

Tabligh factions agree to have Biswa Ijtema in 2 phases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Both factions of Tabligh Jamaat will run the Kakrail Mosque in turns and organise the upcoming Biswa Ijtema in Tongi in two separate phases, as they did over the years, until the government addresses the conflict between the two groups in April next year.

The decision was made at a meeting between followers of Maulana Saad Kandhalvi and Maulana Zubair Ahmad in presence of advisers to the home and religious affairs ministries on Tuesday, according to a press release issued by Maulana Shahriar Mahmud yesterday on behalf of Ulama-Mashayekh Bangladesh.

The first phase will be organised by the followers of Maulana Zubair and the second phase by the followers of Maulana Saad, the press release said.

Maulana Saad will not come to Bangladesh to join the Ijtema, it said, adding that the control of Kakrail Mosque, the main centre of Tabligh Jamaat in Bangladesh, will be shared by both factions.



BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman virtually addresses a party seminar on its 31-point outline for reform of state structure at the capital's Lakeshore Hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Protecting minorities our job, India need not speak about it

Says Nahid in interview with BBC Hindi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"The minorities in Bangladesh are our citizens, and it is our responsibility to ensure their safety. India doesn't have to say anything about this. India should say something about the mass killing that happened here in July and August," Nahid Islam, interim government's adviser for the information ministry, said in an interview with BBC Hindi.

Reminded that India frequently talks about the protection of Bangladeshi minorities, Nahid said the question should be: "What kind of support can India offer to overcome the challenges facing Bangladesh? This is where discussions should focus."

He then said, "I would also like to mention that the Indian media has been spreading false information about our government, and India should address this. We want discussions based on facts and aimed at improving relations."

India has yet to make clear how it views the massacre committed by the Awami League in July and August. If

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



Indemnity provision

FROM PAGE 1

parliament in 2010 initially for five years but was amended several times to extend its validity to 2026, the previous Awami League government awarded power and energy projects without floating tenders.

In so doing, Bangladesh's power generation capacity soared to 27,000 megawatts (MW) even though the demand is around 17,000 MW. And due to a fuel supply shortage, the government failed to produce more than 15,600MW of electricity.

Subsequently, the state had to give capacity charges amounting to Tk 130,000 crore to the idle power plants over the last 15 years, according to the data from the Bangladesh Power Development Board. Of the sum, about Tk 32,000 crore was given in fiscal 2023-24 alone, a major leap from Tk 5,600 crore handed out in fiscal 2017-18.

Not only in the power sector, major decisions in the energy sector like making deals to import high-priced liquefied natural gas from international spot markets and awarding multibillion-dollar gas infrastructure to selected companies were also taken using the 2010 act.

This was enabled by two sections of the Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provisions) Act that the HC yesterday declared unlawful.

Section 9 states that no question about any action done or deemed to be done, and any order or direction given under this law, cannot be raised before any court.

In addition, section 6 (2) says that any planning or proposal related to the buying or investment decisions has to be approved by the energy minister and sent to the cabinet committee for approval after communicating and bargaining with one or more institutions.

The interim government has announced that it will not use the act to make decisions for the power sector.

Challenge for govt

FROM PAGE 12

Experience suggests that the longer an interim government is in power, the louder calls for early elections gets and the larger doubts about its legitimacy grows.

Managing, let alone meeting, sky-high public expectations will be extremely challenging, reads the report.

The report mentioned that Yunus and his colleagues for now are enjoying widespread support, but popular expectations are "double-edged". If the interim administration falters in making reforms, the outcome is likely to be an early election with little progress; in the worst-case scenario, the military could assume power.

Over the past fifteen years, hundreds of billions of dollars have likely been funnelled illegally out of Bangladesh. Much of the money appears to have ended up in the United Kingdom, the US, the EU, Singapore and the Middle East, the report stated.

Already in bad shape, Bangladesh's economy is limping along, having taken a further hit from more than a month of protests and the uncertainty of the transition. Yunus's team has struggled to restore law and order, dependent largely on a police force that was heavily implicated in the anti-protest repression, it reads.

It said rebuilding the country's institutions will also be no mean feat, and while the interim administration is the most inclusive Bangladesh has ever seen, many of its members have little experience in government or management.

The interim government should look to keep its social support base strong as it builds consensus around key reforms and prepares the country for credible elections. International actors should back Yunus's administration and bolster the Bangladeshi economy to help inaugurate a new era in national politics, reads the report.

