

Govt move faces

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the governments during that period were without lawful authority.

The landmark HC verdict on it was upheld by the Supreme Court early this year. Analysts say the fresh amendment move will generate much heat in the political arena, as it may see religion-based politics banned.

The opposition BNP yesterday said it will launch a movement if the government does not retreat from its plan to amend the constitution.

Addressing a gathering in the capital's Muktangan, the party's Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said there is an "ulterior motive" behind the efforts to get back to 1972's charter.

Earlier on Friday, the prime minister said the government would form an all-party parliamentary panel to make necessary changes to the constitution.

She also said changes are a must as the military regimes after 1975 have mutilated the constitution.

Suranjit Sengupta yesterday told The Daily Star that he will first sit with Law Minister Shafiqe Ahmed to discuss formation of the committee.

The draft will be finalised in consultation with the prime minister, who will unveil it in parliament this week, he added.

Replying to a query, he said, "Since the opposition lawmakers do not want restoration of 1972's constitution, they may not be included in the committee."

AL insiders said Suranjit may lead the parliamentary body.

Contacted yesterday, BNP standing committee member and lawmaker Moudud Ahmed said it would not be possible to return to the original constitution, given the present realities.

He however said his party will decide on its stance after examining the terms of reference for the proposed committee.

The HC judgment on the fifth amendment came on August 29, 2005.

BNP had filed a petition with the Supreme Court to overturn the watershed verdict. But the apex court on February 2 dismissed the petition.

The fifth amendment legalised all actions including those that destroyed the basic character of the constitution.

A slew of amendments, additions, modifications, substitutions and omissions were made to the constitution by the regimes that came after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975.

These actions changed the

fundamental principles of state policy, destroyed the constitution's secular nature, allowed religion-based politics and gave political rights to the anti-Liberation War forces.

Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed, Abu Sadaat Mohammad Sayem and Major General Ziaur Rahman led the regimes adjudged unlawful.

Before the parliamentary election in 2008, the AL-led grand alliance pledged to restore the constitution to what it was in 1972.

Legal observers say the apex court ruling upholding the HC verdict has in fact made the job easier for the ruling alliance, which enjoys over three-fourth majority in parliament.

AL General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam yesterday said the party can assist the government in its move to amend the charter by making useful recommendations.

He was speaking at an informal meeting at Sheikh Hasina's political office in Dhanmondi, said party sources.

Meanwhile, the SC that upheld the HC verdict has yet to release copies of its judgment.

A court source said the copies are likely to be available this week.

PM administers

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Minister's Office at 10:00am.

Awami League (AL) General Secretary and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraf Islam said this at a press conference held at the party president's Dhanmondi office.

One thousand guests including leader of the opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and leaders of different political parties have been invited to join the swearing-in ceremony.

About inviting Khaleda, Ashraf said they expect the presence of the opposition leader at the programme.

The LGRD minister will administer the oath to 41 ward councillors and 14 female councillors of CCC at the LGED auditorium in the capital at 12:30pm.

BNP-backed candidate M Manjur Alam won the June 17 mayoral race defeating the ruling AL-supported ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury by 95,528 votes.

RMG worker

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area was crushed under the wheels of a bus in front of his factory at 8:00am.

He was a son of Kutubuddin of Chiribandar area under Roumari thana in Kurigram district.

Hearing the news, hundreds of workers from different factories took to the street and vandalized at least 25 vehicles, said Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station.

Traffic movements on the road remained halted for nearly two hours. Several hundred vehicles got stranded on both sides of the road.

On information, Ashulia police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Peral Garments authorities announced one day's holiday in the factory following the death of the worker.

The bus was seized but the driver managed to flee.

A case was filed with Ashulia police station in this regard.

AL plans rallies

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said they want to brace up the party's grassroots who would elect three members to be considered for nomination in all elections including that for parliament.

He said the move will build up intra-party democracy and benefit the party.

The minister said the party will hold its councils at all wards, unions, upazilas and districts and the task will take at least two years to complete.

AL district unit leaders demanded the party chief hold its long due councils to revitalise the organisation.

The ALWC meeting held at Gono Bhaban with Sheikh Hasina in the chair formed 11 central sub-committees out of 19 according to AL's constitution. Ashraf said, adding that the rest would be formed after completion of a full-fledged AL advisory council.

Dr Moshir Rahman has been made chairman of finance and planning affairs sub-committee, advocate Rezaur Rahman for law, Abdur Razzaque for agriculture and cooperatives, Tofail Ahmed for relief and social welfare, HT Imam for publicity and publication, Prof Alauddin Ahmed for science and technology, Maj Gen (ret'd) Shafulah Bir Bikram for liberation war, Prof AK Azad Chowdhury for education and human resource, Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed for industry and commerce, Prof Abdul Khalek for culture and Prof Abdul Mannan for health and population.

