very limited road network."

When asked if the army or the BDR should be deployed to tackle the situation, he said, "Why don't you count on the police? How would they [army, BDR] bring changes under the current circumstances?"

Urban experts said multi-mode of transport plying on inadequate road network remain a major issue that need to be addressed immediately.

According to Strategic Transport Plan (STP), a government initiative to resolve the traffic congestion in the city, only seven percent of the total land area of Dhaka is covered with roads, as opposed to the ideal road to land area ratio of 25 percent.

Even though Dhaka is laid out on less than 1 percent of the total land area of the country, it is accommodating over seven percent of the total population. The rising population and vehicles in the city are still worsening the situation day by day, the experts added.

Dr Rahmatullah, former director of UNESCAP, put the emphasis on building new roads and a good traffic management.

"As you can see, the city has been expanded from north to south points though the major entry points are from the east and west. We have five major roads from north to south, ...but the condition [of roads] from east to west is miserable. We badly need a good road network that would connect Mirpur Road, Sat Masjid Road and Pragati Sarani," he explained.

Associate Professor KM Maniruzzaman of Urban and Regional Planning Department, BUET, said, "People need to be discouraged to own private vehicles and they need to be persuaded to use public transport. And for that, introduction of a good public transport system is essential."

Number of private automobile registration jumped from 2,452 in the year 2000 to a whopping 7,403 in 2006 while only 75 buses received registration the same year, according to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

Ex-BNP MP

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lakh to Anny through a pay order numbering 0057795 of Sonargaon Road branch of Jamuna Bank Limited on May 7 in 2005.

The former lawmaker deposited the pay order with his savings account No 21015286 with Dhanmendi Branch of Prime Bank Limited, the plaintiff added.

Anny, also former president of BNP's student wing Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal, went into hiding soon after the present government came to power.

Laptop tendering

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laptops, 8,000 webcams, 8,000 finger print scanners, 8,000 Bangla key-boards and 3-button mice, 550 desktop computers with UPS and mono-chrome laser printers, 3,000 portable electricity generators, 90 desktop computers with UPS, and 64 colour laser printers.

Thirty bids were submitted in response to the tender invitation, sources in the EC Secretariat said.

Evaluating the bids, the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) of EC found only three bidders as qualified for supplying the laptop computers, finger print scanners, Bangla key-boards, and the mice. It recommended that the commission signs contracts with the qualified bidders for supplying the equipment and invite tenders again for the rest of the equipment.

Complying with the recommendation, the EC Secretariat in mid-August invited tenders again for the rest of the equipment, the submissions of which the TEC is now evaluating.

Among the three companies qualified as suppliers in the first round of bidding, Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) was qualified for supplying the 8,000 laptops, but the EC could not award the contract to it because a competitor, a consortium of Thakral Brothers Pte Ltd and Thakral Information Systems Pte Ltd, lodged a complaint with the review panel at the end of August against the EC decision of selecting TCIL for the job.

On Sunday the review panel decided to cancel the selection of TCIL and made the five-point recommendation to the EC following a series of hectic meetings examining the complaint, depositions of EC representatives, tender documents, and the TEC report.

"Considering the facts and observations, the review panel decided to re-invite tenders for the laptops," the report said. It also suggested that the registration fee of the complainant, Thakral consortium, be refunded, sources said.

In accordance with the PPR 2003, the complainant had deposited Tk 5 lakh as registration fee for the review, which would be forfeited had the complainant failed to prove its allegations.

PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

To remove the anomalies from the tender documents, which had been prepared by the EC's international and local consultants, and also from the process of evaluating bids, the review panel in its five-point recommendation to the EC suggested dividing the job of supplying the 8,000 laptops in four groups with 2,000 laptops in each, with the provision that a single bidder may take part in the bidding for one or more or all the groups during the re-tendering.

"The review panel came to know that a single manufacturer cannot manufacture and supply 8,000 laptops in 4 weeks. It is likely that a successful bidder may get those computers manufactured in different factories of different companies, in which case it will be difficult to maintain uniformity of quality. As such, the Election Commission may consider dividing the supply in four groups," the panel said in its report.

