

Jamaat now denies

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secretary general yesterday said, "The constitution does not support the demand since Islam is the state religion and 90 percent of the population are Muslims. Besides, there is no war criminal in the country now."

Referring to the charges against them, Mujahid said, "These are all false and ill-motivated." He said after the Liberation War the then government had identified 195 people as war criminals and all of them were members of the Pakistani army.

Asked what role his party played during the war, he evaded a direct answer and instead asked the journalists to find it out. "No one should give a distorted picture of the past," observed Mujahid, also a former minister.

Jamaat, which was in the last government as part of the BNP-led four-party alliance, participated in the electoral reform talks amid different political parties calling for the EC not to allow any religion-based political party to register with it.

In response to the call, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda last month said though the war criminals should have been tried immediately after independence, successive governments did not move to bring them to trial.

Earlier on March 27, when some freedom fighters at a ten party demanded that the war criminals be prosecuted, Chief of Army Staff Gen Moeen Ul Ahmed said he would bring up the issue at meetings with the government high-ups.

JAMAAT DOUBTS POLLS ON TIME During the talks at the EC Secretariat conference room, Jamaat said due to slow pace of the voter roll preparation the commission might not be able to implement its electoral roadmap that aims to hold the long-stalled parliamentary polls by December next year.

It placed a five-point recommendation including the one for having the voter list prepared by June through increased involvement of the armed forces, teachers, and imams of local mosques.

It suggested bringing about a democratic climate by allying fear among the political parties.

People want the election to be held as early as possible. The sooner the polls, the better it is for the nation, argued the Jamaat leaders.

In reply, the EC assured them that they would take measures to speed up enumeration and a voter list with photographs would be ready in time. **JAMAAT FOR INCREASED POLLS EXPENDITURE** In its written proposals, Jamaat suggested that the EC raise the election expenditure ceiling for a candidate to Tk 25 lakh from present Tk 15 lakh.

"The election expenses are a major obstacle to honest candidates and political parties," the Jamaat secretary general noted adding that the current expenditure limit is also.

The CEC said the EC wants to see the elections free from influence of money. "We have come up with the proposal for reducing the length of electioneering since it will bring down the expenditure," he said.

Jamaat also proposed setting the ceilings on donation to the political parties at Tk 10 lakh for an individual and Tk 50 lakh for an institution.

ACC finds

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against Ruhul Amin as part of its investigation against graft suspects whose names have not appeared in the published lists.

Former Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) president Liakat Shikder yesterday submitted his wealth statement to the ACC, saying that he has a bank balance of Tk5.

Four officials of Kamalapur ICD yard yesterday made their depositions to the commission in connection with the Gato graft case. They are Alaudin, Apel Mahmud, Nur Hossain and Rabul Islam.

The ACC also approved submission of the charge sheet against former cashier of Bangladesh Agriculture Bank in connection with a case regarding wealth statement.

Maya, family charged

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information in their wealth statements submitted to the ACC earlier.

Moreover, they earned Tk 6.29 crore illegally which was not mentioned in the wealth statements.

HASNAT CASE Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque issued arrest warrant against Hasnat after National Board of Revenue (NBR) Assistant Tax Commissioner Mohammad Saiful Azam filed the case for evading tax.

In his order, the judge mentioned that the charges brought against Hasnat under sections 164/165 of Income Tax Ordinance 1984 were found to be true.

Saiful Azam mentioned that Hasnat, chairman and adviser of Proden Textiles Ltd and Kanta Corporation (Pvt) Ltd, evaded tax on his income of Tk 11,557,356 in fiscal years from 2001 to 2007.

PINTU CASE ACC Assistant Director Shafiqul Alam, also the IO of the case, submitted charge sheet against Pintu in a case for misappropriating 15 pieces of corrugated iron (CI) sheets meant for government relief.

Rab members raided a house on Ashrafabad College Road at Kamrangirchar and seized 15 pieces of CI sheets from Rupa Mollah who received those from Pintu. Rab filed a case with Kamrangirchar Police station against Pintu on April 2.

ANOTHER CHARGESHEET The same ACC official, also the IO of another case, pressed charges

against Pintu and two others for misappropriating 375 pieces of CI sheets.