AL leaders AFM Bahauddin Nasim, Faridunnahar Laily, Mrinal Kanti Das, Aminul Islam Amin were among others present at the press conference.

Banned Tahrir

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Tahrir men brought out the procession carrying banners written in Bangla, English and Arabic. They attacked the law enforcers who tried to stop the procession, injuring four policemen.

Later, the law enforcers had to charge baton to bring the situation under control and arrested three unruly Tahrir men from the spot, he said adding, the police also seized six banners from the protesters.

The government had banned all kinds of activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh in the greater interests of security of the public since October 22, 2009.

The injured policemen are -- Assistant Sub-Inspector Zahurul Islam, Habilder Nazrul Islam, Habilder Anwar Hossain and Constable Maruf Hossain.

Police filed two separate cases - one under Anti-Terrorism Act and another on charge of assaulting members of the police force, against the arrestees with the Shabagh Police Station.

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40 injured

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entering Barbatipur Railway Station.

Two separate bodies have been formed to investigate the accident, said railway sources.

Communication was restored on the route at 2:10pm after a rescue operation by a relief train, they said.

Krishna Chandra Basak, deputy engineer of the railway station, said they would need at least eight to ten hours to repair the damaged tracks.

Stationmaster Abdul Karim said the cause of the accident cannot be identified without a thorough investigation.

A five-member investigation team led by Sanwar Hossain, examiner of the railway station, has been formed.

Another team led by Habibur Rahman Mollah, divisional traffic officer of Pakshi, is also looking into the matter. So far, primary investigation found four switches of the track broken, which might have caused the accident.

Bangladeshi

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region, sources said.

Foreign ministry sources said it is very difficult for the Bangladesh embassy to get information about the casualties of the fire due to security restrictions and poor telecommunications network.

The regional government in a press statement said 14 Iraqi nationals and 14 foreign nationals were killed in the incident.

Los Angeles Times claimed that the foreign nationals include one from Cambodia, two from Bangladesh, one from Canada, two from Australia, one from Ecuador, one from South Africa, one from the United Kingdom, one from Lebanon and one from Venezuela.

They used to work for the oil firm, Asiaceil, and other companies.

The Philippine embassy in Baghdad confirmed death of a female Filipino worker.

Cairn can sell gas

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price offered under the PSC. Whereas the maximum price of gas per thousand cubic metre under the PSC is \$ 2.75, it could go up to \$ 4-5."

The law ministry had vetted the amendment in recent months and Petrobangla and Cairn were supposed to sign it earlier this month. But, at the last moment, the energy ministry asked Cairn whether it was ready to pay corporate tax on the additional income from the gas sales to a third party.

Cairn or any other PSC operator in the country does not pay any corporate tax under an incentive package. On behalf of them, Petrobangla pays the tax.

Cairn was surprised by the proposal as this issue was never mentioned before. In a letter earlier this month, Cairn said paying the tax will erode the project value and once again make the initial investment less attractive. In addition, it will take three to six months to discuss the tax issue before trying to incorporate it in the amendment.

The British company then said it will not invest further without the contract amended.

Petrobangla sources said the matter was resolved by Thursday, and the amendment is likely to be placed tomorrow (Monday).

"The PSC for Block-6 already has the provision for Cairn to sell gas to a third party. But they still need amendment to the PSC allowing it to negotiate gas price with a third party," said a high official.

Such a third party could be Kanco or a major industrial zone which would be willing to pay more for a steady gas supply for a guaranteed period.

For Petrobangla, this deal will have some extra benefits. If Cairn secures a higher price for gas, the company will be able to recover its investment

at a faster pace. This will also reveal how much money big consumers are ready to pay for gas in this country.

Under the PSC, a part of Cairn's gas will belong to Petrobangla for free.

"We are presently selling PSC gas at a price much lower than the price we are buying it," said the official. This means if Cairn secures a higher price, it would also ensure that Petrobangla does not sell its share of gas at a lower price.

According to Cairn, if the amendment is signed, it will immediately begin work for drilling a costly deviated well from the offshore Sangu platform. This well is called Sangu 11 well. It would require \$45 million investment.

Cairn will also drill a new well in South Sangu, which is 6 km off the Sangu platform. A pipe will be connected to the main platform to extract gas.

Sangu field's life is set to expire next year. By drilling these two wells, Cairn would tap two small sub-reserves to extend the field's life by a couple of years. This would give Petrobangla some time to allow other new gas ventures come into operation and increase gas supplies.

By winter next, the company plans to drill a well in the shallow zone of Magnama where it spotted a thin geological structure promising gas or oil.

"But unless we drill it, we are not sure what it is. In the past, we found water instead of gas in such zones," said a Cairn official.

