

'Free Hasina rally'

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on having front organisations of teachers, students, employees and labourers of financial institutions, and of other professionals. It also disallows the parties to have foreign chapters.

The decisions and amendments came at a meeting of the AL central working committee (ALCWC) where issues like the general election, formation of grand electoral alliance, election conducting committee, election manifesto committee, and the party's present organisational situation came up for discussion.

The party might submit the application for registration along with the amendments brought to its constitution to the EC tomorrow. Before submitting the application the party's presidium will meet for a final decision on the matter.

Held at Hasina's political office in Dhanmondi, the ALCWC with the party's Acting President Zillur Rahman in the chair demanded that the government sticks to the December 18 schedule for the national election.

AL President Sheikh Hasina also put out similar demands from a rally of expatriate Bangladeshis in Belgium on Sunday night calling upon all to stay vigilant so the election is held on schedule.

Meanwhile at the party meeting at home, most of the AL leaders expressed their doubts about holding of the poll on schedule, as they alleged that BNP-Jamaat led alliance is hatching conspiracies to postpone the national election.

The meeting also decided to form different committees to conduct election related activities and to prepare election manifesto.

It decided to form a grand electoral alliance. But before forming the alliance AL will talk to its 14-party coalition partners within a couple of days.

About sharing seats with other parties in the upcoming election, most of the party leaders asked the meeting to consider the candidates more than the parties they will share the seats with.

The meeting also decided to let grassroots level party committees know about the process of finalising the five-member panels of party nominees from which one will be picked by a central parliamentary board as candidates.

MEDIA BRIEFING
Briefing journalists after the meeting, AL Acting General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam said making Hasina's release unconditional and permanent is a must to hold a free, fair and acceptable election.

He said withdrawal of the emergency is also a must to make the election credible to both local and international observers.

"We have amended our party constitution as required by the

revised RPO. We hope now there will be no problem in getting the registration," said the AL spokesman.

Ashraf said they will talk to the government and the EC regarding deferment of the upazilla polls.

The meeting condemned Saturday's bomb explosion in the compound of the house of a High Court judge and also the anonymous threats issued to four noted lawyers through letters.

HASINA'S SPEECH
Addressing a rally of expatriate Bangladeshis in Belgium on Sunday, Hasina instructed all to remain alert, so the election results are announced in a fair manner, according to a report of the US based news agency ANA.

"Holding a free and fair election on December 18 won't be enough, all will have to be vigilant so that the poll results are announced in a fair manner, not like the announcement of the result of Barisal City Corporation election," said the former premier.

She said their current prime demand is for holding a free and fair poll on schedule. The crises prevailing in Bangladesh will not be resolved without an elected government, said the AL chief.

The rally was organised by all European chapters of AL.

The AL chief said unscrupulous high ambitions of certain people sometimes destroy countries and nations.

"If anyone has a high ambition, the person should go to the people for their mandate to assume power," said Hasina asking all to remain alert so that none can play with the fate of Bangladesh.

She however thanked the military backed caretaker government for its reform initiatives, saying the present government has been implementing the reform proposals that her party had placed in the parliament in 2005.

She also urged the expatriate Bangladeshis to invest more money in the country.

Hasina is scheduled to fly for Canada today to return to the US on October 16 for a follow-up on her treatment the next day.

She will decide on her return to Bangladesh based on the suggestions of her doctors.

4 die

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the sinking sand-laden vessel, MV Muktad 2.

Divers pulled four bodies from water. They were identified as Nayan Tara, 30, wife of Fazlu Mia, their son Rakib, 4, Sabiha Begum, 28, and her mother Hazeria Bibi, 45.

The missing were Milon Bibi, 35, her son Akash, 5, and Babu, 30.

MV Muktad 2 was on its way to Gabtali from Munsiganj's Gazaria. The labourers, hired to unload the ship, boarded it along the way at Pagla at midnight.

Survivors said the other vessel, MV Gazaria, coming the other way chugged into the ill-fated craft at about 4:30am, at Dhaka Udyan across from Mohammadpur in the capital.

South Keraniganj police detained the vessel along with its captain and an employee. Fazlu Mia, who lost his wife and son, told The Daily Star, "I woke up hearing the deafening sound of the crash."

