

ChatGPT maker OpenAI ousts CEO Sam Altman

REUTERS

The board of the company behind ChatGPT on Friday fired OpenAI CEO Sam Altman - to many, the human face of generative AI - sending shock waves across the tech industry.

OpenAI's Chief Technology Officer Mira Murati will serve as interim CEO, the company said, adding that it will conduct a formal search for a permanent CEO.

"Altman's departure follows a deliberative review process by the board, which concluded that he was not consistently candid in his communications with the board, hindering its ability to exercise its responsibilities," OpenAI said in the blog without elaborating.

Greg Brockman, OpenAI president and co-founder, who stepped down from the board as chairman as part of the management shuffle, quit the company, he announced on messaging platform X late on Friday. "Based on today's news, i quit," he wrote.

The departures blindsided many employees who discovered the abrupt management change from an internal message and the company's public facing blog. It came as a surprise to Altman and Brockman as well, who learned the board's decision within minutes of the announcement, Brockman said.

"We too are still trying to figure out exactly what happened," he posted on X, formerly Twitter, adding, "We will be fine. Greater things coming soon."

The now four-person board consists of three independent directors holding no equity in OpenAI and its Chief Scientist Ilya Sutskever. The organization did not immediately answer a request for comment on Brockman's claims.

Backed by billions of dollars from Microsoft MSFT.O, which does not have a board seat in the non-profit governing the startup, OpenAI kicked off the generative AI craze last November by releasing ChatGPT. The chatbot became one of the world's fastest-growing software applications.

Trained on reams of data, generative AI can create human-like content, helping users spin up term papers, complete science homework and even write entire novels. After ChatGPT's launch, regulators scrambled to catch up: the European Union revised its AI Act and the U.S. kicked off AI regulation efforts.

Altman, who ran Y Combinator, is a serial entrepreneur and investor. He was the face of OpenAI and the wildly popular generative AI technology as he toured the world this year.



Sam Altman



Ruling Awami League President Sheikh Hasina visits a nomination form sales booth at the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday morning after inaugurating the sale of the party's nomination forms for the January 7 national election.

PHOTO: PID

GROWING CONFLICT IN MYANMAR BGB put on high alert to stave off influx

PORIMOL PALMA

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) has been put on high alert along the Myanmar border to prevent any influx of people from the neighbouring country that has witnessed renewed fighting between the armed rebel groups and Myanmar junta.

The Rakhine state's Arakan Army, which observed an informal ceasefire since November last year on humanitarian grounds, along with the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation launched a coordinated offensive on Oct 27 in northern Shan state, according to media reports.

In the fighting so far, around 70 have died, over 90 wounded and more than 200,000 have become internally displaced since 27 October, according to a statement from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on November 17.

Over 5,000 Myanmar nationals have taken shelter in Mizoram after fleeing from the violence in the junta-run nation.

The conflict in Rakhine is not in the bordering areas, according to foreign ministry officials.

But additional forces have been deployed along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border to make it fully secure, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told The Daily Star yesterday.

BGB has been put on high alert since November 10, said a foreign ministry official.

"We don't want any fallout of the Myanmar conflict into our territory," he said.

Thanks to violence by the Myanmar military, more than a million Rohingyas have fled the Rakhine state and have taken shelter in Bangladesh, a move that has put immense pressure on the economy and environment.

"It is unfortunate that the conflicts in Rakhine have escalated in Rakhine State. We are expecting de-escalation at the soonest. We want to see peace and repatriation of the Rohingya as soon as possible," Momen said.

Stability in Myanmar's Rakhine state is important as Bangladesh pushes for Rohingya repatriation. If there is no peace, Rohingyas will not agree to return.

"We are particularly alarmed by renewed fighting between the military and Arakan Army in Rakhine state after an informal 12-month ceasefire, which poses grave risks to both the ethnic Rakhine and Rohingya communities," said the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Given past patterns, the UN is concerned that as the military loses ground on multiple fronts, its response risks unleashing an even greater force, through indiscriminate and disproportionate air strikes and artillery barrages.

