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107 parties apply for EC registration

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 107 political parties have applied for registration, a new provision made mandatory under the amended Representation of People Order (RPO) as part of political and electoral reforms in the interim period.

BNP and its major ally Jamaat-e-Islami submitted their registration forms separately yesterday, the last day in the extended deadline set by the Election Commission.

Awami League submitted its registration form on October 15, the first deadline.

Registration is a precondition for joining the December 18 electoral race.

All these parties had to amend their respective party constitutions to comply with the registration rules framed to bring changes in the country's outmoded political culture.

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Jamaat recognises Liberation War

Makes major changes in constitution for registration; allows non-Muslims to be members but puts onus of protecting independence only on them

SHAKHAWAT LITON and RASHIDUL HASAN

Finally, anti-liberation Jamaat-e-Islami has recognised the historic Liberation War of Bangladesh in its newly revised constitution, for the first time since the party resumed its activities in 1979.

The change of policy was forced upon it by its desperation to keep itself legitimised as a parliamentary party registered with the Election Commission (EC), in the face of new amendments to the Representation of the People Order (RPO).

The amended RPO says the

constitution of a political party seeking registration cannot contradict the country's constitution.

Jamaat's provisional constitution which was submitted to the EC for getting registered as a parliamentary party, also renamed the organisation Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, changing its earlier name Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh.

Its also allows non-Muslims to be members of Jamaat, but puts the responsibility of protecting the country's independence and sovereignty by taking an oath only on them, while the Muslim members are exempted from taking that

oath.

"I shall actively play a role in defending the independence and sovereignty of Bangladesh," reads a section of the oath scheduled for non-Muslim members, whose inclusion was prompted by the party's latest necessity for removing religious and gender discriminations within the organisation.

According to Jamaat's interim constitution which will be ratified by a national council within six months of the first sitting of the next parliament, as promised by it, both Muslim and non-Muslim

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7-POINT DEMAND 4-party declares protest rally on Oct 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led four-party alliance yesterday announced to hold protest rally across the country on October 26 to press home their seven-point demand including the total lifting of emergency.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain announced the programme after a two-hour-long meeting of the four-party alliance at his Nam flat in the capital.

He said they will contest the parliamentary election slated for December 18 if their demands are met.

"We want to contest the parliamentary election slated for December 18. But the government has to meet our demands to make the election free, fair and credible," Delwar said.

"The chief adviser and the chief

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Supreme power of BNP chairperson curtailed

Fronts, foreign chapters dissolved in interim charter; party submits form protesting the 'forced changes'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Absolute authority of the BNP chairperson to form the party's standing and executive committees has been clipped in its revised constitution submitted yesterday to the Election Commission (EC) with the application for registration.

From now on, members of the two crucial bodies will be elected at national councils in efforts to ensure democratic practices within the organisation, said BNP sources citing the provisional charter.

The party chief's sole power to expel anyone and dissolve or reconstitute any committee too

has been trimmed.

It was this authority that saw expulsion of former secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and joint secretary general Ashraf Hossain from the party on September 31 last year in a unilateral decision of Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Political observers termed the decision undemocratic. Even the EC observed that Bhuiyan and Ashraf had been 'deprived of natural justice'.

According to the interim constitution, the BNP chief shall exercise all her authority now in consultation with the standing committee, highest policymaking body.

The new provisions are meant

to promote joint leadership in the party, BNP standing committee member RA Gani yesterday told The Daily Star.

The new registration laws require the amended constitution to be ratified at national council within six months since the first sitting of the ninth parliament.

After submitting the registration application at the EC Secretariat at around 3:45pm, BNP Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan said the reformed statute has dissolved the provisions for front organisations and overseas chapters.

However, he added, it allows associated organisations made up

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Huji leaders apply to EC with new party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islamic Democratic Party (IDP), a new party floated by leaders of the now banned Islamist outfit Harkat ul Jihad Al Islami (Huji), yesterday submitted an application to the Election Commission (EC) to register themselves for the upcoming parliamentary polls.

The IDP was floated on May 18 this year and also consists of 200 to 300 Afghan War veterans, Kazi Azizul Huq, an adviser to the IDP, told reporters yesterday.

Azizul Huq said that the party's ultimate objective is to establish Sharia law in the country but they would follow the civil code.