"As our vessel started sinking, I handed my son to my brother Kamal and then grabbed my wife. We could save none," Fazlu lamented on the riverbank.

He had five family members and relatives on board: son, wife, sister-in-law, her husband and brother-in-law.

Nayan Tara's younger sister said, "I cannot remember how I reached the bank."

Mohammad Saheed, station manager at Fulbaria fire service station, said they would resume the rescue operation today if requested.

The sunken cargo could not be salvaged till last night.

Communal violence threatens stability

Says Indian PM

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh warned yesterday that a dangerous rise in ethnic and communal tensions was posing a serious threat to the country's social stability.

His comments came against a backdrop of unrest across India, particularly attacks by Hindus on Christians in eastern Orissa and southern Karnataka states, and clashes between Muslims and tribal groups in the northeast.

"Perhaps the most disturbing and dangerous aspect today is the assault on our composite culture... we see fault-lines developing between, and among, communities," Singh told a conference of chief state ministers in New Delhi.

Singh said the violence threatened what he described as India's proud "inheritance" of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-caste society.

"There are clashes between Hindus, Christians, Muslims and tribal groups. An atmosphere of hatred and violence is being artificially generated. There are forces deliberately encouraging such tendencies," he said.

India is officially secular but clashes between the majority Hindu community and minority Christians and Muslims erupt periodically.

At least 35 people died in Hindu-Christian violence in Orissa following the killing of a hardline Hindu priest and four of his followers in August.

Hossain Zillur

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On the government's political dialogue with BNP and Jamaat, the adviser said, "We're at the end of the dialogue process and we're going to end it through tomorrow's dialogue."

He expressed the hope that the dialogue with BNP and Jamaat will be held in a free and frank manner as happened with other parties in the past and it will be constructive, positive and successful.

Zillur said spontaneous participation in the political dialogue will lead all towards the election and it will be successful. "With all good intention, we are moving towards a specific target."

Metro rail

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planning ministry insisted on looking for foreign funds.

In August 2003, the BR sent a proposal to the planning ministry through the communications ministry to carry out the feasibility study using government's resources.

But an inter-ministerial meeting later decided that the decision in this regard should only be taken after finalisation of the Dhaka strategic transport plan (STP), which received government nod in February this year.

In October 2005, the railway sent another proposal to the planning ministry seeking Japanese assistance for the study. However, no further action was taken when Japan refused to fund the project.

The following year the same proposal sought government funding. In May 2006, the planning ministry returned the proposal, again suggesting the railway should find a donor for the study after approval of the STP.

Finally, in April this year, the communications ministry recommended the study could be undertaken using government money provided the funds are reimbursed in the form of a "success fee" from the winning bidder.

And the communications ministry sent this proposal to the planning ministry on July 13 for approval, sources at yesterday's meeting said.

After the meeting, Communications Secretary Mahbubur Rahman said, "To carry out the feasibility study, we don't need to depend on donors like World Bank or others."

Echoing his views, BR Director General (DG) Md Belayet Hossain said, "We have to finance the study."

The project was delayed by years due to bureaucratic wrangling and lack of coordination among different agencies, railway officials said.

The communications adviser said there is no alternative to constructing the subway as soon as possible to increase mobility of people in the capital.

Meanwhile, a Board of Investment proposal had earlier said there would be six routes with 50 stations on the subway that would connect almost 80 percent of the city area.

But sources present at yesterday's meeting said the routes and stations might be changed after the feasibility study.

BNP, Jamaat

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Barapukuria graft case.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will be assisted by five advisers--Hossain Zillur Rahman, AFM Hassan Arif, Ittehar Ahmed Chowdhury, Anwarul Iqbal and Gulsham Quadri.

Hossain Zillur yesterday told reporters that they will keep an open mind in the discussions.

Party leaders said BNP and Jamaat have already drawn up some common proposals to make in the dialogue.

They also said they will seek to strike a hard bargain. Especially, they will try not to budge on their demands for immediate withdrawal of the state of emergency and deferment of the upazilla polls.

They want the government to do those to remove uncertainty over the December 18 election.

