

Huji leaders float

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He said they want to introduce Shariah (the body of Islamic religious law) only for the Muslims. Other religious and ethnic minorities may follow the existing law of the land and norms of their communities.

"We don't want to impose anything on anyone. We'll put the Islamic laws into practice only if the people grant us an electoral mandate to amend the constitution," Azizul continued.

"Even those of Muslims who won't want to follow Shariah will have the freedom to follow the existing law."

He said the government had suggested they [IDP] take measures to convince the international community that their move to launch the outfit had no relations with extremism.

The suggestion came in view of the fact persons behind the new party had involvement with Huji, an outfit that was banned by the government for terrorism in October 2005.

Azizul said Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury and Dr Richard L Benkin, an American citizen, helped in efforts to portray IDP in a positive light across the globe especially in the developed countries.

In an e-mail to this correspondent, Dr Benkin confirmed the statement. He said, "Mr. Huq is correct. Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury and I continuously try to bridge the gulf between religious communities throughout the world and always look for opportunities to promote a positive image of Bangladesh worldwide."

"Mr. Huq and I met for hours one day in Dhaka many months ago and recognised our common belief in God and faith. We also..... 'agreed to disagree' in the spirit of interfaith understanding and democracy."

"The newly formed Islamic Democratic Party opens the door for Muslims to separate themselves before the entire world from radicals and terrorists while at the same time affirming their strength in the Muslim [Islam] faith."

Shoaib, who was arrested at Zia International Airport in November, 2003 and charged with sedition in January, 2004, told The Daily Star, "The government gave permission to launch Islamic Democratic Party and host the Iftar party under the state of emergency. It's a green signal, and it allowed IDP to shed the names of Huji and Islamic Gono Andolon."

He added, "Since IDP echoes the demand for establishing ties between Dhaka and Jerusalem, and upholds interfaith understanding, it is our responsibility to promote them at international level."

Earlier, speaking at Friday's programme, he said, "Islamic parties are stereotyped as anti-democracy. The emergence of IDP represents new trends in the country's politics as it believes in democracy while being an Islamic party."

"The name of IDP is connected

to Huji, an organisation that is widely criticised. Those who brand IDP as a terrorist organisation run on foreign funds."

He also said, "If Hizb-ut Tahrir, which is banned across the countries and had role in the Ball blasts, and anti-Liberation forces like Jamaat-e-Islami can operate openly, why can't IDP?"

Besides the one in Dhaka, IDP held Iftar parties in Chapainawabganj on September 6, Rajshahi on September 8, and Rangpur on September 15. Another one is scheduled to be held in Natore today.

Meanwhile, sources said IDP will form a full committee through a national convention before the ninth parliamentary election.

It also plans an alliance with other small parties-Islamic, non-Islamic and ethnic-and a token participation in the December 18 election, they added.

The party has already applied for registration with the Election Commission (EC).

Azizul Haque said, "We are preparing for registration on meeting the conditions specified in the application form. At the same time, we are working to have organisational structures for district and upazila levels."

The Huji men who are now with IDP claim they had nothing to do with the blasts and some other acts of violence attributed to Huji in general. Rather, it was a splinter group led by Mufti Hannan and Abdur Rouf that was responsible for the attacks.

They said they expelled Hannan from the organisation in 1998. After some time, they formed a political party named Islamic Gono Andolon against the backdrop of Huji being listed as a terrorist organisation internationally.

During the BNP-led four-party alliance rule, Gono Andolon ran its organisational activities in secret as it tried not to be associated with the militant campaign that was being carried out by Jama'at ul Mujahideen Bangladesh at that time.

Gono Andolon was renamed Sacheton Islamic Janata on August 19, 2006 following an understanding with the then government that allowed the organisation to work out in the open.

They have been trying to get permission since the caretaker administration took over in January last year, and obtained it six to seven months back, an IDP source said.

A former Huji cadre said beginning in late eighties and working throughout the nineties, Huji built up a network across madrasas. It organised arms training for students in hilly forest areas.

On different occasions, he continued, it sent trained youths to Afghanistan to participate in the war there. Huji operatives were dispatched to Myanmar as well to fight for Rohingya militants against the Myanmarese army.

Hurricane races toward Nova Scotia

AP, Eastport, Maine

Heavy rain drenched Maine on Sunday and fishermen moved boats to shelter as Hurricane Kyle plowed northward across the Atlantic, triggering the state's first hurricane watch in 17 years.