Cairn's experience with the Bay of Bengal so far showed that there is no big gas structure in the shallow waters, he said. "The gas structures here are quite different from that in the mainland. But the cost of drilling here is higher than that in the mainland."

This is why the economics of offshore gas fields should be treated differently, the official added.

JMB man

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the area and the attackers got away, they said.

Azad died from what an autopsy said was a heart attack in Munich on August 12 that year.

Azad was receiving threats from fundamentalists after his book "Pak Saar Jamin Saad Baad" was published in a national Bangla daily's Eid issue.

Meanwhile, a top DB official said they put acting JMB chief Nazmul, the banned outfit's North Bengal chief Shafiqul Islam alias Jamai Rafiq and former acting JMB chief Saidur Rahman face-to-face and interrogated them.

The official said they also put detained Jamaat leaders face-to-face with detained JMB leaders and interrogated them yesterday.

A DB official said Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, Motiur Rahman Nizami and Delwar Hossain Sayeede claimed that they are not war criminals. They said they just supported Pakistan during the war and it was their political right to do so.

The detained JMB leaders used to keep regular contact with Jamaat leaders and some Jamaat leaders used to provide financial help to JMB operatives, claimed a DB source, adding that JMB high-ups were also trying to forge a unity with Jamaat.

Jamaat and Hizb-ut Tahrir also tried to keep contact with Detained JMB leaders, a DB source said quoting the JMB leaders.

Nizami

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In the remand prayer, the IO stated that Motiur Rahman Nizami along with his party's top leaders had killed a huge number of people during the country's liberation struggle in 1971.

They had also raped women, looted and torched houses at that time. So they need to be remanded to find out reasons behind the killings as well as the whereabouts of their accomplices responsible for committing such offences, the IO stated further.

Defence lawyer Abdur Razzak submitted a petition seeking Nizami's bail as well as cancellation of the remand prayer saying his client was implicated in the case to politically harass him. The court, however, did not entertain the defence petition.

Amir Hossain Mollah, who identified himself as a freedom fighter in his submission, filed the case on January 25, 2008, with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

Meanwhile, the same court yesterday placed the banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Saidur Rahman on a three-day fresh remand in a case filed against him on charge of subversion.

The court sanctioned the remand after Detective Branch (DB) inspector Sheikh Mahbubur Rahman, also the IO of the case, produced Saidur before it with a seven-day remand prayer in the case filed by Kadamtali police on May 23.

Earlier on July 12, the JMB chief was taken on a three-day remand in the same case.

Trader's death

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yesterday protesting police action that led to Sabed's death.

Seeking anonymity, a local motor parts trader said "We kept the shutters down protesting police action as they recorded the false case without probe, arrested two family members of Sabed and tortured them in custody. We also wore black ribbons and hoisted black flags mourning Sabed's death."

Officer-in-Charge of Bangshal Police Station Abdul Mannan said an investigation committee was formed in this regard.

AHM Qamruzzaman, additional deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Lalbagh), said they learnt about the death the following day and formed the investigation committee. He added police received no complaint from Sabed's family.

The victim's wife placed a complaint with the Bangshal Panchayet. The panchayet urged police to conduct an impartial investigation into the case.

Sabed died falling from the first floor of his residence while trying to evade arrest when a team of Bangshal police went to arrest him around 1:00am.

Locals alleged police recorded a false case against a reputed family of the area without investigation as Solaiman Moyna, incumbent president of Bangladesh Motorcycle Parts Merchants' Association, filed the case.

Sabed, former president of the association, and eight of his family members were sued in the case.

Small industries

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development for upgradation of technologies, improvement in product quality and testing facilities so that local industries attain global standard.

"There might be some reasons that tariff structure are somehow in favour of importers. Either those who are involved in framing tax structures pretend not to understand it or don't understand it," said Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, president of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) Alumni Association.

He said importers' lobby is really stronger than small local manufacturers in Bangladesh.

"We want a level playing field and there should be no favour," he said at the discussion on "Light Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Industries in Bangladesh: What Prevents us from a Takeoff".

The Daily Star and BUETAA jointly organised the programme where The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam and Associate Editor Shah Hussain Imam, among others, were present.

The discussants said the light engineering sector involving Tk 20,000 crore by sales employs about 6 lakh people and supplies import-substitute machinery and spare parts to various industries, growing by more than 5 percent a year in the past one decade.

But the sector, comprising around 40,000 small-scale light engineering entities, faces difficulties due to imposition of tax and VAT. Anomalies in duty, tax and tariff structures are hindering the growth of local industries, specially the small enterprises," he said.

"In many cases, unnecessary conditional rules in duty and VAT forced many small industries to quit business," said M Kamal Uddin, head of Institute of Appropriate Technology, BUET.

