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JULY CHARTER

Deadlock drags on, parties want govt to step in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Failing to resolve their differences over the proposed July charter within a one-week timeframe, major political parties yesterday urged the interim government to mediate talks.

Officials said the government would wait a few more days for the parties to reach an understanding. If they fail, it will intervene and take a decision.

Despite the deadline, parties like the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and the National Citizen Party remained deeply entrenched in their positions.

When contacted yesterday, BNP Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed told The Daily Star, "If the government organises a meeting, I hope a way out of the crisis can be found. Since the National Consensus Commission and the government jointly created the problem, they must bear the responsibility."

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Hamidur Rahman Azad said his party had taken an initiative for dialogue. "Those unwilling to participate cannot be forced. Dialogue is only possible when all parties come forward. It is now the government's responsibility to decide how to implement the reforms," he told this newspaper yesterday.

NCP Member-Secretary Akhter Hossain yesterday urged the government not to shift the burden of reforms onto political parties.

He was speaking at a discussion titled "July Charter: Implementation Pathline," organised by the National Lawyers Alliance at the Supreme Court Bar Auditorium in Dhaka.

Akhter called for immediate implementation of the reforms agreed upon during talks between political parties and the National Consensus



The Chattogram Development Authority is digging 36 canals across the port city to restore its waterways. With work on at least 20 canals completed, many appear healthy. The photo shows the Rajakhali canal in the Bakolia area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

- ➔ BNP wants govt, not Jamaat, to invite parties to talks
- ➔ Jamaat says those unwilling to take part in talks cannot be forced
- ➔ NCP urges govt not to shift burden of reform decisions onto parties

Commission.

He said the ongoing political crisis must be resolved without delay to ensure citizens can participate in the upcoming election.

"If uncertainty around the reform process persists, it will also cast doubt on the government's exit strategy and the integrity of the electoral process," he warned.

Earlier, the BNP rejected Jamaat's call for dialogue, questioning why another political party, rather than the government, was making the invitation.

Meanwhile, nine parties including the NCP, Amar Bangladesh Party, Gono Odhikar Parishad, and six from the Ganatantra Mancha alliance have been holding talks to break the deadlock.

But, according to a Mancha leader, responses from other parties have not been encouraging.

Hasnat Quaiyum, coordinator of Ganatantra Mancha and president of Rastro Songskar Andolan, said they were still hopeful about finding common grounds.

Disagreements persist over the timing of a referendum on reforms outlined in the charter, the charter's implementation order, and the handling of dissent notes attached to some reform proposals.

Last Monday, the government urged parties to resolve these differences and reach a unified decision within a week.

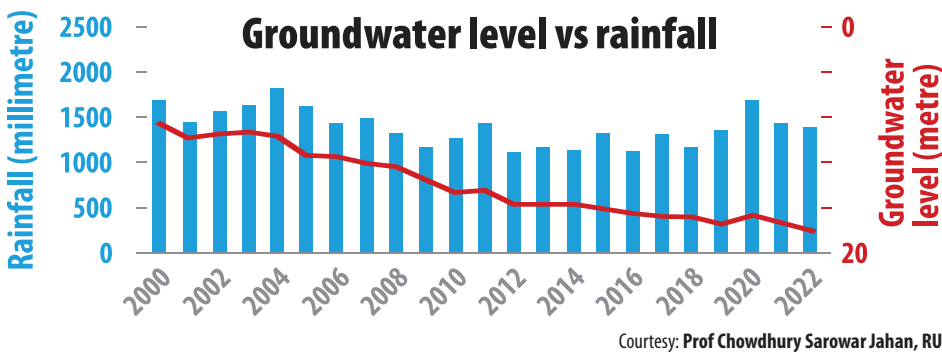
Law Adviser Asif Nazrul told reporters after an advisory council meeting on that day, "We haven't issued any ultimatum. We'll wait. After that, the government will act as necessary."

The BNP ignored the deadline, saying the initiative did not originate

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Barind's rice bowl is running dry

As world leaders prepare to convene at COP30 in Belém, Brazil, to chart a global path on carbon reduction, climate adaptation, and finance, the effects of inaction are already hitting home. In northern Bangladesh's Rajshahi region, marginal farmers are battling erratic monsoon patterns and rising temperatures -- climate woes that are crippling crops and leaving futures uncertain. **Pinaki Roy** reports from the ground.



