

JP to trigger off tug-of-war for tickets in greater Rangpur

Ershad won't compromise on 20 seats while BNP-Jamaat firm to contest from at least 15

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Jatiya Party (JP) Chief HM Ershad's recent move to join 4-party alliance may force many probable BNP and Jamaat candidates to change their plans for the next parliamentary election in Nilphamari and four other districts in greater Rangpur.

They are being haunted by a common concern: Who is going to be scarified in the wake of new polarisation.

Talking to this correspondent, some JP leaders said Ershad has demanded 50 parliamentary seats, 20 of them in greater Rangpur, and four cabinet posts as conditions to join the alliance.

He will not compromise on the 20 seats in greater Rangpur because chances of bagging seats elsewhere are bleak, and this is known to the party high command, they said.

In 2001 election, JP bagged 13 seats out of 22 in greater Rangpur and ran second in three other seats. BNP men contested in 12 constituencies in greater Rangpur as alliance candidates and got three. Its candidates ran second in three other seats.

Contesting for nine seats, Jamaat

men got two and were in second position in four others.

In 1996 general election, JP got 18 seats, Jamaat one with BNP was nil in greater Rangpur.

"We deserve the right to get alliance nomination in all 22 seats as we are doing good in successive terms in greater Rangpur even after our party chief left power in 1990", said JP Presidium member Ahsan Ahmed.

JP central joint general secretary NK Alam said, "We will probably claim a few seats in other districts but greater Rangpur in our stronghold".

But both BNP and Jamaat leaders refuted JP's demand. Local BNP leaders said that at least seven BNP men 'must get alliance nomination' in greater Rangpur.

The seven are Deputy Minister for Food and Natural Disaster Asadul Habib Dulu (from Lalmonirhat), former minister Moidul Islam (Ulipur, Kurigram), Rangpur district BNP secretary and former central president of JCD Habibunnoobi Sohel (Rangpur-4), Rangpur BNP president Rahimuddin Bharosha (Rangpur-3), prime minister's nephew Shahrin Islam Tuhin (Nilphamari-1), lawmaker Amzad Hossen Sarkar (Nilphamari-2)

and lawmaker Lincon (Gaibandha-5). Jamaat-e-Islami sources said

claimed that the party is firm to get alliance nomination in at least eight constituencies. The probable candidates are Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury MP (Nilphamari-3), Moniruzzaman Montu (Nilphamari-2), former Dhaka city Jamaat Ameer Azharul Islam (Rangpur-2), Ruhul Islam (Rangpur-1), Abu Bakar Wahed (Rangpur-5), Nazrul Islam (Gaibandha-3), Abdul Latif (Kurigram-4) and Abu Hena (Lalmonirhat-1).

Nilphamari district BNP secretary Anisul Arefin Chowdhury said it would be suicidal if at least eight party candidates are not nominated from greater Rangpur as BNP is gradually gaining here.

Nilphamari Poura Jamaat Ameer Moniruzzaman Montu said, "We are serious to get nomination in 8-10 seats. We do not need JP in alliance as the four-party alliance got 217 seats in the country in the last election."

Tension and intra-party conflict are mounting among BNP, Jamaat and JP in a number of seats over getting alliance nomination.

JP sources said that the party

would nominate Ershad's sister Marina Rahman and his brother-in-law Dr. Asadur Rahman from Nilphamari-3 and Nilphamari-4 constituencies where Jamaat MP Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and BNP MP Anzad Hossen Sarkar have already started campaigning. They are preparing to resist JP at any cost, party sources said.

In Kurigram, supporters of former JP leader and minister now a BNP candidate Moidul Islam have declared possible JP candidate Tajul Islam Chowdhury unwanted. Tajul Islam was also a minister during JP rule.

In Rangpur-4 (Sadar) constituency, BNP leaders in a recent statement said they want Habibunnoobi Sohel as a candidate and asked JP chief HM Ershad not to contest from the seat.

In Nilphamari-1, local BNP leaders and workers vowed to resist JP central joint secretary NK Alam and expressed their support to prime minister's nephew Shahrin Islam Tuhin.



A big human chain was formed at Satmatha in Bogra on Saturday to create awareness against repression on women. It was organised by Steps Towards Development and Alliance to Resist Family Repression, two NGOs.

