

JP's Salma to contest as an independent

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Presidium Member Salma Islam submitted her nomination paper as independent candidate yesterday for contesting from Dhaka-1 in the 11th parliamentary polls.

Salma, the incumbent MP of the constituency, took the decision as she did not get the party ticket, said party insiders.

The JP high-ups had pressed ruling Awami League to leave Dhaka-1 for Salma. However, AL nominated Salman F Rahman, adviser for Sheikh Hasina's private sector development affairs, for contesting against Salma, JP insiders added.

In the 2014 election, Salma defeated AL Presidium Member Abdul Mannan Khan and got elected as the MP of Dhaka-1.

According to JP sources, the party leaders and activists are annoyed with AL for nominating ruling party leaders from constituencies where JP already has incumbent MPs.

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BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir hands his nomination paper to Thakurgaon Returning Officer Kamruzzaman Selim. Right, BNP nominee Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury for Chattogram-11 and his Awami League counterpart MA Latif greet each other in front of the returning officer's office.



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN / QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

'Do not vote for my father'

Son urges voters, video goes viral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Video footage of Niaz Morshed Elite, son of BNP-nominated candidate Monirul Islam Yousuf for Chattogram-1, went viral on social media as he urged voters not to elect his father.

Niaz, a member of the international affairs sub-committee of Awami League who was a nomination aspirant from his party from the same constituency, said in the video, "Being the only son of him, I am asking you not to vote for him, I am asking you again... do not vote for my father."

"I want to share with you why I am saying this. My father is a freedom fighter and all of our family members are inspired by the ideology of Bangabandhu."

"I feel ashamed that a freedom fighter like my father is representing a militant alliance like BNP-Jamaat," he added.

"It is an example that nomination

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25 Jamaat men

FROM PAGE 1

According to the electoral law, the Jamaat leaders vying for the parliamentary seats on BNP tickets and with its symbol -- "sheaf of paddy" -- will be considered BNP candidates.

Meanwhile, Nazibur Rahman, son of former Jamaat ameer and executed war criminal Motiur Rahman Nizami, filed nomination papers for Pabna-1 as an independent.

The EC has set December 2 for scrutinising nomination papers and December 9 as the last date for withdrawing them.

The government of independent Bangladesh in its first decision had banned five communal outfits, including Jamaat, which not only opposed the nation's independence but also actively helped Pakistan occupation forces commit genocide and other war crimes.

The parties were allowed to engage in politics during the rule of late president Ziaur Rahman after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975.

According to Jamaat, those who submitted nomination papers as BNP candidates are: Abdul Hakim for Thakurgaon-2, Mohammad Hanif for Dinajpur-1, Mohammad Anwarul Islam for Dinajpur-6, Moniruzzaman Montu for Nilphamary-2, Mohammad Azizul Islam for Nilphamary-3, Prof Golam Rabbani for Rangpur-5, Majedur Rahman Sarker for Gaibandha-1, Rafiqul Islam Khan for Sirajganj-4, Iqbal Hossain for Pabna-5, Prof Motiur Rahman for Jhenidah-3, former MP Abu Sayed Mohammad Sahadat Hossain for Jashore-2, Abdul Wadud for Bagerhat-3, Prof Abdul Alim for Bagerhat-4, former MP Prof Mia Golam Parwar for Khulna-5, Abdul Kalam Azad for Khulna-6, Abdul Khaleque for Satkhira-2, Robiul Bashar for Satkhira-3, Gazi Nazrul Islam for Satkhira-4, Shamim Sayedee for Pirojpur-1, Shafiqur Rahman for Dhaka-15, former MP Farid Uddin Chowdhury for Sylhet-5, Habibur Rahman for Sylhet-6, former MP Syed Abdullah Md Taher for Cumilla-11, former MP ANM Shamsul Islam for Chattogram-15, and former MP Hamidur Rahman Azad for Cox's Bazar-2.

Jamaat also kept back-up candidates in most of the seats where its leaders filed nomination papers. The back-up candidates submitted nomination papers as independents.

For example, Jamaat leader Selim Uddin submitted nomination papers for Dhaka-15 as an independent.

