

BCB seeks group swap in meeting with ICC

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Apart from these matches, Sri Lanka will host the Group A matches involving Pakistan during the group phase of the upcoming marquee event.

The discussions were conducted in a constructive, cordial and professional manner, with all parties engaging openly on the relevant issues. Among other points, the possibility of moving Bangladesh to a different group as a means of facilitating the matter with minimum logistical adjustments was discussed," a BCB press release stated.

Meanwhile, during the

discussions, the BCB reiterated its formal request to the ICC to relocate Bangladesh's matches to Sri Lanka.

The board also shared the views and concerns of the Bangladesh government regarding the safety and security of the team, Bangladeshi fans, media personnel and other stakeholders, the press release further stated.

The ICC delegation was represented by Gaurav Saxena, General Manager, Events and Corporate Communications, and Andrew Ephgrave, General Manager of the Integrity Unit.

Both the BCB and the

Saxena was unable to attend the meeting in person as his visa was received later than anticipated and therefore joined the discussions virtually claimed the press release. Ephgrave was present in Dhaka.

From the BCB's side, the meeting was attended by president Aminul Islam Bulbul, vice presidents Shakawath Hossain and Faruque Ahmed, director and chairman of Cricket Operations Committee, Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, CEO Nizam Uddin Chowdhury and head of security Brigadier General Kazi Shameem Farhad (Retd.).

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described as "complex intelligence operations".

The reports claimed that Baradar, operating under the pseudonym Raha Parham on behalf of Reza Pahlavi - the exiled son of Iran's last shah - had played a leading role in organising the unrest. Reuters could not verify the report or her identity.

Alarm has mounted over the reported death toll during the crackdown, as verifying cases remains difficult under severe internet restrictions.

Monitor Netblocks yesterday said that internet connectivity in Iran rose "very" slightly, more than 200 hours into the nationwide internet shutdown.

ICC agreed to continue discussions on the matter in the coming days, added the press release.

The situation stemmed from Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahaman being released by the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Kolkata Knight Riders on January 3, following directives from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) after protests against the pacer's inclusion in the IPL.

On January 4, Bangladesh formally asked the ICC to relocate its T20 World Cup matches from India due to security concerns.

Rights groups have warned that the blackout has been aimed at concealing the extent of the violence during the crackdown.

Norway-based rights group Iran Human Rights (IHR) says 3,428 protesters have been verified to have been killed by security forces, but warns the actual toll could be several times higher.

Other estimates place the death toll at more than 5,000 -- and possibly as high as 20,000, IHR said.

The opposition Iran International channel based outside the country has said at least 12,000 people were killed during the protests, citing senior government and security sources.

Trump 'guilty of Iran casualties'

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action" if Iran executed protesters, said Tehran's leaders had called off mass hangings.

"I greatly respect the fact that all scheduled hangings, which were to take place yesterday (Over 800 of them), have been cancelled by the leadership of Iran. Thank you!" he posted on social media.

Iran had not announced plans for such executions nor said it had cancelled them.

Iranian media affiliated with the government reported that several "ringleaders" of the unrest, including a woman named Nazanin Baradar, had been taken into custody following what they

described as "complex intelligence operations".

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Jamaat to take most vacant seats

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"We have always said that our door is open to everyone. That has always been our message, and that message still stands," Zubair told reporters at the party office in Mughbazar yesterday.

On Thursday, top leaders of 10 parties under Jamaat's leadership announced at a press conference that the seat-sharing deal had been finalised for 253 constituencies, with 47 left vacant for Islami Andolan.

In the seat sharing arrangement announced in Islami Andolan's absence, Jamaat alone took 179 seats.

Among the partners, the NCP received 30 seats, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis 20, Khelafat Majlis 10, LDP seven, Amar Bangladesh Party (AB Party) three, Bangladesh Nizame-Islam Party two and Bangladesh Development Party two.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh

Khelafat Andolan and the Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (Jagpa) announced they would not field candidates this time, citing Jamaat's assurance of "due consideration" after the election.

On Friday, Islami Andolan declared at a press conference at its central office in Old Paltan that it would contest the election independently, stating that it had been ignored and disrespected by Jamaat.

With the alliance now failing to reach a consensus, preparations are underway to field candidates in the vacant seats.

A senior leader of the Jamaat-led alliance, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "There is really no time left now for all parties to sit together and discuss what to do with the vacant seats. A section of the top leaders will sit and

finalise it. Essentially, these 47 seats will be distributed among Jamaat, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis and the NCP. The larger share will go to Jamaat."

Asked how many seats each party might get, he said, "It is not final yet. As per the preliminary discussions, Jamaat may take 37 to 38 seats. The remaining ones will be divided between the NCP and Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis."

NCP leaders, seeking anonymity, told The Daily Star that they have asked to be allocated at least 10 more seats while discussions continue.

Monira Sharmin, joint convener and general secretary of the Election Management Committee, said, "The NCP has already confirmed 30 seats, although 27 of them have been publicly announced. We are now trying to secure a few more."

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis Senior Nayeb e-Ameer Maulana Yusuf Ashraf told The Daily Star, "Beyond the 20 seats, we may get another five or six."

He noted that in three constituencies, Faridpur 4, Kishoreganj 1, and Sunamganj 3, multiple alliance partners have fielded candidates.

"These may be kept open. In early February, whichever party is ahead will be supported by the others."

Meanwhile, Khelafat Majlis Secretary General Ahmad Abdul Qader, whose party received 10 seats in the initial deal, said they are now seeking four to five more.

AB Party Chairman Mojibur Rahman Monju, whose party was allotted three seats, said yesterday afternoon, "We have requested Jamaat to allocate another five seats for us."

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counter-appeal against Hasnat's nomination, claiming his affidavit lacked income and expenditure details. The EC, however, rejected Munshi's appeal and upheld Hasnat's candidacy.

After the eighth day of hearings, a total of 398 aspirants regained their candidacy.

On the eighth day of hearings, the EC heard a total of 112 appeals and declared 45 valid.

It rejected 37 appeals as invalid: 13 were rejected against the cancellation of nomination papers and 24 were rejected against the acceptance of nomination papers.

During the hearing, nine appeals were withdrawn, while two appellants were absent. The EC also kept 19 appeals pending.

On the seventh day of hearings on Friday, Sherpur-2 voter Yazdayin

-- who sought cancellation of BNP candidate Mohammad Fahim Chowdhury's nomination -- was assaulted inside the EC premises in front of police and dragged onto the street.

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