PHOTO: STAR

AL faces tough task to 'please all' in Khulna

Allies want to contest from 19 seats, AL reluctant to spare more than 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Components of 14-party alliance have demanded nominations from 19 out of 37 constituencies in Khulna division but Awami League is reluctant to give them more than three seats to contest in the coming parliamentary election, according to sources in the parties.

"Our allies may not stick to their demands because of their organisational weakness", said president of Khulna district Awami League Shaikh Harun-or-Rashid.

There are several aspirants on the list of nomination seekers who have no political footing in their areas, he said.

Hafiz Uddin Bhuiyan, a prominent labour leader and general secretary of Khulna district unit of Workers Party said allies of the 14-party combine are unlikely to aback out from their demands to contest from at least eight seats in the division. "We hope to win in all the eight seats", he said.

Md Khalid Hossain, a prominent

JSD (Inu) leader in Khulna, said AL's allies actively participated in the on-going anti-government agitation and they should be taken along in the election to build a strong electoral alliance to face the ruling four-party alliance in the region. He brushed aside the contention that none of the smaller parties in the 14-party alliance has any political stronghold in any of the 10 districts in Khulna division. If nominated by the alliance, the smaller parties would contest polls with their party symbols, he said.

But the general secretary of Bagerhat district Awami League, Kamruzzaman Tuku, argued that said it would be "suicidal" for the alliance in case AL's allies do not contest with boat symbol because "they do not have organisational strength in their respective areas".

In 2001 election, Awami League bagged seven seats out of 37 in Khulna division. "We hope to get bag at least 25 seats in the next election", said Khulna city AL president Tulukder Khaleque MP.

Party sources said JSD chief

Hasanul Huq Inu may seek nomination from Kushita-2, Jessore district NAP (M) secretary Enamul Huq from Jessore-2, Rabiul Alam of JSD from Jessore-3, Iqbal Kabir Zahid of Workers Party from Jessore-4 and its central secretary Bimol Biswas from Narail-1.

Sharif Nurul Ambia of JSD will contest from Narail-2, Workers Party leader Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan from Khulna-5 and Mostafa Lutfullah of the party will seek nomination from Satkhira-1 constituency.

Seeking anonymity, a central leader of Awami League holding an important post in its Khulna district unit claimed that only JSD chief Hasanul Huq Inu and Workers Party central leader Bimol Biswas may win their seats while six others will be defeated.

"We will be losing six or seven seats where JSD, NAP and Workers Party candidates are insisting to contest", said lawmaker Talukder Abdul Khaleque who may play an important role in AL in deciding nominations in the region.

Nitai Roy faces boycott by college body members

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Nine out of 14 members of the governing body (GB) of Sreepur Degree College on Saturday boycotted the GB meeting demanding removal of central BNP leader Nitai Roy Chowdhury from the post of its president.

Sources said college principal Jaan Mohammad who is also member-secretary of the GB served notices on its members for a meeting at 11 am on Saturday. Till 12-15 pm, only five members including Nitai Roy and the principal turned up for the meeting.

Talking to this correspondent later, Jaan Mohammad admitted that nine members boycotted the meeting. He however claimed that the scheduled meeting was held as quorum was fulfilled.

Sources said, three teachers' representative Golam Sarwar, Abdul Wahab and Asaduzzaman, two educationalist-members Kamaluddin Master and Rezaul Karim and the rest four including two donor-members Zahid Ahmed and Khalilur Rahman boycotted the meeting.

On contact, influential GB member Kamaluddin Master said, "We boycotted the meeting as people of Sreepur upazila no more want to see Nitai Roy in the area."

Rezaul Karim, another GB member, echoed the same voice and said, "People here have already declared him unwanted in Sreepur and also burnt his effigy earlier."

"We warned him again by boycotting the GB meeting. He should not attend any meeting or function in Sreepur anymore."

Mentionable, Nitai Roy Chowdhury is a man from Mohamadpur upazila (Magura-2 constituency). In 2001 election, he was nominated as 4-party alliance candidate from Magura-1 constituency comprising Sreepur and Magura Sadar upazila. He lost to Awami League candidate.

