



# BNP facing 2-pronged challenge

Tough time in keeping unity in party, setting movement strategy amid arrests, attacks

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

With the deadline for submitting nomination papers to the Election Commission only a week away, the BNP now faces two challenges: preventing defection from the party and drawing up fresh programmes to keep the anti-government movement going.

Leaders of the party believe the government will crack down even harder on the opposition to foil the movement.

The ruling Awami League is also trying to persuade a section of BNP leaders to desert the party by offering them the option to run for parliament as independents or as leaders of the small, less-known parties, said BNP leaders.

“The main challenge is to take our movement forward in the face of police attacks and intimidation. The government is using state machinery to make some of our party leaders participate in the election, but it will not be successful,” Iqbal Mahmud Tuku, a standing committee member of the party, told The Daily Star yesterday.

In the BNP, the top leaders, the activists in rural areas and everyone in between have close ties, and the unity is “rock solid”, he said.

Top BNP leaders believe the recent attacks on the BNP leaders’ houses and businesses are part of the government’s attempt to compel them to stay away from demonstrations and participate in the election.

Attacks on properties owned by BNP leaders have been taking place since mid-October, and it is highly likely that such attacks will continue until November 30, the deadline for submitting nomination forms to the Election Commission, party leaders say.

BNP standing committee members last week held a series of meetings to analyse the political situation and decide the next course of action, according to sources.

The top leadership is of the opinion that there should be changes to programmes like hartal and blockade after November 30.

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The water of the Tongi canal has turned pitch-black due to the continuous discharge of effluents from different factories. This ultimately pollutes the Turag as the canal flows into the river. The photo was taken in Gazipur city’s Sukundirbagh area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## JP descends into chaos once again

Pro-Raushan leaders not given nomination forms

RASHIDUL HASAN

Tension has grown in Jatiya Party as its wing authorised to sell nomination forms yesterday refused to give forms to the leaders loyal to Chief Patron Raushan Ershad.

Several leaders, including opposition chief whip Moshir Rahman Ranga and Khondokar Mahtab Uddin, have been

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## 26 parties, mostly small ones, in polls

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and RASHIDUL HASAN

At least 26 out of the 44 registered political parties have decided to take part in the January 7 national election.

Only five of those had seats in the ninth parliament formed after the 2008 election, the last “accepted election” in the country.

Twelve parties ran in the 2014 election which was boycotted by the BNP and most other opposition parties. Although 39 parties participated in the

- 14 parties won’t join next national polls
- 4 parties still undecided
- 38 parties took part in 2008 polls, 12 in 2014, 39 in 2018 election

2018 election, the results were rejected by the BNP and several other parties, citing widespread irregularities.

This time, 14 parties have decided not to run because they are unwilling to compete in polls under the Awami League government.

Leaders of some of those parties said they are being pressured from different quarters to take part in the election.

However, four parties are still undecided about running.

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## AL makes surprise picks

Decides to give party ticket to Shakib, Ferdous, Nanak, Bahauddin Nasim, Sayeed Khokon; Pankaj Nath, Shah E Alam left out

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Star cricketer Shakib Al Hasan is set to start a new career in politics as he got the ruling Awami League’s ticket to run for parliament from Magura-1 constituency.

Besides, popular film actor Ferdous Ahmed was

**Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will sit with the 3,362 AL ticket seekers at the Gono Bhaban and unveil the list of nominees tomorrow.**

picked by the ruling party to vie for Dhaka-10 in the 12th national election with AL’s electoral symbol of ‘boat’, according to AL leaders with knowledge of the development.

Former Dhaka north city mayor Sayeed Khokon was picked to run for Dhaka-6, AL presidium member Jahangir Kabir Nanak for Dhaka-13, and AL Joint General Secretary AFM Bahauddin Nasim for Dhaka-8.

However, former Chhatra League acting president Shah E Alam and former Awami Swechhasebak League general secretary Pankaj Nath, who are current members of parliament, have not been nominated, the sources confirmed.

The decisions were made by the AL Parliamentary Nomination Board at a meeting yesterday with AL President Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

At the day-long meeting, AL picked its candidates for Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, Mymensingh, and Sylhet divisions.

On Thursday, the AL picked its nominees from Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions. The party will finalise its candidates for Chattogram today and unveil the list of all 300 nominees on Sunday.

Besides, Hasina will exchange views with all AL nomination seekers at the Gono Bhaban on Sunday morning.

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