

# 73pc candidates lose security deposits

It proves Jan 7 polls neither competitive nor participatory, opine experts

ASIFUR RAHMAN and DIPAN NANDY

A total of 1,441 candidates out of 1,969 who contested the January 7 polls lost their security deposits for failing to secure the minimum required votes.

This is the highest since the 1991 election that was held following the restoration of democracy.

All candidates from 19 political parties, out of 28 registered ones, have lost their security deposits. Meanwhile, apart from the winning candidates, all other contestants lost their security money in 104 seats, and in majority of those seats, the winners were from the ruling Awami League.

Under the election law, candidates have to deposit Tk 20,000 to the Election Commission to run in the electoral race. To get the money back, candidates must obtain at least one-eighth of the total votes cast in their respective seats. Election experts said such a percentage is very unusual and reflects that the January 7 election was highly "uncompetitive and not

truly participatory."

They also pointed out that many party-nominated candidates and independents joined the polls just to increase the number of contesting parties and candidates.

"Barring a few, these parties don't have the calibre to create competition in the polls. They don't have any support at all," Brig Gen (retd) Sakhawat Hussain, a former election commissioner, told The Daily Star.

"Most parties that joined the election are little known and newly formed. They participated to increase the numbers in the polls. This election was participatory in terms of numbers but to say the truth, it was not," he added.

"When there are no parties that can challenge the incumbents, that election can't be participatory," said Sakhawat.

Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar said it was very unusual that so many candidates lost their deposits.

"This proves that the election was highly uncompetitive," he said.

## POOR PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

EC data shows that 1,969 candidates took part in the January 7 national polls. Of them, 1,532 were nominated by 28 parties, while 437 ran as independents.

Other than AL, the remaining parties included ruling alliance partners, little-known smaller parties, and newly-floated ones known as "king's parties".

Sixteen political parties, including BNP and its allies, and some leftist parties boycotted the election, demanding a caretaker government and saying that a free and fair election is not possible under the incumbent government.

The election results sheets show that a total of 1,441 candidates lost their deposits, and of them, 1,225 were party-nominated candidates and 216 were independents.

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# ELECTION DEPOSIT HIGHLIGHTS



Election year	Candidates	Deposit forfeited
2024	1,969	1,441 (73.18pc)
2018	1,861	No EC data available
2014	390 (147 seats)	163 (41.79pc)
2008	1,557	941 (60.43pc)
2001	1,939	1,259 (64.93pc)
1996 June	2,574	1,760 (68.37pc)
1991	2,787	1,934 (69.39pc)

### THOSE WHO LOST DEPOSITS

- All candidates of 19 parties
- All but winners in 104 seats
- 236 out of 264 JP candidates
- 1,225 out of 1,532 party candidates
- 216 out of 437 independents

### THOSE WHO GOT BACK DEPOSITS

- All 265 AL candidates
- 221 independents
- 28 JP candidates
- One each from Bangladesh Congress, JP (Manju), Krishak Sramik Janata League and Kalyan Party
- 2 each from Bangladesh Nationalist Movement, Workers Party
- 3 from Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal

### POOR PERFORMANCE

- At least 942 candidates got less than 1,000 votes
- At least 48 candidates got less than 100 votes

SOURCE: EC

## SC bars two lawyers from conducting cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday barred lawyers Mohammad Moshin Rashid and Shah Ahmed Badal from conducting any case before its Appellate and High Court divisions for next four weeks for writing a letter to the chief justice with "some derogatory statements".

The Appellate Division of the SC also ordered them to give written explanation on their roles regarding the letter within this time and appear before it on February 8 in this connection.

Earlier in the day, Rashid and Badal appeared before a four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan in compliance with its summons order.

Senior lawyer AJ Mohammad Ali sought time on behalf of Rashid and Badal from the court for giving explanation.

The chief justice said in the order that "the letter contains some derogatory statements which prima facie appears to be anti-state and demeaning the prestige, position and dignity of the judiciary as a whole".

The lawyers submitted the letter to the SC registrar general's office on January 1 to be forwarded to the chief justice to inform him of their court boycott programme.