Kyle could make landfall in the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia or New Brunswick sometime during the night or early Monday, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

A hurricane watch was posted along the coast of Maine from Stonington, at the mouth of Penobscot Bay, to Eastport on the Canadian border, and for southwestern Nova Scotia, the center said. Tropical storm warnings were in effect from Stonington to the coasts of southern New Brunswick and southwest Nova Scotia.

There were no immediate plans for evacuations in Maine.

RMG workers

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vandalised at least 15 vehicles and set fire to the police pick-up van of Rugganj Police Station. They also pelted police with bricks.

The police took shelter inside a neighbouring factory which was also damaged by the workers of Joya Garments.

Witnesses said during the clash and demonstration, the workers chanted slogans against the garment authorities.

Additional police from Dhaka reinforced the policemen in clash with the workers and forced them to leave the spot. They reopened the highway for traffic.

A number of Joya Garments employees yesterday said the factory was scheduled to pay their 20 days' salary for this month and the festival bonus. But the authorities told them that they would pay workers only half of their salaries and bonuses.

They alleged that police favoured the factory authorities attacked them.

Sources said senior police officials had a meeting with the garment authorities who assured them that the workers would get full payment.

Joya Garments Production Manager Abul Kalam said the authorities already started paying the workers in full in the evening.

Paturia ferry

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authorities scrambled four pontoons displaced by gusty winds into place at about 10:00am, BIWTC manager at Aricha, Bidyut Kumar Sahas said.

Thousands of passengers, especially women and children, went through huge sufferings at the time.

Several loaded ferries sat out the bad weather at the two terminals. The Khanjahan Ali started for Paturia against the odds at about 4:00am, but winds forced it to lay anchor halfway in the mid-river. It stayed put till 9:00am.

The gridlock on the banks eased after 4:00pm, authorities said.

Manikganj police superintendent said additional police were dispatched to Paturia to check any untoward situation.

Launch service on Aricha-Kazirhat route, however, did not resume till filing of this report at 6:00pm.

Khaleda

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BNP chairperson with a proposal to join the four-party alliance.

The two leaders said Khaleda Zia agreed to include their parties in the four-party alliance. But the final decision on the matter would be made after the Eid, they said.

"I gave a proposal to unite the nationalist forces under the leadership of Khaleda Zia," Shawkat Hossain Nilu told reporter after meeting the BNP chairperson.

BNP Office Secretary Rizvi Ahmed who was present at the meetings told reporters that Khaleda has urged the nationalist forces to unite ahead of the upcoming general election.

"She underlined the importance of unity for restoring democracy in the country and safeguarding national integrity and sovereignty," he said.

Controversial former High Court judge Faisal Mahmud Fayezee, leaders of BNP's front organisations including Jatiyatabadi Muktiyoddha Dal and leaders of Jatiya Imam Samity also met the former premier.

Hossain Zillur

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adding that the date for talks with BNP would be fixed soon after his return.

Zillur said his government was maintaining contacts with Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to create an atmosphere of "confidence".

As part of its move to bring qualitative changes in politics as well as democratic practices, the Fakhruddin-led government has held talks with all major political parties, except BNP.

About the much-talked-about dialogue between Hasina and Khaleda, he said this will require preparation from the government's end. "They also [AL and BNP] need to prepare," he said, adding, "We hope that we would be able to achieve our goals."

Jamaat's charter

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of Allah and rule of honest people through organised efforts.

In its preamble, Jamaat's constitution says that Allah has sent mankind with the responsibility to establish Khelafat (Islamic rule) and made mankind responsible for following and practising Allah-directed life style without following and practising man-made ideology.

The Jamaat constitution disagrees with the aims and objectives laid down in the Bangladesh constitution and it also rejected the country's constitution saying "it was man made". There are many other provisions in Jamaat's constitution that contradicts with the country's constitution.

Article 7 (1) of the country's constitution says all powers in the republic belong to the people and their exercise on behalf of the people shall be effective only under and by the authority of the constitution.

To get registered with the EC, the Jamaat will have to change its aims and objectives, laid down in its constitution, in line with the objectives laid down in the preamble of the country's constitution.

Another significant registration criterion says that a political party shall not be qualified for registration if any discrimination regarding religion, race, caste, language or sex is apparent in its constitution.

The text of the criterion was taken from Article 28 (1) of the country's constitution. According to the constitution of Jamaat, only religious Muslims can join the organisation and be members or leaders of the party.