Tolerance, patience needed in politics

Says chief justice

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan yesterday called upon the country's political parties

to cultivate tolerance and patience towards getting along with each other despite disagreements.

"There can be political disagreements, but every political party has to be tolerant of each other; otherwise, a sound society cannot be built," he said.

The chief justice came up with the remarks while addressing a workshop titled "Role of Panel Lawyers in Protecting Human Rights" at the auditorium of Krishibid Institution Bangladesh on Khamar Bari Road in the capital's Farmgate.

"Leaders and activists of each political party have human rights. Similarly, police involved in maintaining law and order situations have human rights. As excessive force on the leaders and activists of political parties violates human rights, then excessive force on the police also violates human rights," he pointed out.



B'BARIA-2 BY-POLLS IRREGULARITIES 2 presiding officers get suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

The Election Commission has suspended two presiding officers for two months following an investigation into the allegations of irregularities at multiple polling centres during the Brahmanbaria-2 by-polls.

The investigation committee confirmed the allegations and found evidence of misconduct by presiding officers Habibur Rahman and Mohammad Shafiullah, according to a letter signed by EC Deputy Secretary (Election Management -2) Md Atiur Rahman.

The letter said that the EC ordered the local deputy commissioner, returning officer, and superintendent of police to investigate the reports of irregularities that were published in the media against Jatrapur Nooraniya Hafezia Madrasa and Sharilpur Government Primary School polling centres following the Brahmanbaria-2 by-polls.

According to the investigation report, Jatrapur Nooraniya Hafezia Madrasa centre presiding officer Habibur Rahman and Sharilpur Government Primary School centre presiding officer Mohammad Shafiullah were found to be involved in the irregularities.

As a result, the EC ordered the suspension of both of them for the next two months (from November 15 to January 14, 2024) for misconduct during election duties.

2 children drown in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Two children, who were cousins, died by drowning in a pond in Sonargaon upazila of Narayanganj yesterday.

The incident took place in the Ichhapara area around 10:00am, confirmed Sonargaon Police Station Inspector Md Mohsin.

The deceased are Muntasir Hossain Sajin, 2, son of Md Mainuddin of Ichhapara area, and Habiba Akter, 2, daughter of Razu Mia of Gausia area in Rugganj upazila.

According to family members, Habiba went to visit his aunt's house in Ichhapara with her father on Friday afternoon.

The next morning, Habiba, along with her cousin Sajin, went to play in the yard in front of the house. While playing, both children fell into the pond next to the house and drowned.

Family members rushed the children to the local upazila health complex, where duty doctors declared them dead.

16 houses gutted in fire

UNB, Faridpur

At least 16 houses were gutted in a fire that broke out at a jute mill workers' colony at Kanaipur in Faridpur Sadar upazila.

The fire broke out at the colony Friday evening around 6:15pm in front of Karim Jute Mill at Malanga village and spread quickly.

On information, a firefighting unit rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze around 7:30pm, said Subhas Baroi, station officer of Faridpur Fire Service and Civil Defence.

The workers claimed that the fire might have originated from an electric short circuit.

Distance 1.6km, mood poles apart

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The first person to buy the form was AL advisory council member Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, who got it for Hasina.

The PM will participate in the election from Gopalganj-3 constituency.

As soon as the sale of nomination papers opened for others after 11:00am, nomination aspirants and their followers started thronging the AL headquarters.

Sources said the aspirants were asked not to bring more than two people along. But very few paid any heed.

People played musical instruments, chanted slogans and marched with large cut-outs of Sheikh Hasina and their favourite aspirants.

Afsar Uddin Khan, a ward councillor seeking AL nomination for Dhaka-18, came to Bangabandhu Avenue around 2:00pm with hundreds of followers on motorcycles and minibuses to collect nomination papers.

A man close to Afsar said their camp brought more than 300 motorbikes and 100 minibuses. Traffic came to a grinding halt on Bangabandhu Avenue and its adjacent streets soon afterwards.

