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421 aspirants back in race

EC disposes of 645 appeals; loan defaulters among reinstated candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With campaigning set to begin on January 22, the Election Commission yesterday reinstated the candidacies of 421 aspirants who had appealed the cancellation of their nominations.

Nearly two thirds of the appellants were reinstated after the EC heard 645 appeals between January 10 and yesterday – a higher proportion than in the previous two elections.

Speaking to reporters after finishing the hearings last night, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin said, "We will need your [all stakeholders'] cooperation to ensure the voting can be conducted smoothly. This is not the end.... Many people will criticise us."

Explaining that concessions had been made for independent candidates, he said, "You've seen how we relaxed the requirement of one percent of voter signatures – because we want the election to be participatory. We want everyone to take part in a fair election."

On the issue of many loan defaulters getting their candidacies back, Election Commissioner Abul Fazal Md Sanaullah said, "We granted

We granted exemptions to loan defaulters with a heavy heart – only because the law permitted so.



Election Commissioner Abul Fazal Md Sanaullah

exemptions to loan defaulters with a heavy heart – only because the law permitted so."

On the final day of hearings against the returning officers' decisions yesterday, 63 appeals were heard. Of these, 23 appellants got their candidacies back, 35 were rejected, one was left pending, three appeals were withdrawn and one appellant was absent.

Yesterday, although BNP's Aslam Chowdhury retained his candidacy in Chattogram-4, the nomination of another party aspirant, Sarwar Alamgir, was cancelled in Chattogram-2.

Aslam's nomination paper had been declared valid by the RO, but an appeal was filed against him with the EC. During the hearing, the appeal was rejected, thereby upholding the RO's decision.

In Chattogram-2, Sarwar's nomination paper was also initially declared valid by the RO. However, Jamaat-e-Islami candidate

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BNP raises alarm over EC 'bias'

Fakhrul urges action on code violations by parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Just days before the formal launching of election campaigning, the BNP yesterday accused the Election Commission of questionable conduct on several issues, including its "bias towards a certain party".

At a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at the EC office in the capital's Agargaon, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir also alleged that leaders of various parties, including key figures, are violating the electoral code of conduct by starting campaigning ahead of the scheduled time.



SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'Some DCs, SPs acting partially'

Jamaat tells Yunus at Jamuna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher yesterday said the party has informed the chief adviser that the conduct of some superintendents of police (SPs) and deputy commissioners (DCs) at the field level appears "biased".

A Jamaat delegation, led by the party's Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna yesterday evening.

Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar and Assistant Secretary General

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN
In Godagari upazila of Rajshahi, traders buy green tomatoes from farmers at Tk 1,000–1,200 per maund, ripen them with toxic chemicals, and sell them in retail markets at Tk 60–80 per kg. The photo was taken on Saturday.

OVERSEAS MANPOWER RECRUITMENT Approval for 252 agencies raises red flags

MD ABBAS

Bangladesh has approved licences for 252 new overseas recruiting agencies, bringing the total to a record 2,646, even as experts warn that the sector is already buckling under systemic corruption and inadequate oversight.

The expansion that comes under the oversight of the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment adviser, Asif Nazrul, makes the country's migration network the largest in South Asia.

The decision directly contradicts recommendations from a government-commissioned White Paper on the economy released in December 2024, which urged a "reasonable" reduction in the number of agencies to curb exploitation and financial irregularities.

"Many old recruiting agencies are unfit and involved in corruption. We suggested reviewing and filtering them through a re-registration process," said economist Debapriya Bhattacharya, who led the experts'

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

COUNTRY	RECRUITING AGENCIES
Bangladesh	2,646
Pakistan	2,537
India	1,988
Nepal	1,041
Sri Lanka	857
Bhutan	31

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