

Protect presiding officers during polls

EC asks executive magistrates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday asked the executive magistrates to ensure equal opportunity for all candidates during the 11th general election scheduled for December 30.

During the second day of briefing, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) KM Nurul Huda and four other commissioners also asked the executive magistrates of Sylhet, Barishal and Chattogram to ensure that the electoral code of conduct is not violated.

"It is your duty to ensure that all the candidates are treated equally," CEC Huda told the executive magistrates at

the Nirbachan Bhaban.

The commission started the three-day briefing for executive magistrates to give them directives on conducting drives against violations of polls code and punishing the violators.

On November 12, the EC directed the Ministry of Public Administration to appoint 579 executive magistrates at the field level to check for violations of the electoral code of conduct.

It asked the ministry to keep the magistrates engaged in the election duty till the day after the election (December 31).

"You must protect the presiding officers instead of commanding them.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain speaking on the country's overall political situation and election atmosphere at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Dr Kamal wants CEC replaced

FROM PAGE 1

activities. We want you to work neutrally from today, no matter what you did in the past."

As per the constitution, the Gonoforum chief said the CEC should work neutrally and independently without being directed by anyone. "But, we're forced to say you've so far failed to demonstrate your impartiality."

"I sincerely request the CEC to ask his conscience whether he is working spontaneously as per his own understanding or at the behest of anybody. The CEC acting as per the directives of somebody is not only a crime, but also a violation of the constitution. If you continue to do that you'll be consid-

ered as a violator of the Constitution in history," he added.

Referring to the CEC's comment that all the arrests are being made as per his directives, Dr Kamal asked Nurul Huda to explain with documents as to why he is issuing orders to arrest people. "Your explanation will help us examine whether your actions are justified or you're doing those as an abettor of the government."

He also warned that they may move the court seeking remedy if the Commission does not change its current attitude towards opposition.

The Gonoforum chief said the wholesale arrest of leaders and activists of opposition parties is still going on

which is not conducive to creating a congenial election atmosphere. "This wholesale arrest should be stopped."

Dr Kamal said, "Police are the force of the state...they aren't the government force. Police have to work for creating a proper election atmosphere. They must provide legal protection to opposition parties."

The eminent jurist urged the CEC to tell the police to help create a proper election atmosphere so that all candidates can reach out to their supporters and carry out their election campaigns with equal opportunities.

He said the government is making it impossible to hold a neutral and credible election with its "undemocratic" activities and "wholesale"

arrest of opposition leaders and activists.

Dr Kamal said they are waiting with eagerness to witness a fair and acceptable election where people, the country's owners, will get a chance to exercise their right to franchise freely.

Showing a photograph, he strongly criticised the police for the way they arrested BNP nomination hopeful Monirul Haque Chowdhury.

The Gonoforum president called upon media to neutrally play their role and depict the real scenario of the country as it will help create a healthy atmosphere for a fair election.

He also opposed the EC's decision to use EVMs in six constituencies and

said most parties are against it.

Replying to a question on seat sharing with BNP, Kamal said there is a possibility of both creating a distance and reaching a consensus over the issue. "We forged the unity for uniting people, and we all parties will field the candidates who will be acceptable to people, responsible and can play a good role in restoring democracy."

He said they will finalise the candidates of their alliance by two or three days.

Earlier, in a written speech, Gonoforum Executive President Subrata Chowdhury alleged that the Gono Bhaban, the ministers' residences and government offices are being used for political activities by

Four hurt in violence over AL tickets

STAR REPORT

At least four people were injured in Barishal and a highway was blocked in Mymensingh yesterday following feuds over Awami League nomination for the upcoming national elections.

Four activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were injured in a factional clash at Badarpur under Mehendiganj upazila after the ruling AL had declared nomination for Barishal-4 constituency, reports our Barishal Correspondent.

Locals and witnesses said a BCL group led by Shiah Uddin, follower of local AL lawmaker Pankaj Nath, attacked upazila unit BCL vice-president Raju Khan and his companions, who are followers of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

'Surprise' awaits in BNP nomination

FROM PAGE 1

From Dhaka-14, former lawmaker SA Khaleque's son SA Saiju would get the party ticket and BNP leader Abdus Salam from Dhaka-13, according to BNP insiders.

