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EC dialogues with parties start today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission is set to begin its electoral dialogues with registered political parties today.

On the opening day, the commission is holding meetings with 12 political parties.

Speaking to reporters yesterday, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said, "We will discuss the changes made to the RPO and the code of conduct and seek their cooperation for a fair election. We will also listen to their views."

The first session is scheduled to be held from 10:00am to 12:00pm, followed by the second session from 2:00pm to 4:00pm.

According to the EC's final list, the parties invited to today's morning session are the Liberal Democratic Party, Bangladesh Congress, Bangladesh Muslim League, National

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PHOTO: QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

A man cycles through the early morning streets with his hoodie shielding him from the cold air in Thakurgaon. In Tentulia, temperatures dropped to 12.6 degrees Celsius yesterday morning, marking the arrival of winter. The photo was taken in front of the town's Circuit House.

Probe into graft allegations against 2 advisers' aides stalls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigation into corruption allegations against the former APS and PO of two government advisers appears to have stalled.

The Anti Corruption Commission initiated the probe seven months ago against Moazzem Hossain, former assistant personal secretary (APS) to Local Government Adviser Asif Mahmud, and Tuhin Farabi, former personal officer (PO) to Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum.

However, no visible progress has been made.

Despite initial findings suggesting bribery over transfers, tender manipulation, commission-taking in



We are not under any pressure... The investigation into the APS and PO of two advisers is ongoing. If evidence of corruption is found, legal action will be taken.

AKHTARUL ISLAM, ACC Deputy Director

procurement, and abuse of power, the inquiry remains stuck at the investigation stage and the commission has failed to file any cases, according to ACC sources.

Several senior ACC officials said "pressure" from influential quarters has slowed down the process. They also said visible progress is unlikely before the upcoming national elections in February.

If the involvement of advisers in the investigation comes up, it will be an embarrassment for the interim government. Therefore, the final report may come after its tenure ends, they added.

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Prescription for power

Physicians emerge as one of the largest professional blocs running for polls

TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

With about three dozen doctors set to contest the upcoming national election, doctors appear to constitute one of the largest groups of professionals vying for seats in the parliament.

Jamaat-e-Islami boasts the highest number, with 17 physicians, of such nominees, including party chief Shafiqur Rahman and a key deputy, Syed Abdullah Md Taher.

Meanwhile, BNP has already nominated 12 doctors for the next parliamentary election, expected to be held in February next year.

Several more doctors are expected to join the race from other parties, including National Citizen Party (NCP) and Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB).

Most of the aspirants belong to

doctors' associations aligned with the respective parties, reflecting the growing influence of such bodies in national politics.

Top leaders of these associations had received nominations in previous elections, but this time, the number is much higher.

Awami League-backed Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad (Swachip) dominated the health sector during the previous regime, with several leaders contesting general elections on party tickets.

After the fall of the AL government in August last year following a people's uprising, the BNP-backed Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB) and the Jamaat-backed National Doctors Forum (NDF) began dominating the health sector.

There is also the left-leaning

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Children's rights should remain above all politics

Speakers tell Unicef event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political parties must ensure that children are never used as tools in protests or politics, emphasised speakers at an event yesterday. They called for the protection of children's rights to remain a priority above all political divisions.

Rana Flowers, Unicef representative to Bangladesh, said Unicef had recently held discussions with young people, political parties, and trade unions, all of whom echoed a shared call for zero tolerance towards violence against children.

Flowers made the remarks at an evidence-sharing and media briefing event held at Unicef House in the capital's Agargaon, which showcased the progress of the "Fostering Rights and Empowerment

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PROBABLE DOCTOR NOMINEES

JAMAAT: 17 CPB: 3

BNP: 12 NCP: 2

Taps run dry in Purba Jurain

3,000 households left without water supply amid Wasa pump failure

HELEMUL ALAM

Residents of several parts of Jurain have been enduring an acute water crisis for the past four days, as a Wasa pump failure has halted water supply through its pipelines.

