

Dhaka should ask

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"A one metre rise will affect 13% of the agriculture land and 17% of the remaining land of the country as Bangladesh will be among the first countries to be affected by this change," he said.

In that case, Dr Atiq pointed out, the sea will come within 60 to 100 km of the capital city and most of the southern areas of the country will go under water. Other countries like the Maldives would go totally underwater.

Dr Atiq also said that the loss from climate change would be higher than that estimated by the International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC).

The speakers at the dialogue also criticised the paper that is to be presented in the upcoming bilateral talks on climate change at UN, saying the paper was "limited towards effects on infrastructure" and was "research-centred" and not based on any field level work or information.

The talks are scheduled for September 10.

They stressed the need for the developed and developing countries' making a commitment to address the issue of climate change.

Experts at the dialogue called on the government to formulate a coordinated policy to address the issue. They praised the government for allocation in this year's budget in this regard but pointed out that Bangladesh is not responsible for climate change, and countries causing the problem must take responsibility for their actions.

Funds for adaptation and research to combat the situation should come from the countries causing the damage, they said.

The speakers also urged the industrially developed countries to introduce special quota for Bangladesh to help people migrate from the affected areas in accordance with existing international laws.

Shahnaz Haque said that we must overcome the fear of damage caused by climatic change and take effective steps to combat it.

"Our real concern is whether human activities is harming the natural system," she said.

It was revealed at the dialogue that fifty percent of Kutubdia Island has

already gone under water. At the present rate of land erosion, both Kutubdia and Bhola will go completely underwater in another 40 and 70 years.

Mominul Haque said, "What really matters is how much the sea level will rise and for how long?"

AL leaders

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"Why should we attend their function where Jamaat leaders are also invited?" he asked to know.

A party which demands the trial of war criminals and speaks about fulfilling the dreams of Bangabandhu cannot sit with anti-liberation forces under any circumstances, the AL's Publicity Secretary Asaduzzaman Noor said.

"Our party line is to not sit with Jamaat leaders at any level, so the AL leaders were wrong to join the iftar party," he said.

He said they have already requested the diplomatic offices in Dhaka to not invite AL leaders to any programmes where Jamaat leaders are also invited.

Presidium member Suranjit Sengupta said it is up to the diplomatic missions to decide whether to invite the AL and Jamaat leaders at the same programme.

Dr MA Hassan, convenor of the War Crimes Facts Finding Committee, said in a statement that some AL leaders and prominent personalities harmed the movement for trial of the war criminals by attending the iftar party with Jamaat leaders.

Acting AL General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam, meantime, said there is no problem with joining any religious functions with Jamaat leaders.

Talking to reporters at Zillur Rahman's residence, he asked journalists not to mix up politics and religion.

Cox's Bazar

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Association (BTIPA) in a press release yesterday blamed the government and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) for dropping of the names.

Association's President Julius Chowdhury said the BPC's ignorance about the rules and regulations of the competition has led to the present situation. The tourism corporation unknowingly ran some promotional campaigns that are considered manipulation of vote.

The release said a roundtable on July 15 called for a policy to coordinate the promotional activities. But none of the authorities concerned paid any attention.

"The government did not care about having a policy to organise the campaigns. Three days have passed since the dropping," but they have not taken any measures to stop unauthorised promotional activities and get the names back on the list," observed Julius.

There should have been separate sponsors for the three nominees of Bangladesh—the Sundarbans, Cox's Bazar and the Ganges.

Only Bangalink, a private mobile operator, has obtained licence from the organisers to run promotional campaign for Cox's Bazar. The activities to drum up support for the other two sites lacked coordination, said tourism sources.

The BPC has all along been providing incomplete and wrong information. They in fact encouraged fake voting in their leaflets by asking people to cast votes using vote4bangladesh.com. Bangalink too did not clarify the terms and conditions of their promotion campaign, they added.

Parjatan Corporation has been assigned to campaign for Cox's Bazar, the Forest Department for Sundarbans and the shipping ministry for the Ganges.

But the BPC had been canvassing for both Cox's Bazar and Sundarbans as the other two government organs sat idle, added the sources.

