

CANDIDATES' INFO

ROs yet to distribute leaflets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Returning officers in many constituencies are yet to start distributing leaflets containing a set of mandatory information about the candidates.

To help people make an informed choice, the leaflets are supposed to mention eight pieces of information, including on the candidates' and their dependents' wealth, annual income, source of income, education, occupation and cases, if any, filed against them.

The election campaign started on December 10 would continue until December 28 midnight.

A writ petition was filed yesterday with the High Court seeking a directive on the Election Commission to publish and distribute leaflets among the voters, containing all information mentioned by the candidates in their affidavits, to help people choose their representative.

Law and Life Foundation, a rights organisation, filed the petition seeking the court's order on the EC to comply with the guidelines provided in chapter VII of the eleventh national parliament election manual.

According to the manual, the EC must distribute leaflets among voters in each constituency, revealing information about the candidates, said the petitioner's lawyer Humayun Kabir Pallab.

If the voters do not know about the candidates, they will not be able to choose the right representative and the election will not be fair, the lawyer said, citing the petition.

The HC may hear the petition on Monday.

The Daily Star yesterday talked with returning officers (RO) in Nilphamari, Moulvibazar, Sunamganj, Sylhet, Manikganj and Pabna.

Of them, only Tofael Islam in Moulvibazar said he had been distributing the leaflets among voters.

Our Nilphamary, Moulvibazar, Sunamganj, Sylhet, Manikganj, Pabna and Narayanganj correspondent contributed to this report.

2 injured

FROM PAGE 20

Assistant deputy director of Narayanganj Fire Service and Civil Defence, said the fire might have had originated from a burning mosquito repellent coil while all the nine members were sleeping in the room with all the doors and windows closed.

Trump defends

FROM PAGE 20

Reuters on Thursday.

Trump had pledged to withdraw from Syria if elected, but the abrupt announcement on Wednesday to withdraw the roughly 2,000 U.S. troops from Syria caught US lawmakers and others by surprise. The White House declined to offer a timeline for the departure.

Some of Trump's fellow Republicans strongly criticised the move, saying they were not briefed ahead of time and that the move strengthened the hand of Russia and Iran, which both support Syrian President Bashar al Assad.

US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, have told Reuters that US commanders on the ground are also concerned about the impact of a quick withdrawal and were surprised by the decision.

Trump's move also drew criticism from some US allies, including Britain and France, which said Islamic State militants had not been defeated and that its troops would remain in Syria.

The void left by the US withdrawal could undermine diplomatic efforts to end Syria's eight-year civil war and undercut the United States' leverage in the region as well as leave it few options if Islamic State surges again.

"ISIS hits us they are doomed!" Trump tweeted, using an acronym for Islamic State.

Islamic State, which declared its so-called caliphate in 2014 after seizing large areas of Syria and Iraq, was down to its last 1 percent of the territory it once held in Syria and has no territory in Iraq, a senior US official last week. But US officials have warned that retaking territory is not the same as defeating the militants.

In a campaign to defeat the group in Syria, former President Barack Obama ordered air strikes from September 2014 and then troops into the country the following year.

Some US lawmakers, including some Democrats, backed

Wednesday's announced withdrawal but said Congress needed to play a larger role in overseeing such military operations.

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday welcomed Trump's decision and said he largely agreed that Islamic State had been defeated.

Myanmar not serious

FROM PAGE 20

At a news conference on December 12, Rosario Manalo, chair of the Independent Commission of Enquiry, stated that the commission had found "no evidence" to support allegations of human rights abuses in the four months since it officially opened its investigation.

Her statement shows that the commission was disregarding evidence and testimony collected by United Nations fact-finders, the US State Department, and international human rights organisations since violence broke out in Rakhine in 2016, said the New York-based global rights body on Wednesday.

The UN Security Council, which has been negotiating its first resolution on the Rohingya crisis, should view the chair's comments as further evidence that Myanmar's commission is not a viable path to justice for victims of abuses, said HRW.

On September 18, the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar issued a 444-page report detailing crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide by Myanmar's security forces in Rakhine and serious human rights abuses in Shan and Kachin states.

