

## Highest ever nomination filing as parties can't pick candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The largest ever number of nomination papers were filed yesterday while the two major electoral alliances have yet to finalise and disclose the lists of their nominees in 300 constituencies for the January 22 parliamentary election.

Wrapping up the first step of nomination process, the Election Commission (EC) last night disclosed that 4,146 nomination papers were filed.

One thousand and three hundred nomination papers were submitted for 90 constituencies of Dhaka division, 934 for 59 seats of Chittagong division, 860 for 72 seats of Rajshahi, 516 for 37 seats of Khulna, 296 for 23 seats of Barisal, and 240 for 19 seats of Sylhet division.

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Dhaka-6 (Motijheel-Sabujbagh) constituency saw submissions of the highest number of 48 nomination papers while Chittagong-7 (Rangunia) and Narayanganj-2 (Araihazar) saw the lowest number of four nomination papers.

At most places, the candidates went to the offices of returning officers (RO) and assistant returning officers (ARO) in processions playing drums and bugles as a mark of festivity. The supporters, wearing party colours and carrying respective election symbols chanted slogans for their candidates.

However, the election fever was marred by violent clashes between rival political parties or intra-party groups at different places.

The number of submitted nominations was 2,563 in October 2001 election, 3,093 in June 1996, and 3,855 in 1991 election.

In 2001 election, BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, Bangladesh Jatiya Party and Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) participated as an alliance while all other political parties competed separately.

But this time, all the major political parties are about to contest the election from two alliances.

The grand electoral alliance comprising Awami League-led 14-party, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad), a faction of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), and Islami Oikya Front (IOF); and the rival four-party alliance comprising BNP, Jamaat, BJP, Jatiya Party (JP-Monju) and a faction of

IOJ are going to announce common rival candidates for each constituency.

If so happens, the number of nomination seekers from the two alliances is not likely to exceed 600. If the numbers of independent candidates and rebel candidates are added to the 600 it is not likely to cross 1000.

But the number crossed four thousand yesterday as both the alliances failed to finalise a single candidate for a single constituency.

In addition to those who got party tickets formally, a large number of leaders of both Awami League (AL) and BNP led electoral alliances filed their nominations either on instructions from party high-commands or on their own as

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## 2 'militants' get AL tickets

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

The Awami League (AL) has nominated two Islamist militant leaders and four other forerunners in religion-based politics to contest the parliamentary elections slated for January 22 on behalf of the AL-led grand electoral alliance.

Sources said keeping almost all the top AL leaders in the dark, a few influential party high-ups persuaded AL President Sheikh Hasina to give nominations to the Islamist extremists, two of them veterans of the Afghan war.

On the other hand, the AL has nominated seven candidates from its left allies which have been in movement with it for various demands of the 14-party alliance since its formation in mid last year.

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## 300 hurt in clashes on final day of nomination filing

STAR REPORT

Around 300 people were injured as supporters of BNP and Awami League (AL) locked in inter-party and intra-party clashes across the country yesterday, the last day of nomination paper submission.

In the capital, supporters of BNP leader and Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka and supporters of AL candidate for Dhaka-8 constituency Haji Mohammad Selim

locked in a clash in front of the returning officer's office at Segunbagicha during filing of their nomination papers. The incident left over 100 injured, 70 of whom received primary treatment in Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

In the morning, the candidates with hundreds of supporters gathered in front of the office to submit their nomination papers. But, around 1:20pm supporters BNP and AL locked in a half-hour-long

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## Jamaat not happy with 32 seats, wants more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A discord between BNP and its major ally Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh over seat sharing is delaying disclosure of the final list of four-party alliance candidates for the next election, according to alliance sources.

Moreover, four-party is not ready to disclose the final list before its rival grand electoral alliance led by Awami League does so, the sources added.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan however said

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## AL shoots itself in the foot

MAHFUZ ANAM

What a tribute the Awami League has paid to the martyrs of the Liberation War in the very month of our victory. There was perhaps no better way to 'honour' the intellectuals who were brutally killed on 13th of December, 1971 for a modern, scientific and secular Bangladesh than by signing a deal with Islamic extremists and pledging to permit fatwa, introduce shariah laws, and basically to lay

the foundation for a religious state in the future.

