

NOMINATION PAPERS

2,582 submitted as clock runs out

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 2,582 candidates submitted nomination papers for the upcoming parliamentary polls by the end of the deadline yesterday, as the final count settled without reports of any major breaches of the electoral code of conduct.

Across the country, the day carried a curious calm, festive in spirit, yet softened by the grey winter sky and the sting of cold.

Outside the offices of the 69 returning officers overseeing the 300 constituencies, supporters gathered in numbers, yet candidates largely maintained discipline, queuing in orderly lines to complete the formalities.

Among the high-profile contenders filing nominations on the final day were BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, acting chairman Tarique Rahman, and Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir.

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur



444 filed nominations for 41 seats in Dhaka region

Scrutiny from Dec 30-Jan 4

Withdrawal deadline Jan 20

Rahman and National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam also submitted papers from their respective constituencies.

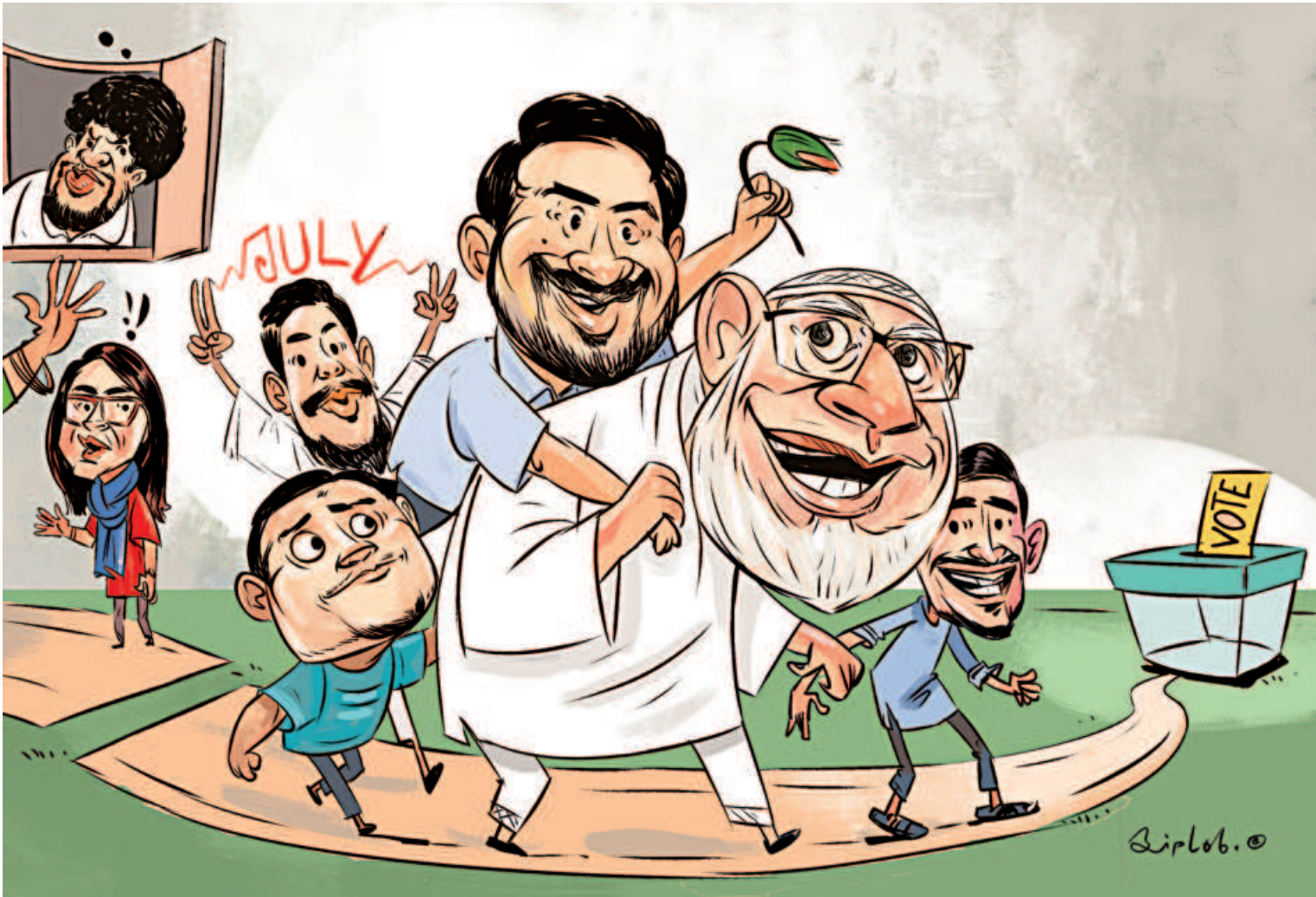
From the other end of the political spectrum, GM Quader, chairman of the Jatiya Party, a key ally of the deposed Awami League, filed his nomination as well.

Not all AL allies chose to take part. The Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal faction led by Hasanul Haq Inu and the Workers Party of Bangladesh led by Rashed Khan Menon announced a boycott, branding the election "unconstitutional and one-sided".

Both Inu and Menon, former ministers in the Awami League-led government, face accusations of crimes against humanity over killings during the regime's violent response to the uprising.

Several parties that were part of the July uprising had earlier staged protests demanding that the Jatiya Party and other

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Khaleda's health shows no signs of improvement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has shown no improvement in her physical condition, doctors said last night.

The 80-year-old former prime minister has been receiving treatment at Evercare Hospital for the past 36 days.