To join Jamaat one will have to swear in as member or leader of the party expressing total allegiance to Allah and his prophet (sm) and promising to give topmost priority to abide by the order of Allah and his prophet.

This means none but religious Muslims are eligible for being a member or leader of Jamaat-e-Islami.

Legal experts say that this is absolutely discriminatory and contradictory to the Article 28 (1) of the country's constitution. They said if any organisation wants to discriminate based on religion and claim such discrimination as its rights, the constitutional guarantee against non-discrimination will obviously have to be thrown away.

If Jamaat now wants to get registered with the EC meeting the criteria, it will have to change its constitution allowing non-Muslims to join Jamaat. Jamaat also opposed the criterion that says that a political party willing to get registration shall have a specific provision in its constitution fixing the goal of reserving at least 33 percent of all committee positions for women including central committee and successfully achieving this goal by the year 2020.

After the new provisions in the RPO were incorporated in an ordinance promulgated on August 19, Jamaat's Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid filed a writ petition with the High Court (HC) challenging the three provisions.

In the writ Jamaat claimed that the provisions are unconstitutional. Following the writ, the HC issued a rule up on the government and the EC on August 28 asking them to explain within two weeks as to why the three sections of the RPO, 2008 should not be declared illegal.

The rule remains pending while the EC's timeframe for applying to it for registration is running out.

Home rush

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agencies. But none of them is coming forward to stop the irregularities," said Shahidul.

BRITA Inspector Joynal Abedin, in-charge of the complaint centre set up at Sayedabad, told The Daily Star, "Everything is okay. There is no irregularity and none of the passengers filed any complaints."

Asked, he said the bus employees had earlier charged less than the government-fixed rates. Now they are charging the fixed rates, which appear to be extra to the passengers.

Maruf Hossain of Netrakona looked furious as he bought a ticket at Tk 180 from Mohakhali in presence of law enforcers and monitoring authorities. He had to pay Tk 60 extra.

Talking to The Daily Star, Sub-inspector Hasan, who was found sitting at the complaint centre at Mohakhali, said he has so far received a single complaint for extra fare.

Speaking anonymously, another policeman said the bus employees are applying different techniques to charge additional fares.

"At first they say all tickets are sold out. If the passengers offer extra money for tickets, they manage tickets and say someone had booked and later cancelled those," he added.

An employee of Soukhin Paribahan said they do not charge

Political parties must apply to the EC by October 15 for registration.

In this situation, Jamaat, a key partner of BNP-led electoral alliance, now wants cancellation of the registration process and it has also successfully made the BNP to back its stance. BNP, however, does not have any such problem and it can easily bring changes to its constitution and apply for registration.

Interestingly, the Special Powers Act (SPA), 1974 does not allow Jamaat and other Islamic political parties to run their activities in the name of or on the basis of religion. The parties have been going on with their activities for the last three decades due to non-enforcement of the laws.

The 1972 constitution banned formation and functioning of any association or union or political party based on religion. Jamaat, which opposed the country's birth in 1971, was automatically banned by the constitution. The provision for ban was later repealed during the rule of Ziaur Rahman allowing Jamaat to resume its activities.

However, the SPA, 1974 is still in force and calls for ban and punishment for violation of the provision.

All successive governments since August, 1975 changeover used the SPA to suppress opponents but turned a blind eye to banning political activities in the name of or based on religion.

BNP shifts

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chairperson at her residence on September 21 to discuss issues related to the RPO.

Party insiders said at the meeting both Khaleda and Kamaruzzaman agreed to take decision regarding registration with the EC and the amended RPO after discussing in their alliance forum.

On September 22, Khaleda asked party Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain to send a delegation to the EC for getting information about the commission's latest views on the revised RPO.

The delegation led by party Vice-President MK Anwar went to the EC the next day. After a fruitful discussion there, Anwar told reporters that the BNP would register with the commission, accept its laws and participate in the ninth parliamentary election.

The announcement irked Jamaat leaders who immediately contacted with the BNP secretary general and sought explanation of Anwar's announcement, Jamaat sources said.

At an iftar party two hours later, Delwar said Anwar's statement was personal. Anwar also said at a press briefing that the earlier announcement was his personal opinion, not the party's decision.

On September 24, hinting at Anwar's statement Delwar even said everyone in the party should not talk on party decisions.

"It is the party secretary general who will convey party positions on different matters. Besides, there is the party chairperson to that end," Delwar said.