Joint forces seized 375 pieces of CI sheets from a state-owned community centre run by a committee comprising Pintu's close aides in the capital on March 19.

In the first information report, police mentioned that Pintu in collusion with the other accused used the CI sheets for the roof of the community centre without any administrative order.

According to the EC proposals, no individual would be allowed to contribute more than Tk 5 lakh in cash or assets or service to a single registered political party while the amount will be no more than Tk 25 lakh for a contributing institution or a business entity.

JAMAAT FOR SIMPLER REGISTRATION PROCESS

The party demanded that the commission simplify the political parties' registration by scrapping all criteria proposed to that end. It wants the EC to allow every party to register and then place them under observation during the next national election to see if they qualify for registration.

The Jamaat leaders said registration of a political party should be cancelled if it fails to obtain at least two percent of the total votes cast in the polls.

They also opposed elections to upazila parishad before the parliamentary polls.

Yaba menace

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Though production of Yaba is banned round the globe, it is being manufactured illegally in Myanmar and Thailand.

Thailand is also facing a serious crisis as use of the drug and trade in it are rising at an alarming rate. If any one in that country is found with more than four or five Yaba tablets, he is shot, sources in law enforcement agencies mentioned.

Bangladesh could deal with Yaba crisis more effectively if the Myanmar government moves to stop its illegal production in that country and seal the route of smuggling, they say. Besides, vigilance by Bangladesh's border security force must be stepped up to combat this menace.

So far, Rab recovered around 1.5 lakh Yaba tablets with the largest cache weighing over 5 kg (equivalent to 1.30 lakh pieces of the tablet) seized yesterday.

When the drive was launched, Yaba was available through a drug dealer syndicate with price ranging from Tk 300 to Tk 400 per piece.

The crisis reached the present stage over the last four years. And it prompted guardians of some drug users and traders to seek assistance from Rab to save their addicted children.

A Rab official involved in the anti-Yaba drive said, "Social awareness against use of the drug, strict monitoring by guardians, rehabilitation programme for the addicted, and steps to ensure entertainment facilities for the youths are necessary to combat the menace."

Voter list

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enumerators. This time it would be prepared through checking finger-prints of the voters and computer database," CEC Shamsul Huda said.

The CEC said that eligible Bangladeshi expatriates would be enrolled as voters.

Asked about registering the stranded Pakistanis in voter list, Shamsul Huda said the matter is under the jurisdiction of the law ministry and were present in the meeting.

PRGF loan

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the conditions and timeframe for fulfilling those," a source said.

Prospective voters can enrol themselves in the local election office as well if they fail to register themselves in the camps, Shamsul Huda said adding that preparing voter lists is a continuous process.

Major Gen Shafiqul Islam, military secretary (headquarters), Brig Gen Hakim Aziz, commander, 46 independent infantry brigade, Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka I q a m A h m e d . D i s t r i c t Commissioner, Dhaka Kamal Uddin, Lt Col AKM Nurul Huda were present at the meeting among others.

Chief of General Staff of Army Maj Gen Sina Ibn Jamali yesterday inaugurated the work of the pilot project for preparing voter list with photograph and national ID card Dania in Shyampur of the city.

Border confce

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subjects," said Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), the host side, in a release on the opening round's outcome.

Indian BSF chief AK Mitra said some 10 Bangladeshi terrorists who are implicated in cases in Kokkata court will be deported to Bangladesh.

Mitra, who is leading the Indian delegation to the BDR-BSF director general-level conference, stated this to reporters after a courtesy call on Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury.

A host of outstanding issues, including the killing of innocent Bangladeshi by the Indian border guards, came up for discussion in the conference.

The BSF Director General Mitra, is leading his country's 17-member delegation while BDR Director General Major General Shakil Ahmed heading an 18-member team.

The conference will conclude with the signing of Joint Records of Discussions on October 29.

Among the host of outstanding issues placed on the table for sorting out are the killing, kidnapping and detaining of Bangladeshi nationals, smuggling of illegal arms and ammo, explosives, drugs and phenyndi, trespasses and push-in of Bangladeshi nationals.

