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NOMINATION SUBMISSION

Polls code takes leave on the last day

17 AL nominees issued show-cause notices

STAR REPORT

Many candidates, mostly Awami League runners and leaders running as independents, violated the electoral code of conduct yesterday by staging a huge show of strength while submitting their nomination papers.

On the last day for submitting the papers yesterday, they went to the offices of the returning officers (ROs) with a huge number of supporters. Some were in motorcades, reports our local correspondents.

Incidents of attacks on journalists and opponents were also reported.

The election enquiry committees issued show-cause notices to 17 AL lawmakers, including four ministers, for allegedly violating the code.

The electoral code of conduct says that government vehicles, equipment or other benefits cannot be used for election campaigns. It forbids any procession of people or vehicles and the show of strength while submitting nomination papers.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Ahsan Habib Khan, while talking to The Daily Star yesterday, urged all to strictly follow the electoral code.

"Stern actions will be taken as per the law if any candidate violates the electoral code of conduct. Show-cause notices were served to several candidates.

"We will not accept any violation of the code of conduct. The commission has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against violators," he said, adding, "We will create equal opportunities for all candidates."

In Chattogram, Sangsad Whip Samshul Haque Chowdhury, who is running as an independent from

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Jahanara Begum, 70, came to capital's Abdul Gani Road at 8:00am to collect kitchen essentials from a TCB truck at subsidised prices and ensure that her daughter in-law can cook lunch on time for her bed-ridden son and grandchildren. However, as the truck hadn't arrived even till noon, she had to leave empty-handed, wondering what her family would eat today. The soaring market prices of essentials have left many from the low-income group, like Jahanara, desperate and helpless.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

30 parties in race for JS; BNP, allies stay away

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The BNP and its like-minded parties are formally out of the polls as nobody from those submitted nomination papers yesterday, the deadline for the submissions.

Candidates from 30 out of the 44 registered political parties have filed nominations for the national election, Election Commission Secretary Jahangir Alam told The Daily Star last night.

Citing primary statistics, he said 2,741 candidates have submitted nomination papers. However, he could not give the names of the parties.

"The deadline for submission of nomination papers expired at 4:00pm today [yesterday]. It will not be

extended," Jahangir said in the evening.

Asked whether the election was destined to be held without the BNP's participation, he said, "You have to understand that."

Only 12 political parties contested the 2014 elections amid boycott by the BNP and other opposition parties, resulting in 153 lawmakers getting elected unopposed.

In 2018, a total of 39 parties ran, but the BNP and many others rejected the election results citing widespread irregularities.

This time, the BNP, its allies and some left-leaning political parties have been demanding general election under a non-party polls-time government. But

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THE THIRD VIEW



MAHFUZ ANAM

Is Awami League heading towards a Pyrrhic victory?

READ THE FULL ARTICLE ON PAGE 8

LABOUR ISSUES

Bangladesh's duty access to EU in jeopardy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's continued eligibility to duty preferences to the EU, its largest export destination, has come under question because of the labour rights situation.

This came up in the European Commission's assessment report on the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) programme published on November 21.

The GSP is the EU's main unilateral trade policy to support vulnerable developing countries' exports to the EU conditional on the respect of international standards on human rights, labour rights, environment and climate and good governance.

In recent years, the EU has stepped up its engagement with three GSP beneficiary countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia and Myanmar.

The EU is engaging with the three countries due to the gravity of alleged shortcomings in respecting core human rights and labour rights standards, as testified by reports from the United Nations, the International Labour

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Landing on AL ticket, straight out of jail

Shahjahan Omar gets ruling party nomination a day after release; BNP expels him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Just a day after stepping out of jail, BNP Vice Chairman Shahjahan Omar yesterday submitted papers to participate in the national election as an Awami League nominee for Jhalakathi-1 constituency.

Addressing a press conference at his office in the capital's Kawran Bazar, he said he had resigned from the BNP and defected to the ruling party.

AL Office Secretary Biplob Barua confirms that Omar is indeed a ruling AL nominee now.

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Henry Kissinger dead at 100



AGENCIES

Henry Kissinger, the relentlessly ambitious US diplomat whose unapologetic promotion of raw American power helped shape the post-World War II world, died Wednesday, his consulting firm said. He was 100.

Kissinger, arguably the most identifiable secretary of state of modern times, died at his home in Connecticut, announced Kissinger Associates, through which the late diplomat grew wealthy helping businesses for decades after his government career.

It said that Kissinger's family would hold a private funeral, with a memorial service to take place later in New York, where Kissinger grew up after his Jewish family fled Nazi Germany.

The statement did not provide a cause of death. Kissinger had remained active even as a centenarian, travelling to China in July to meet President Xi Jinping.

Few Nobel Peace Prize winners are called warmongers, but the

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45 more BNP activists jailed

Cases against them were filed between 2013 and 2018 over political violence

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Forty-five more leaders and activists of the BNP and its front organisations were yesterday sentenced to different jail terms in five cases filed years ago over political violence in the capital.

They were convicted in the cases lodged between April 2013 and October 2018 over illegal gatherings, torching of vehicles, carrying out vandalism, damaging of properties, assaulting police, and preventing law enforcers from discharging their duties.

At least 424 BNP and Jamaat leaders and activists were jailed in the last month in 19 cases filed between December 2012 and October 2018 over political violence in the capital.

In a case lodged in September 2018, each of 10 BNP leaders and activists was jailed for 28 months in connection with violence in the capital's Shahjahanpur.

None of the convicts were present at the court when a Dhaka metropolitan magistrate delivered the verdict. The court also acquitted eight people.

According to the case statement, a group of BNP activists illegally gathered near the Railway Colony in Shahjahanpur on September 16, 2018. They damaged vehicles and obstructed police.

Police filed the case with Shahjahanpur Police Station against 182 BNP activists that day.

On July 5, 2019, police pressed charges against 18.

Another Dhaka court yesterday sentenced 11 BNP leaders and activists to 30 months' imprisonment in a case lodged over political violence in Old Dhaka's Kotwali area in September 2018.

Nine of them were absent while a Dhaka metropolitan magistrate delivered the judgment.

A Dhaka metropolitan magistrate handed down jail sentences to 18 BNP leaders and activists for 39 months over political violence in Shahjahanpur in September 2018.

No convicts were present at the court. Fourteen others were acquitted.

Another Dhaka court jailed three BNP activists for 24 months in a case filed over violence in Sabujbagh area in April 2013. It also acquitted 14 others.

Yesterday, a Dhaka metropolitan magistrate sentenced three BNP activists to two years' imprisonment in a case lodged over political violence in the capital's Kotwali area in October 2018.

Joyeeta Foundation and AB Bank PLC. Join hands to work on Women Empowerment



Joyeeta Foundation inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with AB Bank PLC. for women empowerment to improve their livelihood and to bring economic independence. Under this MoU AB Bank PLC. will disburse loans under Revolving Capital Support Fund of Joyeeta Foundation to the women entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurs' samity registered with foundation.

Ms. Afroza Khan, Managing Director, Joyeeta Foundation and Mr. Tarique Afzal, President and Managing Director, AB Bank PLC. signed this MoU on behalf of their respective organizations. Officials of both organizations also attended the program.

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