The Daily Star

ELECTION 2007

alliances, it is safe to presume that

90% of this vote swing will go to one

of the two parties. When a voter

decides not to vote for the party he

voted for the last time, it is an "out-

ward" swing. In this close situation

the outward swing of a party

becomes the "inward" swing of the

other. Outward swings occur more

from parties in government as they

are the repository of a larger number

of votes obtained in the previous

election. This is the "anti-

In the 1996 elections, the BNP

won 116 seats compared to 140 in

1991, although their vote share

increased from 30.81% to 33.61%.

The AL won 146 seats in 1996

compared to 100 in 1991. Their vote

share increased from 33.33% to

37.44%. The increase or inward

swing for both the BNP and AL was

at the cost of Jamaat and "others,"

whose vote share fell from 27.30%

The 4.44% more votes that the

AL got in 1996 gave them 40 extra

seats. However, now that the vote is

more consolidated and split among

the two top parties, any swing will be

at the cost of one or the other. The

higher the bracket of votes (say 40%

and above) that the two parties get,

the closer will be the difference of

votes between them in the individual

constituencies. That means a

greater number of seats will become

"marginal" and will be decided by

even small vote swings. The end

result will be that the party which

gets the highest number of votes will

win a disproportionate number of

In 2001, the BNP Alliance got

47% votes. That is, 47 persons out

of 100 voted for the Alliance. If 7 of

these voters decide not to vote for

the Alliance in the next election, it

means an outward swing of 7%

Most of this outward swing will go to

the AL giving them a theoretical total

of 48% against BNP's reduced total

of the total votes to 12 72%

ncumbency" factor.



SI

No

1

Constituencies

4 Thakurgaon-2

2 6 Dinajpur-1

3 11 Dinajpur-6

4 13 Nilphamari-2

5 14 Nilphamari-3

6 16 Lalmonirhat-1

7 19 Rangpur-1

8 20 Rangpur-2

9 23 Rangpur-5

10 28 Kurigram-4

13 68 Pabna-1

14 72 Pabna-5

15 86 Jessore-2

16 90 Jessore-6

19 103 Khulna-5

20 104 Khulna-6 21 106 Satkhira-2

22 107 Satkhira-3 23 109 Satkhira-5

24 129 Pirojpur-1 25 146 Sherpur-1

28 232 Sylhet-5

26 154 Mymensingh-6

27 219 Madaripur-3

29 235 Moulavibazar-2

30 259 Comilla-12

17 97 Bagherhat-3

18 98 Bagherhat-4

11 29 Gaibandha-1

12 31 Gaibandha-3



Table 3

JI Candidates in 2001 Elections with JI Votes in Same Constituencies in 1991 & 1996

57 196

110.598

65,83

64,180

17.788

53,17

43,02

75,47

69,022

135.98

142,884

137,717

10.790

69,310

83.95

105.740

127.874

1st 124.206 59.97

110,108

47.37

18,24

77,75

12,41

108,40

1st 105,773

65.490

73 577 55 02

JI Votes JI %

88.669 44.92

48,907 28.06

49,278 28.21

39.77 AL

38.03

9.41

22.74

27.87

10.95

56.78

8 4 5

45 92

48.09

49.56

56.89

84,613 54.86 AL

57.25

27.77

10.61

49.13

7.18

66.02

35.86 JP

Election 2001

Won

AL

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3rd

2nd

1st

1st

1st

1st

1st

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1st

3rd

1st

Name of Candidate

Md.Azizur Rahman Chowdhurv

Md. Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury

Md. Abu Hena Md. Ershad Hossain AL

Maolana Abdul Hakim

Md. Abdullah Al Kafi

Adv. Md. Abdul Latif

Shah Md. Ruhul Islam

A. T. M. Azharul Islam

Md. Abu Baker Wahed

Motiur Rahman Nizami

Moulana Abdus Sobhan

Gazi Enamul Haque

Mia Golam Parwar

Gazi Nazrul Islam

Md Jashim Uddin

Dr. Farid Uddin Ahmed

Dr. Shafikur Rahmar

Abu Syed Shahadat Hossain

Maulana Gazi Abu Bakar Siddique

Mufti Maulana A. Sattar Akan

Maulana Abdul Khaleg Mondal

Allama Delwar Hossain Syedi

Fariduddin Chowdhury (Lachu)

