

ERSHAD'S MOVE TO JOIN 4-PARTY JP rejoices as Jamaat walks a tightrope in Nilphamari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Jatiya Party (JP) chief HM Ershad's move to join the four-party alliance has rejuvenated the party in Nilphamari but worried Jamaat-Islami leaders.

Political circles here say Jamaat will have to make calculation anew if JP forms electoral alliance with the four-party combine. On Tuesday, former JP lawmaker from Nilphamari-2 constituency Ahsan Ahmed bought a cow and hosted a grand luncheon for party men and supporters, JP sources said. He lost to Awami League's Asaduzzaman Noor in the last election.

Ershad's comments reported by the electronic and print media also strained BNP-Jamaat relations in the district.

As in other constituencies in greater Rangpur, local JP aspirants are now enthusiastic to get four-party alliance's nomination in the next parliament election.

If they get alliance ticket, Jamaat will have to make a fresh calculation and tighten its belt.

But Jamaat will not give JP a walkover, some senior Jamaat leaders told this correspondent.

Seeking anonymity, Jamaat leaders said they selected candidates for all the four seats in the district and are working out the next step. They said they will do whatever necessary to get alliance tickets for the four seats.

Party insiders said Jamaat have been eyeing Nilphamari-1 constituency (Domar-Dimla) for long, where BNP chief's nephew Shahrin Islam Tuhin is a possible candidate from the alliance.

In Domar municipal election held last year, Jamaat men voted against BNP candidate for the post of chairman to ensure his defeat as he is Tuhin's man.

"This should have been a message for BNP high command that Jamaat wants alliance nomination in all the four seats in the district", a front ranking JP leader in the district said.

He also claimed that Jamaat had a hand in filing of a rape case against Anwarul Kabir Chowdhury, a BNP contender from Nilphamari-3 (Jaldhaka-Kishoreganj) constituency.

Sources said possible Jamaat candidates from Nilphamari-1, Nilphamari-2, Nilphamari-3 and Nilphamari-4 constituency are Maulana Isahaque Ali, Moniruzzaman Montu, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Md. Mosammel Haq. Jamaat candidates and party workers have been working for long in their areas for the coming election though formal announcement of candidature has not yet been made.

Senior BNP leaders said they have 'good' candidates in the four constituencies but the decision will be taken by the party chief.

The tug of war between BNP and

Awami League to get JP on board has enhanced its position among silent voters, which has become a cause of concern for Jamaat, locals observed.

In 1996 election, Jatiya Party won three parliamentary seats out of four in the district. The rest one was captured by Jamaat.

In 2001 election, JP lost all the four seats, with its candidates running in second and third positions. Jamaat bagged one seat.

Jamaat has now become afraid of losing importance in the alliance.

Talking to this correspondent, JP Presidium member Joinal Abedin said, before joining the alliance, the party chairman should give a pre-condition that JP candidates will get nomination in all the 22 seats of greater Rangpur.

"If we join the (four-party) alliance, Jamaat should not vainly try for nomination in any of the seats in Nilphamari", said Abedin.

Nilphamari district Jamaat Ameer Md. Muzammel Haq, also a probable candidate from Nilphamari-4 said, "Our party has objected to Ershad's joining the alliance".

Moniruzzaman Montu, Nilphamari municipal Jamaat Ameer and a possible candidate from Nilphamari-2, claimed that Jamaat is a 'tested partner of BNP' and said his party will contest in all the four constituencies in the district with alliance ticket.



Awami League leaders and activists staged token hunger strike in Barisal (left) and Chittagong as part of a countrywide programme yesterday demanding execution of the verdict in Bangabandhu murder case.



PHOTO: STAR

AL calls hartal in Jamalpur today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Jamalpur unit of Awami League (AL) called a half-day hartal in the district for today demanding release of an AL leader and a Jubo League leader, arrested by Rab on Sunday.

On Monday, a down-to-dusk hartal was observed in Madarganj upazila in Jamalpur district at the call of AL in protest against arrest of the two party men. They are Joinal Abedin Ayna, organising secretary of Madarganj upazila AL and Jubo League activist Bulbul. Both were injured in a gunfight with Rab.

Ayna is undergoing treatment in Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) under Rab and police guard while Bulbul is at Jamalpur Sadar Hospital.

Rab sources earlier said that a team from Rab-1 went to Hazaribari Bazar in Melandha upazila at about 9 pm Sunday in the guise of arms buyers. They came under attack, that ensued an exchange of fire in which the AL men were injured.

Rab personnel also recovered a foreign made pistol from there, Rab sources said.

