

Shujon wants more info in MP aspirants' affidavits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujon) yesterday slammed a political party for proposing the Election Commission to cancel the provision of affidavit submission by candidates ahead of polls.

In 2005, the High Court passed an order that all contestants will provide eight information -- including their wealth and assets, educational qualifications, sources of income and occupations -- in affidavits ahead of parliamentary elections.

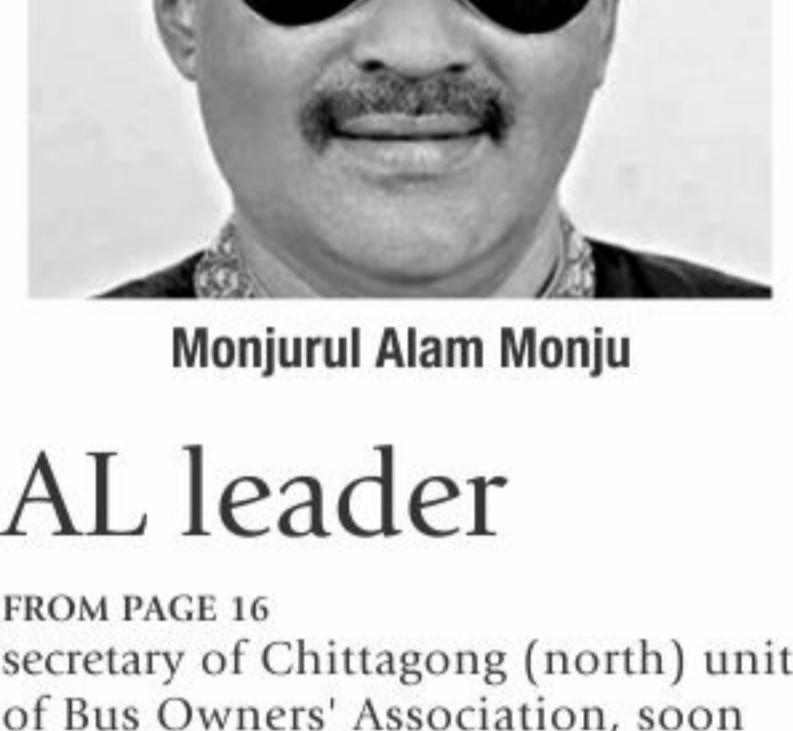
Instead of cancellation of the provision, Shujon demanded that such candidates add five more information -- including the candidates' age (if they are foreign nationals), details about their dependents and whether they are involved in businesses with the government.

Shujon Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar placed the demands at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Shujon also urged the EC to take stern actions against the contestants of the next general election if they provide false information or conceal anything in the affidavits.

Shujon Vice-President Kazi Ebadul Haq and Associate Coordinator Sanjida Haque Bipasha were also present at the briefing.

On October 8, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, in a dialogue with the EC, demanded that the commission scrap the existing provision of submitting affidavits.



Monjurul Alam Monju

AL leader

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secretary of Chittagong (north) unit of Bus Owners' Association, soon after the incident.

Protesting his detention, transport workers blocked Hathazari road for three hours from 9:00am. The blockade disrupted Chittagong city's communications with Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts.

Jasim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, said the shooting happened in front of Officers' Club near MA Aziz Stadium around 12:30am yesterday.

Monjurul and Joynal Abedin Chowdhury, an activist of Jubo League Chittagong (south) unit, were locked in an altercation after spending a few hours at the Officers' Club. At one stage, Monjurul shot Joynal in his right leg from his pistol, he said.

Soon after the incident, police rushed to the spot and detained Monjurul, and Joynal was sent to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, the OC added.

Quoting Monjurul, the police official said, "It was an accidental shooting."

Monjurul claimed that his firearm was licensed. But the police official said they were verifying whether the firearm was licensed.

Victim's elder brother Md Alamgir, also an AL leader in Anwara upazila, told The Daily Star that the duo frequented the Officers' Club. Monjurul used to scold his brother for good relations with other AL leaders.