The letter was placed before the chief justice on January 2.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
JANUARY 12

Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:30	4:00	5:36	7:00
JAMAAT 6:05	1:15	4:15	5:40	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



# Dhaka airport yet to be fog-ready

New landing system ILS Category-2 still not installed

RASHIDUL HASAN

During winter, passengers at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka often have to bear untold sufferings following the diversion of flights due to low visibility amid dense fog.

Between November and February, it is a common scenario for flights to divert from HSI

**ILS is a precision runway approach aid based on radio signals and high-intensity lighting arrays that provide pilots with both vertical and horizontal guidance during landing in thick fog.**

to different airports in India, Bangkok, and even Malaysia following suspended runway operation due to low visibility for hours, causing serious disruption to flight schedules, said a top official of HSI.

An upgrade of the airport's

Instrument Landing Systems (ILS) to Category 2 from the existing Category 1 can provide a remedy to the problem.

However, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) is yet to get this job done so far.

ILS is a precision runway approach aid based on radio signals and high-intensity lighting arrays that provide pilots with both vertical and horizontal guidance during landing in thick fog.

In January last year, CAAB chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mahdur Rahman said the installation of ILS to ensure uninterrupted flight operation amid low visibility in winter was likely to be completed at HSI by the following three months.

Since then, one winter ended and another came, but the work still remains incomplete.

Diversion of flights during dense fog not only causes immense suffering to passengers but also results in the airlines concerned incurring losses due to various charges, including landing and parking, imposed by the respective airports, said aviation experts.

"Diverting a flight to a new airport and then returning to Dhaka again also requires a huge amount of fuel, depending on the distance," said a senior pilot of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, wishing anonymity.

"Besides, an extra take off and landing due to diversion of flights also cause additional costs and need overhauling of the aircraft's engines sooner than the estimated time," he added.

"Sometimes we fly slowly to Dhaka to avoid diversion or hover the aircraft in the sky when we see fog forecasted in the weather report for Dhaka," said another senior pilot of Biman.

"Just because of the absence of ILS-2, we are compelled to waste our time, energy, and money, apart from suffering to passengers and loss to the airlines," said a pilot of Novoair, a private air operator, requesting anonymity.

"In fact, we require a Category-3 ILS system at the country's prime airport when all major ones, including Kolkata airport, have Category 2," he said.

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## CHATTOGRAM-16 HC upholds cancellation of Mustafizur's candidacy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday upheld the Election Commission's decision that cancelled the candidacy of Chattogram-16 Awami League candidate Mustafizur Rahman Chowdhury for threatening law enforcement officials during the January 7 election.

The bench of Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman and Justice Md Bashir Ullah rejected a petition filed by Mustafizur challenging the EC decision, considering that the petition was not presented properly.

## HC acquits Shahed in arms case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday acquitted Regent Group Chairman Mohammad Shahed in an arms case, in which he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The bench of Justice Ashish Ranjan Das and Justice Md Riaz Uddin Khan scrapped the lower court verdict that convicted and sentenced him in the case.

The HC bench delivered the verdict after holding a hearing on an appeal filed by Shahed challenging the lower court judgement.

Shahed's lawyer Shah Monjurul Hoque told The Daily Star that the HC acquitted his client as the state could not prove the allegation brought against him of possessing illegal arms and bullets.

## Need joint efforts to end trafficking

Says Peter Haas

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador Peter Haas yesterday stressed the need for joint efforts to prevent trafficking, prosecute perpetrators, and support survivors.

"We honour those who help end the crime of human trafficking. The United States is committed to partnering with Bangladesh every day to protect the most vulnerable and bring traffickers to justice," he said.

He said this on the occasion of National Human Trafficking Awareness Day at the US embassy.

He also praised the enduring partnership between the two nations in the fight against human trafficking.

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## 'Benapole Express' resumes operations

UNB, Dhaka

The "Benapole Express" train resumed operations from Jashore's Benaople yesterday, five days after its closure following an arson attack by unidentified miscreants that left four people dead and scores injured in Dhaka's Gopibagh on January 5.

Benapole Station Master Shahiduzzaman said the train carrying 141 passengers left Benapole for Dhaka at 1:00pm.

The train with a total of 832 passengers reached Dhaka at night, he said.

Four people were killed after arsonists set fire to the train at Gopibagh in Dhaka two days before the general election.

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President Mohammed Shahabuddin administers oath to 25 ministers at Bangabhaban yesterday evening.

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