About the delivery time, the panel said the meaning of a week should be defined more clearly. The review panel also suggested that the EC may

consider including in the TEC an expert teacher from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET). The panel went on recommending that in the re-invitation for tenders, a provision may be included for the bidders to disclose the names of the manufacturing companies of the laptops they intend to supply.

PANEL'S OBSERVATIONS

The review panel examined the TEC report, BUET report, and all other relevant documents submitted by both the bidders and detected anomalies in the bidding process.

TCIL, which was about to get the contract for supplying the laptops, had not submitted the required certificate from the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) with its offer, although FCC identification numbers were printed on the back of the sample laptops submitted by it, which nonetheless did not fulfil the requirement of the technical specifications for the job, the review panel said.

The review panel also said in its report that the four-member TEC comprising two EC officials, an army major, and a representative from Bangladesh Computer Council, violated the PPR 2003 by failing to ask for sample laptops from the competing bidders during the primary evaluation of the bids. Which it finally sought from the shortlisted competitors, Thakral consortium and TCIL, at the final selection phase, and with which the bidders also complied.

After examining the samples, the EC finally disqualified Thakral consortium citing ten deficiencies in its offer.

EC'S ROADMAP

According to the EC announced electoral roadmap, the procurement and deployment of all sorts of hi-tech equipment for voter listing are supposed to be completed in October this year in a bid to start the field level task of voter listing in full swing in the same month with an aim to complete it by next August. September and October of the next year are slated on the roadmap for printing and distributing the finalised voter list for holding the polls in December.

But the process is destined to require additional time now, which might be two months, as the EC's earlier move for timely procurement of the equipment apparently failed.

Acting Secretary to the EC Secretariat Humayun Kabir however yesterday claimed that the task of voter listing will not be hampered due to the re-invitation for tenders for the equipment.

Currently the EC is preparing voter lists with photographs in some areas on a limited scale using a few hundred laptops, webcams, and other accessories, donated by different donors.

Economic loss

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Consultants International, in August last year for Tk 14 crore, to find out a suitable site for the seaport within a year.

The firm has already submitted its report on the first phase of the study to the shipping ministry.

Meantime, the advisory committee approved the inclusion of Khulna Newspaper Mills in the privatisation list and the formulation of terms and conditions of appointing investors-cum-operators for the Chittagong Port.

EC talks

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make registration of the political parties mandatory with provisions designed to ensure financial transparency and democracy within the parties, and have the power to punish any person for its contempt.

Political parties in 2001 strongly opposed the provision for their registration, following which EC made it optional.

This time, however, major political parties have already expressed their views in favour of registering with the EC.

In 2001, the EC was given the authority to cancel candidatures and punish any person for its contempt, but the powers were scrapped immediately afterwards in the face of severe criticism.

In its proposal, the EC has again sought to impose restriction on participation of retired military personnel or civil servants, defaulters of loan and utility bill, NGO officials and independent candidates in the national election. Besides, none should be allowed to contest from more than three constituencies at a time.

The EC had made the same proposals before the eighth parliamentary election in 2001 but could not finalise them because of opposition from the political parties.

This time the EC is determined to bring massive reforms in the electoral laws. It has already earned support from the civil society, the NGOs and senior journalists for its proposals when it held separate talks with them in April and May.

Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda on several occasions cleared the stance of the current commission on the draft proposals, saying the EC will hear opinions of the political parties but it will do whatever it feels fair.

According to the EC roadmap, it will complete the talks with the political parties by November and then finalise the proposals examining the opinions of the parties. Once the proposals are finalised, it will send those to the government for formulating laws through promulgation of ordinance.

The EC in its roadmap announced to complete the entire procedure by February next year.

Wheat-laden

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channel near the Naval Academy at about 12.50am. It suddenly hit the protection dam and sank, the source said.