Sheikh Abdus Salam heads the convening committee of IDP. It was also under his leadership that a

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Adviser to Islamic Democratic Party (IDP) Kazi Azizul Huq, second from left, hands over IDP application form to the EC for registration yesterday as founding leader of Huji and IDP Convener Abdus Salam, third from left, stands besides him.

Fresh talks with parties start Oct 23

Poll atmosphere, qualitative changes in politics high on agenda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The caretaker government will sit with political parties again this week for a second round of dialogues, aiming to reach a consensus on an atmosphere conducive to holding a credible election, a government adviser said yesterday.

The issue of bringing qualitative changes to the body politic will also feature prominently in the talks, he added.

"It is necessary to hold another round of talks to discuss the two issues. I hope we will be able to resume it by October 23," said Commerce and Education Adviser

Hossain Zillur Rahman.

Talks between the government and Awami League (AL) will be held at 2:30pm on October 23. The schedule for the talks with BNP will be finalised soon, sources in the government said.

Talking to The Daily Star AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed said that they would sit for another dialogue with the government on Thursday.

"Issues, including withdrawal of all false charges against our party chief Sheikh Hasina and her unconditional permanent release, withdrawal of state of emergency

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122 labourers fixed a BTTB toilet pan!

Over Tk 33cr misappropriated through fake worker deployment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is beyond anyone's imagination that installing simply a pan in a toilet might need 122 labourers, but such is the case, at least on papers.

The officials of Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd (BTCL), former BTTB, Khulna Division, showed deployment of 122 labourers for the task, enough for a couple of workers and misappropriated huge amount of money for their wages.

To go side by side with their colleagues in the race of corrup-

tion, another office of BTCL, Khulna Division, showed deployment of 100 labourers to clear its safety tanks, nearby weeds and repair power connection.

These were the means of corruption committed by different BTCL offices in Khulna in different fiscal years from 2000-2001 to 2007-2008, disclosed Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) at a briefing yesterday. The government staffs misappropriated over Tk 33.77 crore by showing fake deployment of labourers.

Investigations by the ACC

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Unfit buses to return to city streets

DMP returning seized buses to owners as it faces space crisis

KAILASH SARKAR

The traffic department of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) is releasing seized unfit buses due to insufficient dumping space in Rajarbagh Police Lines.

The DMP launched a drive on October 17 against buses without fitness certificates and route permits, seized about 500 buses and filed over 3,000 cases in the last four days.

However, DMP had to stop the drive due to shortage of space. The traffic policemen seized over 103 buses yesterday, 230 on Sunday, 108 on Saturday and 59 on Friday.

Sources say over 300 of the buses have already been handed to

the owners after they paid fines and signed bonds that they would not run the unfit vehicles.

Jasim Uddin, joint commissioner (Traffic) of DMP, told The Daily Star, "We are bound to release the buses as we don't have enough dumping space. We had to stop the drive on Friday after seizing 59 buses."

Asked, he said they cannot dump the buses elsewhere as that requires setting up an office to maintain and look after the seized vehicles.

"We're releasing the buses against bonds and commitments of the owners that they would not further ply these vehicles on the city roads," he added.

In reply to a question, Jasim Uddin said, "The bus owners can ply those vehicles outside the city."

The joint commissioner said they would launch a fresh drive from today against the buses violating route permit.

Meanwhile, bus owners have protested against the drive and issued a threat to stop plying their vehicles on the city roads if the drive continues.

They allege the traffic department is carrying out the drive violating an agreement between the government and Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Malik-Sramik Federation (BSPMSF) signed on October 14.

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Talking polls and beyond

Mojahid for stopping abuse of emergency

Feels to plug the loophole in constituency

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN and RASHIDUL HASAN

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid thinks the country's constitution can have an article to prevent abuse of emergency provisions.

If people want, he said, the next parliament may consider this.

In an interview with The Daily Star on October 17, he alleged that the donor agencies inter-

Find details of the interview on page 11



fered in the country's internal affairs last year to foil the parliamentary polls then scheduled for January 22.

The roles that some of them had played contributed to the nation's being in troubled waters, he observed in reference to the changeover of 1/11.

"The upcoming election is an internal matter of ours. None of the donors or development partners should meddle in it," he said.