Alhai Md. Quamruzzaman

Shah Md. Ruhul Quddus

A. M. Riasat Ali Biswas

Principal Maolana Nazrul Islan

Md. Abdul Latif

Moulana Abdul Aziz

Election 1996

JI Votes JI %

19.463 13.53

33.934 16.42

37,546 31.33

17,710 12.76

25,923

8.273

24,541

17,064

38,14

42,26

48,39

16.390

34.32

21,55

15.96

49.023

23.462

55,717

17.378

28,12

5,110

25,984

41,860 26.60

9,317

30,264

37,336 19.63

54.096 31.94

31,172 27.06

21.718 15.94

13 05

32,278 23.90 CPB(AL

21.37

14.47

16.16

29.44

17.19

23.92

23.82

16.27

28.87

16.05

9.42

28.28

22.88

36.96

16.12

7.60

24.06

3.82

seats.

24.27

5.90

14,933

JI

4th

4th

3rd

3rd

1st

3rd

3rd

3rd

3rd

3rd

2nd

3rd

3rd

3rd

3rd

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Won Positio

Party

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JP

JP

JP

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BNP

AL

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AL

AL

AL

JI

AL

JI

AL

AL

AL

47.88 BNP 2nd

AL

AL



Election 1991

JI Votes

17.288

3rd 19,965 17.98

25,425

35,598 30.59

43.989 28.49

30,154 28.69

28,806 25.84

15,515 17.52

7,676 6.94

15,854 21.06

22,732 21.71

32,337 23.39

55,707 36.85

75,586 47.31

46,854 28.38

39.119 47.31

55,124 42.89

26 211 17 96

58.369 40.51

31.631 33.10

20,350 16.72

21,830 26.17

15,207 16.79

35 205

1st 45.546 38.61

1st 45,776 48.38

4th 18,709 16,42

3rd 18,424 16.47

2nd 25,418 25.40

1st 62,897 46.20

No Candidat

17.96

34 44

JI

Positio

3rd

2nd

1st

2nd

3rd

3rd

3rd

2nd

2nd

3rd

1st

1st

2nd

1st

2nd

3rd

1st

1st

3rd

3rd

3rd

2.61% spread over the balance 81

In Sylhet division, the party got

seats alone accounted for

10.09% or 341,575 votes. Of these,

105.044 votes with the balance

spread over 16 constituencies. In

the 3 seats that accounted for a third

of JP(E) votes, none of the candi-

dates even came close to second

position, with the highest at third

is even more dismal with the party

managing only 1.90% or 181,126

votes. Out of 52 seats contested by

the party in this division, in only 3

seats (two in Brahmanbaria and one

in Noakhali) did it get more then

10,000 votes. It is interesting to note

that the higher than average votes

of JP(E) in some constituencies is

In Chittagong division, the story

position with 20.97%.

1st

3rd

Party

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CPB(AL

AL

JI

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JP

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JP

JP

JI

JI

AL

.11

AL

AL

JI

.11

JI

JI

AL

BNP

AL

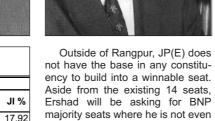
IOJ

JP

JP

JI

JI



a close second. For example, Ruhul Amin Howladar, the general secretary of JP(E) may want a seat. In the last three elections he contested Bakerganj-6. The results were: 18.77% (1991), 15.58% (1996), and 14.85% (2001). The seat is presently held by BNP against the AL

Again, if Kazi Zafar Ahmed wants his seat in Comilla-12, he will be up against Dr Md Taher of the Jamaat who won the seat in 2001 with 66% of the votes. The AL was next with 33%. The IJOF candidate got got 24.27% and the BNP 6.78%. to the total consolidation of the antiagain

If the BNP sacrifices some of their majority seats to JP(E), there will undoubtedly be rebel candidates to ensure that all these are lost. Many in the rank and file of the BNP do not accept Ershad. One must keep in mind that a major plank of BNP's politics has been its fight against the autocrat. While the BNP leadership may overlook this for the sake of political expediency, others in the party may not do so. To them, and other BNP support voters, Begum Zia will lose the high moral ground she has been trying to take. One must also keep in mind that what we see as the BNP vote of 2001 includes the votes of Jamaat and the non-party swing voters. These votes will not transfer to JP(E).