The names of the candidates from Dhaka-5, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19 and 20 constituencies would be finalised following consultations with the Oikyafront leaders, they added.

SEAT-SHARING

Several leaders of the BNP and its partners said they agreed in principle that the aspirants, who have the best chance of winning the election, should be given nomination regardless of their party affiliation.

The BNP is likely to give seven to 10 seats to the Gono Forum, two to three seats to the Nagorik Oikya, and three each to the JSD (Rab) and the Krishak

Sramik Janata League.

The components of the 20-party alliance sought 40 seats but the BNP agreed to give them a maximum of 20 seats.

Leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami, a key ally of the BNP, wished that the BNP would keep open some specific seats to its leaders.

The seats include Thakurgaon-2, Dinajpur-1 and 6, Nilphamari-3, Lalmonirhat-1, Rangpur-5, Kurigram-4, Gaibandha-1 and 4, Bogura-4, Sirajganj-4, Pabna-1 and 5, Jashore-2, Bagerhat-3 and 4, Khulna-5 and 6, Satkhira-2, 3 and 4, Pirojpur-2, Sylhet-5 and 6, Cumilla-11, Chattogram-15 and Cox's Bazar-2.

Another alliance partner, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), wanted the BNP to leave six seats for it. But the BNP agreed to leave four seats to LDP

President Oli Ahmed in Chattogram-14, its General Secretary Redwan Ahmed in Cumilla-7, Joint Secretary General Shahadat Hossain Selim from Laxmipur-1, and LDP leader Abdul Karim Abbasi from Netrakona-2.

The BNP is likely to leave Bhola-1 seat to Bangladesh Jatiya Party Chairman Andaleev Rahman Partha, Chattogram-5 to Kalyan Party Chairman Syed Mohammad Ibrahim from, Panchagarh-2 to Jatiya Ganatantrik Party leader Tasmia Pradhan, Nilphamari-1 to Bangladesh NAP (partial) leader Rita Rahman, Jashore-4 to Bangladesh Minority Janata Party leader Sukriti Kumar, and Jashore-5 and Sunamganj-3 to Jamiat-e-Ulama-e-Islam leaders Mufi Md Wakkas and Shahinur Pasha Chowdhury.

The other alliance leaders, who would contest the polls, include

Khelafat Majlish leader Ahmed Abdul Kader from Habiganj-4, National People's Party (NPP) leader Farhaduzzaman Farhad from Narail-2, Jatiya Party (Jafar) leader TI Fazle Rabbi from Gaibandha-3 and Mostafa Jamal Haider from Pirojpur-1.

SELECTION OF BNP CANDIDATES

The BNP completed interviewing the nomination seekers on Wednesday, and its nomination board later held a series of meetings to finalise the nominations.

The party leaders also sat with the alliance partners to reach an agreement over seat-sharing.

Several BNP leaders said a huge number of grassroots leaders hope to get nomination as the party is going to contest the national polls for the first time in 10 years.

The candidates have been chosen

based on four surveys conducted by the party's acting chairman Tarique Rahman and interviews given by the aspirants, said party insiders.

The party's top leaders are happy with the process of candidate selection as all the decisions were made collectively, they added.

The BNP decided to issue nomination letters to two candidates each from most of the constituencies in case the main contestant's nomination papers are rejected by the returning officer.

It has already taken undertakings from the aspirants that if they do not get nomination, they would not contest the polls independently.

The party's nomination board finalised the candidates for around 250 seats, leaving the rest for its partners in the Oikyafront and the 20-party combine. If the alliance leaders press

for more seats, the party may give them another 10, the sources said.

The nomination letters, signed by BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, would be issued to the candidates from party chief Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office, sources said.

"We will start issuing nomination letters to the candidates tomorrow [today]," BNP Standing Committee Member Moudud Ahmed, also a member of the party's nomination board, told this correspondent yesterday.

"Many educated and young people showed interest in contesting the election on the BNP ticket. During the nomination process, we considered this. There will be a number of new faces in this election," he said.

Party insiders said around 50 new faces, mostly young, would get nomination for the upcoming polls.

50 new faces in, 38 MPs out

FROM PAGE 1

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, who was elected from Sylhet-1 in the last two parliamentary elections, is not in the race this time, creating the opportunity for his brother Dr AK Abdul Momen to run from the constituency.

Arif Khan Joy, deputy minister for youth and sports, was also denied party ticket.

