

SIMULTANEOUS MOVEMENT BNP may unveil outline at Dec 10 rally

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

At its December 10 rally in Dhaka, the BNP might announce the outline of a simultaneous movement with like-minded parties to press home the demand for an election-time caretaker government.

However, sources said the announcement might also come from another programme to be announced at the rally, which will wrap up the party's series of rallies in divisional cities.

The BNP was thinking of making the announcement as it wants to tap into the enthusiasm generated among its leaders and activists over the December 10 rally, the sources added.

The BNP and its like-minded parties have already had two rounds of meetings on this, and the other parties have agreed in principle to wage a simultaneous movement.

On Monday, the BNP standing committee meeting, the highest policy making body of the party, discussed the issues.

It was said at the meeting that if an outline could be finalised by December 10, then the simultaneous movement could begin right on that day.

But some committee members opined that it would be better if fresh programmes could be unveiled at the Dhaka

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A worker in waist-deep water unloads sand from a cargo vessel in Sylhet's Jaintapur. Sand extracted from the Sari river is brought to the shore by boats. Each worker earns Tk 600 to Tk 700 a day from this backbreaking work. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

60 hurt in BNP-police clash

Seven cops among them; 16 BNP activists held in Sherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

At least 60 people, including seven policemen, were injured as law enforcers and BNP men clashed in Sherpur town yesterday afternoon.

Police detained 16 BNP activists in this connection.

Locals said Sherpur BNP, as per its scheduled programme, brought out a procession, led by BNP district unit President Mahmudul Haque, from Gridanarayanpur area around 2:30pm, protesting the death of a BNP man in "police firing" in Brahmanbaria.

After marching different parts of the district town, the BNP men were supposed to have a rally in front of the party office at Roghunathpur Bazar at 3:00pm.

Police obstructed the procession when it reached Raghunathpur Kalibari intersection, triggering an altercation.

At one stage, the BNP men started hurling brick chunks. Police used truncheons, fired shots in the air and teargas canisters to disperse the BNP men, locals said.

A chase and counter chase took place between them.

The entire area turned into a battlefield. Shops were shut, they added.

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ESCAPE OF MILITANTS It was all part of a big plan

Say investigators

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Ansar Al Islam's military wing members snatched their fellows from police custody so that they could execute a plan to launch a major attack, Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime officials told The Daily Star yesterday.

Their initial plan was to snatch at least four members as the four are experts in military training and firearms, and attacks with sharp weapons.

Although the outfit tried to snatch four militants this time, its broader plan involved snatching seven of eight condemned militants.

The four were supposed to join newly trained members of the outfit to execute a major attack, investigators claimed.

The CTTC officials probing Sunday's snatching of two convicts claimed to have found these out after grilling two militants -- Abdus Sabur and Arafat Rahman -- who failed to escape police custody that day.

The militants had planned to snatch these four in February. "As part of the plan, they rented several houses early this year," said a high official of CTTC unit, requesting anonymity.

"The snatched militants were supposed to take cover in the houses and leave the capital for safer places later," the official said.

Investigators said the four were told about the plan beforehand over mobile phone in jail.

The condemned convicts, who were in high security prison, was recently moved to a regular cell, claimed a CTTC official.

"We are now looking into how these militants were moved to regular cells and how they got access to phones," the official said.

Md Asaduzzaman, chief of the CTTC, yesterday said

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Govt to go tough on project revisions

Ecneec approves 8 projects including 3 revised ones

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is chalking out punitive actions for repeated revisions of development projects and weak feasibility studies as it looks to inject professionalism and seriousness into the process of project implementation.

The development comes after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed her disapproval once again at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec).

Of the eight projects approved -- involving Tk 4,826.21 crore -- at the meeting, three were revised ones.

"The prime minister in today's [yesterday's] meeting directed timely completion of the ongoing projects and also forbade repeat revisions of projects. She has made it clear that she doesn't like this practice," said Planning Minister MA Mannan at a press briefing following the meeting.

The minister admitted that they still have limitations in implementing projects but there have been some improvements in the last few years.

