

## 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 Hosein 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 Hosein'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 (retd) 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.

## Flood situation

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in flood waters yesterday.

While floodwaters started receding, the affected people continue to suffer due to lack of food, drinking water and medicine. An acute crisis of fodder is adding to their problems.

UNB reports quoting local people said 18-month-old twin brothers and two other children drowned in flood waters in Shovarchar in Islampur upazila of Jamalpur yesterday morning. Two other children aged 12 and six of a family in Monapara in Sarishabari upazila of the district drowned yesterday.

Our Sylhet correspondent reports: Overall flood situation remained unchanged and major rivers and their tributaries in the region continued flowing above the red marks at all points, according to Water Development Board (WDB) officials.

Road communications in the rural areas have collapsed with most of the roads underwater.

Road link between Gowainghat upazila of Sylhet and the district headquarters remained snapped for the fourth day yesterday due to floods.

Superintending Engineer of the WDB said rivers were flowing much above the danger levels due to onrush of waters from Assam and Meghalaya states of India.

A total of 2.62 km of the Kushira dyke has been washed away by gushing waters as breaches developed at different points in the last few days. Besides, floods have caused partial damage to the embankment in a 42-km stretch, the official added.

Meanwhile, about 500 of their houses washed away moved to 10 flood shelters in Beanibazar, Zikangon and in Kanaihat upazilas.

Our Moulvibazar correspondent reported that new breaches have developed in embankments of the Monu and Dholai rivers.

A fresh breach in the Monu river embankment at Kunagaon village under Rajnagar upazila on Monday night resulted in inundation of many areas.

According to the district agriculture office, transplanted aman paddy on 17,000 hectares has gone under flood water in four upazilas of Moulvibazar district.

Our Netrakona correspondent reports that flood situation further deteriorated with 45 unions of eight upazilas inundated, leaving at least one lakh and 50 thousand people marooned.

The newly affected unions are Chakua and Laxmipur union of Khalajuri upazila, Kadamshree and Gobindashree union of Madan upazila, Netrakona WDB sources said.

Floodwaters damaged newly planted aman crops on about 40 thousand hectares and vegetables on several thousand hectares, Netrakona agriculture extension office sources said.

Around 175 educational institutions including primary schools in Khalajuri, Kalmakanda, Durgapur and Madan upazilas have closed due to flash floods.

Our Faridpur correspondent reports: Many fresh areas in the district went under water in the last 24 hours. Road communications between the district headquarters and many upazilas have been snapped.

Many of the flood victims are now suffering from diarrhoea, pneumonia and skin diseases as water started receding. About 300 patients with these diseases were hospitalised in the last 24 hours.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reports: Balashi railway station has gone under floodwater. A seven-month-old baby drowned in Sunderganj upazila on Monday night.

## 17 killed in Pak

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The 17 dead included a policeman, a paramilitary soldier and 15 civilians, one of whom was a woman, he said. Another 16 were injured including four police officials.

Body parts were scattered on the ground and the minibus was completely destroyed by the blast, police officer Abdul Hai said from the scene of the attack.

Police said they believed the bomber was trying to target government or security force officials in the town but detonated himself when he was detected.

The attack came hours after a bomb detonated by pro-Taliban militants Tuesday damaged a rock engraved with images of Buddha in another part of northwest Pakistan that attracts thousands of tourists yearly, police said.

Shrapnel from the blast in the town of Malam Jabba in Pakistan's Swat district hit the rock but did not damage the Buddhist images.

## Hasina's release

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ALCWC on receipt of invitation from the EC. "There, we will form a committee to settle things regarding the talks with the commission," he added.

AL acting president Zillur Rahman will chair today's meeting beginning at 4:00pm at the AL chief Sheikh Hasina's political office at Dhanmondi.

Acting general secretary Mukul Bose Monday told reporters that only central leaders up to organising secretary level would attend the meeting. But as it caused mixed reaction among the ranks, presidential member Tofail Ahmed requested Zillur Rahman to let all central leaders available in the capital attend the meet.

In response, Zillur said he can do that, but there would be no specific agenda, said an AL insider.

Asked about the topics, AL Organising Secretary Mahmudur Rahman Manna said they would mainly discuss what should be the AL's role as the largest political party

## BNP office secy Tripti expelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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

"The secretary general expelled Mofiqul 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 Westh.

WEST INDIES: Ramnaresh Sarwan (captain), Dwayne Bravo, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Fidel Edwards, Chris Gayle, Darren 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-tonne 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.

in the current context.

A condolence reference would be adopted for the leaders and workers who have died in recent months, said sources.

At the meeting, the leaders are expected to enquire Zillur about the legal steps taken so far to get Hasina free.

They are to ask the government for steps to ensure a fair trial of the former prime minister, also a daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Besides, they would urge immediate measures to control the price hike of essentials especially during the Ramadan. The ALCWC would also request the government to tap the "AL's experience in tackling floods," added the sources.

Meanwhile, in a joint statement yesterday around 300 leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League, the student wing of the AL, demanded that the working committee take measures aimed at quick release of Sheikh Hasina.

## 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 Sayeed Rahman, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's traffic wing (South) for Ramna, Dhamondi, Kotwali 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."

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).

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.

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 Aftab Sherpa 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 shouting "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

## 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

## 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.