Pointing to the cracks in his Aman paddy field, Kongres Tudu, a Santal farmer of Rajshahi's Godagari upazila, said the soil dried out and fractured after just a week without irrigation.

"If I cannot irrigate my field within a couple of days, most of the crops will turn sterile, bearing no grain at all," Tudu said, adding that he couldn't arrange money in

the first week of October to buy water from a deep tubewell operator for irrigation.

Though it rained a bit more this year than the last, the field still needs irrigation every week, said the 55-year-old farmer.

Narrating the financial strains on farmers in his area, he said that a Santal farmer from nearby Barshapara village

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ACC to sue S Alam, associates over Tk 10,500cr graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday decided to file a case against 67 individuals, including the former chairman of S Alam Group, over allegations of loan fraud and embezzlement of about Tk 10,500 crore from Islami Bank through abuse of power and influence.

The case would be the largest financial embezzlement case in the history of the ACC, said Tanvir Ahmed, the commission's assistant director (public relations).

The accused embezzled Tk 9,283.93 crore from Islami Bank by taking out unauthorised loans in the names of S Alam Refined Sugar Industries, S Alam Steels and S Alam Trading Company, ignoring official circulars and through forgery and deception. With interest, the total amount stands at Tk 10,479.62 crore, he said.

According to the case documents, Tk 9,283.93 crore was transferred through 134 transactions to shell companies such as Ahsan Enterprise, Impress Corporation, Unique Traders, AgroCorn International and Dulali Enterprise.

The entities were connected to S Alam Group's Chairman Mohammad Saiful Alam's business interests.

Among them are his brothers' companies Sonali Traders and Global Trading Corporation, S Alam Refined Sugar Industries, SS Power, S Alam Steels, S Alam Cement, S Alam Vegetable Oil and Sonali Cargo Logistics.

The accused include S Alam and his brother Abdus Samad, Osman Gani, Rashedul Alam and Shahidul Alam, former Islami Bank chairman Nazmul Hasan, former managing director Mahbub ul Alam and some current and former officials of Islami Bank.

67% of polling stations 'risky'

Reveal minutes of EC, law enforcers' meeting

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and AHMED DEEPTO

Nearly two-thirds of polling centres for the upcoming national election have been classified as "risky," a sharp rise from the 2024 polls, when only about 25 percent of centres were deemed risky.

On October 20, the Election Commission and law enforcement agencies held a preparatory meeting to discuss election security, the viability of granting judicial powers to the military during polling, and the reclassification of risk zones.

The details of the meeting were revealed yesterday.

The military is currently holding magisterial powers. Currently, the army is deployed in 62 districts across the country to assist the civil administration.

"If given judicial powers, the army will be able to play a more effective role in the elections," a representative of the army chief told the meeting.

An official of the Special Branch of police informed the meeting that 28,663 out of 42,761 polling stations had been identified as risky, accounting for over 67

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Police use water cannons on teachers of government-approved institutions outside the Monthly Pay Order (MPO) scheme as they attempt to break through a barricade near the Secretariat in Dhaka yesterday. The protesters, under the banner of Sammilito Non-MPO Oikya Parishad, demand inclusion of their institutions in the MPO programme. **Teachers withdraw suspension, vow to continue protest -- page 3**

Beximco firms laundered Tk 1,200 crore in 5 years: CID

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Beximco Group chairman and vice-chairman and their associates have laundered \$97 million (around Tk 1,200 crore) abroad over five years through 17 corporate entities under the pretext of foreign trade, the CID has found.

Following a thorough investigation, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has secured approval to file charge sheets in 17 money laundering cases against Salman F Rahman and others, CID Chief Sibgat Ullah told a press briefing at the CID Headquarters in Malibagh yesterday.

The approved charge sheets name 28 individuals and 19 entities, including Beximco Group Chairman Ahmed Sohail Fasihur Rahman and his son Ahmed Shahryar Rahman, and Vice-Chairman Salman F Rahman and his son Shayan F Rahman.

Between 2020 and 2024, Sohail, Salman and their associates allegedly used 17 corporate entities to carry out the money laundering activities.

The companies include Adventure

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