



4-party tags RPO scrapping with poll participation

To hold countrywide rally Oct 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led four-party alliance yesterday placed before the government and the Election Commission a five-point demand, including withdrawal of state of emergency and scrapping of the Representation of the People Order (Amendment) 2008, as conditions for participating in the upcoming parliamentary election.

At a meeting of the alliance leaders it also announced programmes for holding countrywide rallies on October 12 to press their five-point demand.

The other demands are holding of upazila elections after a reasonable interval of the national polls, withdrawal of the

Gatco, Niko and Barapukuria corruption cases and other false cases against alliance leaders, and release of all political leaders, activists and general people detained without specific charges before the Eid-ul-Fitr and withdrawal of the false cases against them.

"The government and the Election Commission have to do something for making the election free, fair and acceptable to all," BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain told reporters at his Nam flat.

Asked if the BNP and its allies will take part in the upcoming polls once their demands are implemented, he said, "We have

placed our demands before the government and the Election Commission. Let us see how they respond.

"We will assess the government's response and fix our next course of action... We hope the government and the Election Commission will respond positively to our demands," he added.

Replying to a question, the BNP leader said the upazila elections should be held after forming of the new parliament.

"How will it be possible for them to hold upazila elections before publishing the national election results and before the elected parliament members take oath?" he said.

Earlier, the four-party alliance set September 20 as the deadline for meeting its demand for withdrawal of the emergency rules clamped on January 11 last year.

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid and Assistant Secretary General ATM Azharul Islam, Bangladesh Jatiya Party Chairman Andalib Rahman Parho and Secretary General Shamim Al Mamun, Islami Oikya Jote Secretary General Abdul Latif Nezami, Khilafat-e-Majlis Secretary General Ahmed Abdul Kader, and BNP Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan and Office Secretary Rizvi Ahmed attended the meeting among others.

How BNP shifts on RPO

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has changed its position regarding registration with the Election Commission (EC) as its key ally Jamaat-e-Islami is strongly opposing the Representation of the People Order (RPO) revised by the EC.

Jamaat insiders said over the past week their leaders successfully convinced the BNP leadership to change their position on party registration and the amended RPO.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia told reporters after her release on September 11 that her party would take part in the upcoming elections and the dialogue with the caretaker government.

But at a dialogue with the EC on September 20, the BNP and its allies said they would not accept implementation of the new electoral provisions in the parliamentary polls slated for December 18. They also submitted proposals to the EC in this regard.

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Kamaruzzaman met the BNP

Huji leaders float party with govt nod

US citizen helped it get 'int'l support'

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Leaders of the banned Islamist outfit Harkatul Jihad Al Islami (Huji) Bangladesh have floated Islamic Democratic Party (IDP) with permission from the government.

Mostly Soviet-Afghan War veterans, they claim they formed a 15-member convening committee in May as the caretaker administration gave them the go-ahead after a probe found nothing that could link them to any subversive campaign.

Kazi Azizul Huq, an adviser of the newborn organisation, told The Daily Star, "The intelligence agencies gathered that we have no relations to any terrorist networks. 'The government however set

some conditions. Those include ones that say the party must run as per the country's constitution, and not resort to violence to implement Shariah law."

Last Friday, IDP held an Iftar party at the city's Diploma Engineers Institution. It was attended by party leaders and guests including Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, editor of weekly Blitz and a campaigner for Israel, Amar Desh Assistant Editor and Human Rights Forum General Secretary Sanjeeb Choudhury, PK Barua of Bouddha Kristi Prochar Sangha and Chitta Francis, a representative of Christian community.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Naim Ahmed told The Daily Star that they allowed IDP to arrange the func-

tion as it was a religious one.

Replying to a query, he said they will definitely go for a closer examination before giving the organisation permission to arrange any political programme.

Sheikh Abdus Salam heads the convening committee. It was under his leadership that a group of Afghan War veterans launched Huji at a press conference at the National Press Club on April 30, 1992.

Sources close to IDP said the outfit's ultimate objective is to establish Shariah law in the country.

Azizul Huq, on the other hand, said, "Our goal is to run the country, as per the Charter of Medina that gives equal rights to all citizens irrespective of religion and ethnicity."

HC orders on Hasina's bail petition today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) will deliver an order today on a bail petition of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, now abroad on parole, in an extortion case filed by businessman Noor Ali.

After completing the hearing on the bail petition, an HC bench of Justice Sheikh Rezaul Alam and Justice Md Rais Uddin on September 24 fixed September 29 (today) for passing the order on the petition.