"We think emergency should be lifted without delay, and constituency delimitation can wait till the next election [10th parliamentary polls]. I hope the government will see the logic of our arguments," Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star.

BNP and its allies have lately confined themselves to five demands. These include lifting of the state of emergency immediately, cancellation of the RPO (Amendment) Ordinance 2008, relaxed registration provisions, the election with previous parliamentary boundaries intact, and release of all political leaders and withdrawal of cases against them.

Tanbir Ahmed Siddiki, a standing committee member, who heads the sub-committee assigned to prepare the dialogue agenda, said a 10-member delegation will join today's dialogue.

"The government will accept our five-point demand if it is really sincere in its efforts to hold a free and fair election," he told reporters at a park in Gulshan.

Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Kamaruzzaman told The Daily Star that they and BNP will place uniform proposals. "We will stick to our five-point demand."

Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) adviser Anwarul Iqbal yesterday said he is hopeful there would be a positive outcome of today's dialogue.

He said this while talking to reporters at the Osmani Memorial auditorium.

Replying to a query, he said they have no agenda set for the dialogue.

The government side will seek to work out problems, if there is any, through talks, he added.

Iqbal described the BNP and Jamaat move to amend their constitutions for registration as positive.

Jamaat charter

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back the petition for moving it to another HC bench.

Some 17 leaders and activists of Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, including its Secretary General Md Rezaul Haque Chandpur, yesterday filed the writ petition saying Jamaat-e-Islami is a religion-based political party.

The petition also said the Jamaat constitution has discriminatory rules regarding religion and sex which are against the spirit of the constitution of the republic, Representation of People Order (RPO), 2008, and section 20(1) of Special Powers Act 1974.

Product innovation

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got proper attention. Manufacturing jute paper and increasing the use of sacks could also cut the import of packaging materials and paper, said the experts.

"Most of the jute products the BJRI (Bangladesh Jute Research Institute) developed are not being commercially manufactured," said a BJRI scientist.

The institute has developed, among other things, blanket, good quality curtain cloth, wool and slab yarn from jute or sometimes blending acrylic and cotton in the process, he said.

"State-owned and private-sector mills are not coming up to mass-produce these products," he said, adding that a few policy decisions on the part of the government would help reverse it.

Using biotechnology, the scientists developed hard paper from the jute plant. The technology uses 30 percent less energy compared to the ones used in traditional paper mills.

Writing paper can also be produced from jute fibre using the technology, ISG Consultant (Operations) Siddiqui Rahman said, adding that both items have huge

demand in the local market. Entrepreneurs, as usual, have not shown much interest in it.

Bangladesh Jute Mills Association (BJMA) Chairman Nazmul Huq blamed the BJRI for this, saying the jute research institute is reluctant to transfer technology to private entrepreneurs. "There's a lot of bureaucratic snafu in there."

"One reason for the disinterest may be that entrepreneurs want supply of jute all through the year. The government may encourage the farmers to grow more jute," the ISG's Siddiqui Rahman said. He said geotextile holds out great promise for the country. The army recently started using it, he said.

BJMA Chairman Nazmul Huq, also managing director of the Janata Jute Mills which now produces geotextile, said European countries are increasing the use of such biodegradable products.

The government has got to encourage the domestic use of these jute products, he said, adding that packaging food grains, cement and fertiliser with sacks should be made mandatory.

He pointed to India where such measures are already in place.

Parties given

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necessary documents ready. Those include a provisional constitution with some amendments geared towards meeting the registration criteria.

Its electoral ally Jatia Party is likely to apply today.

Officials at the EC Secretariat said the toughest challenge for them might come from Jamaat-e-Islami, a key component of the BNP-led four-party alliance.

The party's aims and objectives clearly run counter to those in the country's constitution, the supreme law of the land.

Though Jamaat has already drafted a set of proposals for amendments to its constitution, its leaders said they would not compromise on their aims and objectives to establish Islamic rule in the country.

When his attention was drawn to the matter, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Atim Shamsul Huda Sunday said, "Let them submit their applications first."

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Election Commissioner Muhammad Sohul Hussain said the EC will ask the parties to amend their constitutions again if any provision is found to be at odds with the revised RPO.