No one, not even PM, will be able to abuse power

FROM PAGE 1

an inclusive, liberal and democratic Bangladesh, according to the party.

Diplomats from various foreign missions stationed in Dhaka, members of the civil society, and representatives of different political parties attended the seminar, where Tarique joined virtually from London as the chief guest.

The BNP said the framework for the structural reform agenda has been drawn from party founder late president Ziaur Rahman's 19 points, the Vision 2030 of Chairperson Khaleda Zia, and extensive public engagement.

"When I personally speak of reform, I envision transformative change that enhances people's lives – not mere revision to a few constitutional paragraphs. We cannot afford to be bound by conventional governance – we must embrace modernisation and innovation," Tarique said.

He proposed limiting the tenure of any individual as prime minister to two consecutive terms to prevent the recurrence of authoritarian rule in Bangladesh.

The BNP wants to balance power between the legislative, judicial, and executive branches, said Tarique, who has been heading the party as acting chairperson since 2018.

To ensure the representation and participation of the learned and accomplished professionals in governance, the party proposed introducing a bicameral parliamentary system.

A government's foremost duty is to govern within the guardrails of a rules-based order, said Tarique, who has been in exile since 2008.

By establishing a rules-based structure, Bangladesh will systematically attract private investment and capital from around the world, he said.

"Unlike the crony capitalism of the Awami League, which resulted in a family-run kleptocracy, converted Bangladeshi businesses into oligarchy and syndicates creating division and discriminations, we will establish a fair business climate, prevent institutional

Is respect too much to ask for?

FROM PAGE 1

Rasel, like many others, had joined the protests on Wednesday near NITOR to demand better medical treatment for those injured in the July uprising.

"We risked our lives and limbs for this country, the government has given us separate wards and food, but where is the respect for our sacrifices? I have applied for assistance from the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation. But I am yet to receive any help. We hear many stories about rehabilitation, but we receive nothing."

The frustration runs deep among the injured protesters, many of whom have lost limbs or suffered severe life-altering injuries. The Daily Star spoke to 15 such protesters, all of whom complained of inadequate treatment, a lack of respect and an uncertain future.

Many said financial assistance for the injured was announced on August 12 but before that, they had to spend from their own pockets for their treatment – money that will never be returned to them.

Their frustration boiled over on Wednesday afternoon when injured protesters blocked the car of Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum on NITOR premises. Some lay in front of the vehicle, while others climbed onto it, after she was leaving the hospital after talking to a few patients.

The protesters then left the hospital and blocked the road in front of it around 2:00pm, demanding that Nurjahan meet all of the injured victims. They also demanded

decay and politicisation across all levels of the Bangladeshi society."

The BNP will create the "right business atmosphere, where local and international private capital will flow in to work hand in hand with our public sector to drive national growth and productivity", Tarique said.

"We believe, whenever there is rule of law, accountability and good governance, sustainable and inclusive development will naturally follow."

If elected by the people, the BNP government will make every effort to eliminate the climate of fear that became the norm during the 15 years of AL rule, said Tarique, who turns 57 next week.

"We will eliminate all the tools of suppression used by that regime, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, excessive force, politically motivated trials, warrantless mass arrests and various other forms of gross human rights violations."

Following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the party will work to protect the rights and basic freedoms of every citizen.

The BNP's policy is to ensure equal rights and security for all citizens, Tarique said, adding that Bangladesh was liberated by freedom fighters through immense sacrifices so that every citizen, regardless of religion, political affiliation or social identity could enjoy their religious, political, cultural and social rights without any hindrance.

"Thus, in an independent Bangladesh, we do not view anyone as a so-called 'minority'. This ideal of 'Bangladeshi nationalism' underpins all our politics – where we believe that our religion, political affiliations, and ideologies are personal; but the state belongs to everyone."

He also pledged to restore freedom of expression for all and uphold media freedom so that the fourth pillar of democracy can have the liberty to "speak truth to power" and critique the government openly through investigative reports, political talk shows, comedy, and satire.

Over the past 16 years, the nation

better treatment and financial rehabilitation from the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation.

The protests continued till 3:15am yesterday after four advisers visited them and assured them that the demands would be met.