Besides, the release said, websites like vote4bangladesh.com and pabna.info and pages on social networking website Facebook have been identified by the organisers as unauthorised promotion encouraging false voting.

The BTIPA president said Akij Food and Beverage (Lemu) illegally used the organisers' logo in the campaign for Cox's Bazar. Only the license holders can use the logo.

Khaleda's bail

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container management at Dhaka and Chittagong inland depots.

The following day she was arrested at her cantonment residence.

Then on December 9 last year, the anti-graft body filed the Niko case against her and four others. The charge is abuse of power in awarding a gas exploration and extraction deal to Canadian company Niko.

On May 5, the ACC pressed charges in this case against 11 people. Besides Khaleda, former law minister Moudud Ahmed and former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain are among the charge-sheeted accused.

In response to writ petitions filed by the former prime minister, the HC in July this year stayed the proceedings of Gatco and Niko cases.

It also ordered the government and the ACC to explain why the case proceedings should not be quashed.

The ACC filed the Barapukuria coalmine case against Khaleda and 15 others on February 26. The other accused include 10 former ministers from BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

In the case, the 16 are charged with causing a loss of over Tk 158.71 crore to the public exchequer by awarding a Chinese company a production, management and

Flood feared

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Our Kurigram correspondent reports: A total of 500 villages in nine upazilas have been inundated and about four lakh people have been marooned, the district flood control cell sources said.

T Aman and vegetables on 44,143 hectares of land have been damaged, local agriculture office said.

About 119 educational institutions remain closed in the district due to the flood, district primary education office sources said.

Our staff correspondent from Bogra adds: About 12,000 people were marooned at Chandanaish union of Shariakandi upazila as an embankment on the Jamuna river was breached by floodwater.

The Chandaish UP chairman said although about 335 families were given shelter in seven shelter centres, 400 families are living under the open sky on roads and embankments.

Our Tangail correspondent reports: Over a lakh people in Bhuapur, Kaliahati, Nagarpur, Basail and Delduar were marooned following an increase in the water level of the Jamuna and Dhaleswari rivers.

Vehicular movement on Tangail-Aricha road through Elasin Ferry Ghat remained stalled as the ferry service has been suspended for the last three days due to floods.

Our Moulvibazar correspondent reports: Water levels of rivers and haors are increasing in the district due to continuous downpour. Water levels of the Monu, Dholai, Gopla, Fana, and Juri rivers are rising sharply.

About 15,000 people in Bhukshimul, Joychandi, Jayfamar, West Juri, Dakshinbhag, Sujannagar, Bhatara, and Baranchal unions have been marooned.

CORRECTION: In the news item headlined "Thousands marooned as flood grips north" published in The Daily Star on August 31, it was mentioned that Teesta Barrage was damaged. Actually, a portion of the flood dyke of the barrage was damaged.

Journos barred

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Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda on several occasions said presence of newsmen would reduce the possibility of any misunderstandings.

During the second round of electoral reform talks with political parties, he said he feared that closed-door meetings might trigger fishy things. He had also suggested that the caretaker government follow the EC's practice in its dialogue with political parties.

A good number of journalists and photojournalists from newspapers and satellite television channels yesterday morning thronged the EC Secretariat to cover the talks with political parties without knowing the restrictions imposed in this regard. And they entered the EC Secretariat conference room as talks with Workers Party of Bangladesh began at 10:30 am.

But within a few minutes, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakawat Hussain loudly asked the EC's public relations officer to ensure that no newsmen stays in the conference room. Journalists then left the venue.

Political leaders present at the talks sought to know why newsmen were not allowed to be present.

"The Election Commission told us they want to discuss some issues frankly. So, journalists were not allowed this time," Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon told reporters later.

Ganotantri Party chief Nurul Islam said he also raised the issue with the EC and got a similar reply.

Tarique

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Jubo Dal yesterday looked after the security of Tarique at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSSMU) Hospital where the ailing BNP leader has been receiving treatment.

Several JCD leaders said they have been keeping a close eye on the entrance to Block-D at BSSMU hospital and controlling the entry of visitors into Tarique's cabin.

"He is relatively good today," Dr Idris Ali, under whose supervision Tarique is receiving treatment, told reporters yesterday.