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MELAMINE CONTAMINATION

Fresh samples of milk collected for test

12-member expert committee formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A five-member committee yesterday collected samples of the eight milk-powder brands tested positive for toxic melamine to retest them at laboratories home and abroad for confirmation.

The committee handed in the samples to a 12-member expert committee formed yesterday, a commerce ministry official said.

The expert committee will send the samples in a day or two to laboratories of Bangladesh Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) and Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) and to an internationally recognised laboratory abroad.

The expert committee, headed by Mohammad Ali Patwary, joint

secretary at the commerce ministry, will supervise the whole issue as to the presence of melamine in milk powder.

It will submit the new findings, with comments, to the government in seven working days. The government will make its decision on the eight brands on the basis of the report.

The commerce ministry official said other imported brands of milk powder will also be gradually be sent abroad for melamine tests.

Other members of the committee are BSTI Director General Azmal Hossain, Deputy Director Dr Ashish Ratan Sen, BAEC scientific officers Dr Didarul Alam Chowdhury and Dr SM Salehuddin, BCSIR scientific officers Matur Rahim, Dr Nasim

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Reinstall baul sculptures

Demand different organisations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fundamentalist forces in the country are running their activities with the patronage of the present government, speakers alleged at a rally protesting the removal of the five sculptures of bauls near the Zia International Airport.

They were addressing the rally organised by Jano Sangskriti Mancha (JSM) near the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) on the Dhaka University (DU) campus.

The speakers demanded reinstallation of the sculptures and said the present government has been trying to hide its failures by creating untoward situations with the help of fundamentalists.

Justice Golam Rabbani, DU Prof Geeti Ara Nasrin, Gano Sanghati Andolan Convener Zonaid Saki, and Zaid Aziz, among others, spoke.

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PHOTO: STAR

These seized unfit buses kept inside Rajarbagh Police Lines compound in the capital are being returned to their owners as Dhaka Metropolitan Police does not have enough space to keep them.

Chittagong Test on a knife-edge

MOHAMMAD ISAM in Chittagong

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza ran hard from point to short third-man, picked up the ball and in one swooping motion gave Bangladesh a much-needed spark at the end of the fourth day of the first Test against New Zealand yesterday.

With the Tigers fast losing grip on the match at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium, Mashrafe hit the stumps and found Jesse Ryder, on 38 and chasing a second run, well short of his crease two overs before the close of yet another fascinating day's cricket that saw the visitors staging a remarkable fightback in their pursuit of a daunting 316 runs for victory.

Mashrafe's moment of brilliance gave Bangladesh their second wicket but the Black Caps ended the day on a high 145, needing another 172 runs for victory.

New Zealand will begin the fifth and final day with Aaron Redmond (62) and captain Daniel Vettori (0) at

the crease. Vettori, the most accomplished of the visitors' batsmen, is a nightwatchman on paper but it could be a brave tactical move.

Both teams will look to take control of the day's first session as it might pull the game into their direction.

Earlier, the aggressive Ryder played out 101 balls in an innings that contained four boundaries. He added 90 for the second wicket with Redmond, who has faced 192 and hit eight boundaries.

Redmond, admittedly the grafter, bunted the Bangladesh attack with precision defence mixed with some good shots especially off Shahadat Hossain, who took negative options too early in the innings.

It took the Otago batsman thirty balls to pick a bad delivery when he drove Shakib Al Hasan, Bangladesh's best performer with the ball so far, to the cover boundary. And not surprisingly, the next

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PHOTO: ZOBAYER HOSSAIN SHIDER

Teachers slate madrasa students' vandalism at DU VC's office

DU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday expressed concern over Saturday's vandalism at the office of DU Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof SMA Faiz by a group of madrasa students.

They were speaking at a protest programme at the foot of Aparajeyo Bangla on the university campus at 12:00noon.

The DU teachers demanded proper investigation into the incident and said it was an attack not only on the VC's office but also the university's dignity.

The protest programme, in which about 50 DU teachers took part, was organised following a decision at Sunday's meeting of the executive committee of Dhaka University Teachers Association (Duta).

Over a hundred madrasa students along with some DU students, vandalised the VC office demanding cancellation of the university authorities' decision of

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