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No more RPO edits Says eight-party bloc led by Jamaat; calls rallies on Nov 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight political parties, including Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Andolok Bangladesh, have reiterated their firm stance on retaining the recently amended Representation of the People Order (RPO).

No further exclusion, addition or modification of the RPO would be accepted under pressure from a particular party, they said.

The BNP stood against Article 20 of the recently amended RPO, which states that candidates of any party must carry their own party's electoral symbol, even if they are part of an alliance with a larger party.

Earlier, it was possible to carry the alliance's electoral symbol.

The Jamaat-led parties have been in a simultaneous movement with a five point demand since October 18. Yesterday, the parties held a meeting at the central office of Bangladesh Khilafat Majlis in the capital's Paltan area.

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NCP preparing list of 150 polls candidates

SHAMIMA RITA

After accepting "Shapla Koli" (water lily bud) as its electoral symbol, the National Citizen Party is now gearing up to finalise 150 candidates in as many seats.

According to party sources, the newly formed party has prepared a candidate list and some on the list have received the party's green signal to start election preparations in their constituencies.

Three of the party's top leaders have already hit the ground, ramping up campaigns and preparations in their constituencies.

NCP Convener Nahid Islam is being considered for Dhaka II constituency.

Speaking to this correspondent, he said, "I grew up in Badda, but I spent part of my childhood in Khilgaon, where many of my relatives still live. So, I could contest from either Dhaka-II or Dhaka-9. Dhaka-II is my first choice, but I'll decide for certain when the election gets closer."

Joint Convener Tasnim Jara may run in Dhaka-9. Her husband, Khaled Saifullah, a member of the party's central committee, may run from Rajbari-1.

The spokesperson of the party, Nasiruddin Patwary, will most likely contest from Dhaka-18.

Hasnat Abdulllah, chief organiser of the NCP's southern region, has obtained the green signal to contest the polls from Cumilla-4.

Other members of the top leadership, NCP's Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain and Chief Organiser of the northern region Sarjis Alam have been given the nod to run from Rangpur-4 and Panchagarh-1 respectively.

Senior Joint Chief Coordinator Abdur Hannan Masud may contest from his home constituency, Noakhali-6.

The neighbouring constituency, Noakhali-2, may go to Sultan Muhammad Zakaria, joint convener and international media cell editor, who has already announced his candidacy under the NCP banner.



A man buys a cauliflower from a vegetable vendor in Hatirpool Bazar for Tk 65 yesterday. Even though there is adequate supply of winter vegetables, prices remain high in kitchen markets across the capital.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

THE CONSTITUTION Renewed, betrayed, manipulated but still enduring

BAHARAM KHAN

The constitution of Bangladesh was finalised amid joy and celebration on this day in 1972. After nine months of discussions and debates at the constituent assembly, agreement was reached on the national charter on the fourth of November. The constitution, however, came into effect on 16 December 1972, exactly a year after Bangladesh's victory in the Liberation War.

This supreme law of the country essentially lays down the blueprint of the state, the rules that the government must follow and, perhaps most importantly, enumerates the rights of the citizens. It stipulates the inalienable fundamental rights and the basic needs of the people and the basic principles of the state.

Although the now-toppled Awami League regime declared November 4 as "National Constitution Day" in 2022, none of the past administrations observed it with any notable reverence. The current government even revoked its status as a national day a few months after taking office.

This year's constitution day comes against the backdrop of months of intense negotiations over constitutional reforms, with consensus still elusive. The constitution was drafted immediately after the Liberation War. This time too, the reforms under discussion -- the most significant in the 53 years the constitution has been in force -- follow a bloody uprising.

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Animal welfare demands political will, not sympathy

Cruelty rising amid weak enforcement, poor coordination, say experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gaps in laws, enforcement, education, and coordination continue to undermine animal welfare in Bangladesh, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

Organised by The Daily Star, the discussion titled Toward Humane Cities: Animal Welfare into Urban Policy brought together experts, activists, lawyers, and policymakers to examine the state's responsibility in animal welfare, humane stray population control, legal



"No single institution can enforce the law alone -- citizen awareness and social responsibility are equally crucial. When an act of cruelty occurs, preventing it is not just the government's duty -- it is everyone's."

Dr Md Shahinur Alam, director (livestock medicine store), Department of Livestock Services

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shortcomings, challenges in seeking justice, illegal breeding practices, the role of the media, and access to veterinary care.

Dr Md Shahinur Alam, director of the Livestock Medicine Store under the Department of Livestock Services (DLS), said cruelty persists despite strong laws. "Recent cases in Gopalganj and Khulna show dogs still being poisoned or beaten -- often with local administration involvement. We need stronger accountability and coordination to protect animals under the Animal

Welfare Act-2019."

Stressing that CNVR (catch neuter-vaccinate-release) and vaccination are "scientific imperatives", he said only a structured, humane, nationally led approach can ensure sustainable population control and genuine welfare.

Brig Gen Imrul Quais Chowdhury, chief health officer of Dhaka North City Corporation, said humane dog population management has been "inconsistent" due to legal and institutional gaps. "CNVR is the only proven method for sustainable control. DNCC coordinated with organisations to sterilise 25,000 dogs under a 2016 MoU, but later tenders failed to attract qualified partners."

He noted that the City Corporation Act lacks provisions for large-scale welfare initiatives and urged greater coordination with the DLS and integration of animal welfare into public health policy.

Rubaiya Ahmad, founder and chairperson of Obhoyaronno Animal

Welfare Foundation, said disease and injury among street dogs are at record highs due to state inaction. "Dogs have become the orphaned children of urban governance," she said, adding that no ministry has been tasked or equipped to manage dog populations humanely since culling was banned in 2012.

"Our CNVR programme was never meant to be ad-hoc. Since 2009, our mission has been to end dog culling and promote humane, science-based population control. We signed MoUs with the two city corporations and Humane Society International in 2012, but the plan was never fully adopted."

She said Obhoyaronno has sterilised 25,000 dogs -- the cost of which would be around Tk 60 crore -- but the initiative faltered after former DNCC mayor Anisul Haque's death. "Bureaucratic delays and lack of state support left the programme dependent

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ICT-1 expresses annoyance at defence counsel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday rebuked state-appointed defence counsel Md Amir Hossain, saying that he "talks too much and often makes remarks that embarrass the court."

Tribunal member Justice Md Shofiqul Alam Mahmood said this during the cross-examination of a prosecution witness in a case filed against five police officials, including former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Habibur Rahman. Among the accused, only ex-assistant sub-inspector Chanchal Chandra Sarker is in custody.

The case involves the killings of two people and the injury of two others on July 19, 2024, in Rampura during the July uprising. Amir was representing four absconding accused, including Habibur.

Witness Tabassum Akhter Niha, wife of victim Nadia Mizan, testified about how police and BGB personnel opened fire that day, killing her husband. "Locals brought him home around 2:30pm, shot and bled. I saw blood pouring from his abdomen, and I fainted," said Niha, the third prosecution witness in the case.

During cross-examination, Amir asked her, "Did you see who shot your husband?" The prosecution immediately objected, saying, "Chanchal's lawyer had asked the same question earlier, and you [tribunal] objected to it."

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Design, building fault behind metro pad fall Says DMTCL MD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The collapse of a metro rail bearing pad was not a sudden mishap but likely stemmed from faults in design, construction, installation or consultancy, said Dhaka Mass Transit Company (DMTCL) Managing Director Md Faruk Ahmed.

"This didn't happen by chance -- there are four possible causes," he told reporters at a press briefing yesterday at the DMTCL office in Uttara.

Faruk cited structural design errors, poor construction, non-compliant installation and consultancy lapses as potential factors for the incident.

More than Tk 1,000 crore was spent on consultancy and it is possible that they misunderstood key technical aspects, he said, adding that the causes may be interlinked.

While an investigation committee is already working, DMTCL has initiated an independent safety audit of the metro infrastructure by an international firm.

"This is a 100-year structure. Bearings are meant to last 50 years. Yet we are seeing failures within two years."

Two French firms have expressed interest in conducting the audit.

"It won't happen overnight, but we are expediting the process with ministerial support," he said, adding that the



Afghan earthquake survivors search through the remains of a damaged house in a village in Tashqurghan, Khulm district of Samangan province, yesterday.

Mamdani leads as NYC votes today for mayor

AGENCIES

New Yorkers are set to pick a new mayor today after an unpredictable race that has drawn attention from far beyond the largest city in the US, with President Donald Trump branding frontrunner Zohran Mamdani "a communist".

New York City's mayoral race is always watched closely as the city is the nation's financial capital and its leaders' decisions often influence national political discourse, at least for the locally dominant Democratic Party.

Breakout Democratic Party candidate Mamdani, a naturalised Muslim American who represents Queens in the state legislature, leads former governor and sex assault-accused Andrew Cuomo, running

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