

MEETING WITH CEC

No security threat during polls: IGP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun yesterday said there is no fear of deterioration of law and order situation during the election.

“So far, we don’t see any threats,” he told reporters after holding a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal at the latter’s office in Agargaon.

“Still, the intelligence agencies are working. The law enforcement agencies will take action in light of the information they will give,” he said.

He said stern action will be taken if any one was found guilty of doing unlawful activities during the polls.

The IGP said they are determined to work as per the directives of the Election Commission. He also said they will take action against those who are behind arson and clandestine attacks.



The banks of the old Buriganga channel have been turned into dumpsites, ignoring the harm it will cause to the river’s water and marine biodiversity. The photo was taken in the capital’s Kamrangir Char area recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

NOMINATION PAPERS FOR POLLS

Online submissions nearly half of 2018

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 21 aspirants submitted their nomination papers online ahead of the 12th national election – almost half the number of online submissions compared to the previous polls, Election Commission officials said yesterday.

Before the 2018 elections, a total of 39 aspirants submitted the nomination papers online for the 11th parliamentary polls, EC officials said at the time.

Yesterday was the last date of submission of nomination papers for the next polls on January 7.

A total of 369 persons registered for submitting nomination papers online but only 21 completed the submissions, said EC system manager Rafiqul Huq.

He could not say immediately whether these aspirants were independent or party candidates.

The EC earlier said online submission of nomination would help prevent violations of the electoral code of conduct as many candidates come to the

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Scrutiny of nomination papers December 1-4

Candidates can appeal decisions December 5-9

EC to dispose of appeals December 10-15

Deadline for candidature withdrawal December 17

ROs to distribute electoral symbols December 18

Election campaign December 18-January 5

JnU gets first female VC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Sadeka Halim of the sociology department at Dhaka University has been appointed



Sadeka Halim

the new vice-chancellor of Jagannath University.

The education ministry issued a notification in this regard yesterday, said JnU Proctor Prof Mostofa Kamal.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin, also chancellor of the university, appointed Sadeka as the VC of JnU for a four-year term.

Prof Sadeka was the first elected female dean of the social sciences faculty of DU and first female information commissioner at the Information Commission Bangladesh.

In 2000, she received her PhD from McGill University in Canada.

2 DSA CASES

Khadija’s charge framing hearing Jan 28

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka Tribunal yesterday set January 28 for hearing on the charge framing in two Digital Security Act cases filed against Jagannath University student



Khadijatul Kubra for hosting a webinar.

Judge AM Julfikar Hayat of the Cyber Tribunal of Dhaka passed the order after the defence submitted two petitions, mentioning Khadija’s illness and ongoing fourth semester exams in the university.

On November 20, Khadija, a political science student, was released on bail after languishing over 14 months in jail, four days after the Supreme Court upheld a High Court order granting bail to her.

She was arrested on August 27 last year after police pressed charges against her in the two cases, filed by New Market and Kalabagan police themselves on October 11 and October 19, 2020.



PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 1

| | | | | |
|--------------|-------|------|---------|------|
| Fazr | Juma | Asr | Maghrib | Esha |
| AZAN 5:15 | 12:30 | 3:45 | 5:19 | 7:00 |
| JAMAAAT 5:50 | 1:15 | 4:00 | 5:22 | 7:30 |

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

‘Cops using excessive force to suppress opposition’

Says Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The role of law enforcers in using excessive force to suppress opposition parties reveals a clear bias that has caused anger and frustration among people, said Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF) yesterday.

Following the untoward incident centring the BNP’s October 28 rally, a conflict situation has emerged through the political crisis, strikes, blockades, violence, mass arrests in lawsuits and ghost cases, and raids in the houses of opposition party leaders and activists.

This has disrupted public life immensely, MSF said in a press statement.

Alongside the police crackdown, ruling party leaders were seen flaunting firearms in public, it also read.

Masked men are coming on motorcycles and minibuses at night on deserted streets to swoop on opposition men while police say they do not know anything about these attacks.

Also, it is deplorable that the government used law enforcers to cause deaths, injuries, and arrests to suppress the movement of garment workers without paying heed to their demands for better wages, MSF said in the statement.

Custodial deaths and torture by law enforcers, abductions by men posing as law enforcers, mass arrest and imprisonment of opposition men in ghost cases, and use of excessive force by

police have not stopped but are increasing in many cases, said the rights body.

According to the rights body, at least 2,663 opposition party men, including 936 in Dhaka, were

questionable, it said, analysing the last two months’ law-and-order situation.

The present situation is very alarming as it shows a picture of injustice, abuse of power, gross

| ISSUES | TYPE | OCT | NOV |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|--------|
| Political violence | Case | 101 | 115 |
| | Arrested | 2,538 | 2,663 |
| | Injured | 343 | 260 |
| | Killed | 8 | 4 |
| Mask attacks | Injured | - | 17 |
| | Killed | - | 3 |
| In guise of law enforcers | Abduction and disappearance | 9 | 16 |
| Deaths in jail custody | Death | 16 | 11 |
| | Case | | 41 |
| RMG workers’ protest | Number of Accused | | 16,500 |
| | Arrested | | 119 |
| | Injured | | 100+ |
| | Killed | | 4 |

SOURCE: MSF

arrested in 115 cases in November alone. Of the cases, at least 65 were filed by police and seven by ruling party men.