Arrival of Sreepur thana BNP at a meeting on March 5 declared him 'unwanted' in the upazila for his alleged anti-party activities and burned his effigy. They vowed to resist him if he is nominated again for Magura-1 constituency.

Talking to this correspondent former organising secretary of Sreepur thana BNP Khalilur Rahman claimed, "People of Sreepur no more want to see Nitai Roy leading any institution or platform."

Stop hijacking, robbery on highways Truckers demand, threaten strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Three organisations in Dinajpur at a press conference here yesterday demanded immediate government steps to stop truck hijacking, robbery and toll collection on roads and threatened of strike for non-compliance.

Leaders of Dinajpur Truck Owner Association, Dinajpur Food Grain Traders Association and Rice Millers Association placed a eight-point demand at the press conference held at Dinajpur Press Club. Representatives of Dinajpur Chamber and Commerce and Industry were also present there.

Md. Muzibur Rahman, general secretary of Dinajpur Truck Owners Association in his written statement said at least 15 loaded trucks were hijacked on roads in Dinajpur in last three years and none of them were recovered.

The transport sector is facing a great trouble due to lack of security on roads, which is also affecting other businesses, he said. He also demanded compensation for the missing trucks and their drivers.

Acid victim fights for life, family flees home in fear

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

A poor acid victim is fighting for life at Shahzadpur Upazila Health Complex while his wife and children fled home for fear of life.

His family members are seeking security of life due to continuous death threat given by their rivals to withdraw the case filed by the victim's elder brother.

Hospital sources said, Shahjahan Sarder, 45, son of Shitol Sarder of Ultadab village in Shahzadpur upazila sustained severe burn injuries on head, face, chest and in the lower parts of body. His two eyes have been damaged totally. He needs to be shifted to Dhaka for better treatment. But his family is helpless because of both threat and poverty. As a result, his condition is deteriorating day by day, victim's wife said.

Family sources said, Shahjahan came under acid attack at his tea stall at his village at around 1.30 am on July 20. A group of local rivals including Rahom Ali, a BNP cadre, stormed into the tea stall by breaking open the door and hurled acid on him while he was asleep. After receiving acid burn injuries, he cried out for help. The culprits managed to flee but the victim could identify



PHOTO: STAR

Acid victim Shahjahan Sarder at Shahzadpur Upazila Health Complex.

some of them.

Local people rescued him in a critical condition. They rushed him to the hospital.

Victim's elder brother Eslam Sarder filed a case with Shahzadpur Police Station accusing 15 persons including Rahom Ali.

While talking to this correspondent, Eslam said police did not take any action against the culprits despite filing of the case.

He alleged that the accused are roaming in the area freely and giving death threat to the victim's family members demanding withdrawal of the case. The

accused threatened to kill all the family members of the case if the case is not withdrawn within a week.

None of the accused was arrested to till filing of the report.

On contact, Shahzadpur Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Zahangir Hossain admitted that the 'absconding' accused are giving threat to the family members. As they are hiding, they could not be arrested, he said.

Besides, some ruling party influentials are pressing police for not taking action against the accused, he added.

4 top outlaws handed over to police in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) handed over four top outlaws belonging to New Biplobi Communist Party (NBPC) including its 'second-in-command' in the region to police yesterday, two days after their arrest.

Rab-12 in Kushtia arrested them from Manakhali village in Sadar upazila early Friday.

A foreign-made shot gun and 21 bullets were recovered from their possession.

The arrested outlaws are Shamsul Alam alias Shamsu, Asadul, Rafiqul of Chakrazpur and Alim of Bhadalia in Sadar upazila in the district. Of them, Shamsu was the 'second-in-command' of NBPC, led by Akdil Hossain in the region. The rest three are NBPC cadres, Rab sources said.

Acting on a tip-off, Rab personnel raided a house at Manakhali village on the outskirts of Kushtia town where the outlaws were holding a secret meeting at about 4:30 am.

At least 15 outlaws were at the meeting. Sensing presence of Rab, the NBPC men opened fire.

Rab men caught four of them without firing shots, the Rab sources said.

After two days' interrogation, Rab handed over them to police.

According to police, Shamsu is accused in six cases including four for murders. His accomplices were also accused in several criminal offenses each.

A total 105 alleged criminals including outlaws were killed in crossfire in the district since June 2004. The figure is the highest among districts in the country.