Polls code flouted, no action taken

FROM PAGE 1

Even though reports of electoral code violations came from all corners of the country, Dhaka was different. Police were seen preventing people more than the stipulated number to enter the RO's office at the capital's Segunbagicha.

According to the electoral code of conduct, no procession could be brought out while submitting nomination papers. The Election Commission has said no more than seven people could accompany aspirants to the RO's office. They also cannot avail any government facilities, the EC instructions included.

In Sylhet, AL aspirant AK Abdul Momen went to the RO's office with many party men. He submitted his nomination paper with around 30 people with him.

His elder brother, Finance Minister AMA Muhiht went there with police escort. The police were there when he presented his documents.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid submitted his nomination to the offices of two assistant returning officers (ARO) in Beanibazar and Golapganj before submitting to the RO's office in Sylhet. Like Muhiht, he also had police escort.

In the morning, Nahid went to the ARO office in Beanibazar in a procession of more than 100 people. He

DIVISION	NUMBER OF SEATS	NUMBER OF NOMINATION PAPER FILED
Dhaka	70	708
Chattogram	58	688
Rajshahi	39	353
Khulna	36	351
Sylhet	19	177
Barishal	21	182
Rangpur	33	361
Mymensingh	24	236
Total	300	3,056*

*NB: 39 more nominations submitted through online

SOURCES: EC

entered the office with around 20 people, including Officer-in-Charge Aboni Shankar Kar Beanibazar Police Station.

Aboni said they were "on protocol duty" during the nomination submission.

Similar was the picture when Nahid's motorcade went to Golapganj upazila and at the RO's office in Sylhet.

MPs Mahmud Us Samad Chowdhury in Sylhet-3 and Imran Ahmed Sylhet-4 also submitted their nominations with more people than the EC allows.

Jatiya Party MP Yahya Chowdhury also went to file nominations in

Sylhet-2 with more than 100 people. BNP aspirants in Sylhet-1 Inam Ahmed Chowdhury and Khandakar Muktedir submitted their nomination with a huge crowd of people inside the RO's office.

Inam went to the office holding a sheaf of paddy, the electoral symbol of the BNP.

Kazi Arifur Rahman, assistant returning officer and upazila nirbahi officer of Beanibazar, said he could not control the huge number of people.

In Rajshahi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam went to two offices of AROs with several hundred of his supporters and party men. Many of them were on motorbikes.

When he submitted his papers to the ARO's office in Charghat, more than 10 people were accompanying him and several hundred were waiting outside the office.

Lawmaker Ayeen Uddin filed nominations in three offices. And at each of the offices, he had several hundred people accompanying him. He used a vehicle that had the member of parliament sticker on it.

When Rajshahi-2 lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha and Rajshahi-3 MP Enamul Haque appeared at the RO's office, they had hundreds of supporters with them.

Law enforcers warned them and prevented them from taking more than five people into the office.

Violating the code, BNP aspirants Mizanur Rahman Minu and Shahid Hasan of Rajshahi-2 went to the RO's office accompanied by a huge number of supporters. Even though they went there together, they entered the RO's office one after another with a few supporters.

BNP aspirant Shafikul Islam Milon of Rajshahi-3 also had hundreds of supporters with him when he submitted nomination in Poba upazila.

Awami League nominee in Brahmanbaria-3 RAM Obaidul Muktedir Chowdhury entered the RO's office around 11:15am with more than 50 leaders and followers.

An executive magistrate was there but no step was taken.

Asked, Returning Officer Hayat-Ud-Dowllah Khan blamed journalists for the crowd. He said they could not identify who were journalists and who were political activists.

After Muktedir's submission, officials of the RO allowed only six supporters of Islami Andolon Bangladesh's candidate Syed Anwar Ahmed Liton.

Around 12:30pm, JP nominee Mamunur Rashid was allowed into the office with seven of his men.

In Chattogram, a group of youths

were seen in front of the RO's office wearing T-shirts that had AL aspirant Afsarul Amin's picture on the front and "vote for boat" slogan on the back.