Also, 281 BNP leaders and activists were sentenced in 17 old political cases last month, it added.

The misuse of state power to suppress opposition has made the country’s culture of democracy

violation of rights and growing decadence of impunity, it also said.

The Manabadhikar Foundation demanded that the government take an active role in ensuring punishment for those liable and improving the democratic and political environment in the country.

NATIONAL POLLS

119 seek to vie for 15 Dhaka seats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 119 nomination papers have been submitted for the 15 seats in Dhaka city ahead of the upcoming national election.

Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Sabirul Islam disclosed the information at the end of the nomination submission deadline yesterday.

Of these, Awami League submitted 13, Jatiya Party 17, National People’s Party-NPP 12, Jaker Party 6, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal-JSD 3, Jatiya Party-JP2, Bangladesh Nationalist Front-BNF 12, Bangladesh Supreme Party-BSP 6, Bangladesh Kalyan Party 1, Trinamool BNP 7, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh 1, Bangladesh Nationalist Movement-BNM 1, Bangladesh Congress 6, Bangladesh Tariqat Federation 2, Islami Oikya Jote 1, Bangladesh Jatiya Party 6, Ganatantri Party 1, Mukti Jote 4, Gano Front 3, Bangladesh Islamic Front 2, and independent candidates submitted 13.

Regarding the cocktail explosion in front of the Divisional Commissioner’s office, he said, “We were inside, so we didn’t see it up close. However, law enforcers will take action in this regard.”

He also said, “Fifteen electoral teams and executive magistrates are working to protect the electoral code of conduct.”

Upcoming polls unlikely to be ‘participatory’: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The upcoming national election is unlikely to be “participatory” and it is impossible to ensure public confidence in such an election, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) said yesterday.

TIB organised a press conference on “Political Commitments for Democracy, Good Governance and Integrity: TIB’s Recommendations” at its Dhanmondi office yesterday, according to a press release.

TIB placed 76 recommendations for fostering democracy, institutionalising democratic values and practices, establishing an effective parliament, promoting good governance, and upholding integrity in the activities of political parties.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Management Adviser Sumaiya Khair, Outreach and Communication Director Sheikh Manjur-E-Alam, and Research and Policy Director Muhammad Badiuzzaman attended the press conference, among others.

TIB Research Associate Kawsher Ahamed presented the recommendations.

TIB suggested changing Article 91(A) of the People’s Representation Order (Amendment) Act 2023, saying it reduced the EC’s power by eliminating its authority to annul the entire result of a specific parliamentary seat.

Besides, the pre-election codes of conduct for ministers and parliamentarians should be precisely defined to ensure equal opportunities for all parties and candidates in their campaigns, ensuring a fair playing field in the national election.

Additionally, TIB suggested reintroduction of “No” vote.

Iftekharuzzaman said, “We have been practising the parliamentary system for half a century. Now it is time to adopt a system with proportionate representation in the parliament.”

Ensuring free, fair, and impartial elections is crucial to making the parliamentary system effective. Therefore, there is a need for an unbiased and non-partisan role of the election-time government and all other stakeholders, particularly the administration and law enforcement agencies, he said.

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Many communal, corrupt people being nominated

Alleges Sultana Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many people who previously acted against the interest of the country’s minority communities were nominated to contest the upcoming national elections, alleged rights activist Sultana Kamal yesterday.

Many corrupt individuals also got nomination, she said at a views-exchange meeting titled “Violence in Election: Way to Overcome”, organised by Bangladesh Puja Uddhapan Parishad at the CIRDAP auditorium.

“It’s not that only the minority communities are becoming victims of violence, actually we are living in a violent society, where everyone is now a victim of violence,” she said. “The repression on minorities is more frequent as they [oppressors] can get away with it.” Shahriar Kabir, president of Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee, said, “A quarter says there was communalism during the BNP-led government’s tenure. It also exists now during Awami League’s tenure. So where is the alternative? Now, the Awami League appears to be a lesser evil to us.”

In response, Sultana Kamal said, “It is unfortunate that we have to remain content with the lesser evil, but we are not benefiting from it.”

Shyamal Dutta, general secretary of Jatiya Press Club, alleged that at least 10 AL lawmakers who got nominations were involved in oppressing the minorities.



A pedestrian helps a biker retain balance after his motorbike fell on the road while he was trying to get across amid traffic and hit a bus in the process. Luckily the rider did not sustain any injuries but such reckless behaviour often leads to accidents. The photo was taken in Gulistan yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

AL to decide on seat-sharing Dec 17: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League will decide on the seat-sharing issue within the alliance on the final day of withdrawal of candidacy, said Obaidul Quader yesterday.

“Those who want to participate in the election will have to submit their nomination papers first. If there is a seat-sharing issue within the alliance, there is still time for that,” he said while briefing reporters at AL Dhanmondi office.

Quader said there is nothing to be confused about over the alliance. “Why should we nominate a candidate who will fail to win?” he asked.

Quader said there might be surprises in the run-up to the election, but inviting BNP to join polls is not one of them. “We will have to wait till the election [for surprises]. Who thought Jatiya Party would contest in 293 constituencies, Trinamool BNP would be contesting in 300 seats?”