Thirty-year-old Mohammad Shaon, a motor mechanic, was shot in his left elbow during the uprising. Before the incident, he earned Tk 35,000 to 40,000 per month and was able to comfortably support his family. All that has changed since the day he was shot.

"I've sold my [child's] cot, refrigerator, and TV to make ends meet. My landlord is hounding me for four months of unpaid rent."

Shaon has been receiving treatment at NITOR since August 12.

Though the hospital is providing free treatment and food, he lamented the indifferent behaviour of the hospital staffers and interim government advisers.

"So many have benefited from our sacrifices. Some of them even became advisers. Yet, they show no concern for us. They've built their futures on our sacrifices, but we're left on our own."

About hospital staffers, he said, "Firstly, they said my arm might have to be amputated and that frightened me. However, a team of medical experts from the UK performed my surgery and it went well ... One of the NITOR doctors, during my first surgery in mid-August, asked me why I even joined the protests. It was very rude.

"We're not asking for luxury –

was systematically stripped of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and freedom of association, Tarique said.

"You may recall how a section of the media once published unfounded stories against me and then prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia, engaging in media trials and propaganda. Yet, as it is now well documented, the former BNP government did not suppress media freedom, harass journalists or imprison any editor in retaliation back then."

The BNP's goal is to create a state structure where no one will be harassed for expressing views on platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and other online spaces, or for merely commenting publicly on high-ranking officials, including the prime minister.

"Neither mainstream nor social media will be coerced into concealing the truth or pressured to spread misinformation," Tarique said, calling upon the country's media to maintain neutrality and objectivity in their roles toward national development.

About the transition of power, he said it should not be about passing the state's governing authority from one party to another.

"Rather, it should usher in a new political culture that reflects the evolving landscape of society and the true aspirations of the people, particularly the younger generation," Tarique added.

The BNP previously unveiled the 31-point outline on July 13 last year "to turn the country into a democratic state in the true sense".

Speaking at yesterday's programme held at the capital's Lakeshore Hotel, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said his party, along with over 50 other parties, had prepared the 31-point state reform proposal during the simultaneous movement against the "fascist regime of Sheikh Hasina".

He said the BNP decided to present the 31-point framework to the public once again because it believes the reform proposals that may emerge from the commissions formed by the interim government to oversee state reforms will "closely align" with the party's outline.

just respect and proper care for the sacrifices we made," said Shaon, adding, "Is that too much to ask for?"

Asked whether he received any financial assistance from the July Foundation, he kept mum.

On the other hand, NITOR Director Prof Dr Kazi Shamim Uzzaman said, "We're giving the injured victims [of the July uprising] the highest priority in terms of treatment. Many patients are alleging they aren't being treated with respect, which is not true. They aren't aware of the complications and treatment procedures."

Shilpi Akhtar's 15-year-old son Shahin had to undergo four surgeries since he was injured during the July uprising.

"Doctors said it'll take six more months for him to recover but there's no guarantee. His education is in jeopardy, while he is writhing in pain in hospital."

She said the adviser's lack of empathy towards victims like her son is where her frustration really lies.

"They came to the hospital but didn't even visit all the victims. How can we not feel betrayed?"

Currently, 84 injured protesters from the uprising are undergoing treatment at NITOR. Till date, 21 people have had their hands and legs amputated, while six patients have died.

Md Badiuzzaman, deputy director of NITOR, said, "We've been providing excellent medical care and treating them with utmost priority ... Any claims of us not providing proper treatment are not true."

FROM PAGE 1

"They will get a one-time financial assistance, if necessary, and a training as per their education and abilities so that they can avail employment opportunities," he said, adding that those with physical disabilities will be provided with physiotherapy and equipment funded by the state.

Those suffering from mental trauma will get psychotherapy through a telemedicine network, he added.

The government will open a support centre in every divisional city to provide some of the aforesaid services.

Adviser Nahid Islam later said he doubted whether the political parties and the media were fulfilling their responsibilities toward the injured.

"The stories of the martyrs and the injured should be part of national discourse. But people are simply placing all responsibility on the government and talking about the election and several other issues," he said.

"The voices of the injured are not being featured enough in political discussions or the media. It is the political duty of the parties that supported the July-August uprising to work for the injured and [family of] the martyrs," Nahid said.

It is unfortunate that the injured had to take to the streets, he added.

The meeting scheduled for 2:00pm,

Interim govt to carry out

FROM PAGE 1

the sidelines of the COP29 global climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan.