Besides, demarcation of land boundary, installation of border pillars at Berubari and Singpara-Khudipara in Panchagarh district, completion of survey at undemarcated Muhurir Char, Dolkhata and Lathitala, hand-over of surveyed land at Naogaon after constructing border pillars, construction of defence infrastructures, roads, barbed-wire fencing and installations within 150 yards of the zero point will also come up for discussion.

BDR sources said BSF's obstruction to construction and repairing of roads and development works on Bangladesh side along the border as well as their obstruction to cultivation in adversely possessed lands in Uttarkat and Amalsidh in Sylhet District will come up during the deliberations.

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The BNP secretary general also demanded immediate release of the party chief as well as other party leaders. He said Khaleda Zia expelled a few persons to save the party from breaking up before her arrest, as there was no other way.

He said they would set up a new workplace, only for holding press briefings, as the party's central office is locked.

Asked whether he would take any initiative for unity, he said he has no power to do anything without the approval of the party chief in this regard. "But the door is open; so any expelled leaders can return to the party following the party constitution," he said.

It also decided that the remains of Hamidur Rahman will again be buried with state honour at Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard at Mirpur in the capital or Moheshpur in Jhenaidah in consultation with his family.

Cabinet Secretary Ali Imam Majumder, Liberation War Affairs Secretary Abdul Karim Mahbubul Alam and representatives from the foreign ministry and Armed Forces Division were present in the meeting.

Replying to another question, the CEC said those who will turn 18 by next January will also be eligible as voters.

Prospective voters can enrol themselves in the local election office as well if they fail to register themselves in the camps, Shamsul Huda said adding that preparing voter lists is a continuous process.

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PRGF loan

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The agreement for PRGF was signed in June 2003 and in six instalments the IMF gave out around \$467 million to Bangladesh under strict conditions controlling the country's economic sovereignty. The multilateral donor agency did not release the seventh instalment of \$123 million for what it said for failing to meet the conditions.

In its latest package reform proposals, the IMF asked for automatic fuel price adjustment to be operational during the first year of the PRGF programme.

Another of the IMF conditions says the government will have to introduce a quarterly flash reporting system for the five state-owned enterprises (SOEs) that account for the bulk of SOE losses. These are Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation, Bangladesh Power Development Board, Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation and Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

The IMF also asked for introducing an integrated budget classification and reporting framework among ministry of finance and line ministries. "Consolidate all official external borrowing and repayments into a single database, and identify and address impediments to implementation of the Annual Development Programme are also on the IMF's conditions list," one source said.

The conditions also include finalisation of new foreign exchange law as well as new foreign exchange guidelines.

The IMF went on suggesting the government to bring the Agran Bank to the point of sale by November 2008. It also said the government will have to prepare a new strategy for sale of Rupali Bank by next month.

It also asked for establishing a tax policy unit within ministry of finance to effectively separate tax policy from administration and make the unit operational by appointing a head and providing initial staffing.

They also found mismanagement in gas transmission and distribution process, allegations of harassment of the subscribers, administrative and financial irregularities in the organisation and institutional and CBA related anomalies.

The Titas officials preferring anonymity said they have discussed how they will work in the organisation.

The task force also sought cooperation of the officials to bring necessary reforms, they said adding that the task force would start its work in full swing from Sunday.

Titas activities

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attacks on Turkish forces are totally unacceptable."

The Titas officials recalled his recent meeting in New York with Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan and said that "Turkey is a responsible international actor and Bangladesh values the existing bilateral relations with the country".

Earlier in September, the chief adviser of the caretaker government approved the rental power

Saarc home ministers

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model of Interpol, the Indian bureaucrat said the ministers suggested enhanced coordination and networking between the police forces of the Saarc countries.

They also expressed satisfaction at the working of the institutional mechanisms within the ambit of the home ministries and urged enhanced coordination and networking among the police forces of the Saarc nations.

The ministers also discussed the Saarc Visa Scheme and agreed to provide a special tenure-linked dispensation to the officials of the Saarc secretariat.

The ministers also discussed the Saarc home ministers' meeting, chaired by Indian Home Minister Shivraj Patil, was preceded by a home-secretary level meeting Wednesday and Saarc Police chiefs' meeting on October 23.

Welcoming the former lawmakers, Delwar emphasised that time has come to "cooperate and collaborate" with each other to get rid of terrorism,

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