However, there are also some practical reasons and complex issues behind the delays in implementation, he said, while

citing reasons like the global coronavirus pandemic, the impact of the Ukraine war, inflation and others for delays.

Many decisions have to be taken well after the project proposal has been prepared or some decisions have to be changed later, he said.

evaluating the performances of the concerned officials in case of repeated revision of the projects.

A committee has been formed led by the planning secretary and this committee would formulate a guideline to make the officials accountable, he said, adding that workshops would be held among all stakeholders and ministries to educate them on the guideline.

Regarding weak feasibility studies of projects, he blamed it on the absence of competent firms -- private or state -- in Bangladesh for conducting this exercise.

"If a private firm does a weak study, it is difficult to take action against them as they would have already taken their payment and left the scene when we figure the fault in their work."

The ministry will take steps against government organisations for conducting a weak feasibility study, Rashid added.

Among the projects that got approval is the revised proposal for the third submarine cable, which got the green light in December 2020 for completion by June 2024.

The project's original cost was Tk 693.16 crore. It will now cost Tk 1,055 crore and its deadline extended by another year.

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— Planning Minister MA Mannan

“These cause delays and cost escalations. However, we are making improvements,” Mannan added.

Planning Secretary Md Mamun-Al-Rashid said they were planning to include negative indicators while

Man could be living on moon by end of decade: Nasa official

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Man could be living on the moon before the end of the decade, a leading Nasa official has said following the successful launch of the Artemis rocket.



After a series of failed launch attempts earlier in the year, Artemis 1 took off last Wednesday from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida.

The uncrewed mission around the moon will pave the way for a crewed flight test and future human lunar exploration.

The Artemis is carrying the Orion lunar spacecraft which is manned with a manikin -- a model of the human body used to measure the impacts of the flight on the body.

Howard Hu, the Orion programme manager, said the launch was a "historic day for human space flight".

He told the BBC's Sunday with Laura Kuennsberg: "It's the first step we're taking to long-term deep space exploration, for not just the United States but for the world."

"I think this is an historic day for Nasa, but it's also an historic day for all the people who love human space flight and deep space exploration."

"I mean, we are going back to the moon, we're working towards a sustainable programme and this is the vehicle that will carry the people that

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Journos force envoys to comment on internal issues

Says Momen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Foreign envoys do not want to discuss Bangladesh's internal affairs with the media, but journalists force them to give opinions, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen.

He made the remarks while talking to reporters after the opening ceremony of Sylhet District Sahitya Mela yesterday morning.

He said, "Some ambassadors have told me that even though they don't want to have such discussions [regarding Bangladesh's internal affairs], the media forces them."

Claiming that the media in other countries never ask foreigners for such comments, Momen said, "When I was a teacher in the USA, almost all the media there used to take my comments. After I was made ambassador by the Bangladesh government, no media ever asked me any questions about their country."

He said, "The fault lies with

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Illegally parked human hauliers leave almost no room for other vehicles under an overpass of Dhaka-Mawa expressway in the capital's Jurain. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

'Dhaka should focus more on Indo-Pacific'

The Indo-Pacific region has become a focus for the world powers. Dealing with them has become challenging for many countries. How should Bangladesh handle such a situation?

Ali Riaz, a distinguished professor at the Department of Politics and Government at Illinois State University, yesterday shared his views with The Daily Star's Porimol Palma.

TDS: Why is the Indo-Pacific so important for the world powers?

Ali Riaz: Bangladesh, and South Asia as a whole, always looked at West Asia and Central Asia, which were the gateways to the world. It is no longer the case now. The whole economy has shifted towards the Indo-Pacific. Also, the geopolitical importance of the region has increased manifold because of the rise of China.

TDS: The US and its allies are speaking of a free, open and rules-based system in the Indo-Pacific. What are the challenges of adopting such a system?

Ali Riaz: Controlling the sea lane is important for energy security and economic prosperity. You need to make sure that everybody has the ability to participate. So, a growing hegemony of an aggressive China is a concern for the US. It not only involves economic aspects but also

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