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Ershad's see-saw game gets JP 48 seats from AL

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The Awami League (AL) and Jatiya Party (JP) finally reached an agreement yesterday to nominate JP candidates in 48 seats from the AL-led electoral grand alliance in the upcoming ninth parliamentary elections.

The settlement came at the eleventh hour of candidacy withdrawal following two days' dramatic events centring seat sharing between the two components of the alliance.

Intense negotiations between the two parties had faltered late Wednesday night

when JP withdrew itself from the alliance because of "being deprived" of nomination after the AL offered JP about 30 seats. Earlier, JP got assurance of getting 47 seats from the alliance leader.

But JP chair HM Ershad yesterday afternoon announced to wait until 5:00pm for the AL's final decision regarding seat sharing.

"The grand alliance is still intact and we are ready to take part in the polls under the grand alliance if Jatiya Party is given the number of seats it has demanded," Ershad told reporters.

After Ershad's announcement, a

policymaking level delegation of JP led by acting Chairman barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud went to Hasina's political office at Dhanmondi at about 4:30pm to hold a meeting with an AL delegation.

At the meeting the two parties reviewed seat sharing. After an hour they came out smiling and announced that all misunderstandings were resolved.

Sources said the AL chief who was visiting Sylhet instructed AL spokesperson Syed Ashrafur Islam over telephone to accept JP's demands "in the greater interests of the grand alliance".

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Hasina visits Sylhet shrines AL manifesto to be announced today

SHARIFUL ISLAM from Sylhet

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday offered munajat at three shrines in Sylhet before formally starting her election campaign today with the announcement of her party's election manifesto.

Hundreds of supporters standing on the two sides of city streets with colourful banners and festoons and party symbol boat and chanting slogans welcomed the AL chief on her way to the shrines

SEE PAGE 2 COL 8

4-party completes seat sharing

Jamaat gets 34, IOJ 4, BJP 2; Khaleda starts campaign today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following a seat-sharing deal between BNP and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, Jamaat received 34 seats to run for the upcoming national polls under the banner of four-party alliance.

However, in four other constituencies--Chapainawabganj-3, Sirajganj-4, Rajshahi-3 and Jhenidah-3--Jamaat candidates will be battling against candidates of their ally BNP.

BNP also gave four seats to the two parties in Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), Brahmanbaria-2, Jessore-5, Sunamganj-3 and Madaripur-1, and two seats to Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), Bhola-1 and Bhola-2.

However, IOJ candidates too will be contesting BNP and Jamaat candidates in Netrakona-3 and Cox's Bazar-2 constituencies.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

1,597 finally in race as 414 withdraw on last day

STAR REPORT

A total of 414 candidates withdrew their candidature for the upcoming parliamentary elections on the last day for withdrawing nomination papers.

Finally, a total of 1,597 candidates will contest the December 29 elections as the two major political alliances finalised their seat-sharing deals yesterday.

However, candidates of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Eid-ul-Azha celebrated

UNB, Dhaka

Eid-ul-Azha, the second largest religious festival of the Muslims, was celebrated across the country on Tuesday.

After offering prayers at Eid congregations, well-off Muslims sacrificed animals commemorating Hazrat Ibrahim's devotion to Allah as illustrated by his readiness to give up his beloved son Hazrat Ismail.

They (Muslims) shared the sacrificial meat with their relatives and neighbours and distributed meat among the poor.

The main Eid congregation was held at National Eidgah Maidan at 8:00am. Acting

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



Devotees pray in front of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the capital on the Eid day, failing to find room inside the mosque.

Emergency ceases on December 17 Meetings, rallies allowed from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The state of emergency, imposed in the country on January 11, 2007, will be withdrawn on December 17, the caretaker government announced Wednesday night.

"The government has decided to lift the state of emergency from December 17 with the approval of the president," Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said reading out an announcement during a press briefing at the PID conference room.

