

Fight within alliances for at least 22 seats

Total candidates 1,538; ballot paper printing starts in full swing, Noakhali-1 polls on Jan 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Candidates of the grand alliance's Awami League and Jatiya Party are set to fight each other in at least 11 constituencies, shows the final list of runners published by the Election Commission (EC) yesterday.

The seats are in addition to the three that the alliance has set aside for the AL and JP contestants to battle it out.

Similarly, BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, components of the four-party alliance, both have candidates in at least two constituencies.

Islami Oikya Jote, another member of the four-party alliance, will compete against BNP and Jamaat candidates for two seats.

The immediate past ruling coalition has by consensus left four seats for open contest.

The EC yesterday evening came up with the final list of 1,538 candidates vying for 299 seats. Originally, it was to unveil the list with electoral symbols on December 12.

Ballot papers for some constituencies however have already been sent to press.

Explaining this, the commission secretariat officials said they began printing a little earlier to complete the task on time.

They said the printing job will gain momentum now that the commission has finalised the list of candidates.

Humayun Kabir, secretary to the EC Secretariat, said, "We've already had around 90 lakh ballot papers printed for 24 constituencies."

Meanwhile, the EC yesterday rescheduled the polls to Noakhali-1 constituency for January 12. The election there was

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Advisers okay emergency withdrawal

UNB, Dhaka

The Council of Advisers of the caretaker government yesterday approved the Emergency Powers Repeal Ordinance 2008 to lift the state of emergency declared on January 11, 2007 in the wake of political turmoil.

In pursuance of a prior government declaration, the annulment of the emergency ordinance will be effective from December 17, in the run-up to the December 29 national elections.

A meeting of the council of advisers with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in the chair also approved a proposal for complete withdrawal of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

AL, BNP bank on freshers in Dhaka

Conviction, graft charges herald the change of guards

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN and HASAN JAHAID TUSHER

The two electoral alliances led by the Awami League (AL) and the BNP have for the first time picked a number of fresh less known persons as their candidates for city constituencies in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

The two alliances faced difficulties in finding suitable candidates as many of their former lawmakers are either convicted or have been fugitive since declaration of the state of emergency. Increase in the number of constituencies from 8 to 15 in the capital is also another reason for the crisis of candidates.

Under the circumstances both the AL and BNP have even had to hire a few candidates from other districts.



Sheikh Taposh Shirin Sultana

The BNP has picked nine new faces while the AL has nominated seven.

AL policymakers believe their new candidates can win the election battle because most of them do not have any mentionable bad image. But BNP leaders said they fear a dismal

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



'Bikkhubdha Deshbasi' brings out a procession from the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital with a call for not casting vote for war criminals and communal forces in the upcoming parliamentary election.

Say no to war criminals in polls

Nation pays homage to martyred intellectuals amid renewed demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mourning procession commemorating martyred intellectuals paraded through Dhaka University campus with rickshaw-pullers passing by singing the national anthem and flag-hawkers in solemn silence following intellectuals, teachers, students, artists, cultural activists and journalists.

As the procession ended at fine arts institute some rickshaw-pullers and flag-hawkers joined the crowd and raised hands together making a vow to boycott the war criminals in the upcoming election and bring them to justice.

"We have taken an oath in the name of all martyrs of our long liberation struggles; in the name of the soil, water and air of Bangladesh; in the name of the child born today or to be born.... We will continue the struggle until

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

BNP's POLLS MANIFESTO Pledges abundant, but specific target missing

INAM AHMED and SHARIEF KHAN

The election manifesto of BNP that Khaleda Zia presented on Saturday has a waft of promises for a wide spectrum of sectors. But it lacks accountable and specific targets, and leaves the question of resource mobilisation unsolved.

It too has set curbing of inflation as a prime task, but the ways to tame it are weakly mentioned.

It rightly focuses on development of small and medium enterprises (SME) and proposes a raft of measures, some vague and some specific. The strategy it wants to follow is enhancement of food production by subsidising agricultural inputs and stocking up food.

But the proposition that makes one wonder

about its pragmatism and practicality is that the party wants to distribute food free of cost among the destitute, helpless, elderly and the unemployed. This certainly looks like an impossible proposition. There are at least 25 percent of the population falling below the poverty line, another 9 percent above the age of 55, and another 4.2 percent unemployed. So in total, at least 5 to 6 crore people will need to be fed free of cost, the needed resource for which will be enormous and certainly beyond any government's capability. Is this an empty promise then, or a political rhetoric? The proposal for extending the programme of ensured jobs for 100 days is however well received, and promises good results in munga prone areas.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Unite to ensure victory for pro-liberation forces: Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged people to sink all differences among them and work together to ensure triumph of pro-liberation forces in the upcoming parliamentary polls, and prevent war criminals from coming to power and exploit them.