EC Secretariat officials said if a provisional constitution contains any provision that goes against the registration criteria, the party concerned will not be allowed to register until the contradiction is ironed out.

Announcing the EC's decision to extend the time limit for registration applications, CEC Huda yesterday said the commission will not change its plan to complete registration by October.

BNP and Jamaat on Sunday formally asked the EC to extend the time limit by a week.

Islamic Oikya Jote and Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), the other two components of the four-party, too applied to the EC for time extension yesterday.

Most of the political parties had been vehemently opposed to the registration criteria laid down in the RPO revised by an ordinance on August 19.

As most of the registration conditions call for amendments to party constitutions, they said it was not possible for them to amend the constitutions through national councils at such short notice.

In the face of the political par-

Emergency

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Former foreign secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury who was at the meeting told reporters that the US ambassador wanted to know about BNP's position on holding elections under the emergency.

Shamsheer also said it was a courtesy call where Khaleda Zia categorically said BNP is a pro-election party and wants to contest the elections.

"We told him that elections under the emergency will not be acceptable," said Shamsheer, also the chief of a sub committee formed by the party chairperson.

He said Khaleda told the US ambassador that the caretaker government should defer the upazilla polls and set fresh dates. If voted to power, BNP will hold the upazilla elections on those dates.

Shamsheer said the BNP leaders also informed the ambassador about their election manifesto.

"Basically people will say the state of emergency made it tough to say that this election is credible... that is what I say to the caretaker government and the political party," he said, adding that they hoped to witness a free, fair and credible election on December 18.

The US ambassador said they discussed what he called US interests --- democracy development and denial of space to terrorists.

"We want to say clearly that my government wants to see a free, fair and credible election," Moriarty added.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain and former foreign adviser Reaz Rahman were also present.

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HC hears

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state of emergency in the country on January 11 last year.

The counsels for the petitioners prayed to the HC bench for fixing a date to hold the hearing of the writ petitions considering their public importance.

Former BNP state minister Abdul Mannan filed a writ petition on August 6, challenging the legality of the EC's gazette notification finalising fresh delimitation of the constituencies.

The following day the HC bench of justices Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Mashuque Hosain Ahmed stayed the operation of the notification for three months and directed the government and the commission to explain within two weeks why the gazette notification should not be declared unconstitutional and illegal.

The EC on September 29 submitted an application to the HC for vacating its order that stayed the demarcation of parliamentary constituencies.

On July 14, four apex court lawyers--M Saleem Ullah, Muhammad Mohsen Rashid, Nahid Sultana Juthi and Md Abdul Mannan Khan--filed a writ petition with the same HC bench challenging the legality of the president's proclamation of the state of emergency on January 11, 2007.

On July 20, the HC bench issued a rule asking the government to explain within four weeks why the proclamation of the state of emergency in the country on January 11 last year should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

The court also directed the government to file an affidavit--specifying the grounds on which the state of emergency was proclaimed and what fundamental rights were suspended under the emergency--with the court within a month.

Series decider

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lot of runs when the final game starts at 9am with state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) providing live coverage of the contest.

Bangladesh are set to retain the same team that played the first two games with coach Jamie Siddons ruling out the possibility of any changes despite the inclusion of uncapped opener Imrul Kayes in place of pacer Mahbubul Alam in the list of 12 probabilities.

The big challenge for Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful would be to marshal his bowling on a sporting wicket where the yet-to-fire Kiwi top-order would be raring to go. Siddons too admitted it during the practice at the venue yesterday.

"It would be a different ball game in a different condition," said the Bangladesh coach.

The home team's bowling and fielding has been more or less consistent in the series so far, but Bangladesh will need the batting to click to script another milestone in Chittagong where they had pulled off their only Test victory against Zimbabwe three years back.

TEAMS
BANGLADESH (from): Mohammad Ashraful (captain), Tamim Iqbal, Zunaed Siddiqui, Shakib Al Hasan, Nayeem Islam, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Abdur Razzak, Shahadat Hossain, Syed Rassel and Imrul Kayes.

