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AL, JSD for not registering religion-based parties with EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Religion-based political parties are not supposed to be eligible to register with the Election Commission (EC), according to the draft proposal of the EC, said Awami League (AL) and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) yesterday.

According to the commission's draft proposal, religion-based political parties cannot be registered with the Election Commission, said AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed after a meeting between the AL and JSD -- two allies of the AL-led 14-party coalition -- at AL Acting President Zillur Rahman's Gulshan residence in the capital.

Reading out a clause from the EC draft proposal, Tofail said a political party would be disqualified for registration if there is any

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Tk 5,213cr legalised in tax amnesty time

NBR boss says response not up to expectation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About Tk 5,213 crore was legalised under the government-granted opportunity of declaring undisclosed earnings by paying taxes and penalties within a time limit that expired on Sunday.

According to National Board of Revenue (NBR) sources, 42,459 people legalised the amount paying Tk 802 crore in taxes.

The NBR received over Tk 200 crore in taxes from more than 16,500 people on the last day of this opportunity.

NBR Chairman Badru Rahman hoped the money now legalised would help growth of the national economy through its utilisation in

different sectors.

He however said the response from undisclosed money holders was not up to expectation. The time limit for the opportunity given to them was extended with the hope that at least Tk 1,500 crore would be received in taxes from them.

In Rangpur region, 1,957 people disclosed Tk 177 crore paying Tk 19 crore in taxes and in Rajshahi region, 2,159 people disclosed Tk 266 crore paying taxes of about Tk 32 crore.

A total of 1,629 people legalised Tk 137 crore in Barisal region, 4,347 people disclosed Tk 261 crore in Khulna region and 2,446 people legalised Tk 337 crore in Sylhet region.

The NBR also received Tk 45 crore in taxes from 158 people of the largest taxpayers unit (LTU).

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British foreign office director arrives today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British Foreign Office Asia Director John Dennis will arrive in Dhaka today on a three-day official visit.

He will meet government high-ups to discuss the importance of holding credible elections to sustain democracy.

During his first official visit to Bangladesh, Dennis will meet President Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser Fakhrudin Ahmed, Army Chief Moeen U Ahmed, Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda, Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman Lt Gen (retired) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury and the foreign secretary.

A British High Commission press release yesterday said he would be "Seeking to emphasise the importance of credible elections in the country that can sustain democracy in the longer term."

"He will discuss progress on

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PHOTO: STAR

Rapid Action Battalion personnel led by a mobile court seize fake power cables of different brands at a house in Siddikbari in the capital yesterday. The court sentenced 10 people to a year in prison and fined them Tk 1 lakh each in this connection.

Court accepts extortion charge against Minu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi court yesterday accepted charge sheet against City Mayor and former BNP lawmaker Mizanur Rahman Minu and three others in the Tk 1 crore extortion case.

The other accused are Lutfar Rahman, district BNP vice-president and former president of Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industries (RCCI), and his brothers Fazlur Rahman and Bazlur Rahman.

The Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Rajshahi also relieved three people from the case.

They are Kundu Babu, Lutfar's personal aide, Jahir Uddin, Lutfar's manager, and Mosharrif Hossain, his business partner.

The court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate M Afzal Hossain issued warrants of arrest against Lutfar's brothers and asked police to serve

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PHOTO: STAR

A makeshift kitchen market on railway tracks near Khilgaon level crossing in the city where both sellers and consumers risk their life every day.

1,000 missing in Myanmar after protests quashed

UN envoy meets junta boss today

AFP, Bangkok/Yangon

With protests quashed and many monasteries empty, fears are growing for those who have disappeared into Myanmar's grim prisons in recent days as rights groups say more than 1,000 are missing.

Amid the pervasive climate of fear in military-ruled Myanmar -- where troops patrol streets, news has been stifled, and Internet links cut -- observers are struggling to assess just how many have been rounded up.

Security forces have launched overnight raids to pick up more

monks and members of the National League for Democracy (NLD), headed by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, herself under house arrest for most of the past 18 years.

UN envoy Ibrahim Gambari, sent to Myanmar to express outrage over the crackdown on anti-government protests, has been forced to wait until today to meet junta leader Than Shwe, the regime said.

Gambari made his second trip in two days to the country's new and remote capital, facing

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LDP now Bikolpa Dhara again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) headed by former president Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday restored its previous identity as Bikolpa Dhara Bangladesh.

The LDP took this decision to be eligible for invitation from the Election Commission (EC) for the ongoing electoral reform talks with it, party sources said.