He, however, did not elaborate on Tarique's condition.

When asked about Tarique's treatment abroad, he said the process is underway.

"Tarique's condition seems to have improved today," said Tarique's counsel barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia, who visited him at the hospital yesterday.

He hoped that BNP Chairperson and former premier Khaleda Zia would also be released soon through legal process.

BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mahbub Uddin Ahmad and Jubo Dal General Secretary and former BNP lawmaker Moazzem Hossain Alal along with other BNP leaders yesterday visited Tarique, released on bail on Wednesday.

"There is no crisis in BNP. Our party is as strong as it was in the past," Khandaker Mahbub said claiming that there is no faction in BNP.

EC to seek easing

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delegates from across the country for holding the national council, which is not possible amid the state of emergency."

"They assured us that they will manage the government's permission for us to hold the national council, if we can hold it in a month," Ershad, the octogenarian former military dictator who led the JP delegation, told reporters after the meeting.

The Workers Party of Bangladesh (WP), Gonotantri Party, and Samyabadi Dal also sat with the EC separately yesterday and demanded that the state of emergency be lifted allowing political parties to hold national councils in an atmosphere free of fear and intimidation, for meeting the criteria for registration.

The three parties however said it will be difficult for them to hold national councils now 'within such a short time' before the election which is tentatively planned for the third week of December, and suggested relaxing some criteria for the registration.

Emerging from the talks, leaders of all four political parties claimed that the commission assured them of considering their proposals for relaxing the criteria for registration.

"We have no objection to the criteria, except the one that deals with the panels of nominees," Ershad said.

The EC assured the JP leaders of considering their objection, meeting sources said.

During the talks held in the EC Secretariat conference room, the JP leaders said if the state of emergency is relaxed, it will be easier for them to hold the national council, the sources added.

The emergency powers rules (EPR) that enforce the state of emergency do not allow political parties to hold meetings of over two hundred people in open space.

In that case, the government may issue a general instruction allowing political parties to hold national councils, the JP leaders suggested.

The other three dialogue parties demanded that the EC announces a specific date for the parliamentary election which 'must be held before upazila polls'.

They however proposed for announcing the schedules for both elections together.

They also urged the EC not to register religion based parties and parties that had opposed the birth of Bangladesh.

On upazila polls, the JP chief said his party does not have any objection if the upazila polls are held before the parliamentary poll.

"We left the issue to the Election Commission," Ershad said, adding, "Whenever they are held, Jatiya Party is ready to participate in the upazila elections."

WP suggested keeping some of the registration criteria suspend till after the parliamentary poll, allowing the political parties adequate time for meeting those.

It also proposed to cancel the criterion that imposes restriction on having front organisations of professionals and students.

WP President Rashed Khan Menon said the EC assured them of considering their proposals.

"Some criteria for registration might be relaxed or suspended," Menon told reporters after the talk.

On upazila polls, Menon said the EC wants to take a decision after finishing the round of discussions with the political parties.

But a senior leader of JP said the EC is determined to hold upazila polls before the parliamentary election, although it is now worried due to the ongoing flood situation in the country, which is worsening.

Lidless manhole

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body after a more than 20-minute search.

Police said the body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Locals said the manhole is lidless for about 25 days, and they complained about it repeatedly only in vain.

Flood factor

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Aman could be harvested because of floods and cyclone Sidr.

Ministry sources said one lakh hectare of arable land in 16 districts has been so far affected due to the current floods but the agriculture ministry is still not sure how much the floods would affect the crop's cultivation.

Uttam Kumar Dev, head of research at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said the consequences of the current flood cannot be predicted yet since the picture of floods is still unclear.

If the flood affects Aman planting, it will not be possible to meet its production target, in which case the government will have to undertake strong rehabilitation programmes for Robi crops.

The government Boro target for this fiscal year is 1.96 crore tonnes when with a bumper production the total output of the crop was 1.77 crore tonnes in the last season. In FY2006-07, Boro production was 1.49 crore tonnes.

