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Changes elude JS

Negative political culture in one-year-old ninth parliament overshadows timely formation of JS bodies, early good gesture to opposition

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Perennial animosities between the ruling and opposition parties have blunted hopes that the ninth parliament would become the main force for change.

Last year, the House saw parliamentary committees formed in the inaugural session and opposition lawmakers given the helm of three standing committees—all for the first time in its history.

But soon the culture of parliament boycott returned and took the shine off those successes.

The main opposition BNP and allies began boycotting the Jatiya Sangsad from the second session in June last year.

First they said they were keeping off the House proceedings to protest the

seating arrangements.

Later, in a departure from the reason they originally cited, the opposition announced they would return to the JS on condition that the government meet their 10-point charter of demand.

The demands include scrapping the decision to cancel the lease of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's cantonment residence, withdrawing cases against Khaleda, her son Tarique Rahman and other BNP leaders, strengthening her security, having two more BNP MPs as standing committee chair, adjourning scheduled business of the House to discuss law and order, price hike of essentials, India's planned construction of Tipaimukh dam and ruling party men's involvement in tender manipulations.

Amid growing public concerns, BNP legislators still remain absent from the House, which steps onto its second year today.

Similar practice in the past had prevented parliament from functioning effectively. In fifth, seventh and eighth Sangsad, opposition lawmakers boycotted around half the total sittings.

As of Thursday, the ninth parliament had 95 sittings, and BNP-led opposition attended only 23.

In the previous parliament, the then main opposition Awami League joined the House when 70 sittings had already passed.

Before the election, AL said it would do everything necessary to make parliament

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Commute death penalty

Two Bangabandhu killers appeal to SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two of the five condemned prisoners in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman assassination case--Bazul Huda and AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed-- appealed to the Supreme Court yesterday to commute their death penalty to any other punishment.

They made the appeal through their counsel as the SC began hearing the petitions filed by the five convicts seeking review of its judgement confirming their death sentence.

The four-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice Md Tafazzul Islam later adjourned the hearing till this morning.

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Jamaat's goals still against constitution

EC asks it to change party charter again to be RPO-proper; Freedom Party to lose registration

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday asked Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami to amend its constitution again, as the party's aim and objectives and some other provisions stipulated in it do not conform to the country's constitution and RPO.

In a letter to the Jamaat secretary general, the EC pointed out the provisions and asked the party to amend those, said EC sources.

The commission also sent letters to eight other political parties including HM Ershad-led Jatiya Party for amending their charters again as well in compliance with the Representation of the People Order (RPO).

Freedom Party, formed by a number of killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, will lose its registration as it failed to submit its ratified amended charter to the EC

within the deadline yesterday.

"We received ratified charters of 38 political parties. Freedom Party did not submit its charter. Therefore, its registration will stand cancelled," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain told reporters yesterday in his office.

Jamaat's call in its charter for establishing the rule of Islam in the country through organised efforts, requires bringing drastic amendments to the basic structure of the country's constitution, said EC officials.

But the country's constitution, the supreme law of the land, does not allow the parliament to amend its basic structure, they added.

They also said a number of clauses in Jamaat's charter call for establishing the rule of Islam.

In its ratified charter, submitted to the EC on

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DHAKA RIVER GRABBING Start demolition within a month

HC asks govt for update every 3 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government to start within a month demolition of all illegal structures built within the boundaries of four rivers around the capital, so that removal of the debris can be completed by the time stipulated by a previous court order.

The rivers are Buriganga, Balu, Shitalakhya and Turag. The court also directed officials concerned to submit to it, progress reports of the river reclamation drive through the Supreme Court (SC) registrar every three months, for necessary new court orders.

The HC in June last year issued a set of directives, including one upon the government, to complete by November 30 this year the demolitions and debris removal.

The court issued the June order upon a writ petition in a public interest litigation filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), an organisation for protecting human rights and the environment.

Yesterday's directives were issued by an HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui upon a supplementary petition filed by HRPB President Advocate Manzill Murshed the same day.

In December last year, deputy commissioners of Dhaka, Narayanganj, Munshiganj and Gazipur submitted survey reports on the four rivers to the court.

According to the survey reports, there are more than 8,000 illegal structures in the four rivers and on their banks.

Manzill Murshed yesterday told the HC that the authorities have not yet started demolition of the illegal structures despite the earlier HC directive.

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This elderly man, like many others, could not enter the ijtema ground yesterday, the concluding day of the congregation. He along with fellow devotees takes part in Akheri Munajat from Tongi Rail Station area yesterday.

PHOTO: SHAFIQUE ALAM

Ijtema ends with prayer for peace

7 devotees die in accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over a million Muslims raised their hands seeking forgiveness and blessings for mankind and the Muslim Ummah as the three-day Biswa Ijtema concluded yesterday with final suppli-

cation--Akheri Munajat.

Maulana Jobayerul Hasan of Tablig-e-Jamaat, India led the 22-minute Munajat at the ijtema, the biggest annual Islamic event after the hajj, on the bank of Turag in Tongi.

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MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 3, 5

Brutality beats the beast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Husband's cruelty forced 15-year-old garment employee Beli to opt for divorce but the separation could not save the teenage girl. Beli is now struggling for life at a hospital as the divorced husband stabbed her brutally in the city's Kalyanpur yesterday.

Doctors stated the condition of Beli Akter, now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, critical with indiscriminate stab injuries.

Locals caught the husband, Anisur Rahman, 24, of Kalyanpur Porabosti where Beli also lives and handed him over to Mirpur police after a good beating.

Police recovered the weapon Anis had used for stabbing Beli. Locals said Anis attacked Beli when she was on her way to workplace NEC Garments on Darussalam Road around 7:30am.

"When Beli saw Anis running towards her with a long sharp weapon in his hand Beli tried to run away but she could not escape," said 23-year-old Monir, who witnessed the incident.

"We caught Anis after he had already stabbed Beli several times." Beli's mother Monwara Begum said Anis is a drug addict and often tortured her daughter for dowry and money. Beli divorced him on December 26 last year.

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'Green office' planned in ICT ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday said an office building would be constructed under Science and ICT ministry using 'green technology' which would emit zero carbon.

The parliamentary standing committee on Science and Information and Communication Technology ministry is taking the initiative in line with the prime minister's direction to cope with the climate change threat and to draw attention of international community.

Chaired by Dabirul Islam, chairman of the standing committee, it also recommended that the government construct other offices and

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The recent visit of **Sheikh Hasina**, Honourable Prime Minister, to India, the treaties and memorandum signed between two friendly countries will open the door of new horizon towards the economic progress of Bangladesh.

Our Hertiest Congratulations to
Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

for taking the bold, far reaching and timely decision as a great statesman.



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DHAKA
TOUCHING LIVES

Tigers falter early

ATIQUE ANAM

Those who switched on their TV sets a little late for the Dhaka Test yesterday morning, were in for a shock. Bangladesh are five down for 53 within an hour of play is not what you would expect after the hosts had decided to bat first on a placid track.

But that was how the frailty of the Bangladesh top-order batting was exposed at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. There was very little assistance for the seamers on the

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