The same day, Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid met the BNP chairperson at her cantonment residence after returning from Saudi Arabia and discussed the issue.

After a meeting with acting British High Commissioner Duncan Norman on September 25, Delwar told reporters that there are many obstacles, including the amendment in the Representation of the People Order, to holding a free and fair election.

extra fares, but different other companies are doing it.

Saiful Islam Sohag of Jhenidah said, "I had to buy a Tk 200-250 ticket of a normal bus at Tk 400 for Shailakupa from Gabtoli centre."

According to the chart displayed at the terminal with the government-fixed rates, the fare is Tk 313 for special chair coach and Tk 240 for normal bus.

Ruhul Amin, an employee of bus owners' association in Gabtoli who is assigned to monitor irregularities and receive complaints, claimed, "All the employees are receiving the government-fixed fares from the passengers."

The complaint centre at Gabtoli terminal was found closed after 3:30pm. An employee said the centre remains open till the office hour.

During visits to Gabtoli, Mohakhali, Sayedabad terminals and several bus counters in Shyamoli and Kalyanpur, hundreds of homebound people were seen collecting tickets paying extra money.

The launch passengers were also seen scrambling for a place even on the deck by paying extra bucks.

Overcrowded vessels were seen leaving the Sadarghat launch terminal, with some launches taking passengers from boats in midstream to avoid the patrol teams.

Obaidul Qader

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undergoing treatment at the Delhi Apollo Hospital.

He had numbers of grenade splinters in his body he sustained in the August 21 grenade attack on an AL rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in 2004.

Qader will fly by a Jet Airways Flight at 9:20am this morning. Talking to The Daily Star last night, he sought blessings from the countrymen.

Qader secured bail from the High Court in all the five cases against him on medical grounds and was released on September 5 after around 18 months of confinement.

A four member medical board formed at the BSMMU advised Qader to follow up his treatment in Delhi.

Lankan fight

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while five soldiers also died in combat, the statement said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) made no comment on the fighting.

Sri Lankan troops are advancing to wrestle the rebels' political capital of Kilinochchi and are now within four kilometres (2.5 miles) of the town, army chief Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka said last week.

The United Nations on Sunday said it would begin sending food convoys to Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, after Sri Lanka ordered aid workers out of the region in the face of the heavy fighting.

Mohamed Saleheen, head of the UN's World Food Programme in Sri Lanka, said 60 trucks would enter the rebel-held areas next week, to deliver badly needed supplies to some 230,000 displaced civilians.

Colombo relaxed its stand after UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expressed concern about civilians during talks with Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse in New York last week.

The latest wave of fighting has killed at least 6,983 rebels, according to the ministry, which admits losing 682 soldiers in the same period.

The tolls cannot be independently verified as the ministry blocks independent journalists from travelling to the frontlines.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's military says a suicide bomber has blown himself up near a vehicle carrying policemen in a northern town, killing himself and a civilian and wounding eight others.

Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara says separatist Tamil Tiger rebels were responsible for the attack Sunday in the town of Vavuniya.

He says four police in the vehicle, three nearby soldiers and a civilian bystander were wounded.

Rebel officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

Ctg transport

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SI Mujibur Rahman arrived at the spot shortly and rescued the constable. The workers however continued to protest the attack. They stopped work and stopped the traffic on the road by placing blockades on it.

At one stage more police were deployed in the area to control the situation. Police charged baton to disperse the protesting workers, injuring several of them -- including a linesman named Babul in the process. This resulted in the workers throwing stones at the police.

A police constable, Lal Mia, at this time allegedly shots in the air. Police claimed that he did so to save himself from the workers' attack.

As the shots were fired, a rumour spread that a worker had died in the shooting prompting over four hundred workers to get more violent and bring out a procession chanting slogans against the incident.

During the clash, the half-kilometre road stretching from Kadamtali Mor to Nazirpuri turned into a virtual battlefield as the chase and counter chase between the police and the workers continued.

Seven policemen identified as sub-inspector Mujibur Rahman, constables Lal Mia, Musa, Mintu Kanti, Osman, Morshed and Nayek Swapan were injured during the clash. Five of them were admitted to Dampara Police Line Hospital while Mintu was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

The protests created serious congestion on different busy roads like Station Road, Pathantooli Road and a portion of Dhaka-Trunk (DT) Road as a large number of vehicles got stuck in the traffic jam.