The Fortnightly Foodgrain Outlook released on August 21 says, "Domestic prices of rice continued declining over the past two weeks, reflecting improved supply to markets in a context of good progress in Aus harvesting and Aman planting coupled with downward pressures on international prices."

"The rice price decrease is unusual for this period of the year. It indicates that the large private stocks built over the past months are being released. This might continue over the coming weeks if

Ganotantri Party chief Nurul Islam said political parties seeking registration need adequate time to meet the criteria, as they will have to amend their constitutions by holding councils.

He said they suggested relaxing the criteria for registration for now, and the commission assured them of considering their proposals.

He said his party also opposed holding of upazila polls before the parliamentary election.

The EC however did not talk to the media about the outcome of the dialogues yesterday, neither did it allow the media to be present during the discussions.

The EC opened the talks with political parties to reduce increasing differences between the two camps over the party registration issue, as the parties have been opposing the idea of completing the registration process before the upcoming parliamentary poll due to 'a constraint of time'.

Political parties willing to get registration with the EC must apply by October 15, after meeting the criteria including severing relations with front organisation of professionals and students, and with overseas chapters by amending the constitutions.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh, Bikalpadhara Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu), and BNP are scheduled to have talks with the EC today.

Tigers

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The pair put on 60 to lift the visitors back into the match, but when the latter fell for 27 the rest set in again.

Medium pacer James Hopes (3-30) conceded 11 runs from his first over but bounced back to take the vital wicket of Al Hasan and then two more quick scalps as Bangladesh lost 5-21 to slump to 8-103 as all hope was lost.

Man-of-the-match Iqbal eventually fell for 63 from just 69 balls, holding out to Shane Watson (2-8) when he knew he was running out of partners.

Their cause was not helped by the fact that they without number 11 Shahadat Hossain, who picked up a hand injury in the field.

Earlier, on a slow wicket that suited the Bangladesh spinners, the tourists did well to restrict the home side after Australia won the toss and elected to bat.

Mike Hussey again anchored the Australian effort with an unbeaten 57 from 72 balls, while Cameron White added some late runs with 22 not out from 24.

The Australians had looked set to fall well short of 200, until a late flurry from the pair added 23 runs from the last two overs.

The bowlers were able to restrict the strokeplay of the normally aggressive Australians and were superbly backed by their fielders, with three run outs robbing the home side of any momentum.

Spinners Al Hasan (0-25 from 10 overs) and Abdur Razzak (1-22 from 10) both bowled superbly in the conditions.

Opener Watson (27), struggling captain Michael Clarke (25 from 66 balls) and middle order batsman David Hussey (11) were all run out, the latter two both by direct hits at the bowler's end as they attempted quick singles.

The home side went 27 overs without a boundary before Mike Hussey finally broke the drought in the 42nd over.

Bangladesh made two changes to their side for Saturday's match, with Mahmudullah and Farhad Reza replacing Mehrib Hossain jnr and Nazmul Hossain.

Reza's introduction into the attack for the first time in the series was successful, bowling opener Shaun Marsh (30), who had already been dropped, with his first ball.

Only political refugees need registration

Says SQ Chy reaching Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detained former premier Khaleda Zia's parliamentary adviser and BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury yesterday demanded recasting the Election Commission (EC) for a 'free, fair and credible general election.'

"The EC now headed by ATM Shamsul Huda has failed to create a congenial atmosphere for a credible election with the participation of all political parties," he said while talking to journalists at his residence in the port city.

The BNP leader, who was released on bail from Kashimpur Jail in Gazipur on Friday, demanded scrapping of all election-related ordinances and said, "Political parties do not need registration, only political refugees need it."

He hoped that BNP chief Khaleda Zia would be released soon through legal process.

Going, Going

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Dr Reza Khan, a zoologist and environmentalist, said. It is also a nocturnal animal dwelling on the ground level in mixed evergreen forests, and would feed on underground worms and roots of plants. Badgers need wide areas for foraging. But as the lower tier of forests got thin, they also got exposed. The one in the picture was caught as a result of forest depletion and no one knows what happened to its cub or mate.

Leopard cats (Pic No 2) also used to live in mixed evergreen and Sal forests. Today they are deemed extinct in Bangladesh. Sitch claims somebody caught them and handed them to him. But Dr Khan suspects they were brought in from India.