JCD-BCL clash leaves 20 hurt at Bhurungamari Degree College

A CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

At least 20 people including a college teacher were injured in a clash between the activists of Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Bhurungamari Degree College yesterday.

The injured are Mosharrif Hossain, Shwapan Shafiqul, Milon and Halim. Of them Mosharrif is a college teacher. He was injured when he went to stop the clash. The injured were admitted to Bhurungamari hospital for treatment.

Police and eye-witnesses said, the clash ensued when JCD activists tore down a banner and erased wall writings of BCL on the campus.

Being informed, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Police forces have been deployed at the local Awami League (AL) and BNP offices to avert any untoward incident.

Strike at RU protesting JCD bomb blasts, attack

RU CORRESPONDENT

Classes and examinations were not held at Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday as students of Fine Arts department enforced a strike on the campus protesting the attack on students by Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists.

On Saturday, at least 10 students of Fine Arts department were injured as JCD activists blasted bombs and attacked them with iron rods and hockey sticks.

Following the attack, the students called a strike on the campus.

Among the injured, Ariful Islam, former RU Chhatra Union president and member of Sammito Sangskritik Jote, Iti and Bishnu Podder Raju were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Yesterday, students of Fine Arts department under the banner of General Students Council locked the administrative building for

several hours and staged a two-hour sit-in from 9 am.

The students withdrew their sit-in programme after higher authorities in the university agreed to fulfil their demand for punishment of the culprits.

Vehicles including university buses did not ply while university shops and the post office remained closed yesterday.

Presence of students on the campus was also very thin and the university central library was closed.

At a rally in front of the central library at around 11:00am, the students warned of indefinite strike on the campus if the authorities fail to punish the persons responsible for Saturday's attack within 48 hours.

Earlier, the students formed a human chain on the campus demanding removal of a teacher of the department.

Following a meeting with Proctor Enamul Haque and Students'

Adviser Prof Zahid Hassan Milky in the afternoon, the students withdrew their strike vowed to boycott their classes and examinations till the attackers are not punished.

Sammito Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) at RU also took out a procession on the campus and held a rally yesterday demanding punishment to the attackers.

Speakers at a rally threatened tougher agitation against the RU VC if the attackers are not punished.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Progressive Students Alliance (PSA) also staged separate demonstrations on the campus and demanded punishment to the attackers.

Bagha saw no development because of MP's apathy

BNP leaders allege at press conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Leaders of ruling BNP from Bagha upazila at a press conference in the city yesterday blamed their party lawmaker for not doing any development work in the area during last 10 areas.

They, however, demanded nomination of Rajshahi district BNP president Azizur Rahman from Rajshahi-5 (Bagha-Charghat) constituency. Azizur Rahman is a man from the area.

Bagha Pourashabha BNP secretary Zahirul Islam read out a written statement at the press conference.

Bagha upazila BNP president Jamal Uddin, secretary Saiful Islam, joint secretary Masud

Karim, municipal BNP president Amjad Hossain and organising secretary Ruhul Amin also attended the programme and replied to questions from newsmen. Local Jubo Dal leaders Kamal Hossain, Saleh Ahmed Salam and Chhatra Dal president Zahirul Islam were also present.

Zahirul Islam alleged that there was no development work in Bagha-Charghat upazilas since 1996.

The BNP leaders held senior BNP lawmaker Kabir Hossain responsible for this and said he seldom visited the area and paid little attention to people.

They explained that Dr Alauddin, who joined BNP from Awami League, was elected in

1996, but he returned to Awami League later.

In 2001, Azizur Rahman was promised of nomination, but it finally went to Kabir Hossain following a 'conspiracy', they said adding that Kabir was rarely seen in the area after being elected.

The BNP leaders claimed that district BNP president Azizur Rahman is a man from the area and he will be with the people always.

"We will not welcome any man except Azizur Rahman", said Jamal Uddin.

They also said that many 'guest candidates' are emerging as the election is nearing but they are not involved with the people.



PHOTO: STAR

Grameen Bank Chairman Prof Muhammad Yunus and his daughter Monika Yunus yesterday visited Adinat Mandir a temple of mythological interest at Moheshkhali in Cox's Bazar and exchanged views with leaders of the Hindu community.