Last night, Monjurul opened fire on his brother following an altercation at the Officers' Club, he added.

Due to Hathazari road blockade, people were seen waiting at different bus stops for buses, and many of them opted for CNG-run autorickshaws to reach their destinations, paying exorbitant fares.

Talking to this correspondent around 11:00am, Soma Das said she and her family were waiting for a Rangamati bound-bus near city's Oxygen intersection from 10:00am to go to Rangamati to attend a wedding ceremony, but they did not still get a bus.

Abdullah Al Masum, additional superintendent of police in Hathazari circle, said the transport workers put the blockade around 9:00am and continued until 12:00noon.

Rohingyas may lose land, crops

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got these documents. In Myanmar, you need to present documents to prove everything."

The stack of papers, browning and torn at the edges, may not be enough, however, to regain the land in Kyauk Pan Du village, where he grew potatoes, chilli plants, almonds and rice.

"It depends on them. There is no land ownership for those who don't have citizenship," said Kyaw Lwin, agriculture minister in Rakhine state, when asked in an interview whether refugees who returned to Myanmar could reclaim land and crops.

Despite his land holdings, Myanmar does not recognise Ahmed as a citizen. Nearly all the more than 1 million Rohingya who live in Myanmar before the recent exodus are stateless, despite many tracing their families in the country for generations.

Officials have made plans to harvest, and possibly sell, thousands of acres of crops left behind by the fleeing Rohingya, according to state government documents reviewed by Reuters.

Myanmar also intends to settle most refugees who return to Rakhine state in new "model villages", rather than on the land they previously occupied, an approach criticised in the past by the United Nations as effectively creating permanent camps.

'OWNERLESS' CROPS

The exodus of the Rohingya from the conflict zone in northern Rakhine has left some 71,500 acres of planted rice paddy abandoned and in need of harvesting by January, according to plans drawn up by state officials.

Tables in the documents, reviewed by Reuters, divide the land into paddy sown by "national races" -- meaning Myanmar citizens -- or "Bengalis," a term widely used in Myanmar to refer to the Rohingya, but which they reject as implying they are illegal migrants from Bangladesh.

Kyaw Lwin, the state minister, confirmed the plans, and said there was a total of 45,000 acres of "ownerless Bengali land".

Two dozen combine harvesters operated by officials from the agriculture ministry will begin cutting stalks this month in areas under military control.

The machines will be able to harvest about 14,400 acres according to official calculations contained in the plans. It is unclear what will become of the remaining crop, but officials told Reuters they would try to harvest all the paddy, recruiting additional labour to harvest manually if necessary.

An acre of paddy in Myanmar typically makes more than \$300 at market, meaning the state will gain millions of dollars worth of rice.

The harvested rice will be transported to government stores, where it would either be donated to those displaced by the conflict or sold, Rakhine state secretary Tin Maung Swe told Reuters by phone. "The land was abandoned. There is no one to reap that, so the government ordered to harvest it," he said.

IDENTITY CHECKS

Those who decide to cross back into Myanmar will first be received at one of two centres, according to government plans reviewed by Reuters.

At the centres, officials said, the returnees will fill out a 16-point form that will be cross-checked with local authorities' records. Immigration officials have for years visited Rohingya households at least annually for checks, photographing family members.

For refugees who lost all their documents, the government would compare their photos to those that immigration authorities have on file, said Myint Kyaing, the permanent secretary at the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

Officials will accept as evidence "national verification" cards handed out in an ongoing government effort to register Rohingya that falls short of offering them citizenship. The card has been widely rejected by Rohingya community leaders, who say they treat long residents like new immigrants.

Poor highway

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today," said Afaz Ali, a trader.

"Our bus was stuck over the night, at least for five hours, only at Kaliakair. My wife and young daughter suffered for lack of lavatory (toilet) facility on the road, which was at times unbearable," he added.

AKM Mizanul Haque, officer-in-charge of Mirzapur Police Station, said vehicles moved very slowly due to potholes hidden under stagnant water.