Meanwhile, two separate petitions will be submitted to the HC today for bail in favour of Sheikh Hasina in the Niko and barge-mounted power plant corruption cases filed by the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC).

Hasina's counsel barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh on Saturday told The Daily Star that he would submit the bail petitions to the vacation bench of the HC comprising Justice Md Anwarul Haque and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury on Monday (today).

On September 23 an HC bench comprising Justice AKM Fazlur Rahman and Justice Sheikh Abdul



Garment workers protesting non-payment of salaries and bonuses put up roadblock turning a police van on its side near Kanchpur Bridge on Dhaka-Sylhet Highway yesterday.

Jamaat's charter in clash with country's constitution

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh will have to bring fundamental changes to its constitution to get registered with the Election Commission (EC) so that it qualifies for participating in parliamentary polls. If the party changes its constitution to conform to the registration criteria, it will definitely lose its characteristics as an Islamic political party.

Among the registration criteria laid down in the revised Representation of the People Order (RPO), two conditions infuriated Jamaat leadership as those put the party's very existence as a hardline Islamic party at stake.

One of the significant criteria for registration says that a political party shall not be qualified for registration if the objectives laid down in its constitution are contradictory to the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Jamaat's constitution clearly contradicts the objectives laid

down in the country's constitution, the supreme law of the land. All other laws, actions and proceedings must conform to the Bangladesh constitution and any law, action and proceedings, in whatever form and manner, is void if made in violation of the constitution.

The preamble to the constitution reads: "...it shall be a fundamental aim of the state to realise through the democratic process a socialist society, free from exploitation, a society in which the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, equality and justice, political, economic and social will be secured for all citizens."

But the aims and objectives laid down in Jamaat-e-Islami's constitution are to establish rule of Islam through all out efforts and for establishing peace all over the world and welfare of mankind.

The party constitution also urges to end all types of repressions, injustice by establishing rule

Power price likely to rise by 18pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Power price is likely to be increased by 18 percent at bulk level to adjust the loss incurred by the Power Development Board (PDB).

The Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) will announce the new power price today, a high official of ERC said, adding, "The ERC is undertaking the task of adjusting power price in the country for the first time."

The decision to enhance the power price was taken following a formal PDB proposal to the ERC to increase the power price.

Following the proposal ERC organized a series of hearing on the issue and decided to increase the price by 18 percent from the present level.

Following the price adjustment at the bulk level the cost of per unit power will also see an increase in the retail level, sources said.

Soon after the announcement of the decision the distribution companies will apply to the ERC for the rise in the power price at retail level, sources added.

ERC officials said the government has also taken initiatives to raise the petroleum and gas prices through the same procedure and the ERC has already staged a hearing on gas price hike.

Khaleda asks party men to work unitedly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday urged party leaders and activists to work unitedly.

The former premier made the call when leaders and ex-lawmakers of the party met her at former Jai Jai Din editor Shaikh Rehman's Eskaton residence in the capital.

Inam Ahmed Chowdhury, an adviser to the BNP chairperson, told reporters that Khaleda Zia discussed with him various issues including party unity.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (Jagpa) Chief Shafiqul Alam Proddhan and National People's Party (NPP) Chief Shawkat Hossain Nilu yesterday separately met the

RMG workers block Dhaka-Sylhet highway, clash with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A few thousand garment workers yesterday clashed with police and barricaded Dhaka-Sylhet Highway at Kanchpur for over three hours causing untold sufferings to people heading home for Eid holidays.

The workers of Joya Garments at Kanchpur also set fire to a police pickup van during the clash that left at least 35 people, including 10 policemen, injured.

Several hundred vehicles were stuck in queues well over seven kilometres long due to the barricaded highway.

Earlier, the workers staged

demonstration inside their factory demanding their wages and festival bonuses. They first clashed with factory staffers and then attacked the Ansar camp inside the factory. At one stage, they took to the highway.

Witnesses said around 3,000 workers of the factory barricaded the highway around 3:00pm.

Police charged truncheons to disperse the workers after failing to convince them to remove the barricade.

When police charged truncheons on the workers, the workers became more violent and

Ex-AL MPs vow not to contest polls without Hasina's release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Awami League (AL) lawmakers yesterday said they would not contest the upcoming parliamentary elections slated for December 18 under any circumstance without permanent release and participation of party president Sheikh Hasina.

They also demanded immediate resignation of Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar criticising him for his 'partisan statement.'