The situation was brought under control at around 2:30 pm when senior police officials including Deputy Commissioner (DC) Port Habibur Rahman and leaders of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Union including its secretary Md Sharif, adviser Mrinal Chowdhury arrived at the spot.

They assured the agitating workers of an investigation of incident and punishment of the culprits.

Workers alleged that some of the police constables and sergeants ask for bribery everyday and the drivers face harassment if they don't cough up the amounts.

AC Itutmish of Double Mooring zone said they would investigate the matter.

US House okays

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unusual Saturday session, held as lawmakers try dealing with the financial crisis and wrapping up the year's business.

The accord reverses three decades of US policy by shipping atomic fuel to India in return for international inspections of India's civilian reactors. Military reactors would not be subject to examination.

Supporters say it would bring India's atomic program under closer scrutiny. Critics say it would boost India's nuclear arsenal and spark an arms race in South Asia.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-California, said the measure "further our countries' strategic relationship while balancing nuclear nonproliferation concerns and India's growing energy needs."

But Rep. Ellen Tauscher, D-California, said in a statement before the vote that the agreement "flies in the face of decades of American leadership to contain the spread of weapons of mass destruction."

The deal enjoys strong support from senior lawmakers in both parties. But it has stalled in the Senate because at least one lawmaker has anonymously blocked it from coming to a vote, according to congressional aides, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to brief reporters.

Supporters warn that while Congress argues over the deal, US businesses are losing opportunities as France, Russia and other countries eyed India's multibillion-dollar nuclear market.

Critics say the initiative sends the wrong message to countries like Iran as they pursue atomic progress.

JP leader

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The injured were rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) where Noman succumbed to his injuries.

Angry locals put up roadblocks on the highway for an hour, creating huge traffic jam.

Police seized the truck but the driver and helper managed to slip away.

Hasina to meet

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her at her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy's Virginia home on September 27.

During the around one-hour-and-45 minutes meeting, they discussed problems of minorities in Bangladesh, the present political situation and the elections.

Hasina about the Tk 3-crore bribery case lodged against her said it has become clear that a briefcase cannot contain Tk 3 crore. She questioned whether she made any mistake by purchasing MiG fighter jets for less than the market price.

According to the ANA report, the AL chief said if the grand alliance is voted to power it will establish the trend of fare politics in the country.

Hasina told the Oikya Parishad leaders that she will visit her daughter Saima Hossain Putul's home in Toronto, Canada on September 30 and from there she will fly to England for her niece's (Sheikh Rehena's daughter) first day of class at Oxford University.

She will return to Virginia, USA for her follow-up treatment.

Wall Street bailout

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executives whose firms seek help and requires the government to make more aggressive efforts to prevent home foreclosures.

In some cases, the government would receive an equity stake in companies that seek aid, the newspaper reported. The White House has also reportedly agreed to strict oversight of the program by a congressional panel.

US lawmakers have struggled to reach a deal on the 700-billion-dollar original plan put forward more than a week ago by Paulson, who was criticized for failing to provide enough oversight.

The Paulson plan initially called for the government to use tax dollars to buy up bad loans, including mortgages, and hand onto them to provide greater liquidity for financial institutions.

But rebel Republicans instead drafted an alternative plan, calling for an expanded insurance system financed by banks to rescue individual home mortgages, so taxpayers do not have to fund the bailout.

The proposed bailout, first rushed to Capitol Hill by Paulson as a three-page proposal, has now ballooned into a document of more than 100 pages, CNN reported.

Democratic White House hopeful Barack Obama hailed the progress made, saying: "The breakthrough between Congress and the administration is the culmination of a sorry period in our history, in which reckless speculation and greed on Wall Street and lax oversight from Washington led to a meltdown of our financial markets."

But he cautioned: "When taxpayers are asked to take such an extraordinary step because of the irresponsibility of a relative few, it is not a cause for celebration. But this step is necessary."

With the world's largest econ-

grams. India built its bombs outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which provides civil nuclear trade in exchange for a pledge from nations not to pursue nuclear weapons.

India has refused to sign nonproliferation agreements and has faced a nuclear trade ban since its first atomic test in 1974. The agreement with the US has been a top priority for the Indian prime minister.

The 45-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group of countries that supply nuclear material and technology agreed this month to lift the ban on civilian nuclear trade with India after contentious talks and some concessions to countries fearful it could set a dangerous precedent.

Indian defence and diplomacy experts predicted Saturday that the measure would be approved by the US Congress.

Mashud