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Go all out to make JS polls free, fair

CA asks govt officials UNB, Rangpur

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday asked field-level government officials to take all necessary measures to hold free and transparent national elections on December 29 for building a corruption and terrorism-free country.

"Take a vow to present the nation an acceptable general election wherein people's expectations would be properly reflected," he said.

Fakhruddin was addressing an opinion-sharing meeting with the government officials from Rajshahi division ahead of the 9th parliamentary elections.

It was the 2nd meeting after

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Nomination rejects flood EC with appeal

30 nominations declared valid after hearing of 73 appeals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the first day of hearing yesterday, the Election Commission (EC) settled 57 appeals by candidates disqualified during scrutiny, declaring as many as 30 nominations valid and rejecting 27.

Sixteen of the 73 appeals it heard yesterday will be disposed of today, said EC sources.

That the number of nominations being cleared is higher than those snubbed has called into question the standard of scrutiny by the returning officers (ROs).

So far, 267 appeals have been filed. Of them, 232 are against rejection and the rest are against acceptance of nominations.

The commission will accept appeals till today. It will continue hearing till December 10. The closing day for withdrawing nominations is December 11.

Of the candidates back in the race, Mohammad Nabi Nawaz in Jhenidah-3 belongs to Awami League (AL) and Rafiqul Islam Jamal in Jhalakathi-1 to BNP.

The other contestants whose nominations have been accepted are Jatiya Party's Mostafizur Rahman in Comilla-2, Zahirul Islam in Dhaka-8, Monzur Alam in Jhalakathi-1 and AKSM Sahidul Islam in Chandpur-1, Jamaat-e-Islami's Abul Kawser Mohammad Nazrul Islam in Gaibandha-3, Bangladesh Islami

Andolon's Shamsuddin in Faridpur-4, Moulana Abdul Jalil in Pabna-4, Moinul Islam in Jhalakathi-1 and AKM Erfan in Dhaka-8, Jatiya Party's (Monju) Mohammad Rubel Hawlader in Jhalakathi-1, Sarwar Hossain in Dhaka-7 and Lutfar Rahman in Kurigram-4, Gono Forum's Safar Ali in Dhaka-4 and -5, and Abu Bakar Siddiky in Chandpur-2, Krishak Samik Janata League's Sayed Ali in Rangpur-3, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal's Akhter Hazi in Dhaka-4, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal's Biren Chandra Sil in Gaibandha-1, Bikalpadhara Bangladesh's Maqbul Hossain in Lalmonirhat-1, National People's Party's Solaiman Pramanik in Pabna-4, Khelafat Majlish's

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BNP draws 100-day plan for economy

Majority leaders still in dark about poll manifesto

RASHIDUL HASAN and RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

BNP's draft election manifesto promises a 100-day crash programme for boosting the country's economy and for creating temporary employment for the poor to deal with the country's existing economic crisis, said a highly placed party source.

The manifesto was however drafted by a handful of close aides to Chairperson Khaleda Zia keeping most of the top leaders in the dark, according to party insiders who claimed that the document might be unveiled on December 12.

Along with a 'look east policy', the draft manifesto promises that the party will take steps towards an integrated anti-terrorism and anti-militancy policy with effective participation of ten countries of the region, if voted to power, according to the source.

"Economic diplomacy will be the base of BNP's foreign policy," an adviser to the party chairperson told The Daily Star last night.

In the manifesto, BNP pledges to take many steps for eliminating traffic congestions in the capital including shifting Zia

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Hasina, Khaleda kick off race Dec 12, after Sylhet prayers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will hit the campaign trail on December 12.

Before setting out, they will visit shrines of Hazrat Shah Jalal (r) and Hazrat Shah Paran (r) in Sylhet.

Hasina will go to Sylhet on December 11.

The following day she will unveil her party's election manifesto for the December 29 general election and launch formal electioneering at a press conference in the capital.

The same day Khaleda Zia will begin her electoral campaigns from Sylhet. However,

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AL pledges metro tunnel, circular rail

Finalises electoral manifesto, focuses on food prices, power crisis, graft, terror

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Awami League (AL) has finalised its manifesto with a pledge, among many others, to construct metro tunnel and circular rail to remove traffic jam and solve transport problems if voted to power.

AL will frame a strategy paper containing both mid-term and long-term plans to implement its election pledges, says the manifesto,

which was formally approved by the party yesterday.

AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC), the highest decision making body of the party, approved the manifesto after a two-day hectic meeting with party chief Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Hasina is set to unveil the manifesto at a press conference at Hotel Sheraton on

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Over 2m head for Arafat

AFP, Mna, Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has mobilised a force of 100,000 men to protect an estimated two million Muslim pilgrims starting hajj yesterday, amid fears of attack or deadly stampedes.

The interior ministry said that in addition to many thousands of Saudis, an estimated 1.7 million of the faithful have descended on the kingdom from abroad to perform the annual rites.

Local press reports spoke of a throng that could reach three million, and the official SPA news agency reported yesterday that everything was proceeding smoothly.

The hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam, which the Quran says all Muslims must carry out at least once in their lives, if they are able to do so.

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Muslim pilgrims visit al-Noor mountain, where the Hira cave is located, overlooking the Saudi holy city of Makkah late Friday. Islam's Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) received his first message to preach Islam while he was praying in this cave. Around two million Muslim pilgrims have flocked to the holy city for the annual hajj pilgrimage.

PHOTO: AFP

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