A huge number of leaders, activists and supporters were with AL and BNP nominees but police did not allow more than seven to accompany the aspirant inside the RO's office.

In Narayanganj, AL lawmaker Shamim Osman went to the RO's office in Fatullah in a car that had the member of parliament sticker. Several hundred of his followers and party men waited outside the office to welcome him.

After exchanging greetings, he submitted his nomination paper for Narayanganj-4 with around 50 men with him. As he came out of the office, his supporters chanted slogans and distributed sweetmeats.

Earlier in the day, his brother and JP lawmaker Selim Osman entered the RO's office with some 50 men to file his nomination.

BNP aspirant Kazi Moniruzzaman arrived at the office with more than 50 of his party men to submit nomination for Narayanganj-1.

SM Akram, a BNP aspirant, submitted his papers for Narayanganj-5 with over 30 people.

None of the aspirants wanted to talk about the violation of the code of conduct.

1 killed, 40 hurt in violence over party tickets

FROM PAGE 1

Police recovered a motorcycle belonging to Mostaq's brother Monjur Hossain from the scene, and they were trying to detain the attackers, said Lalpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Nazrul Islam Jewel, adding that the two brothers went into hiding.

No one was detained and no case was filed in this connection when the report was filed around 8:00pm yesterday.

MP Abul Kalam could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts.

In Barishal, BNP-nominated aspirant for Barishal-4 claimed that at least 20 of his party men were injured in attacks in three places -- Launch Ghat area, Badarpur and Patarhat -- of Mehendiganj upazila between 12:30pm and 2:30pm yesterday.

The BNP leader, Mejbahuddin

Farhad, alleged that AL men carried out the attacks to create panic among BNP men so that they stayed away from election campaigns.

However, AL nominee Pankaj Devnath denied the allegation and claimed that the incidents were "results of the BNP's internal conflict".

Masud Khan, OC of Mehendiganj Police Station, could not be contacted over phone for comments.

Asked, Mehendiganj UNO and Assistant Returning Officer Dipok Kumar Roy said, "It was nothing serious. Some BNP men were hurt by some AL activists. Police visited the spots and brought the situation under control".

Besides, at least two BNP men were hurt as two rival groups scuffled when party leader Mojibor Rahaman Sorwar was submitting his nomination papers

to the returning officer for Barishal-5.

The incident happened around noon when the two groups took position in front of the RO's office, said witnesses.

Talking to The Daily Star, the injured -- Sayed Chowdhury Khokon and Masud Hasan Mamun -- blamed each other's group for the incident.

In Munshiganj, at least 20 BNP men were injured in an intra-party clash at Tongibari upazila while the party nomination aspirant for Munshiganj-2, Mizanur Rahman Sinha, was on his way to submit nomination papers.

The clash took place between supporters of Sinha, also former state minister for health and family welfare, and the district unit BNP Vice President Asgar Mallick Ripon, who failed to get party nomination for the same constituency.

Talking to The Daily Star, Sinha alleged that Ripon's supporters suddenly attacked them near the assistant returning officer's (ARO) office.

However, Ripon denied the allegation and said Sinha's supporters attacked them first without any provocation.

At least 10 people were detained in connection with the clash. Both groups were preparing to file cases last night.

In Patuakhali town, a group of AL men, under the banner of "people from all walks of life", brought out a procession holding brooms, protesting against ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader, who has been nominated by the Jatiya Party for Patuakhali-1.

The protesters, who termed Hawlader an outsider, were supporters of district unit AL president Shajahan Miah, who has been nomi-

nated by the ruling AL for the parliamentary seat.

In Nilphamari, around 500 female supporters of incumbent JP lawmaker Shawkat Chowdhury brought out a similar procession in Kishoreganj upazila town yesterday against Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu, former secretary general of JP, fearing that the latter might submit nomination papers for Nilphamari-4.

However, Bablu did not file nomination papers.

Supporters of Shafi Ahmed, who did not get AL nomination for Netrakona-4, formed a human chain in municipal building area yesterday. They were angry as the party chose Rebeka Momin for the seat.

They demanded that the party reconsider the decision and select Shafi as its candidate.