Then comes the question, what will the BNP gain? Ershad joining the Alliance does not mean the JP vote will transfer to the BNP. On the contrary, it will go to rebels, Independents, and marginally to AL. There is also the strong possibility that the JP(E) will again split. This splinter group may tie up with other BNP rebels to form their own electoral understanding.

Even in North Bengal, including Rangpur, the JP(E) is on a slipperv path. Kansat, Phulbari, and other factors have changed the electoral scene from that of 2001. While the proposed alliance of BNP and JP(E) looks a win-win situation to the leaders of the two parties, to me, it is a lose-lose situation. Not only that the JP(E) will not be able to win any seats outside Rangpur, even there the number of seats will decrease to a single figure. I do not see the party winning more than 9 seats.



nation can never be in doubt, as all actions in 1971 were taken in his name. The Awami League framed the nation's first Constitution, keeping in mind the people's aspiration as reflected in the Independence War. But the change of Constitution through the Fourth Amendment, and imposition of one-party rule in the form of Baksal in January of 1975, divided the nation. This divide would continue for the next twentyfive years.

The subsequent events and years saw mixed fortunes for the Awami League. It did take part in the presidential elections of 1978 and was mainly responsible for the 21.70% vote gathered by General MAG Osmani. It participated in the parliamentary elections of 1979. getting 39 seats with 24.55% of the votes. The return of Sheikh Hasina in 1981, and her assumption of the leadership of the party, gave AL a new impetus. It decided to withdraw from the concept of Baksal by saying it now preferred to return to a parliamentary system as prevailing before the Fourth Amendment. It took part in the presidential elections of 1981, and its candidate Dr Kamal Hossain managed 26.35% of the votes.

Its co-operation with Ershad in the elections of 1986 did not pay any dividends as the results of the 1991 elections show. However, its vote share continues to increase. As I said earlier, it has now overcome its Baksal negative image, but is yet to gain a strong positive one.

One of AL's problems so long has been that it did not have a viable electoral ally, one that could support it in an election arrangement. Its allies in 1991 could not help it, and these allies lost most of the seats they had got as their share. The present 14-Party Alliance really means nothing from a vote point of view as none of the other parties have any electoral strength. Since the anti-AL alliance is based on the theory of accumulating all anti-AL votes into one basket, the AL needs a strategy that would reverse this. So long it did not have such a possibility. Now it has been gifted this opportunity by the new BNP leadership

What I mean are the BNP dissidents who are likely to float their own platform. The Awami League may take full advantage of this. The way this is likely to work is for the dissidents led by Dr Chowdhury and Col Oli, either collectively or from separate platforms, to put up candidates in as many constituencies as they can. Say in 100 seats. They will have an understanding with the AL in some 25 to 30 core seats where

the AL will not put up any candi-

dates. This would mean the return of

the main leaders of the BNP dissi-

dent group. In the other seats, the

dissident candidates will eat onto

scenario. Greater Chittagong

district has 22 seats. In 2001, BNP,

with 53.56% of the votes won 18 and

the AL with 38.67% only 3. For all

purposes these are safe BNP seats.

Now, in a changed situation, Col Oli

Ahmed contests in five constituen-

result from that in 2001

strongholds of Greater Dhaka. For

instance, Manikganj-2 is already

lost to BNP. Manikganj-4 after the

recent by-election is precarious.

Munshiganj-4 has a BNP margin of

7.46%. Similarly Dhaka-1 (Dohar)

has a margin of 2,771 votes or

Let's look at a hypothetical

the BNP-led Alliance vote bank.



1.81%. These are said to be BNP fortresses, but the Bikalpa Dhara is already inside.

The Awami League now has a unique chance to play electoral politics. Sheikh Hasina seems to recognise this need for electoral understanding, as in her meetings with her district party leaders, she has prepared them for seat adjustments and sacrifices. It is now up to them as to how they handle this opportunity. Like all major parties, the AL has

its own problems of intra-party conflict. Fortunately for them, their voter base is more loyal as it is founded on long-time politics, and when in opposition, is likely to close ranks when it comes to voting day. Sheikh Hasina today has a historical opportunity before her. With more then half the voters dissatisfied with

political parties, she is faced with a great number of undecided voters. It is now up to her as to how she attracts them to her party. Negative policies will not work. She has to state positive positions of her party. She has to say how she will govern if again voted to power. Mere party manifestos are meaningless. As it is, voters tend not to believe political promises. She has to read the mind of the voters and understand their needs. She needs to sense the mood of the nation as her father did