Earlier, on Monday, Shahabuddin, deputy assistant director (DAD) of Rab-1, filed a case under Arms Act with Melandha Police Station against Ayna and Bulbul, terming them arms traders.

Aurun Kumar Shaha, vice-president of Madarganj upazila unit of AL, however said Ayna had never involved in arms trading.

Additional police have been deployed at different points in the district town to stave off any untoward incident during today's hartal.

AL activists brought out a procession and held a rally at Bakul Tala intersection in Jamalpur town yesterday to drum up support for today's hartal.

RU School and College locked as teachers on indefinite strike

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) authorities Monday night locked the RU school and college and closed the institution indefinitely as its teachers and staff continued their work abstention programme.

The teachers and staff are abstaining from duty since July 22 demanding transfer of their services under government's revenue budget from development budget. The institution is run by Rajshahi University authorities.

On Monday, several hundred students of RU School and College confined their teachers in the teachers' lounge for about six hours demanding resumption of classes.

As the RU authorities locked the school, its teachers and other staff gathered on the compound yesterday morning and staged a demonstration, chanting slogans in support their demands.

RU Proctor Enamul Haque rushed to the school and tried to cool down the demonstrators but some unruly teachers allegedly assaulted him, sources said.

Later, at around noon, RU Institution of Education and Research (IER) Director and the president of RU School and College called an emergency meeting of the school governing body at IER hall room and discussed the situation.

After the meeting, IER Director Prof Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star that they requested the teachers to call off their strike, promising that their demands would be examined.

A team led by RU Vice-chancellor Prof Altaf Hossain will meet with the University Grants Commission (UGC) chairman and discuss the school teachers' demands.

TOKEN HUNGER STRIKE, PROCESSIONS, RALLIES IN DISTRICTS 'Execute Bangabandhu murder case verdict without delay'

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Awami League (AL) and its front organisations yesterday observed token hunger strike and brought out mourning processions in the districts demanding execution of the Bangabandhu Murder Case verdict.

Our Staff Correspondent reports from Chittagong: The city AL observed a token hunger strike in front of press club which followed a meeting.

Chittagong City AL president and Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury presided the meeting.

Speakers demanded execution of the verdict of Bangabandhu Murder Case without further delay to stop politics of murder in the country once for all.

In his presidential address, the CCC mayor said, 'It is a matter of great shame for the nation that the

country's seat of justice feels embarrassment in pronouncing the verdict.'

Among others, city AL general secretary Kazi Inamuk Haque Danu, AL Presidium Member Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser and AL central advisory committee member MA Mannan addressed the meeting.

Communist Party, Gano Forum, Workers' Party, Ganotantri Party and other organisations expressed their solidarity with the AL programme.

Our Patuakhali Correspondent reports: district AL observed a token hunger strike in front of the press club from 4 pm to 5:30 pm.

A street corner meeting was also held.

Among others, district AL president Advocate Shahjahan Mia, secretary general Khan Mosharrar Hossain, organising secretary Kazi Alamgir, office secretary Shailen

Chandra and BCL president Jahangir Sikder addressed the meeting.

The speakers demanded immediate steps to execute the verdict.

Our Tangail Correspondent reports: Tangail district unit of Sechhasebak League brought out a candle light procession before staging a token hunger strike at the Shaheed Minar from 9am to 3pm.

A brief meeting was also held.

Among others, AL leaders Faruque Ahmed and Anisur Rahman, convener of Tangail district unit of Sechhasebak League Masudur Rahman Siddiki, joint convener Mirza Anwar Hossain Babul, president of Tangail district unit of BCL Faruque Hossain Manik, and general secretary MA Rouf addressed the meeting.

Our RU Correspondent reports: Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) brought out a mourning procession

on the campus.

The general secretary of the university unit of BCL, Ayan Uddin led the procession.

A meeting was held in front of the Central Library.

BCL leaders blamed the government for protecting the killers of Bangabandhu and called upon the government for execution of the verdict.

They said the BNP-Jamaat axis is creating obstacles against the verdict.

They threatened to launch a tougher agitation against the government if the verdict is not executed without further delay.

Rajshahi University unit BCL president Ibrahim Hossain Moon, general secretary Ayan Uddin and other leaders Sirajul Islam, Pintu, Reajul and Prince addressed



PHOTO: STAR

Harvested jute plants stacked on a field in Nilphamari due to scarcity of water to rot them.

Jute yield to exceed target in 8 northern districts

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Jute production will exceed the target by 15 to 20 percent this year in eight northern districts in greater Rangpur and Dinajpur and the price may remain reasonably fair, agriculture officials here said.