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a "flash report" in February last year documenting extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, arbitrary detention, torture, and other abuses by Myanmar security forces in Rakhine after an attack on security posts in August 2016.

The HRW has documented the widespread use of sexual violence against the Rohingya, a massacre in the village of Tula Toli, and the widespread destruction of Rohingya villages.

Amnesty International has documented serious human rights abuses by the military in Rakhine and identified some of the military units and officers responsible for atrocities.

The US Holocaust Memorial Museum and Fortify Rights issued a joint report in November last year documenting abuses by security forces including murder, rape and

Ex-minister

FROM PAGE 20

minister then. Later, he became land minister and minister for relief and rehabilitation respectively.

He was also a political adviser to Ershad.

After the 2008 national polls, he left Jatiya Party (Ershad) and joined the Jatiya Party led by Kazi Zafar as vice-chairman.

FB's woes mount

FROM PAGE 20

Analytica and other third-party applications to collect personal data without users' permission. Today's lawsuit is about making Facebook live up to its promise to protect its users' privacy."

The suit filed in Superior Court in Washington seeks an injunction "to ensure Facebook puts in place protocols and safeguards to monitor users' data and to make it easier for users to control their privacy settings," and demands "restitution" for consumers.

Facebook said: "We're reviewing the complaint and look forward to continuing our discussions with attorneys general in DC and elsewhere."

The social network has admitted that up to 87 million users may have had their data hijacked by Cambridge Analytica, which shut down weeks after the news emerged on its handling of private user information.

A whistleblower at the consultancy, which worked on Trump's presidential campaign, said it used Facebook data to develop profiles of users who were targeted with personalised messages that could have played on their fears.

The scandal has triggered a series of investigations and broad review by Facebook on how it shares user data with third parties.

SHARING WITH 150 PARTNERS

The New York Times reported that some 150 companies -- including powerful partners like Amazon, Microsoft, Netflix and Spotify -- could access detailed information about Facebook users, including data about their friends.

According to documents seen by the Times, Facebook allowed Microsoft's Bing search engine to see names of Facebook users' friends without consent and gave Netflix and Spotify the ability to read private messages.

The report said Amazon was able to obtain user names and contact information through their friends, and Yahoo could view streams of friends' posts.

While some of the deals date back as far as 2010, the Times said they remained active as late as 2017 -- and some were still in effect this year.

"It appears that Facebook has not

other sexual violence, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and forced displacement.

"The record of Myanmar military abuses against the Rohingya is detailed and voluminous," Adams said. "What more do Security Council members need to know to call for justice and accountability for grave international crimes?"

The four-member commission, set up by the Myanmar government in May, is the eighth domestic commission created since violence broke out in Rakhine State in 2012.

None of these commissions have led to justice or accountability for human rights abuses such as extrajudicial killings, rape, torture and arson.

With government representatives on the commission and the military officers implicated in egregious abuses still in command, victims and witnesses are likely to be at risk.

Some witnesses who have previously provided information about abuses have faced reprisals, while Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo have been imprisoned for their role in exposing a massacre in Rakhine.

"Security Council members should call out the Commission of Enquiry for the diversionary and delaying tactic that it is," Adams said. "Waiting for this commission to finish its work is a waste of time that will only further delay accountability for grave human rights abuses against the Rohingya."

Obama delights

FROM PAGE 20

"I just want to say thank you to all of you guys," Obama told staff, who greeted him with rapturous cheers, in a video he shared on his Twitter account.

"We've had the chance to talk to some of the wonderful kids and their families," he added.

"As the dad of two girls, I can only imagine in that situation to have nurses and staff and doctors and people who are caring for them, and looking after them... that's the most important thing there is."

The 44th president of the United States still lives in Washington, where he last year dressed up as Santa to visit middle school students at a Boys & Girls Club in the capital.

US First Lady Melania Trump also made a trip to the hospital last week, reading patients a Christmas story during her visit.

She then gave each child a copy of the book, which was about a bullied Christmas ornament.

Melania did not wear a Santa hat for the visit, instead opting for a red-and-white coat and candy-cane striped stilettoes.

been honest with Congress or the public about how it treats its users' data," Congressman Frank Pallone, a Democrat, said in a tweet.