In addition, electrical and electronics industry, with hundreds of small and medium-scale assemblers, loses steam due to inconsistency in tariff regime, said K Siddique-e-Rabbani, professor and chairperson of Biomedical Physics & Technology, Dhaka University.

Before 2002, there were widespread activities for television assembly. But tax policy since 2002 killed the small assembly industries, he said.

The government should take measures to stop harassing local entrepreneurs and give them enough freedom to create and innovate newer import-substitute items, Prof Rabbani added.

Rabiul Alam, managing director of Energy Pac Ltd, said tariff policy has not been rationalised because of influences of business people, especially traders.

Alam, also an engineer, said local manufacturers have to pay taxes to take part in international tenders floated by the government. "But duty for imported products is zero," he said.

"We don't need any favour. We want a similar baseline," said Alam.

Abdur Razzaque, president of Bangladesh Engineering Industry Owners Association, said despite provision of 10 percent incentive, the sector does not get benefit of these policies in absence of imple-

menting. He added policy support alone would not help domestic industry to grow. "Political commitment to realise the vision is important," Razzaque observed.

"This is like chicken or egg case. If you don't create environment, local industries will not take off," said Habibullah N Karim, former president of Bangladesh Association of Software and Software & Information Services (BASIS).

Industries Minister Dilip Barua said those who want to use Bangladesh as a captive market like to control tariff policies to prevent local industries from growing.

"In the past, we had a trading-based economy. But now it passes a transitional phase and gradually turns into an industry-based economy," said Barua.

"We have to promote local industries; otherwise, our country will become a captive market for others.

"The main task of the government is to create a safe-guard for the industrial capital to help economy grow and create employment opportunities," said Barua.

In this regard, the government is going to unveil the industrial policy soon, he said.

The minister also revealed the steps to strengthen Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution (BSTI) and Bangladesh Industrial Technical Assistance Centre (BITAC).

"These organisations are essential to facilitate local entrepreneurs with technical knowhow and ensure the quality of our products. And our products will be competitive once we can ensure that these bodies function properly," Barua observed.

Hossain Khaled, former president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), said his business organisation, Anwar Group of Industries, prefer local materials.

"But we cannot judge the quality of products in absence of testing facilities for light engineering products," he said suggesting creation of testing facilities to check quality.

Khaled also suggested extending finance from the Equity and Entrepreneurship Fund (EEF).

Prof AMM Safullah, vice-chancellor of BUET, stressed the need for a strong industry and education linkage to support industrial sector expansion.

Road crash

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rammed into a Chapainawabganj-bound tempo while trying to overtake a truck, said Zakirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Godagari police station.

All the victims were passengers of the tempo, he added. Agitating locals blocked the highway nearly for about an hour protesting the accident.

Normalcy returned when police seized the bus.

Our correspondent says shallow-engine run three wheelers have recently become a threat to people's lives causing most road accidents.

At least 15 people died in accidents of these vehicles at Godagari last month.

Indo-Pak talks

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"Serious introspection is required by Pakistan into why terror has been used as an instrument of policy against India," she said.

Islamabad also needs to understand "why terror threatens the very fabric of Pakistan itself," Rao said, referring to the slew of deadly attacks in the country blamed on Taliban and Al-Qaeda-linked militants.

Rao's comments echoed statements on the eve of the talks by India's Home Secretary GK Pillai, whose accusations that Pakistan's intelligence service coordinated the Mumbai attacks cast a long shadow over the Islamabad meeting.

India's newspapers, meanwhile, on Saturday blamed Pakistan for creating the talks deadlock.

The Economic Times accused Islamabad of pushing ties "off the diplomatic rails... by sidelining New Delhi's main demand for action" against the Islamic militant perpetrators of the 2008 Mumbai attacks, which left 166 people dead.

The Hindustan Times said Pakistan had engaged in "ambush diplomacy" by insisting on a timeframe to resolve such thorny issues as the row over Muslim-majority Kashmir, which has triggered

two of three wars between the nations.

Qureshi on Friday accused India of "narrowing down the talks" by focusing exclusively on militancy rather than the range of disputes between the countries, including Kashmir and water rights.

He said Pakistan wanted the discussions to lead to creation of a "roadmap" for better relations.

Despite the failure to improve ties, Qureshi and Krishna agreed to meet again in New Delhi later in the year.

"What happened (in the talks) was unfortunate but they have to remain engaged, they have no viable option because the issues that bedevil their relationship are so complex," Uday Bhaskar, security analyst and head of the India's National Maritime Foundation think-tank, told AFP.

India and Pakistan's premiers met in April on the sidelines of a summit in Bhutan and set in motion the process of trying to revive contacts.

The thaw has been encouraged by Western allies, in particular by the United States, which sees regional stability as crucial to winning the war in Afghanistan and has pushed Pakistan to fight Taliban insurgents.