exactly forty years ago. "People power" as demonstrated by Kansat, Phulbari, Demra, Mirpur, and now countless other places. means that people want to actively participate in their own destinies. This nation can no longer be governed centrally from Dhaka. Sheikh Hasina has to promise power to the people. She has to promise decenralisation and effective local government. She has to spell out how she will help the small trader and local business. She has to reach out with concrete proposals on economic policies or any other matter that affects the citizen's daily life. Though the voter will view all

political promises with scepticism, he or she is more likely to go with the opposition than the party immediately in power, for that party will be iudged more by their present performance. If the AL is able to attract even half the undecided voters, it will win the next election. If it is able to convince 55% of the undecided to vote for the party, it will win by a landslide as large as that the BNP dot last time around.

Summation

parties.

Election numbers are the most popular game at the moment. What I have tried to present is a view of the

Dr. Syed Abdulla Md. Tahe 31 292 Chittagong-14 Shahjahan Chowdhury Jamaat-e-Islami The Jamaat is an old party, reputed to be well organised. I do not know much about this party except that it opposed the Liberation War and that its aim is to see the establishment of Islamic law. Nonetheless, as long as it is a participant of the political

system, one has to accept it as a player in our democratic process. Its electoral fortunes have been chequered. It fought with other opposition parties against the Ershad dictatorship in 1989-1990 and seemed to get some reward. In 1991, it won 18 seats in Parliament with 12.43% of the popular vote. It participated in the anti-

government movement of 1995-96. However, this time around in the elections of 1996, its vote share was reduced to 8.61% and seats in Parliament to only 3. It joined BNP in an alliance in 1999, and in the elections of 2001, it was allocated 30 seats. It contested one more independently of the alliance (Ctg-14).

Table 3 shows the Jamaat seats in 2001, and votes obtained by them in those constituencies in 1991 and 1996 elections. I have held that the reputed strength of Jamaat is not based on ground reality. Between 1991 and 1996, it lost one-third of its vote base. This was a dramatic loss. My theory is that the party may have built up some cadres, but it failed to attract the general voters, particularly the newer ones who came into the voter lists in 1996. Though it won 2 new seats in 1996, it lost 17 of the 18 seats it held. In electoral terms. this was a washout, and my opinion is that, had there not been an alliance in 2001, the downward trend of Jamaat would have continued. In fact it did. Even as an Alliance partner, the performance of the party in 2001 is poor. Of the 31 seats contested by Jamaat, 10 had been held by them in 1991, of which they had lost 9 in 1996. In 2001, with the help of the BNP, they won back 8 seats. The other 8 seats held by Jamaat in 1991 were not given to them as the party was not strong enough in those seats. Of the 30 seats allocated to Jamaat, they lost 14. That is almost half the seats contested. Considering the fact the Jamaat had bargained for those seats based on their own assessment of strength, and the fact the Alliance was riding a popular wave, the party indeed cut a sorry figure. Even more surprising is the extent of their miscalculation. In 3 of the 14 seats lost. Jamaat candidates lost their deposits, getting less than 10% of the votes. In 2 other seats they got less than 25%, in 5 seats less than 30%, and in 5 more seats, below 40% The Alliance concept also did not work everywhere. A case in point was Jessore-6. In 1991. Jamaat won this seat with 47.13% votes. But in 1996 their votes came down to 16.27%. However, the combined BNP-Jamaat vote that year was 44.66%. The AL had won that seat with 35.04% of the votes.

Moulana Motiur Rahman Nizami. almost all these constituencies, the won from Pabna-1 in 1991 with 36.85% votes. In 1996, he came a distant third with 23.92% votes. That year the BNP candidate came second with 33.20% votes. The combined BNP-JI vote in that seat was 57.12%. The seat was won by AL with 41.51% of the votes. In 2001, Moulana Nizami won

with exactly 57.68% votes while the AL got 41.62%. In the next election, Moulana Nizami can win only if he has virtually the full support of all failings, the price raise of essentials,