However, according to the electoral code of conduct, election campaigns are not allowed until December 18.

A police team was deployed at the gate of the AL office to maintain order.

Party leaders announced on loudspeakers that nomination papers would not be sold unless there was discipline. But it hardly made an impact.

Roadside vendors selling tea and AL badges were enjoying brisk trade.

Baten Mia, one of the vendors, said, "I came from Laxmipur to help my cousin handle the sales that have grown exponentially in recent days."

A DESOLATE BNP OFFICE

BNP supporters say they have not been going anywhere near their central office due to fear of arrest.

The place has been under lock and key since October 28, when a grand rally of the party ended in clashes with police.

Through the collapsible gate, a chair is visible from outside. There were at least seven envelopes on it, including one sent to the BNP secretary general by the Election Commission. The front desk and everything else are covered in thick layers of dust.

Police were discouraging people from hanging around or peering into the office.

A man walking by muttered, "Such a big party, but there is nobody to open the office."

Nurul Amin, who has been running

a tea stall next to the office for seven years, said, "I have never seen such a situation.... Things are different this time."

"My daily sales hover between Tk 6,000 and Tk 7,000. It went past Tk 10,000 when the BNP was holding events. But after October 28, it plummeted to Tk 1,000 or a little more."

OFFICES OF JP, OTHERS

There were only a few people at the offices of AL allies Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and Workers Party on Bangabandhu Avenue and Topkhana Road.

At the Workers Party office around 4:30pm, a leader named Nur Ahmed Bakul said, "We are selling nomination papers. Many partymen have already visited today."

The head office of Jatiya Party, the main opposition in parliament, was found locked at 3:24pm.

Top leaders of Communist Party of Bangladesh were holding a meeting at their office around 4:15pm. "We are not participating in the election while Sheikh Hasina is in power," one of the leaders said.

At the office of Islami Andolon Bangladesh in Purana Paltan, there was business-as-usual as the party also shunned the election under the AL government.

6 parties want to run on AL's boat symbol

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grand alliance, like in the past three general polls.

She added that the JP-nominated candidates will have the liberty to choose whether to run with the JP's symbol "plough" or the grand alliance's boat.

On the other hand, JP Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnun in letter to the EC said party Chairman GM Quader will be the signing authority of the party's nomination seekers.

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh too has told the EC they want to participate in the polls as part of the ruling grand alliance.

The six parties who want to use "boat" as their symbol alongside their own are Workers Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal

(Inu), Samyabadi Dal, Jatiya Party (JP Monju), Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, and Ganotanti Party, EC sources said.

Yesterday was the last day for registered parties to inform the commission whether they want to take part in the polls under an alliance and what symbol they want to use.

EC Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath told reporters that AL had informed the commission it would be participating in the polls under an alliance.

AL President Sheikh Hasina will sign the nomination papers of her party contestants as the signing authority, he added.

According to the EC's recently announced schedule, the upcoming polls are slated for January 7.

Workers Party of Bangladesh

General Secretary Fazle Hossain Badshah told The Daily Star they informed the EC about using AL's electoral symbol "boat" under the alliance.

He added that some other candidates of their party would use their symbol -- "hammer" -- and will contest separately.

The Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal faction led by Hasanul Haque Inu told the EC they have made a similar decision, said Shazzad Hossain, the party's deputy office secretary.

Bangladesh Tarikat Federation Joint Secretary General Md Ali Farooqi said they also informed the EC about using the boat symbol.

Meanwhile, Trinamool BNP in a letter to the EC said components of Islamic Pragatashil Jote will take part in the polls using its symbol.

Rift opens up in JP again

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letter said the JP has decided to contest the election as a component of the Awami League-led grand alliance like it did in the last three parliamentary polls.

She said the grand alliance would only be an electoral alliance and the elected JP lawmakers would follow the party's decision after the election.