Besides, the road had been dug up at different points for widening under the four-lane project, forcing vehicles to move slowly. The slow movement of vehicles worsened the situation, the OC said.

At some places, vehicles broke down right in the middle of the road and drivers fell asleep, stretching the tailbacks, he added.

Traffic Inspector Sajedul Islam was seen struggling hard to ease the traffic congestion in Rasulpur area in the morning.

"The condition of the highway from Elenga to Rasulpur was bad even earlier. The road subsided at many points, and numerous potholes were enlarged in rains for the last two days," Sajedul said.

"Vehicles remain stuck for hours almost every day due to the battered road condition and the unplanned four-lane work ongoing," said Rasel Miah, driver of a Rangpur-bound bus.

Though the Roads and Highways Department did temporary repairing works on several occasions at the cost of crores of taka, the road condition became worse rather than improve, he said.

ADMISSION SEEKERS STUCK IN TRAFFIC JAM

Many of the admission seekers of Rajshahi University who were travelling on the route failed to take the tests.

Sourav Biswas, one of them, said he had boarded a Rajshahi-bound bus from Dhaka's Kallyanpur around 10:00pm on Saturday. He reached only Tangail bypass area around 10:00am yesterday morning.

"My exam is at 2:30pm. Now it is not possible to reach Rajshahi before the exam as our bus is still stuck at Elenga in Tangail [around 11:30am]," said Mohammad Rokibuzzaman, another admission seeker.

Antara Shilum wanted to study in social science faculty at Rajshahi University. But by the time she would reach Rajshahi from Dhaka, her admission test would be over. The five-hour journey on the route at usual times took her more than 20 hours due to traffic jam.

She left home in Dhaka at 9:00am on Saturday. The bus that was scheduled to set off for Rajshahi at 10:00am, started the journey six hours later for traffic jam.

Reaching Rajshahi around 12:30pm yesterday, she could take the tests held

afterwards.

Shimu was still luckier than hundreds others from eastern parts of the country, who failed to take any of the RU admission tests for traffic jam.

Many applicants and their relatives said they made a journey of 17 or more hours on the route. Many students took another route through Nagarbari ferryghat, but that too took nearly ten hours.

The RU dean for social science faculty, Prof M Faizar Rahman said 84.18 percent applicants took the three admission tests held before 1:30pm yesterday.

RU teachers and officials claimed that nearly ten percent of the applicants could not take the tests, citing 95 percent attendance in the previous years.

However, the RU Pro VC said many of those who had not sat for the tests secured places in medical colleges and other major universities. At the same time he admitted that at least a few hundred students could not attend the tests for traffic jam.

The attendance in two tests of the arts faculty could not be known immediately.

Transport managers said around a hundred students returned their tickets as they cancelled trips for traffic jam.

Our Tangail correspondent Mirza Shakil, Rajshahi correspondent Anwar Ali Himu and Rajshahi university correspondent Arafat Rahman contributed to the report.

Arbitration

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At the arbitration, Lal Mia and his men offered 20 decimals of land to the girl's family, said Abdullah Al Amin Johnny, chairman of Ramgopalpur UP.

The chairman admitted the incident and said the victim's family did not inform him about it and the matter was settled locally.

Locals allege Sajib's family is trying to cover up the rape attempt luring the victim's family.

The victim's father, a day labourer, said he was in Dhaka when the incident took place and did not attend the arbitration.

He alleged Lal Mia forced him and other members of his family to put their signatures on a blank stamp paper.

"We are poor and have no power to avoid the decision of the influential arbitrators," he lamented.

About the land, he said it was not handed over to them.

Lal Mia could not be contacted as he did not receive any calls.

Delwar Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Gouripur police, said they heard about the matter, but the victim's family did not file any complaint.

The OC said he sent a team to the victim's house yesterday but no one was there.

Abe wins polls gamble

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constitution, drawn up after Japan's defeat in World War Two. Several opposition parties favour changes, but don't necessarily agree on details.