In another example, Moulana

What I am trying to demonstrate is that the Jamaat won almost all its seats only with full support of the BNP and its sympathisers. This is going to be a crucial factor in the next election as the Jamaat is weaker then ever before, and the BNP vote may no longer be solidly with them In Table 3, we see Jamaat core vote drastically reduced. In our survey, we asked the BNP voters if (IJOF). In the elections of 2001, this they would vote for a Jamaat or a Front halved its vote share to 7.25% JP(F) candidate as a part of the and only 14 seats. Let us look at Alliance, 43% said no. Of the group Table 4. For the purpose of this that said no, 93% said they would article we will presume that all the like to see BNP contest on its own. votes of the IJOF are that of JP(E). While this is a mere opinion at the time of the survey, consider some lakh votes or 16.23%. But in 2001, other facts. Since 1996, the Jamaat the party got only 40.38 lakh votes has been absent from the electoral or 7.25%. This was at a time when process in 269 constituencies. This 133 lakh new voters had come on is an absence of ten years. During the electoral rolls. Of the 40.38 lakh this period there have been a vasi votes that JP(E) got in 2001, number of new voters on the rolls. Greater Rangpur accounted for More than half the voters in the next 16.45 lakhs, which was more then elections have never seen a Jamaat 40% of its total votes. Rangpur also candidate accounts for 13 of the 14 seats won. As any student of constituency The other seat is in Dinajpur, where politics will tell you, a party cannot it got 15.48% of the votes. In the rest build up a vote base if it does not of Rajshahi division with 39 seats contest in the particular seat. It is the JP(E) vote share was a mere illogical to think that just because the Jamaat has been in government, and has been able to give JP(E) votes accounted for only some of its supporters some bene-4.65%. In Khulna division with 37 fits, its vote base will have increased. On the contrary, its participation government has hurt the party. Jamaat sympathisers will ask where the Jamaat politics is, and what the party gains from being in the Alliance with the BNP. A large section of its support base feels that the party is deviating from its core seats accounted for 374,716 votes, objective, i.e. the formation of an leaving 439,123 votes or about Islamic state. This base has moved to the far right and has manifested itself in different forms such as the JMB. Again, the association of some Jamaat cadres with active militancy has alienated the traditional BNP support base and they will show this dissatisfaction through the ballot. There is a myth about the Jamaat. Its public posture is one of supreme confidence. It is trying to pressure its Alliance partner BNP to give it more seats in the next election. The current BNP leadership are political novices and are stuck with the 2001 electoral numbers. However, the reality is different. The Jamaat has virtually nothing to give to the BNP. If the BNP accedes to the Jamaat demands for new seats there surely will be rebel BNP candidates in those constituencies, resulting in a loss to the Alliance.

who voted for him in the last election. As a member of the government, he has to share blame for its power crisis, etc. It would be difficult for him to overcome such odds.

Abdus Sobhan won Pabna-5 in 1991 with 47.31% of the votes. In 1996, he dropped to third with 19.63% votes. The seat was won by BNP with 41.10% votes. In 2001 this safe BNP seat was gifted to Moulana Sobhan and he won it with 56.78% of the votes. The AL was second with 41.13% of the votes. Moulana Sobhan faces the same scenario

Jamaat MPs have concentrated on their own party, thus alienating the local BNP leadership, who have also been denied a share of the booty. This difference is now out in the open and in the national media. It will be next to impossible for the BNP leadership to control this. It is

my belief that, in all likelihood, we will not see a Jamaat presence in the next Parliament. At best it can expect a maximum of 3 seats.

Jatiya Party (Ershad)

Jatiya Party was born in betrayal. It was founded by a man who betrayed his oath to uphold and honour the Constitution of the country. It was, and is, manned by people who betrayed their own parties at a time when their parties needed them the most. The party has no politics except to be in power and share booty.

It won two rigged elections in 1986 and 1988, but was ultimately forced out in 1990 through a popular movement. In spite of all this, it did get about 12% of the vote and 35 seats in the election of 1991. It joined the movement against the BNP government in 1995-96. It was rewarded with a larger vote share in 16.23% of the votes, but its seat share fell to 31. aracter, the Jativa True to its o

In 1996, the party received 69.54

due to the personality of the candidate rather than support for the party. A different candidate would not pull the same number of votes. Consider other facts. Of the 281

seats contested by JP(E), it got 3% or less in 149 and lost its deposit in over 200. It only managed to get above 30% in 20 seats of which 17 were in Greater Rangpur. The question that now begs to be asked is how can JP(E) benefit any electoral alliance? Its vote base is on the decline and is concentrated in one

with a margin of 9.7%.