"I call upon all in the country to be united to ensure polls victory of pro-liberation forces in December, the month of victory, and make sure defeat of war criminals," Hasina said.

Hasina, who is set to launch a nationwide polls campaign today by addressing eight rallies in the capital, was speaking at a discussion meeting in memory of the martyred intellectuals held near Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi.

The former prime minister is due to address rallies at Hazaribagh, Mohammadpur, Pallabi, Kafrul, Mirpur, Tejgaon, Karwan Bazar and Uttara this afternoon to seek electoral support for the AL-led grand alliance candidates.

She is scheduled to visit

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Remain neutral to ensure fair polls

CA asks top bureaucrats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday directed top civil bureaucrats to discharge their duties with total neutrality in order to present the nation with a free, fair and credible election which will reflect public opinion.

"We want to be partners in an election that will set an example," said the head of the caretaker administration in his farewell address to the secretaries at the Cabinet Division of Bangladesh Secretariat in the capital.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Azam seeks to drop case against Hasina

Says it was filed for some 'misunderstanding'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Businessman Azam J Chowdhury will discontinue the extortion case he filed against Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina and her cousin Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim about one and a half years back.

He already submitted an application to the home ministry yesterday, seeking an executive order for withdrawal of the case through the court

concerned.

Speaking at a press briefing at his Gulshan office at around 11:00am, he said, "The case against Sheikh Selim was filed due to some misunderstanding in the adverse circumstances prevailing at that time."

Azam, managing director of East Coast Trading Ltd, termed the filing of the case an undesirable experience for him.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

New York, JFK.

Daily flights from Doha.

Enjoy every moment of your journey onboard with us. Make the most of space and comfort. Indulge in an amazing choice of entertainment and world class cuisine. Fly with us. After all, we cover the world with over 80 destinations.

World's 5-star airline. qatarairways.com

The Daily Star

10TH 'O' & 'A' LEVEL

AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY, 2007-2008

Announcement for 'O' & 'A' Level Private Candidates and Schools

Private Candidates
Private candidates who fulfill the criteria described below are requested to register their names at The Daily Star Office for inclusion as awardees. The criteria to be fulfilled are as follows:

Criteria for 'O' Level
Minimum 6 (six) 'A' grades in two consecutive sittings within May/June 2007 to May/June 2008

Criteria for 'A' Level
Minimum 3 (three) 'A' grades within 1 academic year (May/June 2007 to May/June 2008)

Eligible candidates are requested to contact Mr. Risalat Khan at The Daily Star office with their original Results Certificates along with a photocopy and 2 (two) passport-size photographs in person on December 20, 21, 22 & 23 between 11:00 am and 2:30 pm.

Schools
Any school that has students meeting the criteria above but has not been contacted by The Daily Star (i.e. has not been informed of the first scheduled meeting through regular post, email or phone) is requested to contact Mr. Risalat Khan at The Daily Star office at the aforementioned dates and times or email him at coordinator_dailystaraward@yahoo.com by December 24 with:

- The name of the school, phone number of a responsible representative (who will attend the meetings) and a valid email address that is checked regularly

The schools are also requested to promptly prepare a list of the candidates meeting the above criteria, the number of 'A' grades achieved by each candidate, and photocopies of results certificates for each candidate.

NOTE: If you know of any private candidate(s) or school(s) that may be unaware of this, please communicate the above information to them so that we may include them in this ceremony as well.

Jamaat boycotts Khaleda's rally in Meherpur

A CORRESPONDENT, Meherpur

The district unit of Jamaat-e-Islami boycotted the public meeting of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in Meherpur last night, as the key ally of the four-party alliance was not informed 'formally' about the programme.

Sources said district Jamaat Ameer Haji Samiruddin and BNP district president Masud Arun are vying separately for the December 29 election in Meherpur-1 constituency and this is the reason behind the boycott.

Khaleda Zia started her two-day election campaign yesterday morning and reached the meeting ground at Meherpur Government High School under the constituency around 10:00pm.

Samiruddin told the correspondent that he did not get any information about the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Notice
Today's edition of The Daily Star contains a supplement of a roundtable on "Bangladesh's Delimitation Issues" on pages 12 and 13.

Dhaka Reservations 9890024-5, General 8858781
Dilkusha 9556538, 9556491 • Chittagong (88-031) 2512001-2
Sylhet (880-821) 719838

QATAR AIRWAYS القطرية