Former AL general secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam was given the nomination for Kishoreganj-1 but keeping Mashaur Rahman Humayun as the backup candidate. Ashraf, also the minister for public administration, has been sick for quite a long time.

The party gave nomination letters to multiple aspirants each in eight constituencies, including Dhaka-5, Dhaka-7, Patuakhali-2 and Chandpur-1.

It will finalise the candidates by December 9, the last date for withdrawal of nomination papers. The last date for filing nomination papers to returning officers is November 28.

Around a dozen controversial ministers and lawmakers, including Shajahan Khan, Shamim Osman and Nizamuddin Hazari got tickets while some others were dropped.

The party began distribution of nomination letters around 10:30am, with AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader collecting the papers for party chief Sheikh Hasina.

Hasina will stand for the polls from Gopalganj-3 and Rangpur-6, from where she contested the 2014 election.

Throughout the day yesterday, a



Jahangir Kabir Nanak



AFM Bahauddin Nasim



BM Mozammel Haque



Abdur Rahman

huge number of leaders and activists gathered in front of the party headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue.

The AL high-command had to face an uphill task to pick candidates from 4,000 nomination seekers for 300 seats in the December 30 polls.

Talking to reporters at AL central office at 7:45pm, Abdus Sobhan Golap, office secretary of the party, said the party has distributed nomination to aspirants for 248 seats.

Earlier in the afternoon, at a press conference at the party chief's Dhanmondi office, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said they collected signatures of the candidates on withdrawal letters as well as well on the nomination papers.

According to Quader, some 70 seats will be set aside for the party's alliance partners and there will be a formal announcement around 3:30pm today.

"I know how many seats will be kept for the alliance partners, but I will not disclose it now. A formal announcement will be made tomorrow [today]. But the seats for allies will be no more than 70," he said.

NEW PICKS

National team cricketer Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and silver screen star Akbar Hossain Pathan, popularly known as Farooque, got the party ticket for Narail-2 and Dhaka-17 respectively.

Additionally, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda's nephew Shahjada Sajju (Patuakhali-3), former AL general secretary Abdul Jalil's son Nizam Uddin Jalil (Noagaon-5), former mayor of Chattogram City Corporation ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury's son Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Noufel (Chattogram-9), wife of FBCCI former president Matlub Ahmad, entrepreneur Selima Ahmed (Cumilla-2), former inspector general of police Nur Mohammad (Kishoreganj-2), PM's Assistant Press Secretary Saifuzzaman Shekhor (Magura-1), and former chairman of the National Board of Revenue Golam Hossain also got the nomination letters yesterday.

AL incumbent MP Sheikh Helal Uddin got the letter for Bagerhat-1 and his son Sheikh Sarhan Naser for Bagerhat-2.

Helal's brother Sheikh Jewel also got ticket to contest from Khulna-2 as AL dropped its MP Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, who was mired in a controversy over his alleged links to the yaba trade.

Haji Selim (Dhaka-7), Yusuf Abdullah Harun (Cumilla-3), Swapan Bhattacharjee (Jessore-5) and Sirajul Islam Molla (Narsingdi-3) also got the AL ticket this time. They were elected MPs in the 2014 election as independent candidates, defeating AL candidates.

Two AL leaders have been given nominations for two seats held by JP leaders. In Dhaka-1, Salma Islam of the JP is the current MP but the AL has picked businessman Salman F Rahman for the seat.

JP's Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu is the MP from Chottogram-9, where the AL has made Muhibul Hasan Chowdhury Naofel its nominee.

The JP is highly disappointed with AL men being nominated in the two constituencies, said sources.

FEMALE CANDIDATES

Eighteen female nomination seekers, including two new ones, have got AL ticket to contest the national polls.

The two newcomers are Shahina Akhtar Chowdhury, wife of controversial lawmaker Abdur Rahman Bodi, and Selima Ahmed. Shahina has got nomination for Cox's Bazar-4 and Selima for Cumilla-2.

In the current parliament, the AL has 19 women lawmakers, who were elected through direct election. Besides, the party has 42 female MPs in the reserved seats for women, accord-

quoted the OC.

Contacted yesterday, Nasim Khan, then OC of the police station and now with the Detective Branch, said he could not recall whether any such press release was sent.