0.29%. Kazi Zafar won this seat in 1991 with 35.78% of the votes. Jamaat's Dr Taher was second with 25.40% (AL got 24.58% and BNP 9.69%). In 1996, he lost to the AL (46.49%) getting only 21% of the votes. The same Jamaat candidate The Jamaat victory in 2001 was due AL vote which is unlikely to repeat

It was expected that in 2001, it would be a safe Alliance seat. Unfortunately, a BNP rebel contested and the AL retained this seat with 45.01% vote. The BNP rebel got 44.88% votes while the Jamaat candidate got only 8.45%.

Another case in point is Moulavibazar-2. The Jamaat did not contest this seat in 1991. In 1996 the party got 3.82% of the votes. The seat was won by the AL with 39.35% of the votes. The BNP came third with 23.43% votes. In 2001, inexplicably this seat was given to Jamaat. Its candidate got only 7.18% of the votes, while a rebel BNP candidate won as an Independent with 45.50% of the votes.

Even Jamaat stalwarts are not on sure wickets. The Ameer,

At present the Jamaat hold 17 seats. Over the last five years, the local Jamaat MPs and the local BNP party have distanced themselves. In

Party joined the BNP-led Alliance in district. In 2001, it failed to attract the new voters. It is illogical to expect it 1999, only to leave it in 2001. This to do so in the next election. Then led to a break in the party. The Jatiya Party (Ershad), as it has now why is the BNP so keen to have it in became, formed its own group, the Alliance? I personally fail to calling it the "Islami Jatio Oiko Front" understand it.

The only explanation I have is that the present BNP leadership are getting their sums wrong. Then again, maybe I am making a mistake. So, let's take another look. What is the profile of the JP voter? He or she is a person not happy with either the BNP or the AL. They want another choice.

But the JP voter by inclination is opposition biased as they have been against different governments for the last 15 years. This time around it is no different. Their dissatisfaction will not be so much against the AL for their misgovernance the last time around, as much as it will be against the present government's lack of governance. Incumbency, power crisis, raise in prices of essentials, etc will bother them as much as anyone else not in In the rest of Bangladesh, the government. If that is the case, what s the scenario?

General Ershad must be having seats, the party got 2.88% or a great laugh. He is calling the shots 213,742 votes. In Barishal division for agreeing to join the BNP-led with 23 seats, it got 6.85% or alliance. He will ask for 40 to 50 221,714 votes. Of this, 114,502 seats. From where will the BNP give were in 4 constituencies (49,109 was in one seat where MR Talukdar him the seats? In North Bengal, lost to Sheikh Hasina). In Dhaka there will be a direct clash with the division with 90 seats, the party got Jamaat. Of the 30 seats allocated to 4.78% or 823,839 votes. Of this, 9 JI, 12 are in Rangpur and Dinajpur. Of the 17 seats held by Jamaat, 4 are in these districts.

Others (Parties and Independents)

Normally, "others" are a reducing species, coming down from 34.29% in 1979 to 5.59% in 2001. I do not see any change in the next election. Small parties like JP (Manju) will align with the AL for a few seats. There will be a lot of Independents and fringe religious parties, but I do not think they will have any impact on the main game, except to hurt the BNP to some extent.

Awami League

The Awami League is largest of the political parties. Though founded in 1949, its re-birth was in 1966 under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who became the party's president. He then presented his Six Point Formula for the autonomy of East Pakistan. This became the central principle of subsequent movements that finally led to the War of Independence and the birth of Bangladesh

That Bangabandhu Sheikh 2.95% and Dhaka-2 (Nawabganj) Mujibur Rahman is the father of this has a margin of 2,544 votes or

