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Eyes on election, not talks or movement

AL preparing to face BNP if it finally decides to join polls, not worried about one-point movement

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The ruling Awami League thinks the main challenge for the party does not stem from the BNP's one-point movement, but from the possibility of BNP joining the national polls at the last minute.

Although the BNP says it will not take part in the polls under the Sheikh Hasina-led government, the AL leadership says the BNP has already started making preparations to contest the parliamentary polls, slated for January next year.

If the BNP finally joins the polls, the AL may face tough competition, say party insiders.

- AL won't make any effort to bring BNP to polls, dialogue
- First electoral rally in Rangpur on July 30

The AL leaders also think the BNP is finalising its candidates behind the scene, keeping the party's existential crisis in mind.

They believe when the BNP sees the other political parties contesting the polls with Sheikh Hasina as the head of the polls time administration, it too will decide to join.

The AL, therefore, is not at all bothered about dialogue with political parties, which has received much media attention over the past couple of months. And the ruling party will not take any initiative to bring the BNP to the polls, according to AL sources.

Instead, the ruling party is focusing all its attention on resolving intra-party feuds so that it can take part in the polls unitedly.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina told her party colleagues on many occasions that the upcoming national polls would be challenging for the party. She asked them to make all-out

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PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Towhid Hridoy punches the air after Shoriful Islam struck the winning runs in Bangladesh's nerve-racking two-wicket victory against Afghanistan in the first of the two-match T20I series at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. Hridoy remained unbeaten on 47 as Bangladesh chased down the 155-run target with one ball to spare.

THREE NORTHERN DISTRICTS Floodwater inundates low-lying areas

Thousands stranded; Teesta, Dharla, Dudhkumar continue to swell up

STAR REPORT

Thousands of people in three northern districts have been marooned after low-lying areas got inundated.

The Teesta, Dharla and Dudhkumar rivers have been swelling up since Thursday due to incessant rain and onrush of water from upstream, said officials of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB).

"There is a chance of heavy to very heavy rain in the northern and adjoining areas of the country in the next 24 hours. As a result, the Teesta, Dharla, and Dudhkumar rivers of this region may rise at times during the

period," said a weather bulletin of Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre at 9:00am yesterday.

It also forecast, "The flood situation in low-lying areas of Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, and Kurigram may remain steady in the next 24 hours."

Houses, roads and vast tracts of farmlands have been submerged, while poultry and crops were washed away in some areas.

Many people have taken shelter on roads, dykes and in flood centres. They are having only dry food as cooking is impossible there.

Officials said they have already

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Young guns lead Tigers to nervy victory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Youngsters Towhid Hridoy and Shamim Hossain, arguably two of the most inexperienced ones in the line-up, helped Bangladesh seal a tricky chase against a formidable Afghanistan bowling attack in a tight two-wicket win in front of a jam-packed Sylhet International Stadium yesterday.

Hridoy remained unbeaten on 47 off 32 as the Tigers got through despite late drama.

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EU delegation to sit with AL, BNP, JP today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The visiting Election Exploratory Mission of the European Union will hold meetings with the ruling Awami League, BNP, Jatiya Party and several other political parties today.

The six-member EU delegation will talk about the next national election slated for January next year.

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GOVT'S COMMITMENT TO FAIR POLLS US to keep close watch Analysts tell Star

PORIMOL PALMA

US Under Secretary Uzra Zeya has made it clear that Washington will not get involved in Dhaka's internal political issues, be it caretaker government or dialogue between political parties.

She mentioned the commitments made by the prime minister and several other ministers to hold free, fair and peaceful elections.

Foreign policy analysts say the government considers this as a matter of relief as there was widespread speculation that Zeya would put pressure on the government over the upcoming election after Washington's two actions -- visa policy against Bangladeshis who seek to "undermine the democratic election process" and sanctions against Rab.

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