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday sought prayers for his mother from party leaders and activists when he went to the Nayapaltan office in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, Tarique's wife, Zubaida Rahman, their daughter, Zaima Rahman, his sister-in-law Sharmila Rahman, and Sharmila's daughter, Zahia Rahman, went to the hospital to check on her condition.

Khaleda's elder sister Selina Islam and her younger brother Shamim Iskander also visited the hospital on the day.

Speaking to The Daily Star last night, BNP Health Affairs Secretary Dr Rafiqul Islam said, "Madam's health condition is the same as before. We are a bit worried about hospital-acquired infection. Doctors are trying their best to control it. The board of doctors is giving necessary advice so that other systems remain stable."

On Saturday night, Khaleda's personal

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BNP leaves 14 seats for allies

Turns in nominations for 286 constituencies; changes 17 picks

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP is set to contest the upcoming polls in 286 of the 300 constituencies, leaving 14 seats for alliance partners and political leaders who stood with the party during the anti-fascist movement.

According to BNP leaders, five political leaders who recently joined the party, having resigned from or dissolved their respective parties, will contest the polls with BNP's



BNP has also issued dual nomination letters in seven constituencies, allowing two candidates per seat as a backup measure under a broader election strategy to manage potential legal, organisational or political uncertainties at the later stages of the electoral process.

electoral symbol, the Sheaf of Paddy, while alliance partners will run in the remaining nine of the 14 seats using their own party symbols under seat-sharing arrangements.

BNP has also issued dual nomination letters in seven constituencies, allowing two candidates per seat as a backup measure under a broader election strategy to manage potential legal, organisational or political uncertainties at the later stages of the electoral process, they added.

With the nomination submission deadline passed yesterday, the party is expected to publish a list of both its own candidates and alliance nominees soon, they added.

In two phases, on November 3 and December 4, BNP unveiled its nominees for 272 constituencies. The latest tally has been finalised following extended negotiations with alliance partners and internal discussions,

party insiders said.

Senior BNP leaders said that with the Awami League barred, the next parliamentary election is expected to be largely a direct contest between the BNP-led alliance and the Jamaat-e-Islami-led coalition.

Under the seat-sharing agreement with six political parties, four seats have been allocated to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam -- Sylhet-5, Brahmanbaria-2, Nilphamari-1 and Narayanganj-4 -- the highest number given to

any single alliance partner.

Nagorik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna will contest from Bogura-2; Junaid Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolon, from Brahmanbaria-6; Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque from Dhaka-12; Bangladesh Jatiya Party Chairman Andaleeb Rahman Partho from Bhola-1; and Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haq Nur from Patuakhali-3. All will contest using their respective party symbols.

However, in Manna's seat, the BNP has nominated its own candidate in case the Election Commission bars him from contesting on legal grounds.

According to BNP leaders, after careful deliberation, the party has left these seats to alliance partners with a realistic chance of winning and will not field its own candidates there.

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NCP submits nomination forms for 47

To seek 40 seats from Jamaat, allies; former adviser Asif joins NCP

SHAMIMA RITA

The National Citizen Party submitted nomination papers for 47 candidates yesterday even though its seat-sharing arrangement with Jamaat-e-Islami covers 30 seats.

The party is now seeking to negotiate for up to 40 seats with the alliance, according to several party insiders.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, NCP Convener Nahid Islam said, "We have submitted 47 nominations. Our seat-sharing agreement has not been finalised yet, so we submitted a slightly higher number. Some may be rejected due to errors or inconsistencies. Within the next few days, discussions will finalise how many seats NCP will ultimately contest under the alliance."

Sources say around 30 party leaders have already received the "green signal" from the alliance regarding final candidacy approval.

Nahid is looking to contest from Dhaka-11 and has submitted his nomination form to the Dhaka Divisional

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NCP's gamble, Jamaat's gain?

Analysts express differing views on alliance

MAMUNUR RASHID

The National Citizen Party's decision to join the Jamaat-led electoral alliance has touched off sharp debate in Bangladesh's political circles. While some warn it could erode the NCP's youthful promise and cast doubt on its future, others see it as a breakthrough for Jamaat-e-Islami.

Political analyst Altaf Parvez describes Jamaat's success in bringing the NCP into its electoral fold as the Islamist party's biggest political feat to date.

The NCP, formed by student leaders of the 2024 mass uprising that toppled the Awami League regime, entered into a seat-sharing pact with Jamaat-e-Islami and its allies on Sunday.

According to analyst and writer Mohiuddin Ahmad, the NCP practises "state power-centric politics" and will naturally align wherever it is suitable. He, however, said that such arrangements may not last beyond the election.

Salahuddin Muhammad Babar, editor of the daily Naya Diganta and also a political analyst, argues that the Jamaat-NCP "politics of understanding" could open up a new horizon of possibilities in Bangladesh, moving beyond the country's past experience of alliance politics.

However, many who had expected the NCP to strive for a new political order in the post-uprising Bangladesh have voiced disappointment over its seat-sharing pact. Some fear the party could lose relevance before it even has the chance to fully establish itself in the political arena.

After its launch, the NCP had pledged to introduce a "new political arrangement" and had repeatedly expressed optimism about contesting all 300 seats and forming the government.

However, its eventual decision to pursue an electoral understanding with Jamaat and other religion-based parties has raised questions among analysts about the party's political future.

Thirty central NCP leaders also objected to the move, while several leaders and activists resigned, withdrew from the election race, or both, saying the party was "not on the right track".

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