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JANUARY 7 POLLS

Rebels to trouble AL big shots

Party to be tough on wayward leaders if BNP joins race but go soft if it doesn't

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Awami League nomination seekers are in a race among themselves as on average 11 people are vying to get the party ticket in each constituency.

However, party ticket for some constituencies was much sought after, like Chattogram 8 where 26 want it, 20 want it in Chattogram 10, 22 in Netrakona-1, 21 in Narail-2, and 29 in Cumilla-5.

For the 300 constituencies, 3,362 AL leaders, stars, and former bureaucrats collected nomination forms during the four-day sale of nomination forms that began on Saturday. The party earned Tk 16.81 crore selling the forms for Tk 50,000 each.

- ➔ On average 11 nomination-seekers in each constituency
- ➔ Most ministers, AL top leaders likely to face rebels
- ➔ Nomination Board to start picking candidates from tomorrow
- ➔ 3,362 AL nomination forms sold for Tk 16.81 crore

Even though 675 fewer forms were sold, when compared to the sale ahead of the 2018 polls, the ruling party is leaping into fighting among nomination seekers and rebel candidates in the polls scheduled for January 7.

Party sources said if the BNP decided to run at the eleventh hour, the AL would ensure that there is only one party candidate running in each constituency.

But if the BNP does not run, the AL might go soft on the rebels, who are basically AL leaders running as independents, and even encourage them to run so that it might help make the polls appear competitive and festive and could even improve turnout.

If the AL does so, many key leaders and ministers might have to run against their own party colleagues as a good number of AL representatives in local government bodies and local AL leaders collected nomination forms.

AL praesidium member and Deputy Leader of the House Matia Chowdhury, MP from Sherpur-2, could be facing five party men on January 7. Nalitabari upazila Chairman Muksedur Rahman and former bureaucrat Abdur Samad, among others, collected forms for this constituency.

AL praesidium member and Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque, MP from Tangail-1, could face three, including AL Education and Human Resources Affairs Secretary Shamsun Nahar Chapa and Madhupur AL General Secretary Sarwar Alam Khan.

Four AL leaders bought forms for Gopalganj-1, of which AL praesidium member Col (retd) Faruk Khan is the MP, Kashiani upazila Chairman and district AL Joint General Secretary Subrata Thakur, AL national executive

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Illegal structures have been set up on the Buriganga near the Lohar Bridge in the capital's Kamrangirchar. The Dhaka South City Corporation has knocked down illegal structures in some areas to restore and beautify an old channel of the river. But they are yet to carry out such drives in this area. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ATTACKS ON BNP-JAMAAT MEN Of masks, helmets and baffled cops

ANWAR ALI

Police are clueless about mask- or helmet-wearing assailants who have killed three BNP Jamaat supporters and injured 15 others in Rajshahi region over the last two months.

At least 18 such attacks were carried out in Pabna, Natore, Naogaon, and Rajshahi.

In every incident, the attackers arrived and left in motorcycles or minibuses and used sharp weapons, said the victims' family members.

On October 29, Golam Kazem Ali Ahmad, a renowned doctor of Rajshahi city, was stabbed to death in Bornali area.

Quoting witnesses, police said the attackers, who were in a microbus, cut off the motorcycle the doctor was riding as a pillion passenger and then stabbed him in the chest before fleeing the scene.

There was no registration plate on the microbus.

On the same day, several masked men kidnapped Ershad Ali from his pharmacy in Rajshahi city. His body was found the next morning.

Local Jamaat men said both the victims were patrons of their party.

Two police officers told this correspondent that the attackers in both incidents were wearing masks and using the same microbus.

The Police Bureau of Investigation was tasked on November 14 with investigating the murder of Kazem. Abdul Mannan, the inspector investigating the case, said he has yet to find any clue.

Contacted, Bijoy Basak, additional deputy inspector general of Rajshahi range police, said, "We found patterns in some of the incidents of attacks. We're working on the cases and taking actions to prevent its repetition."

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BUSINESS

NPLs rise in private banks

Non-performing loans (NPLs) have increased in private commercial banks but dropped in state-run lenders as a portion of the loans were regularised through rescheduling.

During the last July-September period, default loans in private banks rose by Tk 7,902 crore but decreased by Tk 8,657 crore in state-run banks, as per the central bank's latest data.

Overall, the NPLs in Bangladesh's banking sector have slightly decreased, mainly due to the regularisation of some of Janata Bank's loans through rescheduling.

STORY ON B1

'No rule of game' in collecting remittance

Some banks offer Tk 120-125 per dollar

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Some banks are seeing extraordinary growth in remittance inflows thanks to offering at least Tk 4 more than the permitted rate per dollar.

The Bangladesh Foreign Exchange Dealers Association (BAFEDA) and the Association of Bankers Bangladesh (ABB) have stipulated, as per the unofficial direction of the central bank, that a maximum of Tk 116 can be offered per dollar for inward remittance.

But a good number of banks are collecting remittances at Tk 120 to Tk 125 per dollar.

Industry insiders said the banks offering rates higher than the Bafeda-ABB one are receiving more remittances.

Between November 1 and 17, Islami Bank received the highest remittance of \$206 million, followed by Pubali Bank (\$122 million), Al-Arafah Islami Bank (\$66 million), Brac Bank (\$52 million) and Eastern Bank (\$48 million).

Mohammad Ali, managing director and chief executive officer of Pubali Bank, denies doing anything underhand to attract higher remittance.

The bank saw a high growth in remittance due to offering gifts to their regular clients.

"Still, there is a mismatch of demand and supply of dollar," he added. During the period, the remittance receipts of state banks were below \$35 million: Janata Bank received \$29.02 million, Sonali \$19.85 million, Agrani \$26.27 million and Rupali \$3.34 million.

Bangladeshi expatriates are sending remittances through those

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Bangladeshi activist makes it to 'BBC 100 Women 2023'



AZMIN AZRAN

Bangladeshi activist, writer, and filmmaker Jannatul Ferdous Ivy has been named in "BBC 100 Women 2023".

Her journey -- from surviving horrific burn injuries to becoming an advocate for women with disabilities and burn survivors -- is nothing short of inspirational.

Ivy lived a normal, middle-class life, but tragedy struck when she was just a first-year honours student at Khulna's BL College. An accident at home burned 60 percent of her body.

After a long, gruelling treatment that involved numerous

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Motorcyclists illegally driving their vehicles on a footpath in the capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday. Careless bikers are often seen hogging the footpaths and hampering pedestrian movement in an attempt to escape the city traffic.

JP INDECISION OVER POLLS

Pro-Raushan leaders voice worry to home minister

RASHIDUL HASAN

Jatiya Party leaders loyal to Raushan Ershad have expressed concern over GM Quader's indecision over taking part in the January 7 national election.

The leaders raised the concern in a meeting with Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan at his home in the capital's Monipuripara on Monday night.

The 18-member delegation, led by Golam Moshi, political secretary of Leader of the Opposition Raushan, informed the minister that they want to participate in the election, meeting sources told The Daily Star.

They, however, expressed worries that their participation in the polls hangs in the balance as JP Chairman Quader is yet to make the final decision.

"If the leaders loyal to GM Quader decide to stay away from polls at the last moment, our hopes to run in the election will be dashed as the party chairman has the authority to sign nomination papers of the candidates," a JP leader, who was present at the meeting, told The Daily Star. "We will be in a big trouble if GM Quader stays away from the polls," the leader said.

The home minister told the JP leaders that he would raise the issue before the Awami League high-ups.

The meeting was held around 10:30pm.

This correspondent could not reach the minister yesterday for comments as he did not answer phone calls or texts.

Asked, JP Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnun

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