Facebook's head of developer platforms and programs, Konstantinos Papamiltiadis, said in a blog post that the Times report referred to partnerships that enabled "social experiences" - like seeing recommendations from their Facebook friends -- on other popular apps and websites."

None of those partnerships or features "gave companies access to information without people's permission," he said, adding that the deals did not violate a 2012 privacy settlement with the US Federal Trade Commission.

Papamiltiadis said, however, that "we've been public about these features and partnerships over the years because we wanted people to actually use them."

But he said most of the features are now gone.

PRIVATE MESSAGES

Netflix said that the feature was used to make the streaming service "more social" by allowing users to make recommendations to friends, but that it stopped using it in 2015.

"At no time did we access people's private messages on Facebook or ask for the ability to do so," Netflix said in a statement.

Spotify offered a similar response, indicating the music service "cannot read users' private Facebook inbox messages across any of our current integrations."

The Canadian bank RBC, also cited in The New York Times, said the deal with Facebook "was limited to the development of a service that enabled clients to facilitate payment transactions to their Facebook friends," and that it was discontinued in 2015.

Senator Brian Schatz said the latest revelations highlight a need for tougher controls on how tech companies handle user data.

"It has never been more clear," Schatz tweeted. "We need a federal privacy law. They are never going to volunteer to do the right thing."

US slams

FROM PAGE 20

indictment. US authorities said the two worked in association with China's Ministry of State Security.

The United States and about a dozen allies were set later yesterday to condemn China for efforts to steal other countries' trade secrets and technologies and to compromise government computers, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Sweden are expected to be involved in the U.S. effort, according to the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The US indictment said hacking targets included the US Navy, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and companies involved aviation, space and satellite technology.

"China's goal, simply put, is to replace the US as the world's leading superpower and they're using illegal methods to get there," FBI Director Chris Wray said at a news conference.

The companies targeted by China were a "who's who" of American businesses, Wray said.

The Justice Department accused China of breaking a 2015 pact to curb cyber espionage for corporate purposes. Britain also said it would hold the Chinese government responsible for the global hacking campaign targeting commercial secrets in Europe, Asia and the United States.

The hacking effort is considered a major cyber threat by private-sector cyber security researchers and government investigators because of the scale of the intrusions.

The hackers were charged with spying on some of the world's largest companies by hacking into technology firms to which they outsource email, storage and other computing tasks.

The timing of the action may further escalate tensions between Washington and Beijing after the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei Technologies, in Canada at the request of the United States.

The action also comes just weeks after the United States and China agreed to talks aimed at resolving an ongoing trade dispute that threatens global economic growth.

The British government said in a statement the hacking was conducted by a group known as APT 10, which was acting on behalf of China's Ministry of State Security.

"This campaign shows that elements of the Chinese government are not upholding the commitments China made directly to the UK in a 2015 bilateral agreement," the British statement said.

Shakib leads

FROM PAGE 1

had Nicholas Pooran caught at short fine leg for 14.

At the other end, Shai Hope kept swinging the bat wildly before he was at deep mid-wicket off Mehedi Hasan Miraz after a 19-ball 36 which included six fours.

However, it was Shakib who changed the course of the game with two devastating blows in the 11th over. He first dismissed Shimron Hetmyer (19) off the second ball and followed that by removing Darren Bravo (2) off the last ball of the over.

West Indies, already struggling on 101 for five, suffered another blow as Shakib dismissed visiting skipper Carlos Brathwaite, who was stumped for eight. The champion cricketer then bowled Fabian Allen with a drifter to register his maiden five-wicket haul in T20Is.

Rovman Powell, who reached his fifty off just 33 balls, was the only hope for the visitors but that too faded when Mustafizur Rahman dismissed the right-hander in the 16th over.

Earlier, the Tigers team management stuck with the same eleven from the first T20I and they showed a different approach by banking on their strengths after being asked to bat.

Opens Liton and Tamim Iqbal set the platform with a 42-run stand before Tamim departed for 14. However, Liton continued at the other end after taking some time to adjust to the Mirpur pitch.

The stylish right-hander opened up and struck three boundaries off Sheldon Cottrell in the third over, which he followed with back-to-back sixes off Brathwaite in the next over.