NEW ZEALAND (from): Daniel Vettori (captain), Grant Elliott, Daniel Flynn, Mark Gillespie, Gareth Hopkins, Jamie How, Brendon McCullum, Kyle Mills, Scott Styris, Jacob Oram, Jeetan Patel, Michael Mason, Jesse Ryder, Tim Southee and Ross Taylor.

HC set to hear

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against them. Khaleda Zia on October 12 filed a petition with the HC to quash the proceedings of the Barapukuria coalmine corruption case against her.

An HC bench comprised of Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Huq and Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury yesterday fixed today (Tuesday) for the hearing.

Khaleda in her petition filed with the HC prayed for staying of the proceedings of the case and issuing a rule upon the government to explain why the proceedings against her should not be quashed.

Another bench of the HC comprising Justice Sheikh Rezaul Karim and Justice Md Rais Uddin is set today to hold the final hearing on two writ petitions filed by Sheikh Hasina for quashing the proceedings against her in the Niko and barge-mounted power plant cases.

On September 29, the same HC bench rejected a bail petition filed by Sheikh Hasina in the extortion case filed by Noor Ali.

Responding to writ petitions filed on her behalf on July 7, the HC stayed for two months all proceedings of the Niko and barge-mounted power plant cases.

It issued separate rules asking the government and the ACC to explain why the cases should not be quashed. In August, the HC extended the tenure of its orders and fixed October 14 (today) for hearing the rules.

On October 5, a vacation bench of the HC comprising Justice Mohammad Anwarul Haque and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury directed the government not to harass or arrest Hasina at home or abroad till October 20 in

these cases. It however did not grant her bail in the cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). Sheikh Hasina is now on parole overseas for treatment.

She was released on June 11. On September 16, the HC vacation bench of Justice Mirza Hussain Haider and Justice Mamnoon Rahman granted three months' ad interim bail to the former premier in the Azam Chowdhury extortion case. It also stayed the case proceedings against her till October 19.

Sheikh Hasina stands accused in 15 cases. She is on bail in all 10 cases filed during the BNP-led four-party alliance rule.

Of the five cases filed after the present caretaker government took over in January last year, three are extortion cases filed by businessmen Noor Ali, Azam Chowdhury and Tajul Islam Faruq and the other two are the Niko and barge-mounted power plant graft cases filed by ACC.

Global crisis

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Zaid Bakht, research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, believes RMG exporters would receive increased orders for its edge over China where the production costs would jump another step in the wake of the crisis.

Professor MA Taslim, chief executive of Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute, also looks at the brighter side of the situation.

"It's also an opportunity. Garment makers can take advantage of the decline in exports from other countries by increasing competitiveness," said Taslim, citing the example of China, which raised exports after the 9/11 attacks on the US.

READ MORE ON STAR BUSINESS

Paul Krugman

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The Princeton University professor was rewarded for his "analysis of trade patterns," the Nobel jury said.

Krugman, 55, has formulated a new theory that determines the effects of free trade and globalisation, as well as the driving forces behind worldwide urbanisation, the citation said.

"I'm a great believer of continuing to do work. I hope it doesn't change things too much," Krugman told Swedish television immediately after the prize announcement.

Krugman's approach is based on the premise that many goods and services can be produced more cheaply in long series, a concept generally known as economies of scale, the jury wrote.

Unlike traditional trade theory, which assumes that differences between countries explains why some nations export agricultural products while others export industrial goods, Krugman's "theory clarifies why worldwide trade is in fact dominated by countries which not only have similar conditions, but also trade in similar products," it added.

Krugman has formalised a new global trade policy, which helps to explain that globalisation tends towards concentration, both in terms of what a manufacturing base makes, and where it is located.

His theory shows that globalisation tends to increase the pressures on urban living, sucking people into these centres of concentration.

"Krugman's theories have shown that the outcome of these processes can well be that regions

become divided into a high-technology urbanised core and a less developed 'periphery,' the jury said.

The issue of ever greater concentration in cities is a major policy issue everywhere but particularly in developing countries, since the cities struggle to have the infrastructure to cope, and urbanisation makes it increasingly difficult to deal with urban environmental pollution.

Last year, US trio Leonid Hurwicz, Eric Maskin and Roger Myerson won the prize for their pioneering work on trading mechanisms aimed at making markets work more efficiently.