"The captain of the ship might have lost control over it due to strong tide," said Parvez Ahmed, managing director of Mutual Shipping Lines Ltd which was given the responsibility to transport the cargo.

He said wheat worth Tk 3.70 crore went under water.

2 RU teachers

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Director Shawkat Ali lodged the case with Motihar Police Station on August 23 accusing two teachers and four students—Dipayan Sarkar, Mizanur Rahman Mithu, Sardar Ayaz, and SM Fakrul Islam Raihan.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case Sub-inspector Mukhtar Hossain submitted the charge sheet accusing 14 people. The other eight accused are Bangladesh Chhatra League RU unit secretary Ayeuddin, Sadikul Islam, Abu Sayem, Shamim Ahmed, Kazi Abdul Latif, Shakawat Hossain, Kazi Bin Kamal and Ataur Rahman.

The plaintiff in his complaint said the two teachers ordered and instigated the demonstrating students to set fire to the government-owned vehicle while he was on duty at the campus on August 22.

The same court yesterday fixed September 17 for charge framing in another case filed against six RU teachers in connection with violating the Emergency Power Rules.

The six teachers—former RU VCM Saidur Rahman Khan, RU syndicate member M Abdus Sobhan, Moloy Bhownik, Dulal Chandra Biswas, Sayed Selim Reza Newton and Abdullah Al Mamun—were produced before the court.

Several teachers and officials of the university have been made prosecution witnesses of the two cases.

Meanwhile, wives of all the arrested teachers and their family members met RU VC Prof Altaf Hossain at his campus residence yesterday afternoon.

Talking to reporters following the 45-minute meeting, Altaf Hossain said the relatives of the teachers met him and narrated their present condition. "I told them what the RU authorities can do for them and what can not be done," said the VC refusing to elaborate.

SYDICATE MEETING

The RU syndicate is to sit today and discuss the reopening of the university, the university's vice-chancellor yesterday said.

VC Prof Altaf Hossain said the university authorities yesterday held a meeting with senior faculty members and other high officials of the university to finalise the agenda and other issues for the syndicate meeting.

Campus sources said high-ranking police and intelligence officials were present at yesterday's meeting.

Meantime, the university's admission sub-committee will hold a meeting today at the vice-chancellor's office to discuss admission-related issues for current academic year.

All the public universities in the country were closed sine die on August 22 following the students' turmoil last month.

Inflation to come down

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that the government has taken some urgent steps to encourage imports at the private sector level.

Along with the state-owned banks, some private banks have come forward to provide agri-loans as part of post-flood rehabilitation programme.

Such efforts have already begun to leave positive impacts on the supply side as the imports of food items continue to rise significantly. It all might help rein in the rate of inflation, he noted.

Inflation on point-to-point basis stood at 9.20 percent in June and 10.10 percent in July.

Asked if the government's policy measures have anything to do with higher inflation, he replied, "I don't think so."

The government's bank borrowing did not increase alarmingly while the central bank kept encouraging credit flow in the private sector, he added.

Talking about the Prime Bank's

education programme, he said there is no alternative to education to become a prosperous nation.

He said higher education rate leads to higher economic growth.

Inflation in Sri Lanka hovers around 17 percent, but being educated most of their people understand why it happens, Salehuddin said explaining the utility of higher education.

Chairman of Prime Bank and Prime Bank Foundation Azam J Chowdhury, Managing Director M Shahjahan Bhuiyan, the bank's executive committee Chairman Mohammad Aminul Haque and Chief Executive Officer of Prime Bank Foundation Iqbal Anwar, among others, spoke.

Under the education support programme, the Prime Bank provides stipends to meritorious students at post-HSC level.

At the function, the BB governor handed over the first instalment of the stipends to 170 students.

Deportation of Sharif

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charges and sent to Saudi Arabia just hours after he flew home from seven years in exile on Monday.

The move came despite the fact that the Supreme Court in August ruled that Sharif had an "inalienable right" to come home and that the government should not block his return in any way.