Liton reached his fifty off just 26 balls while, at the other end, Soumya Sarkar also scored quickly before the Tigers faced a mini-collapse, going from 110 for one to losing Soumya (32) and Liton (60) in the 12th over of Cottrell which was followed by the wicket of Mushfiqur Rahim (1) in the next over.

It was then Shakib and Mahmudullah Riyad who added an unbeaten 91-run fifth-wicket stand to post a huge total. Bangladesh added 71 runs from the last five overs as Riyad remained unbeaten on 42 off 26 balls with the help of seven fours.

BNP in a tight corner

FROM PAGE 1

Besides, 22 Jamaat-e-Islami leaders contesting the December 30 polls with BNP's electoral symbol "sheaf of paddy" await the Election Commission's decision on their candidacies. The HC asked the commission to make the decision by Monday.

They are joining the polls on BNP's ticket as the EC scrapped Jamaat's registration following a HC verdict.

The court yesterday also directed the EC to allocate "sheaf of paddy" to four BNP candidates instead of their rivals who had earlier been given the symbol.

Yesterday's HC ruling disqualifying the five came as a fresh blow to the BNP whose election campaign has already been hit hard. Many of its candidates and their supporters have been arrested while the motorcades of other contenders have come under attack in different places after electioneering began on December 10.

The five BNP leaders are Faridul Kabir Talukdar of Jamalpur-4, Fazlur Rahman of Joypurhat-1, Abdul Majid of Jhenidah-2, Abu Sayeed Chan of Rajshahi-6, and Md Moslem Uddin of Brahmanbaria-4.

The court also disqualified two Awami League rebels -- Mahmud Hasan Suman of Mymensingh-8 and Md Asaduzzaman of Rangpur-1 -- on the same ground.

The HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Md Khairul Alam passed the orders and issued the rules after separate writ petitions were filed by the rivals of the leaders.

The resignations were not accepted as the candidates did not submit them to the ministry and the deputy commissioners concerned within the "reasonable" time before filing nomination papers, Shah Monjurul Hoque, lawyer for the writ petitioners, told The Daily Star.

The HC passed the orders in line with the SC directives that had disqualified some other sitting upazila chairmen considering that they hold "office of profit", he added.

In such a situation, the BNP and the Jatiya Oikyafront yesterday demanded scope for fielding alternative candidates or rescheduling the polls day in the constituencies in question.

In a letter to Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda, BNP Standing Committee Member Nazrul Islam Khan also urged the EC to allow them to field alternative candidates from among those who have already submitted nomination.

"There is a provision of rescheduling election if a contestant dies ... A court disqualifying a candidate is one sort of death," Nazrul told reporters after handing over the letter to the CEC.

"The EC should reschedule election in those constituencies."

He alleged that the BNP and Oikyafront candidates were being disqualified with an intention to ensure a walkover for the ruling party in the coming polls.

On Tuesday, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court passed orders, disqualifying BNP contenders M Rashiduzzaman Millat, Tahsina Rushdir Luna and Syed Jahangir Alam for Jamalpur-1, Sylhet-2 and Dinajpur-3 respectively.

Eight other BNP candidates had lost candidacy following SC and HC orders a day earlier.

They are Khondokar Abu Ashfaq of Dhaka-1, Tamiz Uddin of Dhaka-20, Abdul Muhit Talukder of Bogura-3, Sarkar Badal and Morshed Milton of

Bogura-7, Nadim Mostafa of Rajshahi-5, Afroza Khan of Manikganj-3 and Abdul Hannan of Chandpur-1.

Yesterday's HC bench also directed the EC to allocate "sheaf of paddy" to Kamrun Nahar Shirin instead of Monjurul Islam Bimal in Natore-1, said Deputy Attorney General Motaheer Hossain Sazu.

Khandker Abdul Hamid Dabliu will get the symbol in place of SA Kabir Jinnah in Manikganj-1, Mostafizur Rahman instead of Khalek Chowdhury in Naogaon-1 and Masuda Momin in place of Abdul Muhith Talukder in Bogura-3, he said.

The bench came up with the order following separate writ petitions filed by Nahar, Hamid, Mostafizur and Masuda challenging the EC's decisions.