Khaleda's polls hope dashed

FROM PAGE 1

Khaleda's participation in the polls became uncertain after a special court convicted and sentenced her to five years in prison in February in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

She filed an appeal with the HC, challenging the lower court verdict. But she lost the legal battle at the HC, which on October 30 rejected the appeal and enhanced her punishment to 10 years in jail from five years.

On October 29, the same special court sentenced her to seven years' imprisonment on the charges of abusing power in her second term as prime minister (2001-2006) in collecting and spending Tk 6.52 crore for different purposes, which include purchase of 42-katha land in the capital to set up a charitable trust after her late husband's name.

The BNP tried to clear up uncertainty over Khaleda's polls bid by filing two appeals against both verdicts delivered by the HC and the special court. The appeals were filed on November 18 and 19 with the SC and the HC.

But Tuesday's HC ruling came as a shock to the party leaders.

five BNP leaders for staying their sentences, the HC rejected their pleas and ruled that a convict sentenced to more than two years in jail cannot contest elections even if an appeal remains pending against his or her conviction.

The HC gave the ruling, citing article 66 (2) (d) of the constitution that reads, "A person shall be disqualified for election as, or for being, a member of parliament who has been, on conviction for a criminal offence involving moral turpitude, sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release."

Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, one of the five BNP leaders, filed a petition with the SC the same day, challenging the HC order and seeking a stay on his sentence.

In 2008, a special court sentenced him to 13 years' imprisonment in a corruption case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Yesterday morning, a seven-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain refrained from interfering in the HC order, and passed "no order" on the petition.

The HC order and therefore, the HC ruling has been upheld, Additional Attorney General Murad Reza told The Daily Star.

Khurshid Alam Khan, counsel for the ACC that filed both cases against Khaleda, echoed the same view.

They said that following the SC order, Khaleda as well as the other convicts, who were sentenced to more than two years in jail, cannot contest the upcoming polls.

Khurshid said Zahid has a scope for moving a leave-to-appeal petition before the SC after receiving the full text of Tuesday's HC order.

If Zahid does so, the apex court may assess the HC order, the lawyer said, adding that the HC ruling will remain in force until the SC passes an order on the leave-to-appeal petition.

Zahid's counsel Rakanuddin Mahmud told this newspaper that the SC's "no order" means the order is neither in his client's favour nor against him.

The BNP leader yesterday filed nomination papers for Mymensingh-4 constituency.

If the RO rejects his nomination papers, he would approach the SC and challenge the rejection, said his lawyer.

At the SC hearing on Zahid's petition, Rakanuddin said the apex court has the authority to suspend the conviction and sentence as the Indian Supreme Court suspended conviction and jail sentences of some people and allowed them to contest elections there.

He also argued that the SC had allowed Awami League leader Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir to contest the 2008 general election though he was convicted and sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment in a corruption case like that of his client.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam opposed the petition and argued that the HC rightly delivered its order in line with Article 66(2) (d) of the constitution.

Later, talking to reporters at his office, Mahbubey said Khaleda, who is now in jail after being convicted and sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment in two corruption cases, cannot contest the upcoming election following the SC order.

After Tuesday's HC order, the attorney general came up with an explanation of the Article 66(2) (d) of the constitution.

for five years for contesting the elections even if their convictions and sentences are scrapped by a "competent court", as the word "release" mentioned in the article means acquittal from a case.

Yesterday, the attorney general reiterated his opinion.

Former law minister Shafique Ahmed, however, disagreed with him. "When a court scraps the conviction and sentence of a person, he or she will be treated as innocent and need not wait for any period for contesting elections," he explained.

Talking to this newspaper, BNP Standing Committee Member Moudud Ahmed said, "We still hope the party chief will be able to contest the election."

This is the first time the BNP is contesting the polls without Khaleda's active participation in electioneering since she joined politics in 1982 after the assassination of her husband and party founder Ziaur Rahman.

Under her leadership, the party took part in a vigorous movement against military dictator HM Ershad in the 80s and contested five parliamentary elections since 1991. She led her party to victory in three general elections.