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AL, BNP OFFICES Distance 1.6km, mood poles apart

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU, SAJJAD HOSSAIN and
TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Scenes at the Awami League and BNP offices could not be more contrasting.

On the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue, over 50 policemen were struggling to maintain order yesterday afternoon as droves of people arrived with leaders who were buying nomination forms to run for parliament on the AL ticket. By 2:30pm, several thousand cheerful supporters had gathered there.

Around the same time, policemen were on duty also at the BNP's Nayapaltan office, which has been under lock and key for the last three weeks.

There, the cops, divided in two groups, were mostly



whiling away the afternoon. Whenever someone tried to park a vehicle, they told them to steer clear. Other than this, there was nothing unusual in the area. People were going about their business on VIP Road in front of the BNP office.

But 1.6 kilometres away (according to Google Maps), traffic on Bangabandhu Avenue barely moved as large groups of supporters were marching to the AL office.

The starkly different pictures from the two places pretty much sum up the state of politics in a country that goes to the national election on January 7.

The BNP rejected the election schedule announced by the Election Commission on November 15 and called a 48-hour hartal that starts this morning.

The BNP and its allies demand holding the next election under a non-partisan administration. The AL maintains that the election will be held while it is in office.

RULING PARTY ALL ABOUT ELECTION

AL President Sheikh Hasina formally launched the sale of nomination papers around 10:30am.

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GOVT CAN BE CHANGED ONLY THRU VOTE: PM - 12



An air of festivity pervades the Bangabandhu Avenue, *left*, as Awami League leaders and activists throng the party office yesterday, the first day of the sale of its nomination forms for the January 7 election. *Right*, the BNP's Nayapaltan headquarters, on the other hand, is deserted with its gate locked. The opposition party says it won't take part in any election under the present government.

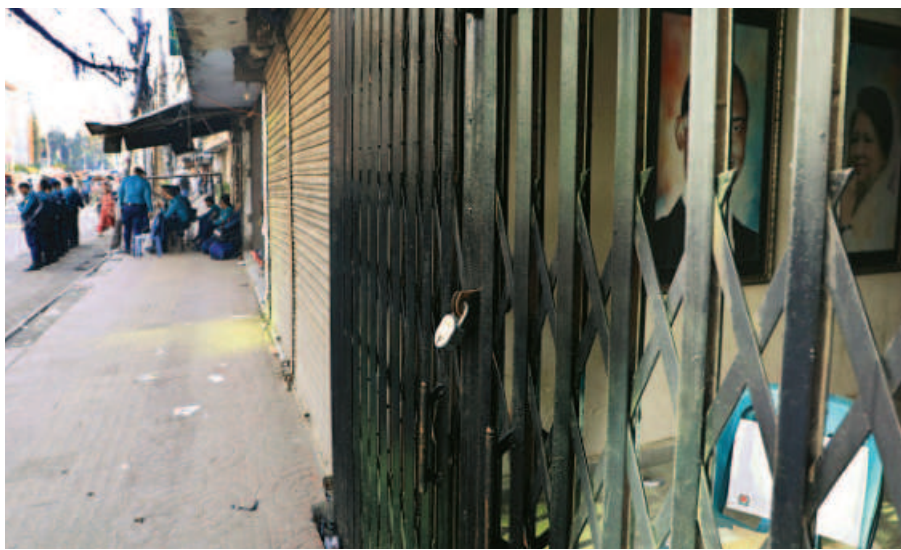


PHOTO: PALASH KHAN, AMRAN HOSSAIN

6 parties want to run on AL's boat symbol

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The demand for using the ruling Awami League's electoral symbol "boat" seems high among the registered political parties, as the opposition BNP and allies remain unyielding in their demand for polls under a non-partisan administration.

At least six political parties have directly informed the Election Commission that they want to contest the polls with the boat symbol.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Party's chief patron and Leader of the Opposition Raushan Ershad in a letter to the commission said the party has decided to participate in the election under the AL-led

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Rift opens up in JP again

Raushan, Chunnu write to EC about
participation in polls, authority to
sign nomination papers

RASHIDUL HASAN and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Conflict within the Jatiya Party came to the fore once again as two top leaders wrote to the Election Commission yesterday about the authority to sign the nomination forms of candidates and taking part in the January 7 national election.

Party Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnu and Chief Patron Raushan Ershad sent separate letters to the commission.

Chunnu in his letter said JP Chairman GM Quader will sign the nomination papers of its candidates as he is empowered to do so.

However, Raushan's representative, who handed over her letter to the EC, said the JP chief patron would ink the nomination forms.

Later in the day, Chunnu in a video message sent to the media said the party will make a final decision on running in the polls in a couple of days.

JP insiders said Chunnu's letter is an apparent hint that the party is going to join the election.

Raushan, also the leader of the opposition in parliament, in her

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Can Aussies deny rampant India of home glory?

AL-AMIN

It will be a cup for India to lose when the grand final of the 2023 World Cup is staged at the imposing Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad today.

True that India would be up against their biggest adversary Australia, the five-time champions who have that uncanny ability of prospering when the chips are down.

Still, considering the momentum the invincible home side have carried in this tournament so

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10,000	1,020,020	1,060,000	1,128,000	1,190,020
15,000	1,530,030	1,590,000	1,692,000	1,785,030
20,000	2,040,040	2,120,000	2,256,000	2,380,040
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