He also said restrictions on rallies and processions would be withdrawn from today to facilitate campaign for the parliamentary elections scheduled for December 29.

The government's spokesman said the election campaigns must be conducted following the Code of Conduct, 2008, issued by the Election Commission (EC) for political parties and candidates.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 8



Dipjol held after 2yrs in hiding

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Film actor and Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) ward councillor Monwar Hossain Dipjol was sent to jail Wednesday, a day after the BNP leader was arrested.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

119 get back polls candidacy as EC hearings conclude

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has cleared candidacy of 119 parliamentary aspirants including seven from Awami League (AL) and BNP each during hearings of appeals filed against cancellation of nomination papers by Returning Officers (ROs).

Meanwhile, many aspirants whose candidacy were either accepted or rejected by the EC at the end of hearings on Wednesday night waited for the certified copy of EC decision at the commission secretariat until yesterday evening.

The EC secretariat was very sluggish in completing formalities, which according to many aspirants caused difficulty in withdrawing candidacy and filing appeals with the High Court (HC) against the commission's decision.

Admitting the commission's slow pace of work, Election Commissioner Sohul Hossain told reporters last night that the commission extended the deadline for withdrawal of nomination papers to 10:00pm from 5:00pm yesterday.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

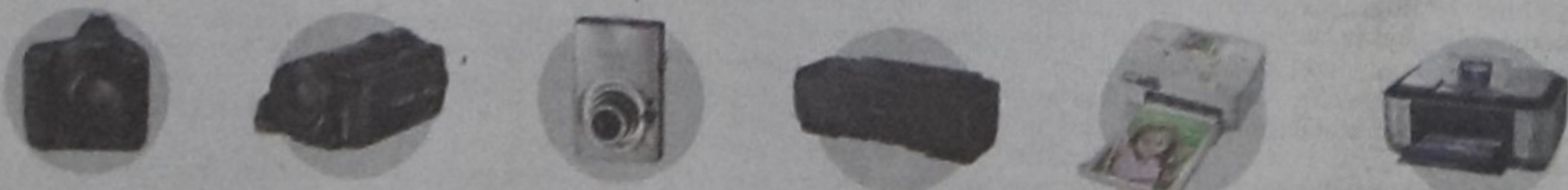
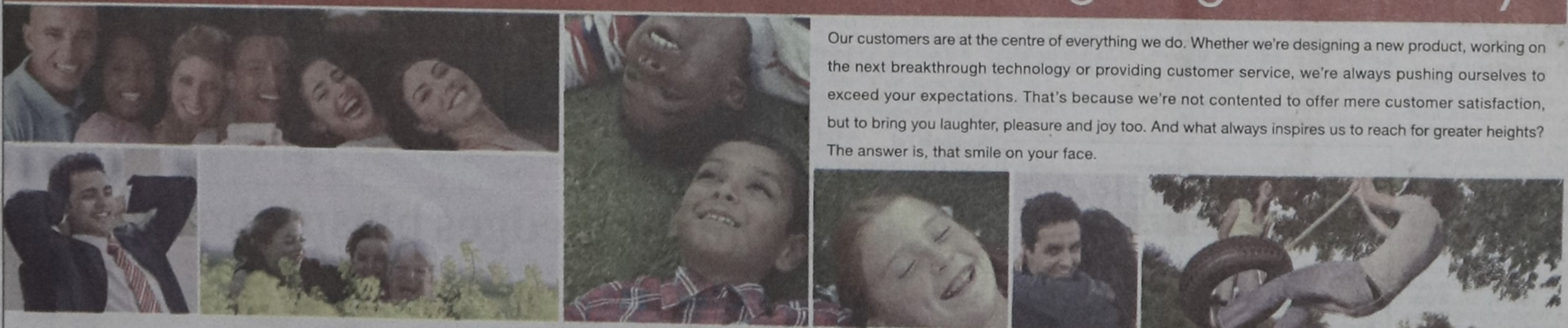
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