The JP chief patron said the party candidates will run on its electoral symbol "plough" or they can take part in the polls under the grand alliance as per their wish.

The JP has been the main opposition in parliament for two consecutive terms since 2014. Several party leaders were in the Awami League-led cabinets in 2009 and 2014.

Kazi Mamunur Rashid, who introduced himself as the spokesperson for the leader of the opposition in parliament, told reporters at the EC Secretariat yesterday that Raushan would sign the nomination forms as per the JP charter as the chief patron holds all power in the party.

However, there is no mention in the JP charter that the party chief patron has the authority to sign the nomination forms.

The Daily Star could not reach Quader and Chunnun for comments as they did not respond to phone calls.

The EC on November 15 unveiled the schedule of the 12th parliamentary polls. Yesterday was the last day for the political parties registered with the EC to inform it whether they want to take part in the polls under an alliance, and also whether they would use the polls symbol of any particular alliance.

After the announcement of the polls schedule, the parties get seven days to inform the EC in writing about who will sign the nomination papers.

Asked about the two letters from the JP, EC Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath said the commission would look into the matter.

Normally, the chairman or president, general secretary or secretary general of political parties are given the authority to sign nomination papers, he told reporters.

In another video message sent to the media yesterday evening, Chunnun said sending the letter to the EC had nothing to do with the JP's participation in the polls.

"We did not say we will not take part in the election. But neither did we say

we will contest the polls. However, we have completed some primary tasks as part of preparations for contesting the election," he said.

With the parliamentary polls getting closer, the conflict between Quader and Raushan over the control of the JP was intensifying, said party insiders.

Although the majority of the JP leaders and activists are supporters of Quader, a section of leaders is siding with Raushan considering that she maintains close ties with AL President Sheikh Hasina. However, many JP leaders maintain relations with both sides, the insiders added.

Sources said if Quader finally decides on staying away from the polls, the JP leaders loyal to Raushan will run in the election.

Conflict between Quader and Raushan hit the headlines on many occasions since the death of JP founder HM Ershad in 2019. This conflict intensified over the last one year over holding JP council, Quader's letter to Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury seeking removal of Raushan from the post of opposition leader and removal of Moshir Rahman Ranga from all party posts.

Can Aussies deny rampant India of home glory?

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far, and especially after the 70-run thrashing of New Zealand in the first semifinal, it will not be a surprise if India win the final at a canter and lift the trophy for a third time, second on the home soil after 2011.

The more-than-a-billion Indian fans would be expecting nothing less than yet another clinical performance from Rohit Sharma's star-studded side that showed little to no weakness on their way to 10 straight victories.

However, with Australia showing their true colours with eight straight wins after defeats in the first two games, including one against India, the neutral global audience would be expecting an absorbing contest, if not an unforgettable final like four years ago, when hosts England clinched the title defeating New Zealand on

boundary count after both teams' scores were tied in 50 overs and also in the Super Over.

The biggest strength of India in this World Cup has been performing as a collective unit. Besides, in the last 10 games they dominated their opponents right from the word go and did not allow their opponents to bounce back.

So dominant have India been both with bat and ball, they have hardly missed the absence of key all-rounder Hardik Pandya, who was ruled out of the tournament after picking up a knee injury against Bangladesh.

While Mohammad Shami came off the bench to more than compensate for Hardik's absence as a third seamer with a staggering 23 wickets, Hardik's absence with the bat has not been felt down the order with Rohit, Virat

Kohli, Shubman Gill and KL Rahul firing almost in every game.

With Jasprit Bumrah leading the versatile bowling attack, India have been a complete package in this World Cup.

Australia, on the other hand, have been struggling to find a perfect batting combination with their key batter Steve Smith yet to find form. The good thing about the Aussies is their pacers looked sharp against South Africa in the nervy second semifinal that they won by three wickets.

But in the final against a rampant India, Australia will not only need to take their game to the next level but will also need a slice of luck and win the toss on a ground with diverse pitches, if they are to win a record-extending sixth World Cup title.