

## SEAT-SHARING FOR JS POLLS AL keeps its allies hanging

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

A crucial meeting between the Awami League and its 14-party allies ended last night without any concrete decisions on seat sharing.

At the meeting, held at the AL organising secretary Mirza Azam's office in parliament, participants could not reach a consensus over the withdrawal of "AL independents" who would compete against AL partners.

Frustrated by what they said was the AL dilly-dallying over resolving the seat-sharing issue and keeping partners hanging, the other 14-party alliance leaders said they would make polls-related decisions on their own, said meeting sources.

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During last night's meeting, Workers Party

President Rashed Khan Menon and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haq Inu asked the AL delegation to make it clear how many seats the ruling party wants to share with them, said sources.

The two leaders also asked the AL team not to leave them hanging. If the AL does not want to share seats with them, then they would have to reconsider their decision to join polls after consulting their party colleagues.

Inu told the meeting that if the AL decided not to share, then his party would field one candidate as a symbol of participation and the rest would withdraw. Menon said his party leaders would decide whether to take part in the polls, said sources.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader assured them that the AL would run under the 14-party banner and would not have any other alliance.

He said the main opposition Jatiya Party would run on its own with the "plough" electoral symbol.

He urged the 14-party partners to wait until December 17 for AL's final decision over seat sharing.

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Manju Mridha weeps as he pleads for the release of his son, Arif Hossain Mithu, 24, who was arrested from his home by Demra police in Saruliya in the early hours of November 5. The family members and supporters of BNP yesterday formed a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club, marking International Human Rights Day.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Bribe taken at minister's house now in DB custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A representative of Zakir Hossain, state minister for primary education, has returned Tk 9.5 lakh allegedly taken in bribes from a man seeking to be a primary school teacher.

The job seeker is named Abu Sufian Biswas, and the "mediation" over his getting the money back took place at the Detective Branch office on Minto Road in Dhaka around 11:00am yesterday.

The issue came to light after police detained Sufian on December 7 on charges of misbehaving, yelling, and engaging in a brawl with the security guards at the state minister's residence.

Sufian claimed that the minister's secretary on Thursday asked him to go to the minister's residence to get the money back.

He added that at least 48 job seekers met State Minister Zakir at his residence on June 8 last year. "We handed over Tk 94 lakh to the minister's nephew Liton and driver Momin. But none of us got the job. When we asked for the money, the minister repeatedly assured us of the job, but nothing happened."

Then in May this year, a written complaint was sent to the Prime Minister's Office, which angered the minister, he said.

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## 610 BNP-Jamaat men jailed in one month

They were sued in 2012-2018 over political violence

COURT CORRESPONDENT

At least 610 leaders and activists of BNP-Jamaat and their front organisations were sentenced to different jail terms in last one month in cases filed years ago over political violence in the capital.

They were convicted in 30 cases filed between January 2012 and November 2018 on charges of illegal gathering on the streets; rioting; damaging properties; arson attacks on vehicles; vandalism; and assaulting police and

obstructing them from discharging duties.

Lawyers and rights activists have expressed astonishment at the lower courts' performances in sentencing so many people in old cases in such a short period of time, that too just ahead of the national election.

Contacted, Supreme Court lawyer and rights activist ZI Khan Panna said, "Convicting and sentencing so many people in such a hasty manner is contradictory to the rule of law. If the cases are resolved in this expeditious manner,

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## BNP human chains foiled in 9 districts 30, including journos, cops, hurt in clashes; blockade from tomorrow

MD ABBAS and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

BNP's first nationwide public event since October 28 was obstructed and foiled by police in nine districts yesterday.

The nationwide human chain programme observing the International Human Rights Day ended peacefully in Dhaka but police and Awami League activists clashed with BNP supporters in Habiganj and Narayanganj.

BNP supporters were not even allowed to begin the programme in

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Queues in front of TCB trucks get longer by the day as more and more people are depending on the trucks for kitchen essentials at subsidised prices due to soaring prices in the markets. The photo was taken at the capital's Jigatala yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## 'HOLDING FREE, FAIR POLLS' EC orders withdrawal of two cop chiefs, DC

Also withdraws 5 SPs, transfers 3 OCs

STAR REPORT

The Election Commission yesterday ordered withdrawal of the commissioners of two metropolitan police units, one deputy commissioner, and five superintendents of police.

It also issued an order to transfer officers-in-charge of three police stations outside the districts of their present workplace.

The withdrawal and transfer decisions were taken by the commission to ensure fairness and neutrality of the 12th parliamentary election, said the EC notices issued yesterday in this regard.

The officers to be withdrawn are Barishal Metropolitan Police Commissioner Md Saiful Islam; Sylhet Metropolitan Police Commissioner Elias Sharif; Deputy Commissioner of Brahmanbaria Md Shahgir Alam; Noakhali SP Md Shahidul Islam; Habiganj SP SM Murad Ali; Pirojpur SP Md Shafiqur Rahman; Satkhira SP Kazi Moniruzzaman, and Meherpur SP Md

Rafiqul Alam.

Meanwhile, the EC has issued letters to the senior secretaries of the home ministry's public security division and the public administration ministry to send their recommendations for the posting of experienced and compatible officials to replace the withdrawn ones.

So far it has been decided that Md Habibur Rahman, deputy director of the local government division in Kishoreganj, will be replacing Bahmanbaria DC Shahgir, said a notice from the EC secretariat last night.

The OCs ordered to be transferred are of Manikganj Sadar Police Station, Singair Police Station, also in Manikganj, and Sreepur Police Station in Gazipur.

Another letter was sent to the senior secretary of the public security division, seeking recommendations for the transferred OCs' replacements.

Locals in Barishal said rivals of former Barishal city corporation mayor

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## Oil reserve found in Sylhet-10 gas well

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new crude oil reserve that can provide 500-600 barrels a day has been discovered in the recently-drilled Sylhet-10 gas well under Haripur Gas Field, said Nasrul Hamid, the state minister for power, energy and mineral resources.

This is the second time crude oil has been found in a country's gas fields after petroleum was discovered in the Haripur Gas Field in 1986.

"This is great news for us in this month of victory," Hamid said at a press briefing yesterday.

Chinese company Sinopec began drilling in Jaintiapur and Gowainghat a few months ago and crude oil was found in the first layer of the well at 1,400 metres of depth.

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সবসময় সব প্রয়োজনে  
বিকাশ

**2TIMES IN A ROW** bKash has been awarded as the highest VAT payer in the service sector of the country

For the financial year 2021-2022, bKash is recognised as the highest service sector Value Added Tax (VAT) payer by the National Board of Revenue. In light of the country's economic growth, bKash is humbled and inspired to receive this award of honor.