According to the policy set by the EC, for a political party to be eligible to receive invitation for the talks, it must have secured at least one parliamentary seat in any general election since the independence, or it must have secured at least two percent of cast votes in any general election since the independence, or it must have committees in 32 districts and in all upazilas under those districts with a minimum of 1,000 members in each district unit and 200 members in each upazila unit.

The LDP does not meet the EC criteria.

If they (LDP) restored its former identity as Bikolpa Dhara Bangladesh, it would be invited for talks, the EC had earlier told newsmen.

A Bikolpa Dhara press release yesterday said, "Most of our party leaders and workers do not want use of the name LDP, and therefore we restored the name Bikolpa Dhara Bangladesh."

Signed by Maj (retired) MA Mannan, secretary general of the party, the press release also said an LDP leader's proposal to divide Bangladesh into 11 provinces was against the ideals and principles of LDP.

Besides, the image of LDP was tarnished as some of its leaders were allegedly involved in corruption of the previous BNP-led coalition

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Thai coup gen quits junta to join cabinet

AFF, Bangkok

Thailand's General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, who led last year's coup, has stepped down as head of the nation's junta, paving the way for him to join the cabinet, a spokesman said Monday.

"His resignation took effect on September 30," said junta spokesman Sansern Kaewkamnerd.

"Sonthi said he has completed his mission as the head of the Council for National Security (CNS)," the spokesman said, using the junta's formal name.

Air Chief Marshal Chalit Pukhlasuk, head of the air force, took the helm of the junta on Monday, Sansern said.

Sonthi, who turns 61 Tuesday, had announced earlier in the day that he would join the army-installed government as a deputy spokesman.

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US weighs airstrike on Iran's military

AFP, Washington

The US administration has shifted strategy and is drawing up plans for possible airstrikes against Iran's Revolutionary Guard instead of the country's nuclear sites, the New Yorker magazine reported yesterday.

President George W. Bush has requested the Joint Chiefs of Staff revise plans for a possible attack on Iran, with the focus on "surgical" raids against the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps which Washington accuses of targeting US forces in Iraq, the magazine wrote.

Previous contingency plans called for a more elaborate bombing campaign against suspected nuclear sites in Iran as well as other infrastructure, the magazine reported, citing unnamed former officials and government consultants.

The change in focus comes as Bush and his top aides have begun to describe the war in Iraq in public statements as increasingly a "strategic battle between the United States and Iran," said the article by investigative reporter Seymour Hersh.

During a video conference over the summer, Bush allegedly told Ryan Crocker, the US ambassador to Iraq, that he was considering striking Iranian targets across the border and that the British "were on board," according to the article.

But Israeli leaders were dismayed that Washington had decided not to target Iran's nuclear programme and French officials had expressed doubts about the possible limited air strikes, it said.

While Bush has not yet issued an "execute order" for a military

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This canal in Manda in the capital is virtually clogged with garbage, an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes. The photo was taken yesterday.

Burqa-clad bomber kills 16 in Pakistan

230 opposition MPs quit Houses

AGENCIES, Peshawar/Islamabad

A suicide bomber disguised in a woman's burqa struck at a police checkpost in northwestern Pakistan on Monday, killing at least 16 people including four policemen, officials said.

The blast happened on the outskirts of Bannu, a key garrison town near Pakistan's troubled tribal areas bordering Afghanistan where the army is battling al-Qaeda and Taliban militants.

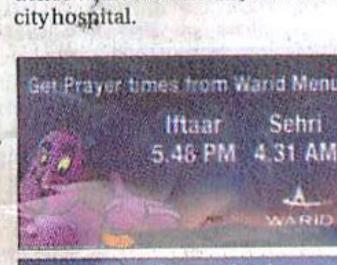
It was the latest in a string of deadly attacks in Pakistan since

government troops stormed the al-Qaeda-linked Red Mosque in Islamabad in July, and comes days before President Pervez Musharraf's re-election.

"A man disguised in a burqa got out of an autorickshaw when police stopped the vehicle for a search at a checkpoint. He then blew himself up," police officer Asar Islam told AFP.

Interior ministry spokesman Brigadier Javed Cheema said 16 people were killed and 29 were wounded and that authorities were soon launching attacks.

It was the latest in a string of deadly attacks in Pakistan since



Prayer Timing		
October 2		Iftaar
19	2	5:48
20	3	4:31
21	4	5:47
		5:46
		5:46

Sehri, Iftaar timings		
19	20	21
5:48	4:31	5:47
5:47	4:31	5:46
5:46	4:30	5:46
5:46	4:30	5:46