Table 4 JP (E) Votes & Seats in the Elections of 2001

					/									
Division	Total Seats	JP(E) Votes	JP(E) %	Seat Contested	Seat Won	Below 3%	Between 3 to 5%	Between 5 to 7%	Between 7 to 10%	Between 10 to 15%		Between 20 to 25%	Between 25 to 30%	Above 30%
Rajshahi	72	2,256,457	15.10	70	14	25	7	2	5	3	2	5	3	18
Dinajpur	11	354,323	15.48	11	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	0	1
Rangpur	22	1,645,624	38.36	22	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	17
Others District of Rajshahi Division	39	256,501	3.06	37	0	25	6	1	3	1	0	1	0	0
Khulna	37	213,742	2.88	35	0	21	7	3	2	2	0	0	0	0
Barishal	23	221,714	6.85	22	0	7	3	3	5	2	1	0	0	1
Dhaka	90	823,839	4.78	82	0	51	8	5	2	7	4	1	3	1
Mymensingh	12	238,737	11.44	12	0	3	2	1	1	1	1	0	3	0
Others District of Dhaka Division	78	585,102	4.18	70	0	48	6	4	1	6	3	1	0	1
Sylhet	19	341,575	10.09	19	0	3	2	3	1	7	1	2	0	0
Chittagong	59	181,126	1.90	53	0	42	6	1	3	0	1	0	0	0
Total	300	4,038,453	7.25	281	14	149	33	17	18	21	9	8	6	20

of 40%. How much is a 7% vote overall situation based mainly on swing?

you have the answer.

numbers.

presented

If among all your friends, rela-

tions, colleagues, and other people

you meet, you find 10 persons who

voted for the BNP Alliance, and of

them, one (10%) says that he or she

will not do so next time, you have an

outward swing for the BNP of 4.7%

of the total votes (10% of 47%). You

can do the same exercise for the AL.

You will come up with interesting

Politics is not static. Every day

will bring in a new issue, a changed

circumstance. However, if the

elections are held as per the sched-

ule, and all the major political parties

take part, I do not see a different

eventual outcome from that I have

factual numbers based on past It means that of 47 voters out of elections and my own perception of every hundred who voted for the the present situation. We have examined the strengths and weak-Alliance, just 7 persons (which is nesses of the different parties. We roughly 15% of 47) will not vote for it have seen the regional vote patnext time. Readers can now do their terns. We have looked at the new realities and changed equations. own sums. Do you think that every Based on all these factors I have single person who voted for the BNP indicated my opinion on the probaalliance will again vote for it again? ble performances of the different Will the millions of new voters vote for it in the same proportion? There

cies. He wins in his own seats of To summarise, there are two Chandanaish (Ctg-13) and ways of looking at the possible Satkania (Ctg-14) with AL help. He results. The first is based on the also contests BNP held Patiya (Ctgsurvey. If we accept that there are 12) where the BNP margin is 8,286, about 53% voters undecided, the Ctg-11 (BNP margin 16,664), and question comes as to which direc-Ctg-9 (BNP margin 19,721) and tion they will eventually move. The diverts a part of the BNP vote. survey shows the AL with about 23% Considering that the margins in of the vote and the possible BNP question are less then 10% of the Alliance (BNP+JI+JP(E)) with 21%. votes cast, and combined with other It is the nature of election swings factors mentioned earlier, those that the undecided (in this case the seats could easily be won by the AL. dissatisfied) vote will be divided in This exercise, repeated in all the 22 similar proportions. However, one seats would likely see the reverse has to factor in the anti-incumbency element, in which case the balance The same scenario could work will tilt in favour of the opposition. with Dr Chowdhury in the BNP

If the AL gets even just 52%, and "others" 2% of the undecided votes it leaves BNP with 46%. A spread of 6% between the BNP Alliance and the AL would be a conservative estimate under the present circumstances. This means a grand total of 51% for the AL and 45% for the BNP Alliance, and 4% for "others." In this scenario, the AL could theoretically win 300 seats. While the prospect of AL and partners getting close to 50% is a possibility, the actual seats

they would win would be around

on the results of the 2001 elections.

In every election a party gets a

certain vote share. As the political

process of a nation consolidates,

the major parties get the major

these parties will lead major alli-

The other way of looking is based

220-plus.

For me personally, I see an outward swing from the BNP Alliance of around 8%. This will take the AL and their electoral partners to

close to 48% of the votes Under these circumstances, I do not see the Greater BNP Alliance (with JI & JP(E)) getting more than

share of the votes. Over the last 80 seats in the next Parliament. The three elections, we have seen the AL share will be around 180 seats vote share of BNP and AL consolidate from 61% to 87%. As both with about 40 seats going to AL allies, "others," and Independents. ances in the next election, it is safe

more than 90%. The vote swing is represented by the change of vote Parliament and GS-DUCSU during the 11-point by a voter in one election to another movement, is an independent election analyst.

party in the next election. Since 90% of the people are likely to vote for one or the other

to assume their vote share will be Nazim Kamran Choudhury, former Member of