"There has been absolutely no water for the last four days. The affected areas include the eastern part of Purba Jurain -- Haji Sardar Road, Rishipara (near Mistir Dokan), Kusumbag, and surrounding areas," said Mizanur Rahman, a local resident.

He claimed that more than three thousand households have been left without water entirely.

In other areas, water supply has been intermittent, and the little that has come through is dirty and contaminated -- almost like drain water. This issue has primarily affected residents around Road 1, Dargabari, Niyamat Mosque Road, and parts of Haji Sardar Road.

Mizanur said Wasa's acting managing director had apologised to the residents

but did not offer a specific timeframe for resolving the issue.

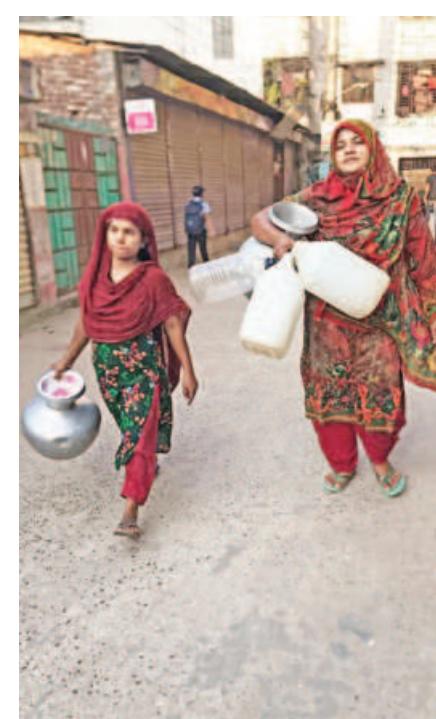
Nazma Sikder, secretary of the Shahi Mosque Pukurpar Panchayet Committee, said their water issues began on the sixth of this month. Initially, many residents did not realise the severity, as they still had water stored in their reserve tanks.

"Those who rely on direct water supply started coming to our houses to bathe and use water. We thought maybe there was some repair work on the road or a temporary issue, so we didn't worry much. But now the reserve tanks are completely empty. The last bit of water we had smell rotten. Many people are not even using it because of the foul odour," she said.

Nazma said all the mosques in the area have set up water tables, and large crowds gather daily to collect water for drinking, cooking, and washing.

"But not a single Wasa water truck has come to supply water. The situation in our area is really bad," she remarked.

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Crowds gather daily at mosques in Jurain to collect water for drinking, cooking, and washing as a Wasa pump failure has halted supply through its pipelines in several parts of the area for the past four days. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



COURT CORNER

Ivy to remain in jail
SC stays HC bail order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court chamber judge yesterday stayed the High Court verdict that granted bail to former Narayanganj City Corporation mayor Selina Hayat Ivy in five separate cases.

Justice Md Rezaul Haque, chamber judge of the Appellate Division, passed the order following five petitions filed by the state seeking a stay on the bail order.

He also sent the petitions to its full bench for the hearing on November 17.

Following the SC chamber judge's orders, Ivy cannot be released from jail, said lawyer Md Motaher Hossain Sazu.



BAGERHAT, GAZIPUR JS SEATS
SC chamber judge upholds HC verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court chamber judge yesterday upheld for a time being a High Court verdict that declared illegal the Election Commission's gazette notification which reduced the number of parliamentary seats in Bagerhat from four to three and increased the number of seats of Gazipur from five to six.

Justice Md Rezaul Haque, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC, passed the order. He also sent the EC's petition to its full bench for hearing on November 16.

On November 10, the HC declared the EC's gazette illegal and ordered restoration of the districts' previous constituencies.

Preserve all DU playgrounds: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to properly preserve and protect all the playgrounds of Dhaka University.

Delivering verdict on a petition, the court observed that the sports ground is vital for the students. DU has a legal obligation to preserve all its playgrounds.

The HC bench of Justice Md Shohrawardi and Justice Dihider Masum Kabir delivered the verdict following a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) in 2012 seeking directives.

At that time, construction materials were kept at the central playground of DU.