

EC TALKS WITH PARTIES Structured to fall through?

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission's move to hold dialogue over preparations for the upcoming general election appears doomed to fall flat, as the BNP and its allies won't take part in it and the issue of polls-time government remains unresolved, say political analysts.

They believe the talks, scheduled for tomorrow, with 44 political parties in a single day are nothing but "eyewash", as the participants will get only a few minutes to discuss the electoral and political issues and make their recommendations.

The EC is holding the dialogue with the political parties' top brass or their nominated leaders when it actually seems to have no time for it, they said.

Also, the analysts added, insincerity is writ large as the EC is inviting the BNP when the party's top leaders are either in jail or in hiding.

The BNP and like-minded parties would not be sending anyone to the talks, sources said, adding that Islami Andolon Bangladesh, a major Islamist party, too would not join.



EC's invite to talks at BNP headquarters

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Police fire teargas to break up a demonstration by garment workers in the capital's Mirpur-11 area yesterday. The protest was staged demanding the workers' minimum monthly wage be fixed at Tk 23,000 and punishment of those who attacked some recent demos.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Jail Killing Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation is observing the Jail Killing Day today paying rich tributes to four national leaders who were brutally murdered inside the Dhaka central jail on November 3, 1975.

The four Liberation War heroes -- acting president of the Bangladesh government in exile in 1971 Syed Nazrul Islam, prime minister Tajuddin Ahmad, finance minister M Mansur Ali, and minister for home affairs, relief and rehabilitation AHM Quamruzzaman -- were killed by army personnel.

They were assassinated 79 days after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members were killed on August 15, 1975.

The national and Awami League flags will be flown at half-mast at the ruling

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PM brushes aside possibility of talks yet again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought cooperation from the people to curb violence and resist criminals who attacked ordinary people, journalists, and cops.

"I would like to urge the people of the country to get united to catch the criminals who are behind the arsons and hand them over [to law enforcers].... Burn those hands which set vehicles on fire. They will stop only if this is done, otherwise not," she said.

Delivering her concluding speech in the last session of the 11th parliament, Hasina said there was nothing to worry about as there were only a handful of criminals. "So, I call upon all to get united to resist them."

The PM said conspiracy was on to kill her even during her stay abroad, but she was not worried

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BNP goes for fresh 2-day blockade from Nov 5

100 BNP activists held

STAR REPORT

The BNP yesterday announced a fresh two-day nationwide blockade of rail, road and waterways from November 5 demanding general election under a non-party caretaker government.

Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, senior joint secretary general of the BNP, announced the programme at a virtual press briefing, hours before its 72-hour blockade ended at 6:00am today.

Torching and vandalising of vehicles were reported in the capital and elsewhere in the country yesterday, the last day of the three-day blockade.

Also, over 100 BNP leaders and activists, including some arson suspects, have been detained across the country over the last two days, police said.

More vehicles plied the streets of the capital yesterday compared to the

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JS passes labour law, concerns unaddressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Bangladesh Labour (Amendment) Bill-2023" was passed in parliament yesterday without the changes demanded by labour rights leaders.

It was done at a time when the readymade garments sector in the country is already in a volatile state.

An amendment to the law in accordance with international labour standards was one of the prerequisites for getting trade benefits for developing countries offered by trading blocs like the European Union.

The rights leaders alleged their consent was not taken before the bill was placed in parliament, even though discussions among all stakeholders have been going on since 2021.

A Tripartite Labour Law Review Committee, comprised of worker representatives, manufacturers and the government, has been working on this as per a roadmap set out by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Union leaders had demanded the

removal of the obstacles needed for forming and registering trade unions, but it went unheeded, they said.

"The amendments don't allow the workers in export processing zones [EPZs] to unionise. This was one of our demands," said Kalpona Akter, founder and executive director of the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity.

The labour leaders have also been asking for the removal of a provision that mandates that at least 20 percent workers from a factory's whole workforce must consent to the formation of a trade union.

They further asked for the removal of another provision that allows the auto-dismissal of any worker who is absent for 10 consecutive days.

Another demand was bringing the maternity leave in line with the international standard for six months. However, the new amendment increased the leave of 112 days by only eight days, making the entire leave only 120 days -- around four months.

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Minimum wage for RMG workers may be fixed Nov 7

Says state minister after talks
with union leaders amid
protests for better wage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The garment factory workers' minimum wage might be settled on November 7 when the stakeholders hold a meeting, said Monnujan Sufian, state minister for labour and employment.

A monthly salary of Tk 10,400, as proposed by the owners, is illogical, she said yesterday.

The government is working to negotiate a salary that will be acceptable to all, and the labour ministry will soon propose an amount to the wage board, she told reporters after a meeting with union leaders in the capital's Srama Bhaban.

Earlier, the workers' proposal for a monthly salary of Tk 20,393 was rejected by the owners.

In another development, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters

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A World Cup of top-order domination

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

The biggest facet, and also a noticeable one, of this World Cup has been top-order carnage that has not only allowed teams to put on huge scores batting first but also made it more



important than ever for top-order batters to assert their dominance in their approach of chasing down the big targets thrown at them.

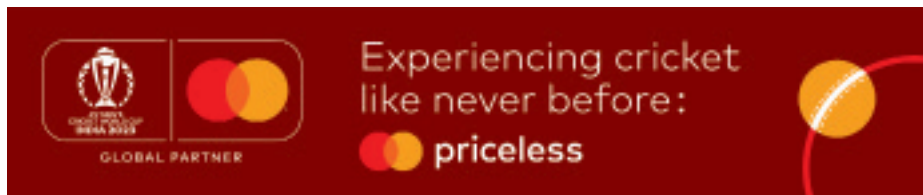
The top-order has to set the game up as well

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Mohammed Shami of India celebrates after dismissing Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews in their seventh ICC World Cup match at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium yesterday. Courtesy of a five-wicket haul, Shami is now India's all-time leading wicket-taker in the tournament, with 45 scalps.

PHOTO: REUTERS



India overwhelm SL on way to semis

REUTERS, Mumbai

Some fiery fast bowling from India's Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj lit up their World Cup encounter with Sri Lanka and helped the unbeaten hosts secure a thumping 302-run victory yesterday, becoming the first side to book a semi-final spot.

It was India's seventh win from as many matches in this year's 50-over tournament, and arguably their most dominant, with Sri Lanka's batters lasting under 20 overs while chasing a 358-run target.

The defeat all but ended Sri Lanka's remaining hopes of making the knockout stages with Kusal Mendis' side suffering their fifth defeat from seven matches.

Sri Lanka's chase got off to an awful start. Jasprit Bumrah struck with the first delivery before Siraj picked up the next three wickets to reduce them to four for three runs.

Coming into the attack next, Shami bagged a five-wicket haul to ensure that India's juggernaut rolled on. Sri Lanka were bundled out for 55, their lowest total in a 50-over World Cup.

Earlier, Dilshan Madushanka, who eventually picked up his first five-wicket haul in the format, gave Sri Lanka a dream start by dismissing in-form India captain Rohit Sharma with the second ball of the innings after the island nation won the toss and decided to bowl on a hot

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