Musharraf has been embroiled in crisis since his failed attempt to sack the chief justice of the Supreme Court earlier this year, a step that sparked mass protests in this nation of 160 million people.

Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz party on Tuesday filed a petition with the Supreme Court asking it to order the government to allow the immediate return of the two-time premier.

"Nawaz Sharif was illegally abducted and the architect of this unlawful act is General Pervez Musharraf," senior party official and lawmaker Khawaja Asif told reporters outside the court.

The party also asked the court to bring contempt of court charges against Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, Interior Minister Atif Sherpao and officials of the country's graft-busting body and federal investigation agency.

Pakistani lawyers boycotted court proceedings in most cities over the handling of Sharif while around 100 demonstrators chanting "Go, Musharraf, go!" rallied in the eastern city of Lahore.

Pakistan's outspoken Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry said in August that Sharif's return should not be "restricted or hampered" by the authorities.

Musharraf suspended Chaudhry on misconduct charges in March, seeing the independent-minded judge as a possible obstacle to his bid to stay in power, but the court reinstated him in July.

The manner in which Sharif was deported was a "clear attempt to

provoke the Supreme Court and send a strong message of defiance," Abbas Athar, a columnist for the Urdu-language Daily Express newspaper, told AFP.

"A showdown between Musharraf and the Supreme Court looks on the cards," he said.

The European Union and Britain both called on the Pakistani government to obey the rule of law, while Human Rights Watch said that Musharraf had flouted international concepts of justice by expelling Sharif.

Washington said it was an internal matter for Pakistan to handle.

Home redefines

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distinctive name and who hold themselves out for the purpose of propagating a political opinion or engaging in any other political activity.

The electoral laws and the Representation of the People Order 1972 also recognise a political party as defined in the constitution.

According to the constitutional provision, political parties in Bangladesh conduct their activities with distinctive names from each other.

If any group of leaders of a political party quits the platform or is expelled and wants to do politics, they will have to float a new organisation with a distinctive name since they are not recognised to conduct political activities until they take a distinctive name.

The Election Commission (EC) that begins dialogue with political parties today following relaxing of the restrictions on indoor politics has categorically said they will sit only with political parties, not with any individual or group.

Laden taunts US

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the most extreme degrees of danger and is a rarity among men: one of the 19 champions (may Allah have mercy on them all)," according to IntelCentre.

There were 19 hijackers on four planes.

Al-Shehri was aboard American Airlines Flight 11, the first jet to crash into the World Trade Centre in New York on September 11, 2001.

IntelCentre said the video, which lasts 47 minutes, is titled: "The Wills of the Heroes of the Raids on New York and Washington, The Will of the Martyr (As We See Him) Abu Mus'ab Walid al-Shehri, With a Foreword by Sheikh Osama bin Laden."

In a tape released on Friday, Bin Laden mocked the United States as "weak" and threatened to escalate the war in Iraq.

News of the latest video emerged before the United States was to hold ceremonies to remember the dead from New York's Twin Towers, the US Defence Department headquarters in Washington and a hijacked plane that crashed into a field in Pennsylvania.

Also on the anniversary, Turkish police defused a powerful bomb hidden under a bus in central Ankara where a link to September 11 was immediately made.

The Turkish capital's governor, Kemal Onal, said the bomb was hidden under a bus in a car park. "The meticulous work of the police averted a possible catastrophe," he told journalists.

German police launched a major operation at the Spangdahlem US military airport after US forces received threats by telephone, police said.

The base received an anonymous call on Monday but a police spokesman said it was possible it was a hoax.

In New York, where 2,749 people were killed when two hijacked planes ploughed into the World Trade Centre, rescue workers were to read out the names of the dead in a solemn ceremony.

Unlike in past years, most of the ceremony will be held at a park near Ground Zero, the area where the Twin Towers once stood, and not on

the site, where a memorial and other new buildings are being constructed.

In what has become an annual ritual, the reading of the names will pause for four moments of silence to mark the exact times that the planes hit the towers and when the massive buildings collapsed into piles of rubble and dust.