Ashrafur Alam, who is the OC now, said it was a mistake made before he joined.

Bibhuti Bhushan Mondol, assistant professor of Shaheed Abul Kashem College, was tagged as a BNP supporter.

"The list has embarrassed me. My image is tarnished," he told The Daily Star, adding that he had done many

researches on Bangabandhu.

Assistant professor of the college, Sarder Rafiqul Islam was marked "Now a BNP supporter, used to support Jamaat". He said had no idea as to how the list was made.

He denied having any political leaning. Panchanan Golder, who was mentioned a BNP supporter, also said similar things.

Lecturer of the college Ruhul Amin, who was flagged a Jamaat supporter, said, "I was a custodian of the Tablighi Jamaat at Rajshahi University. This list

Two AL candidates in constituencies	
Constituencies	Names
Dhaka-5	Habibur Rahman Mollah and Monwar Hossain Monu
Dhaka-7	Abul Hasnat and Haji Mohammad Salim
Patuakhali-2	ASM Firoz and Shamsul Haque Reza
Kishoreganj-1	Syed Ashrafur Islam and Moshirur Rahman Humayun
Chandpur-1	Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Golam Hossain
Barguna-1	Jahangir Kabir and Dharendra Debnath Shambhu
Jamalpur-5	Rezaul Karim Hira and Mosharaff Hossain
Laxmipur-3	AKM Shajahan Kamal and Golam Faruk Pinku

ing to the Jatiya Sangsad website.

The party has nominated 17 people, including two new faces, from minority communities to run the race.

The two are Asim Kumar Ukil and Swapan Bhattacharjee.

WHO WERE DROPPED

For the last several days, speculations ran rife about who will not get party

tickets this time. It was discussed in the party forums whether Jahangir Kabir Nanak and AFM Bahauddin Nasim will get nomination.

Nanak, who was elected lawmaker from Dhaka-13 in 2014, went to the Gono Bhaban recently in his attempt to know his fate, said party sources.

In his place, AL's Dhaka North General Secretary Sadek Khan was nominated to fight the battle of ballots in one of the key constituencies in the capital.

Nanak was promoted to the post of joint general secretary from organising secretary of the party in 2012. He was dropped from the then polls-time cabinet as state minister for LGRD ministry the next year.

Bahauddin Nasim, a cousin of Hasina, also did not get the party ticket. In his place, AL Central Office Secretary Abdus Salam Golap was picked.

According to sources, Nasim did not get the party ticket mainly because of internal feud. Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan, who has an enmity with Nasim, and former communications minister Syed Abul Hossain lobbied hard so that Nasim could not get the ticket, they added.

Even there were clashes between supporters of Shajahan and Nasim on several occasions.

Nasim was elected lawmaker in 2014 polls for Madaripur-3, the constituency where Abul Hossain got elected in 2008 polls. Abul failed to secure party ticket in 2014 over allegations of Padma Bridge corruption conspiracy.

is not substantive," he said, adding that people involved with Tabligh hardly ever support Jamaat.

In the wake of reports of police collecting information on probable polling officials, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda on Thursday at a special meeting with law enforcers instructed police not to do that.

"We did not instruct you to do this. Don't do this. This is embarrassing," he said.

Our Khulna correspondent contributed to this report.

FROM PAGE 1

dismayed, embarrassed and that their images had been tarnished by the act. They stressed that they were not involved with politics.

Headmaster of Rayermahal Hamidnagar Haji Mohsin Government Primary School, Mollah Tajuddin was marked as BNP leaning.

"I have been working as a teacher for the last 25 years, but have never faced any question like this. I am a government servant and I have never been involved in politics," he said.

The press release police intended to send to reporters was about the arrest of a suspected drug dealer with 115 bottles of Phensedyl.

The first page of the document contained the press release while the second and third pages contained a table containing the names, designations, workplaces, mobile phone numbers, and political leanings.

Names of assistant professors, lecturers, headmasters, senior assistant teachers, and assistant teachers of a college, a high school, and two pri-

mary schools appeared on the list.

According to the emailed document, the officer-in-charge of Harintana Police Station had sent the list of probable presiding officers, assistant presiding officers, and polling officers to the special superintendent of police of special branch of Khulna Metropolitan Police.

"With due respect and for your kind information, the names of the presiding officers, assistant presiding officers and polling officers have been given below in the chart," the document