Jungle cats (Pic No 1) are also rarely seen in the wild because of their rarity and also because of their ability to hide. These two cubs were captured in Sri Mongol.

Civets (Pic No 5 & 6) live in the middle tier of forests which is also in a sorry state in Bangladesh. They feed on geckos, worms and eggs. Today they are endangered due to forest depletion.

Hornbills (Pic No 8) need tall trees for nesting. As such trees became a rarity, their number also dropped. And they can be easily located today and caught, as the few remaining tall trees, their only refuge, can now be easily identified.

Green pigeons (Pic No 7) are also a lost case in Bangladesh because of vanishing fig trees and hunting. These beautiful birds can hardly be seen in the wild today in this country.

Telenor warns

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"In the conflict regarding the ownership of Grameenphone, Telenor disagrees with Muhammad Yunus that we have an agreement to sell our stake in the company to him," Telenor said in a statement.

It threatened that further disagreement on this issue would be dealt with in court. "We would like to emphasise that the shareholder agreement clearly states that any disagreements should be resolved through the Swedish courts," Telenor said.

The Norwegian company, of which 54 percent stakes are owned by the Norwegian government, admitted to recent media findings of child labour and poor working conditions in GP distributorships.

But it stressed that Grameen Telecom and Bangladesh government have equal responsibility in resolving these matters.

"Nobody can define themselves as exempt from this responsibility. In this context, it is irrelevant whether you own 62% or 38% of a company. This responsibility starts by demonstrating a cooperative attitude," the Telenor statements says.

Telenor also lashed out at Yunus' statement, saying it felt that the two sides reached an amicable solution at two meetings preceding the release of the statement.

"It would have been reasonable to expect Professor Yunus to mention these accusations during our meeting earlier that day, particularly as the release of this statement had apparently already been planned prior to our meeting," the statement reads.

"Muhammad Yunus is a highly influential person in Bangladesh with extensive knowledge of the business sector in the country. Rather than attacking Telenor, we have urged Yunus to cooperate with us to address the unacceptable conditions as quickly as possible," it adds.

Telenor also said it agreed with Yunus to further investigate the people responsible for GP's illegal Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) operations, for which the government fined it \$60 million.

Tk 396cr gobbled

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bribe officials for new connections.

The report said the company's 1990 deal with Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company Limited (Kafco) was uneven, making the BGCL to supply 60 mmcf of gas to Kafco daily at half the price of other industrial clients.

It said stopping irregularities in providing new connections, keeping an eye on illegal connections and regular monitoring to bring down systems loss would help the company become more effective.

TIB affiliate Shachetan Nagarik Committee (Sanak) helped prepare the report.

Nuke suppliers

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and sale of nuclear technology, reached consensus on a one-off waiver of its rules for India, which refuses to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"This is a historic moment for the Nuclear Suppliers Group, for India, for US-Indian relations, indeed India's relations with the rest of the world," acting US Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security, John Rood, told reporters at the end of around 90 minutes of talks on Saturday.

"Today at the NSG, we have reached a landmark decision to allow for civil nuclear trade with India," Rood said.

"This is an important moment also for the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime," he added.

"This is a critically important moment for meeting the energy needs in India, and indeed dealing with the global need for clean and reliable energy supplies."

NSG rules ban nuclear trading with India because it refuses to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty, having developed atomic bombs in secret and conducted its first nuclear test in 1974.

The United States wants a special waiver for India so it can share civilian nuclear technology with New Delhi.

The United States argues the deal would bring India into the NPT fold and help combat global warming by

allowing it to develop low-polluting nuclear energy.

Critics say the deal undermines international non-proliferation efforts and accuse the nuclear powers of pursuing commercial and political gains.

Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon told reporters: "India welcomes the decision by the NSG to adjust its guidelines to enable full civil nuclear cooperation of its members with India."

New Delhi "regards this decision as an important step in the ongoing process of India and the international community resuming cooperation in civil nuclear energy as a contribution to global energy security and for meeting the challenge of climate change and sustainable development in India," he said.

It was the second time in two weeks that the NSG had met to try and agree