Amendments must be approved by two-thirds of each chamber of parliament and then by a majority in a public referendum.

"Now that pro-constitutional change parties occupy more than two-thirds of the parliament, the constitution will be the most important political issue next year," said Hidenori Suezawa, a financial market and fiscal analyst at SMBC Nikko Securities.

"And as we saw in the UK ... a referendum could be tricky. So while Abe is likely to be prime minister for the time being, it is too early to say whether he can stay in power until 2021." Abe declined to say if he had run for a third term.

Abe has said he needed a new mandate to tackle a "national crisis" from North Korea's missile and nuclear threats and a fast-aging population, and to approve his idea of diverting revenue from a planned sales tax hike to education and child care from public

debt repayment.

He called the poll amid confusion in the opposition camp and an uptick in his ratings, dented earlier in the year by scandals over suspected cronyism and a perception he had grown arrogant after nearly five years in office.

Abe has backed US President Donald Trump's tough stance towards North Korea, which has test-fired missiles over Japan, that all options, including military action, are on the table. Trump is to visit Japan Nov 5-7 to reaffirm the leaders' tight ties.

Abe's snap poll gamble had seemed risky - some early forecasts saw the LDP losing a significant chunk of seats - after Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, often floated as a possible first Japanese female premier, launched her conservative Party of Hope.

That party absorbed a big chunk of the failed main opposition Democratic Party, which abruptly decided to run no candidates of its own. But voter enthusiasm soon waned despite its calls for popular policies such as an exit from nuclear power and a freeze on the planned sales tax rise.

DU releases test results

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former and present students and cross-section of people.

Instead, the authorities formed a probe body to "find out those who are spreading rumours of question leak in different social platforms".

"I have talked with the IT experts of counter terrorism unit about the time mentioned in some news. They said it could be manipulated somehow," said Prof Akhtaruzzaman yesterday.

Asked about the publication of results in such shortest period of time without verifying the allegations, he said the allegations were baseless.

"We had earlier published results in such short time," the VC told reporters after announcing the results.

Pass rate in this unit is 14.35 percent. The rates were 13.46 percent in science group, 22.07 percent in humanities and 12.77 percent in business group.

As many as 98,054 candidates applied for 1,610 seats for three groups, but 71,549 of them sat for the test. Of them, only 10,264 students have secured pass marks.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Pragatisheel Chhatra Jote, an alliance of left-leaning student organisations, yesterday demonstrated in front of the VC office demanding cancellation of the test.

As many as 150 activists walked in a procession from Madhu's Canteen to the VC office. They started taking position inside the VC office by breaking locks of two collapsible gates.

"The authorities published the result to cover up the incident and hide the perpetrators without forming a neutral investigation committee," said Eva Majumder, president of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front of DU unit.

Meritorious students are being defeated by money due to corrupt administration, she said.

On Thursday night, Criminal Investigation Department arrested two Chhatra League leaders and an admission seeker in connection with ques-

tion leak. A mobile court also sentenced 12 admission seekers to one-month imprisonment each for using electronic devices during the one-hour test that began at 10:00am.

A Dhaka court on Saturday placed two Bangladesh Chhatra League men and an admission seeker, arrested on suspicion of leaking the question papers, on four-day remand.

A total of 32 people including three DU students and two BCL leaders have so far been detained during this year's DU admission tests. Twenty-seven of them were admission seekers.

In the last 10 years, questions of admission tests of different public universities were allegedly leaked from the examination centres. In many cases, the questions were leaked at least half an hour before the test.

In most of those cases, probe bodies were formed, but none was found guilty. In a few other cases, the committee found the allegations to be true and cancelled the test.

But the syndicate remained out of reach.

TEACHER MISBEHAVES WITH JOURNO

Assistant Proctor Sohel Rana behaved roughly with the DU correspondent of an English daily newspaper.

Mir Arshadul Haque, DU correspondent of The Daily Independent, alleged that