



NCP signs July charter without notes of dissent

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party (NCP) yesterday signed the July National Charter on the condition that the people's verdict on the referendum would be implemented in its entirety, without the notes of dissent.

The signing took place at the state guest house Jamuna in the presence of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

NCP Convener Nahid Islam and Member Secretary Akhter Hossen signed the charter on behalf of the party.

Nahid said the party had not signed the July charter earlier because its legal basis had not been confirmed, and clarity was needed on the note of dissent.

He said the signing of the charter was a formality and that it was signed without the note of dissent. He added that the signing would help ensure a smooth path for the swift implementation of reforms in line with the public referendum order.

Akhter also said they signed the charter without the note of dissent and subject to the full implementation of the referendum result.

Also present at the ceremony were National Consensus Commission Vice President Prof Ali Riaz, commission member Badiul Alam Majumdar, and the Chief Adviser's Special Assistant Monir Haider.

Other members of the NCP delegation included Monira Sharmin, Sarwar Tusher, Javed Rasin, and Jahirul Islam.

Earlier, Nahid had said his party would not sign the July charter unless there was a clear "legal foundation".

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Sri Lanka opener Pathum Nissanka celebrates after scoring a century in their eight-wicket win over Australia in an ICC T20 World Cup Group B match in Kandy yesterday. Chasing 181, Nissanka smashed an unbeaten 52-ball 100 to guide Sri Lanka home with 12 balls to spare. The victory sealed a Super Eight spot for the Lankans and left Australia on the brink of an early exit.

PHOTO: AFP

Transcom chairman, CEO cleared in last case



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transcom Group Chairman Shahnaz Rahman, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Simeen Rahman and four others were discharged yesterday from a fraud case filed by the CEO's sister.

With this, Simeen, Shahnaz and other top officials of Transcom Group have been cleared in four cases in total.

Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman passed the order following two discharge petitions filed by the defence, said Simeen's lawyer Mohammad Siddique Ullah Miah.

The court order stated that the

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LAND REGISTRATION Israel's West Bank move draws outcry Cabinet clears path for settlers to buy plots directly

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's government has approved a process to register land in the West Bank as "state property", drawing condemnation from Arab nations and critics who said it would accelerate annexation of the Palestinian territory.

Israel's foreign ministry said the measure, approved late Sunday, would enable "transparent and thorough clarification of rights to resolve legal disputes" and was needed after unlawful land registration in areas controlled

- Palestinians condemn 'de-facto annexation'
- The process will take place only in Area C
- Egypt, Qatar, Jordan criticise the move as illegal

by the Palestinian Authority.

But Egypt, Qatar and Jordan criticised the move as illegal under international law. In a statement, the Egyptian government called it a "dangerous escalation aimed at consolidating Israeli control over the occupied Palestinian territories".

Qatar's foreign ministry condemned the "decision to convert West Bank lands into so-called 'state property'," saying it would "deprive the Palestinian people of their rights".

The Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority called for international intervention to prevent the "de facto beginning of the annexation process and the undermining of the foundations of the Palestinian state".

Israeli anti-settlement watchdog Peace Now called the measure a "mega land grab".

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HATIA 'RAPE' Police file GD; victim's medical tests done 2 days after admission

ANWARUL HAIDAR

A general diary was filed over the alleged rape and torture of a woman in Noakhali's Hatia upazila on Sunday, after which a forensic test of the victim was conducted at Noakhali General Hospital yesterday — two days after she was admitted on Saturday.

Hospital sources had earlier said they were unable to conduct the tests due to legal complications, as neither the victim's family nor the police had filed a complaint.

Following a letter from the National Human Rights Commission on Sunday, urging Hatia police to take necessary legal steps over the allegations, the police filed the general diary that night.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Md Saiful Alam, officer-in-charge of Hatia Police Station, said they filed the GD on Sunday night and sent a formal letter to the hospital authorities yesterday morning, requesting a medical report.

"If the family later submits a formal

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Defence deals needed, but their timing 'questionable'

Analysts say interim govt should have left long-term agreements to elected govt

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh's interim government has signed a series of defence deals with foreign countries that may be strategically necessary but have come at a questionable time, according to security analysts.

They said the technological modernisation of the country's defence sector is long overdue for credible deterrence, but such purchases carry long-term strategic and diplomatic implications.



The deals signed by the interim government are meant to make things easier for the next government, not to leave behind any burden.

Foreign Adviser Touthid Hossain



Therefore, they believe an elected government should sign such agreements.

Over the last two months, Bangladesh has signed at least five deals related to defence purchase, production and transfer.

On December 9 last year, the Bangladesh Air Force and European Leonardo Sp.A, an Italian multinational company, signed a Letter of Intent to buy Eurofighter Typhoon fighter aircraft as a step to include modern Multi-Role Combat Aircraft. The number of aircraft to be purchased was not announced.

On January 27, the BAF and China Electronics Technology Group Corporation International signed a government-to-government agreement for establishing a drone (unmanned aerial

vehicle/UAV) manufacturing and assembly plant in Bangladesh, as well as for technology transfer.

On February 3, the Bangladesh Armed Forces Division and Japan signed an agreement on the transfer of defence equipment and technology, a move expected to accelerate Bangladesh's defence modernisation and strengthen bilateral strategic ties.

On February 8, the Bangladesh Navy and the UK Ministry of Defence signed an agreement for buying HMS Enterprise, a former Royal

Navy vessel meant for hydrographic and oceanographic survey in Bangladesh.

Reports suggest that the interim government has also advanced discussions with Turkey on buying the SIPER long-range air defense system, and with Pakistan on buying JF-17 Thunder fighter jets.

On January 26, the government revealed its decision to earmark around 850 acres of land in Chattogram's Mirsarai to develop a defence industrial zone, aiming to build domestic capability and tap into the growing global defence production market.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Mohammad Ashique Rahman, senior research fellow

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Blaze ravages five-storey building in Karwan Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire broke out at a five-storey building in the capital's Karwan Bazar last night.

The fire erupted inside a room of the building in the Kathpotti area around 10:30pm and engulfed the third, fourth, and fifth floors.

There were boards, wood, tissue paper, stationeries, diapers, among other things, stored in the building, which are highly flammable materials. The upper floors were used as warehouses. The ground floors housed sawmills.

Eleven fire engines were trying to douse the flames until 12:38am today, said Talha Bin Zashim, an inspector at the media centre of Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Army personnel were helping the firefighters.

Md Jewel, a staffer of Anwar Motor Works, said their one-storey tin shed workshop is located right next to the five-storey building. "Right after the building caught fire, we took the cars out from our workshop, but our shop was destroyed."



PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Firefighters try to douse a blaze that broke out at a five-storey building in the capital's Karwan Bazar last night.

Medieval tunnel found in Germany linked to cult rituals



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Archaeologists have discovered a medieval underground tunnel running beneath a German village, which was the likely site of cult rituals.

Researchers stumbled upon the tunnel during excavations that unravelled a Stone Age burial site near the German village of Dornberg.

A trapezoidal trench dating to the fourth millennium BC was first discovered along with several poorly preserved, late Neolithic remains from the third millennium BC.

Then further excavations revealed a stone slab and a long, oval pit, measuring around 6.5ft long and 2.5ft wide, intersecting the Stone Age burial ditch at a right angle.

Initially assumed to be another grave, researchers soon found that the pit extended and was actually a tunnel system.