"The labour issue is one of our top priorities. We want to resolve all labour issues," Prof Yunus told her as they discussed Bangladesh's recent developments.

May expressed her desire to work on the issue. She also discussed human trafficking and migration with Bangladesh's interim leader.

Prof Yunus called for increased migration to Europe from Bangladesh through legal channels, saying that it will cut risky and irregular migration and act as a deterrence against human trafficking.

He gave her a copy of the Art of Triumph, a book on graffiti and murals painted by Bangladeshi young people during the uprising.

Meanwhile, Prof Yunus returned home yesterday evening wrapping up his Baku tour, reports BSS.

In Baku, Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev told him that his country would deepen ties with Bangladesh and take its bilateral relationship to a new height.

Azerbaijan was also keen to invest in Bangladesh and explore the possibility of opening an embassy in Dhaka as both nations seek increasing opportunities for trade, commerce, and international cooperation.

Aliyev said this when he met Prof Yunus on the sidelines of the COP29.

The Azerbaijan president said a high-level team of the Azerbaijani government will visit Bangladesh early next year in a move to sign a comprehensive arrangement with Bangladesh.

Aliyev praised the student-led uprising, saying that he has been following events in Bangladesh for months.

He congratulated Prof Yunus for assuming the leadership of the interim government and said Bangladesh will grow and prosper under his leadership. "Your task is very challenging. But I know you are the one who can face the challenge."

The chief adviser also called for stronger ties between the two nations.

He said both nations could prosper if there were increased bilateral trade, people-to-people interactions, and cooperation in major international forums.

Prof Yunus also stressed the need for job opportunities for Bangladeshis

started two and a half hours late, due to what witnesses said were arguments among the injured attendees.

The meeting was initially intended for those who demonstrated in front of the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation the night before.

However, several individuals from other hospitals and some who are not currently admitted to any hospital arrived, causing anger among the first group.

Eventually, Hasnat Abdullah and Sarjis Alam, two key leaders of the student movement, persuaded everyone to proceed with the meeting.

On Wednesday, a group of the injured people in the July uprising held a protest in front of the national traumatology institute, demanding better treatment and rehabilitation.

Four advisers rushed to the spot at 2:30am yesterday and promised to meet their demands.

Mir Mahbubur Rahman Snigdho, brother of a martyr and chief executive of the July Martyrs Memorial Foundation; Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum; Social Welfare Adviser Sharmin S Murshid; Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Farida Akhtar; Information and Broadcasting Adviser Nahid Islam; Local Government Adviser Asif Mahmud Sajib Bhuiyan; and Adviser without portfolio Mahfuj Alam attended the meeting.

Interim govt to carry out

in the oil-rich central Asian nation.

Hundreds of Bangladeshis have found jobs in shipbuilding industry in the country in recent years.

President Aliyev said Azerbaijan has fought corruption through the digitisation of its services.

He expressed his interest in sharing their digitisation experience with Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Lu Alckmin, the wife of the vice-president of Brazil, Geraldo Alckmin, called on Prof Yunus at the conference venue yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed issues of mutual interest. The Brazilian second lady handed over a book she wrote on Prof Yunus to him.

She said she has translated the books of Prof Yunus and launched social business enterprises after being inspired by his work.

Prof Yunus stressed the need for increased trade and cooperation between Bangladesh and South America's largest economy.

Lamiya Morshed, senior secretary and principal coordinator of the SDG Affairs, was also present during the meeting.

WAITING LOUNGE OPENED AT HSIA Prof Yunus yesterday inaugurated a waiting lounge for the migrant workers and their relatives at the multilevel car parking area of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) in Dhaka, reports BSS.

He opened the lounge after returning home from the global climate conference.

Prof Yunus said before going to Azerbaijan, he inaugurated a lounge at the airport for expatriate workers, which is dedicated for the workers so that they can use it comfortably while going abroad and returning home.

The chief adviser sought opinions and suggestions from the relatives of expatriates so that this waiting lounge can be made more comfortable for them.

Saying that he was very happy to inaugurate the lounge for the relatives of expatriates, Prof Yunus spoke to the relatives of the expatriates who were present there.

The lounge has a waiting room, a baby care room, and prayers places for men and women and a low-cost cafeteria.

On November 11, Prof Yunus opened a special lounge named "Probashi Lounge" for the country's migrant workers inside the HSIA.