The AL leaders also pressed the demand for immediate withdrawal of all charges against Hasina at an

Home rush gains momentum

Passengers suffer due to shortage of transports, high fare

KAILASH SARKAR

The monitoring agencies remain silent at the terminals in stopping the bus and launch operators from charging thousands of home-bound passengers extra fares ahead of Eid.

Meanwhile, the bus operators are waiting to make extra bucks for the second time as around five lakh garment workers would start leaving Dhaka as their vacation begins on September 30.

Sources say there are around 1,000 garment factories in and around the capital where about five lakh workers work.

All the entrance roads to different terminals remained jam-packed as thousands of home-

bound people were marching towards the terminals.

The traffic men and regular policemen had to face severe troubles to tackle the situation.

The sources say at least 10 complaint centres have been set up at Gabtoli, Sayedabad, Mohakhali, Kamolapur and Sadarghat terminals to monitor and prevent all kinds of irregularities in ticket selling and also to curb public harassment.

Moreover, several mobile courts were assigned and personnel from various law enforcement agencies have been deployed at the terminals.

But all these measures have failed to change the situation due to apparent reluctance of the

officials of the complaint centres claim everything is going normal as they have received no complaints at all.

But many of the victims alleged they had lodged complaints but got no assistance.

Shahidul Islam of Comilla said, "I bought a ticket at Tk 140 from Sayedabad bus terminal which was earlier Tk 70-80."

According to the chart of fares fixed by the government, the price of a Dhaka-Comilla ticket is between Tk 65 to Tk 95.

"There are complaint centres and officials from the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and different law enforcement

Govt to talk with BNP after CA's return

Says Hossain Zillur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commerce and Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said the interim government would make arrangements for the dialogue between the government and BNP after Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed returns home from the United States.

Zillur said this to reporters after attending a certificate distribution ceremony of a computer training course for girls at Tejaon in the city. He was the chief guest of the ceremony.

"We are waiting for his [Fakhruddin's] return," Zillur said,

Hasina to meet Khaleda if AL working body gives nod

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the dialogue between her and former premier Khaleda Zia depends on the decision of AL working committee.

"I will abide by the decisions which they [the working committee] will make for the interest of the country," New York-based news agency ANA quoted Hasina as saying.

Hasina, now in the USA for medical treatment, also said a vested quarter is trying relentlessly to restore Khaleda Zia's image.

The former premier made the remarks when a delegation of United States Oikya Parishad met

Breakthrough in US talks on Wall Street bailout

AFP, Washington

US lawmakers said they had reached a "breakthrough" in negotiations early yesterday and were poised to announce a formal deal on an unprecedented 700-billion dollar Wall Street bailout to avert the country's worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Senate Democratic Majority Leader Harry Reid attributed the fresh progress to a last-minute intervention by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

"It's been a very long day. Quite frankly, a long week. This evening has been extremely difficult," Reid said after US lawmakers worked feverishly into the early morning hours.

The breakthrough came about an hour ago, with the speaker

coming with an idea that hadn't been formulated. But it was enough to get, I think, this so we can commit it to paper."

"We have made great progress," agreed Pelosi after the impromptu press conference. "We have to get it committed to paper, so that we can completely, formally agree."

US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, who also joined the talks in Congress, said: "We've made great progress toward a deal, which will work and will be effective in the marketplace, and, you know, effective for all Americans."

But other lawmakers, especially on the Republican side, were more cautious on what would be the largest government bailout of struggling financial institutions since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Senator Judd Gregg, a leading Republican negotiator, said he would be looking at the final wording of the agreement Sunday and consulting with colleagues before giving his final approval.

"I think we are going to be able to have an announcement tomorrow, but these are difficult issues," he said.

Republican Representative Roy Blunt said he would have to take the proposal back to his caucus before committing his support for it.

However, White House spokesman Tony Fratto said President George W. Bush and his aides were "very pleased with the progress" made at the talks.

The New York Times reported the bill includes pay limits for



A ferry is boarding only people to help them get home on Eid vacation. Bad weather had snapped Paturia-Daulatdia ferry services for 8 hours until 10:00am yesterday, creating huge tailbacks on both sides of the Padma.

Stormy weather Paturia ferry services stop for 8hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ferry services on Paturia-Daulatdia route were suspended for about eight hours up to 10:00am yesterday due to stormy weather, stranding thousands of Eid vacationers on both sides of the Padma.

Bad weather had forced launches to remain docked for about 20 hours till 4:00pm yesterday.

Hundreds of vehicles, including passenger buses and trucks, got stuck in a three-kilometre tailback on the Paturia side. The jam was at least two kilometres long at Daulatdia, sources at Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) said.

Ferry services resumed after