We have known for a while that our politics had become unprincipled, opportunistic and devoid of all ethical considerations. BNP and its allies shocked and surprised us during the last five years. Now AL has shown that it is equally capable of a betrayal of values and ethics in politics. We knew that 'anything to gain power' was the most favourite game of our leaders. We saw with

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## Protests on against AL deal with bigots

DU CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-cultural, professional and student organisations yesterday continued to condemn the deal signed between Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis (BKM).

They urged AL to scrap the deal as it is against the spirit of Liberation War and against the spirit of a secular, democratic and welfare state.

11-Party, an alliance of left political parties, held a press conference and feared that if the deal were implemented, it would destroy democracy, the spirit of

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## Ershad asked to surrender, his appeal rejected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

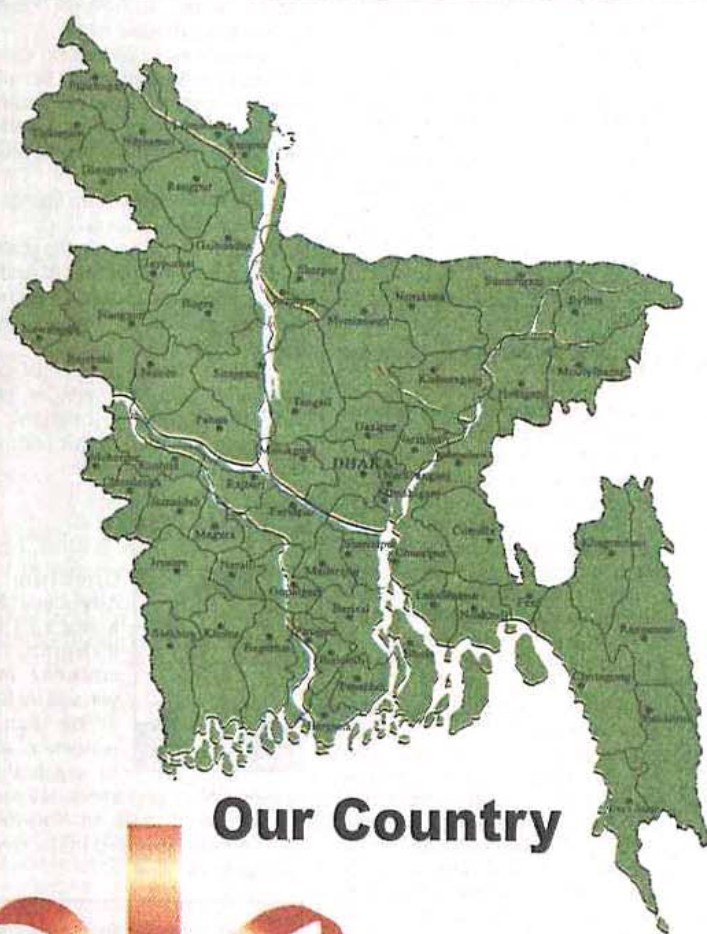
The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday rejected Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad's petition for a stay on the December 14 High Court (HC) verdict sentencing him to two years in prison in a graft case and asked him to surrender to the trial court.

The one-member vacation bench of Justice Joyrul Abedin of the Appellate Division heard the petition and passed the order.

The Election Commission (EC) meantime will seek the law ministry's opinion whether the latest SC order would translate into Ershad being barred from contesting the forthcoming election, sources said.

JP Secretary General ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader said they do not think the verdict will forbid the former president from standing for the January 22 election. But if it turns out to be so and the party

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Aaron H Chowdhury (Danny)



All the memories of your footsteps and your breath drip on our afflicted hearts like autumn leaves. May be somewhere in boundless divinity, you are delighting the porch of God. We believe someone holds all the departures and you exist in his infinite store like a silent brightness. You are alive in our hearts and thoughts. You are an innocent glow in this eternity.

Dida & Dadu Bhai: Anita & Samson Chowdhury, Parents: Bula & Tapan Chowdhury, and all members of the family