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BREACH OF ELECTORAL CODE

Two candidates, AL leader asked to show cause

STAR REPORT

Election enquiry committees have served show-cause notices on two candidates in Cumilla and Savar, and an Awami League leader in Lalmonirhat for breaching the electoral code of conduct.

Besides, a government official, who is also the wife of an AL candidate in Narayanganj, reportedly breached the rule by campaigning for her husband and seeking votes for “boat”, AL’s electoral symbol.

In Cumilla, the election enquiry committee issued a show-cause notice to AKM Bahauddin Bahar, AL nominee for Cumilla-6, on December 19, asking him to appear before the committee at 11:00am on Sunday.

Md Siraj Uddin Iqbal, joint district judge and chairman of the committee in Cumilla 6, issued the notice as Bahar on December 18 said, “If any BNP and Jamaat activist is found to support any candidate, you [AL activists] will break his hands and legs; I will be with you.”

He was speaking at a meeting at PTI school field. Zakir Hossain, senior assistant judge and chairman of Dhaka-19 (Savar, Ashulia) electoral enquiry committee, asked Dhaka-19 independent candidate Talukdar Tauhid Jang Murad, a former AL lawmaker, to be present before the committee at 10:00am on December 26.

According to the notice, Murad on Tuesday held an election rally blocking the Dhaka-Aricha highway in Shimultala area, and staged a “showdown” using trucks

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A woman and her child rush out of their home following an Israeli airstrike in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

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22,000 local observers seek to monitor polls EC scrutinising applications

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 22,000 local observers from 96 registered organisations have applied to monitor the January 7 national polls, according to the Election Commission.

EC Director (Public Relations) Shariful Alam said that local observers filed their applications, which were now being scrutinised.

“The number of local observers might slightly increase from 22,000 as some applications are yet to be scrutinised,” he said.

He said following the scrutiny, these applications will be presented to the election commissioners for approval.

However, the number of local observers is lower than in the previous election, despite the fact that the number of polling places has increased since the previous election.

Ahead of the 2018 election, 34,671 local observers from registered election monitoring organisations applied, and the commission approved 25,920 local observers from 81 organisations to monitor the election.

EC will need to set up 42,500 polling centres for the January 7 polls, while

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UNSC demands more aid to Gaza Strip

Stops short of calling for a ceasefire; WFP warns of famine in the Palestinian enclave

AGENCIES

Israel kept pounding Gaza yesterday as the UN Security Council approved a much-delayed resolution to boost aid to the besieged Palestinian territory where civilians are struggling to find food.

The Gaza health ministry said more than 410 people had been killed in Israeli bombardment over 48 hours, including 16 in a strike in Jabalia yesterday.

Four members of one family, including a girl, died in another strike on a civilian vehicle in Rafah in southern Gaza, the ministry said.

An AFP video showed the impact had played the vehicle’s roof, leaving the wreckage blackened and blood-stained.

“The Jeep was hit. Five minutes later people gathered and a second attack took place,” witness Hamada Abu Taha said.

After much delay and diplomatic wrangling, the United Nations Security Council yesterday adopted a resolution that “demands” all sides in the conflict allow the “safe and unhindered

delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale”.

The resolution also urged the creation of “conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities” but did not call for an immediate end to fighting.

Israel’s ally the United States, which earlier this month blocked a vote calling for a “ceasefire”, abstained along with Russia, and the watered-down text passed with 13 votes in favour.

It came after the UN’s World Food Programme warned that Gaza’s population is at a “high risk of famine”.

Since October 7, Israeli strikes have killed 20,057 people, mostly children and women, in the Gaza Strip.

With homes destroyed, they are living in crowded shelters and struggling to find food, fuel, water and medical supplies. Diseases are spreading, and communications have been repeatedly cut.

UN chief Antonio Guterres said after the Security Council vote that “the way Israel is conducting this offensive is creating massive obstacles to the distribution of humanitarian

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BSP candidate comes under attack during polls campaign Fingers pointed at Jubo League men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Salim Ahmad, the nominee of Bangladesh Supreme Party for Narayanganj-4 (Fatullah Siddhirganj), was injured in an attack during campaigning in Fatullah’s Katherpul area yesterday afternoon.

Salim is the secretary general of Bangladesh Jana Dal (BJD), a component of Liberal Islamic Alliance. He is contesting the election as a candidate of BSP, another member of the alliance, with its electoral symbol “Ektara”.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Salim alleged that some 20-25 men, armed with bamboo sticks and hockey sticks, intercepted him and his supporters in Katherpul area around 5:30pm when they were distributing leaflets and seeking votes. All of a sudden, they launched an attack.

“My five supporters and

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X-rays reveal unusual technique in Rembrandt’s ‘The Night Watch’



CNN ONLINE

In Rembrandt’s enormous 17th-century masterpiece “The Night Watch,” a troupe of Dutch civilian soldiers gathers in a darkened room and prepares to march out to defend their city. Rembrandt, a master of light and shadow, strategically illuminated his subjects’ expressive hands and faces, while dimness hid the room’s details and obscured many of the guardsmen’s bodies.

That wasn’t all that the famous painting was hiding, researchers recently found.

When conservators used X-rays to peer below the varnish and paint of “The Night Watch,” they discovered something unexpected under its surface: a layer that was full of lead.

This was the first evaluation in the painting’s 400-year history that combined X-rays with spectroscopy of a paint sample and 3D digital reconstructions, and it revealed a lead-rich layer that had never been seen before in Rembrandt’s works, researchers reported on December 15 in the journal Science Advances.

ASSET SEIZURE

Russia may cut diplomatic ties with US Report says

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia may cut diplomatic ties with the United States if Washington confiscates Russian assets frozen over the Ukrainian war, the Interfax news agency quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying yesterday.

The United States “must not act under an illusion... that Russia is clinging with both hands to diplomatic relations with that country,” Ryabkov said.

Russia has described relations with the United States as “below zero” because of US military and financial aid for Ukraine in the war now approaching the end of its second year.

Ryabkov said Russia, which sent forces into Ukraine in February 2022 in what it called a “special military operation”, would not be the one to initiate a break in diplomatic ties, but such a rupture could be prompted by a variety of factors.

“The trigger could be asset confiscation, further military escalation, many other things. I would not go into negative forecasts here,” he said, adding that

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HOLDING NAT’L POLLS CEC asks field-level officials to be more vigilant

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Kazi Habibul Awal yesterday urged all field-level administration officials to remain vigilant to ensure a free and fair 12th parliamentary election on January 7.



Habibul gave the instruction at a view-exchange meeting with deputy commissioners, superintendents of police, upazila nirbahi officers, and officers-in-charge posted in Khulna division at the Sheikh Hasina Software Technology Park in Jashore.

“Law enforcement officers will have to keep a close eye on things to make sure that there is no chaos surrounding the election. Also, arrangements should be made so that voters can safely arrive at the polling centres,” the CEC told reporters after the meeting.

Habibul further announced that all forms of election rigging efforts would be resisted.

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Low-income people gather at a makeshift market to buy used warm clothes on Jonson Road in Old Dhaka’s Sadarghat yesterday. These clothes are being sold for Tk 30-100 a piece.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN