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Ershad barred from polls

Grand alliance to rethink election participation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad was declared disqualified from the ballot yesterday, forcing Awami League (AL)-led grand electoral alliance to re-think whether it will compete in the upcoming parliamentary election.

Returning officers (RO) rejected the five nomination papers Ershad had filed for the constituencies of Dhaka-5, Rangpur-3, Lalmonirhat-3, Sylhet-3 and Habiganj-3, on grounds of the Supreme Court's rejection of his appeal against a High Court verdict that had sentenced him to two years in prison in a graft case popularly known as 'Japanese boat purchase scam'.

The RO's rejection of Ershad's nomination



Ershad talks to press coming out of Sudha Sadan.

papers sparked a violent protest in greater Rangpur where leaders and activists of JP (Ershad) staged protests yesterday and called for dawn-to-dusk hartals today in different districts.

Ershad, who could not contest the 2001 election as he had been convicted in Janata Tower case, can now file an appeal against his latest disqualification with the Election Commission (EC) in three days, on which the commission will have to give a decision before January 3.

Sensing the rejection coming his way, Ershad met AL President Sheikh Hasina in her residence at 11:50am yesterday and discussed strategies for the next course of action.

He told reporters that if the 'conspiracy

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Yunus among world's most talked-about persons of '06

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

'Banker to The Poor,' as described by the west, Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus has been identified by famous weekly magazine Time as one of the most-talked-about persons of 2006.

In its year-end issue of December 25, Time has published a special report headlined 'People Who Mattered' where it carried the names, analyses or interviews of 15 persons across the globe 'who made a difference' this year.

The article on Yunus continued with a double-page spread of a photograph of him taken at Patenga sea beach in Chittagong. There is also a short analysis of the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Army rolls out to control crime from Jan 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The armed forces will be in action, along with other law enforcement agencies, for 20 days from January 10 to maintain law and order ahead of and after the ninth parliamentary election scheduled for January 22.

During the period the armed forces-army, navy and air force-may arrest any one on the poll day without any warrant and act

against any activity that goes against the electoral code of conduct.

The power was given to the armed forces through a controversial ordinance in 2001.

The Armed Forces Division in a preliminary circular dated December 20 said the armed forces will be deployed on January 10 and will remain in the field until January 29 to maintain law and order.

Referring to a home ministry plan, sources said the army will act as a mobile and strike force along with the police, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), ansar and the coast guard.

The circular for using the army during the election came a month after their deployment on December 9 through a unilateral decision of President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed.

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Malaysia issues arrest warrant against 12 CEOs

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian immigration authorities have ordered the arrest of 12 CEOs for harbouring hundreds of illegal Bangladeshi workers, reports said Wednesday.

Immigration enforcement director Ishak Mohamed said one of the firms involved was a publicly listed company, and that the chief executive officers and other top company officials should surrender themselves or face arrest.

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Violence erupts in north districts

Hartal today in Sylhet, greater Rangpur to protest cancellation of Ershad's nomination

STAR REPORT

Cancellation of the nomination of Jatiya Party (JP) chief HM Ershad from four constituencies in greater Rangpur and Sylhet for the upcoming general election triggered widespread protests, violent demonstrations and call for hartal in

five northern districts and part of Sylhet today.

The Awami League (AL)-led grand alliance called a dawn to dusk shutdown in Rangpur, Gaibandha, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram protesting cancellation of Ershad's nomination.

The JP will enforce a half-day hartal in Sylhet-3 (Dakshin Surma and Fenchuganj) to protest his nomination for this seat.

Our Rangpur correspondent reports: Hundreds of JP activists went on rampage at the office of the deputy commissioner, damaged at

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Khelafat deal 'falsely' depicted in media: Jalil

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday alleged that the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between his party and Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish is being 'falsely' reported to create confusion for particular political interests.

Stressing that 'secularism does not mean non-religion', Jalil said by signing the MoU, Khelafat Majlish has agreed to ensure the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



Election officials verifying submitted nomination papers at the Segunbagicha election office in the capital yesterday.

AL's deal with bigots against Liberation War spirit

Say leaders of minority community

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday said the minority communities would not vote for the political parties who take the Liberation War traitors into their folds only to get benefit in the upcoming election.

Describing the deal signed between Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish (BKM) as against the spirit of Liberation War and that of a

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264 nomination papers cancelled

Loan default main reason

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has rejected the nomination papers of at least 264 candidates, including a number of known political leaders and industrialists because of loan defaults and other disqualifying factors.

Nomination papers of 194 of the 264 candidates were rejected for loan default.

Out of 4,146 nomination papers, 3,882 were accepted after being scrutinised for disqualifying flaws by returning officers yesterday.

The nomination papers that had flaws were later rejected by the returning officer and sent to the EC.

The prominent candidates from the Awami League-led grand alliance whose nomination papers were rejected are former president of Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Yusuf Abdullah Harun, (Comilla 3), former minister Mueenul Islam, (Kurigram-4), Nurul Islam Madani (Maymensingh-7), Benazir Ahmed (manikganj-1), Ruhul Amin Hawlader, general secretary of Jatiyo Party (Patuakhali-2) and Nasrin Jahan Ratna, wife of Ruhul Amin Hawlader (Barisal-6).

Narayanganj Awami League's (AL) district convener SM Akram's

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BNP worried by number of rebel candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP high-up is worried by the huge number of dissident leaders across the country who filed nomination to contest the next general election without any consultation with party high command.

According to party sources, the BNP high-up fears that party aspirants might face revolt from many leaders who will not get party ticket when the names of party nominees are announced.

Meanwhile, although BNP leadership is apparently happy over the decision of Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad being barred from the poll race, senior leaders are anxious about a possible boycott of the election by the Awami League-led alliance over this issue.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told reporters at

a briefing on Tuesday that they would disclose the names of party nominees later. He said most candidates have already been confirmed while nominees for rest of the seats will be finalised soon.

Sources said the BNP high command is trying to convince the disgruntled leaders to withdraw their nominations and Bhuiyan hoped that these leaders will agree to do it.

The BNP-led four-party alliance, however, could not finalise its candidature as of last night.

The dispute over seat-sharing between the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islam also was not resolved. Sources said Jamaat demanded at least 40 seats for the next election but BNP does not see any possibility of Jamaat candidates' win in more than 20 seats.

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