Harvest has begun but farmers are facing problems in rotting, washing and preparing the fibre for marketing due to scarce rainfall. This is affecting the quality of raw jute and also its price, they said.

According to sources at the regional office of Agriculture Extension Department (AED), 60,300 hectares were brought under jute cultivation in the eight northern districts. Of them, 9900

hectares were in Rangpur, 7,300 in Gaibandha, 15,000 in Kurigram, 6000 in Lalmonirhat, 8500 in Nilphamari, 4200 in Dinajpur, 3,900 in Thakurgaon and 5,000 hectares in Panchagarh district.

The production target in the eight districts was fixed at 4,82,400 bales including 68,000 bales in Nilphamari. The target will exceed by 15 to 20 per cent as the weather was favourable during cultivation, they said.

Now jute is being sold at between Tk 550 to Tk 600 depending on the variety and quality, said Arindam Kumar, chief jute inspector in Nilphamari. The price was Tk 650 to Tk 750 two weeks ago.

The prices declined mainly due

to poor finishing and quality as farmers face problems in processing the jute due to less rainfall, he said. At places farmers have to stack harvested jute as they do not find water to rot those. Keeping it stacked for days and washing in insufficient water make its colour dull and less attractive to buyers, he said. Prices will pick up again if there is sufficient rain and processing is good, he said.

Quoting meteorological department, Nilphamari AED officials said total rainfall in the district so far since June was only 32 mm against 1,597 mm last year.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Khulna Medical College Hospital is virtually unprotected as iron robs in the boundary were stolen long ago. The authorities are careless about security even after a recent bomb blast incident in which miscreants tried to kill a patient inside.

Sect 144 as AL leader Maya, his rival call meet in Matlab

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

The district administration here yesterday imposed Section 144 at Fatehpur High School ground and its adjacent areas in Matlab North upazila as Awami League (AL) leader Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya and noted freedom fighter M A Wadud also a nomination seeker called separate public meetings at the same venue and time in the afternoon.

Apprehending possibility of clash, the district magistrate imposed it at the venue to avert any untoward incident, police sources said.

Kishoreganj Poura chairman's removal demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kishoreganj

Kishoreganj Chamber of Commerce (KCC) yesterday demanded removal of Kishoreganj Poursabha chairman for collecting toll from buses and trucks in name of damaged roads in the municipality area.

The KCC leaders demanded this at a press conferences held at Kishoreganj Press Club. They threatened a tougher agitation including road blockade and hartal if municipality chairman Abu Taher Mia did not stop toll collection through his musclemen.

They alleged that the chairman had engaged his musclemen at all the entry points in the town and compelled each bus and truck driver to pay the toll ranging between Tk 50 to 100. His musclemen assaulted many drivers for refusing to pay the same, they said.



PHOTO: STAR

Striking non-government schoolteachers squatting on Dhaka-Barisal highway in Barisal yesterday as part of a countrywide road barricade programme to realise their 8-point demand.

KHULNA BNP FACTIONS HOLD SEPARATE RALLIES TODAY

Nurul Islam harbouring anti-socials, says Lobi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna city BNP convener Ali Asghar Lobi MP yesterday accused party lawmaker M Nurul Islam of 'leading a group of misguided elements who are involved in anti-social activities including rampant toll collection in the name of BNP'.

Addressing a press conference at Khulna Press Club yesterday, Lobi reiterated his firm determination to hold a party rally at Shahid Maharaj Square this afternoon.

He said he got permission from Khulna City Corporation to hold the rally.

He however requested lawmaker Nurul Islam and former secretary of city BNP Nazrul Islam Monju to join today's protest rally at Shahid Maharaj Square with a 'fair mind to avoid any confrontation'.

At the press conference, Shaharuzzaman Mortuja, member-secretary of city BNP convening committee, accused Nazrul Islam Monju of forging a letter in the name of city corporation for holding a rally at the same venue at the same time.

"Monju will be sued by KCC for forging a letter to hold a rally", he said.

Both the BNP factions led by Lobi

and Nurul Islam earlier vowed to go ahead with the programme for holding rally at the same venue.

At about 7:30 pm yesterday, a press release issued by the Nurul Islam faction said it will hold its rally at Sonali Bank square at Jessore Road.

"We have changed our decision and shifted the venue from Maharaj square to Sonali Bank square in the interest of peace and at the request of KMP Commissioner", said Nurul Islam. He however accused KCC authorities of double standard.



The badly twisted bus and the truck after a head on collision on the western approach road of Jamuna Bridge Monday night.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA