

EU to assess pre-poll situation

Team due on Nov 6

UNB, Dhaka

The European Commission (EC) expects an announcement from the caretaker government soon about lifting or relaxing the state of emergency as a 10-member core team from Brussels comes here on November 6 to assess the pre-poll situation.

"Our position has not changed. The team will talk to as many people as possible, including press, political parties and election officials, to assess the political situation and report back to Brussels whether or not a full-fledged observation mission will come," EC Ambassador Stefan Frowein said yesterday.

He said the EC headquarters will take the right decision as to

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Jamaat charter still anti-constitutional

Finds EC committee; BNP's associated organisations not RPO proper; AL's charter not accepted yet

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Some provisions in the revised constitution of Jamaat-e-Islami still run counter to those in the republic's, finds the expert committee assigned by the Election Commission (EC) to examine the applications for registration.

One section disregards the fundamental feature of the country's constitution in that it does not accept the plenary powers of parliament to make laws. Another calls for concerted efforts to establish 'just rule of Islam', said sources

close to the committee.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Jamaat's Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid however claimed that in no way does his party's constitution contradict the country's.

According to the criteria laid down in the revised Representation of the People Order (RPO), a political party shall not be qualified for registration if the objectives in its constitution are at variance with those in the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

BNP's revised charter too has

been found to have sidestepped RPO stipulations, added the sources.

According to a criterion, a party seeking registration must have a provision disavowing associate organisations made up of students, workers and other professionals.

BNP has scrapped the provision for front organisations, but has had one that says students and workers can form organisations on their own, and the party will consider those its associated bodies.

Ending speculations, BNP and

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Re-DEMARCATION AL asks EC to resolve legal matters soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday demanded that the Election Commission (EC) hold the upcoming national elections with the previous constituencies if the commission failed to resolve within a week all complexities centring re-demarcation of constituencies.

It also cautioned the EC not to get the national elections hampered by complexities centring re-demarcation of constituencies.

"Resolve the issue within a week or hold the elections with previous constituencies. The candidates as well as the voters do not know their constituencies yet," AL acting General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam told reporters after a

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Only 3 in BNP saw revised charter

RASHIDUL HASAN

The new provisional constitution of BNP has been virtually a secret document as only the party 'high command' and the Election Commission (EC) officials so far had the seemingly coveted privilege of having copies of it.

Even the party's standing committee members, who ostensibly approved the amendments to the original constitution, are yet to get copies or know its details, alleged party insiders.

Even the draft of the interim constitution had not been distributed among all standing committee members for their scrutiny, although BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain told reporters that the provisional constitution had been approved 'unanimously' in the standing

committee after a two-hour long meeting on Sunday.

The party insiders said only Chairperson Khaleida Zia, Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, and Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan were involved in the process of bringing changes to the original constitution, as the 'high command' did not want to publicise the details.

"I discussed the draft constitution in the standing committee meeting on the basis of my personal opinions without seeing any copy of it," a standing committee member told The Daily Star last night requesting anonymity.

"We had no opportunity to comment on the draft as we did not get copies of it," he said adding that he already asked the 'high command' for a copy of the 'approved'

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Bail orders for three bigwigs upheld by SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday upheld the High Court (HC) orders which granted bail to former minister Mirza Abbas, ex-state ministers AKM Mosharraf Hossain and Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and former lawmaker Kamal Ahmed Majumder in separate corruption cases.

Chamber Judge Justice MA Matin also upheld the HC order that granted bail to Asma Kamran, wife of Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran.

The judge passed the orders after hearing separate appeals filed by the government and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) against a string of bail and stay orders passed by the HC.

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Citizens to unite against sculpture removal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens of the country yesterday decided to bring all the organisations protesting the removal of Baul statues from the airport roundabout under one platform in a day or two to forge a people's movement against fundamentalist forces.

They said they will send letters to the Awami League, BNP and other political parties asking them to support the demand for installing a statue of high art value at the site and stand up to what they termed conspiracies against the spirit of the liberation war.

The roads & highways

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The cultural activists and Dhaka University students pose as sculptures and parade streets on the campus yesterday, demanding right to free practice of cultural activities and protesting removal of Baul sculptures at ZIA intersection.

India shoots for the moon in Asian space race

AFP, Sriharikota

India takes a giant leap today with the launch of a lunar mission that will boost its space programme into the same league as regional powerhouses Japan and China.

The unmanned lunar orbiting spacecraft Chandrayaan-1 is scheduled to blast off aboard an Indian-built rocket at 6:20 am (0050 GMT) on Wednesday from Sriharikota on India's southeastern coast.

For India, the 80-million-dollar mission puts the country on the inside track of a fast-developing Asian space race.

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MELAMINE CONTAMINATED MILK

Samples of 8 brands sent to FAO for further test

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Samples of powdered milk of eight brands that had tested positive for melamine contamination were handed over to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) yesterday for further testing.

A 12-member experts committee formed Monday to supervise the matter also sent samples of

these products to the laboratories of Bangladesh Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) and Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) for re-test as confusions arose over differing test results from local laboratories.

The test results are expected to be available to the government in 9-10 days and the government will

take a decision on the eight popular brands on the basis of those reports, an official of the commerce ministry told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, Nestlé Bangladesh Ltd, which markets Nido fortified instant, and New Zealand Dairy Products, which sells Fonterra brands Red Cow, Diploma and

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Govt to cut fuel prices by 8-10pc

Likely to be effective next week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to cut prices of fuel oil by eight to ten percent, which is likely to come into effect sometime next week, according to energy ministry officials.

A proposal will soon be sent to the chief adviser (CA) to the caretaker government seeking his approval for the price cut.

Under the new regime, prices of petroleum products will go down by Tk 5 to Tk 8, said the officials.

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Rejoinder, our reply

In a rejoinder to our reports headlined "IGP show-caused: asked to explain his frustration over Police Ordinance" and "IGP notice portrays police as weak force: feel reform aspiring cops: IGP replies to Home", the home ministry said no show-cause notice was served on IGP.

The home ministry said it rather served a letter to the IGP requesting him to inform the ministry about related sections of the Police Act, 1961 which were against neutral investigation of criminal cases as mentioned by the IGP and reported by newspapers.

The home ministry also said that the government is keen on reforms and welfare of Bangladesh Police and has taken various measures in this respect.

It said the draft police ordinance received from the Police Headquarters is under active consideration of the government.

OUR REPLY
The home ministry letter was legally not a "show-cause" letter but a letter seeking explanation from the IGP. We stand corrected.

Talking polls and beyond

Anti-graft drive slowing down

Dr Kamal sees signs of compromise

SHAMIM ASHRAF and HASAN JAHD TUSHER

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain has said 206 bails in just 100 minutes and the commerce adviser's meeting with corrupt politicians are signs of a weakening in the caretaker government's fight against corruption.

"I do not want to say yet that the government has failed in its fight against corruption. But certainly we have seen some weakening. And that is because we feel that some views have been taken that you should bring in the parties [to the election] at

any cost," he said during an interview with The Daily Star.

Granting of so many bails in such a short time is not possible through the legal procedure, he said.

Asked if too many arrests have thinned out the anti-corruption drive, he said, "Definitely. It should have been more targeted."

Termining preparation of voter list and declaration of election date "solid achievements" of the Election Commission, Dr Kamal said delay in implementing the remaining reforms can be

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Find details of the interview on page 11

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