In their petitions, the writ petitioners said the BNP had nominated them first for contesting the election.

But, the EC allocated "sheaf of paddy" to their rival candidates in violation of the RPO, they alleged.

Monjurul, Jinnah, Khalek and Muhith cannot contest the polls following the HC orders, said the deputy attorney general.

However, they can move appeals before the Appellate Division challenging the HC orders, he added.

The HC stayed for three months the EC's decisions to allocate the symbol to Monjurul, Jinnah, Khalek and Muhith and issued separate ruling asking the EC and the government to explain in four weeks why the EC decision should not be declared illegal.

FATE OF JAMAAT LEADERS

Election Commission Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed yesterday said the decision on the candidacies of 22 Jamaat leaders and three independent candidates would be made by Monday.

"We have got the High Court letter today. The legal wing of the Election Commission has been asked to handle the matter," he told The Daily Star.

On December 18, the HC directed the commission to dispose of in three working days the application filed for cancelling the candidacy of 25 Jamaat men.

The court also issued a rule asking the government to explain in four weeks why the EC's decision to allow 25 Jamaat candidates to contest the election despite the cancellation of their party's registration should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, the court also asked the EC to show causes as to why the commission should not be directed to cancel their candidacy.

ARREST WARRANTS

A Dhaka court yesterday issued arrest warrants for Saiful Alam Nirob, BNP candidate in Dhaka-12, and 37 others in a case filed for assaulting police and preventing them from discharging their duties in December last year.

Nirob will vie with AL candidate Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan.

After accepting the charge sheet against 71, including the 38, Metropolitan Magistrate Md Sarafuzzaman Ansari passed the order.

He also directed the officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station to submit by February 10 the report on the execution of the arrest warrants.

Meanwhile, BNP candidate in Gazipur-5 Fazlul Haque Milon was shown arrested yesterday in a case filed with Paltan Police Station for allegedly assaulting policemen in February this year.

Tension flares

FROM PAGE 20

attacked police posts and has denied almost all claims of atrocities.

But the commander-in-chief Min Aung Hlaing's office said in the statement posted to his official website yesterday that security forces were active again and had been carrying out "area clearance operations along Pyu Ma Creek."

The post said the activity was sparked after two ethnic Rakhine Buddhist men did not return from fishing and were later found on the creek bank with their throats slit.

On the same day two members of another ethnic Buddhist minority were attacked while fishing along the creek by six men "speaking Bengali language," but they escaped and were treated at a local hospital.

The post said authorities did not know the identities of the attackers.

Myanmar does not recognise the Rohingya as one of its national races and refers to them as Bengali to falsely imply they are newly arrived immigrants from Bangladesh, reported AFP.

Tensions are high in northern Rakhine as the government seeks to kickstart a repatriation process but Rohingya in Bangladesh have refused to take part without being guaranteed rights, citizenship and safety.

'GENOCIDE'

A bipartisan group of US senators on Wednesday called on Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to designate the Myanmar military's campaign against the Rohingya Muslim minority a genocide.

"We are deeply concerned that despite clear evidence of genocide amassed by the Department's own

report ... that the Department has not made a formal determination that the crime of genocide has been committed," said a letter to Pompeo from the senators, a copy of which was seen by Reuters.

In September, leaders of the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee called on the Trump administration to declare the military campaign a genocide, days after a State Department report stopped short of that description.

A declaration of genocide by the US government could have legal implications of committing Washington to stronger punitive measures against Myanmar's government, which is led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. This has made some in the Trump administration wary of issuing such an assessment.

The areas where the Rohingya lived in Myanmar's western Rakhine State before the army ousted them were being dramatically transformed, making their return increasingly unlikely, Reuters reported on Tuesday.

The senators asked Pompeo to provide a formal determination about the actions of Myanmar's military.

"There is no question that the violence in northern Rakhine State -- intended to terrorize, drive out, and exterminate Rakhine's Rohingya population -- meets the definition of genocide," the letters said.

Led by Senator Bob Menendez, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the letter was also signed by Republican Senators Marco Rubio and Susan Collins and Democratic Senators Ed Markey, Tim Kaine, Ben Cardin and Jeff Merkley.