

4 former ministers likely to face tough fight in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Nominations of four former BNP ministers as Four-party Alliance candidates for Tangail-2, 3, 4 and 6 constituencies are almost confirmed. But they will have to face a tough challenge from Awami League (AL) candidates in the seats. They defeated their strong AL contenders with a little margin in the last election in 2001.

Krishak Sramik Janata League president Abdul Kader Siddiqui Bir Uttam contested from five seats (Tangail-1, 2, 3, 4). There are eight constituencies in Tangail. Kader Siddiqui's own constituency was Tangail-8 (Basail-Sakhipur) during the 2001 election. Earlier, Kader Siddiqui was expelled from AL in 1999. After expulsion, he resigned from parliament and formed his own party Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) and vowed to defeat AL candidates.

BNP leader Abdus Salam Pintu was elected a lawmaker from Tangail-2 (Gopalpur-Bhuapur) constituency by defeating AL candidate Khondokar Asaduzzaman in the last general election in 2001.

Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) leader Abdul Kader Siddiqui Bir Uttam became third in the election.

After takeover of 4-party Alliance

government, Abdus Salam Pintu became the Deputy Minister for Education. Later, he became the Deputy Minister for Industry and Deputy Minister for Information.

BNP leader Lutfar Rahman Khan Azad was elected a lawmaker for third consecutive period from Tangail-3 (Ghatail) constituency defeating AL candidate Shamsur Rahman Sahjahan in the 2001 election.

Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) leader Abdul Kader Siddiqui Bir Uttam secured third position getting 6,964 votes.

Lutfar Rahman Khan Azad was appointed the State Minister for NGO Affairs after takeover of governance by 4-party Alliance. Afterwards, he became the State Minister for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment.

BNP senior leader Shajahan Siraj was elected a lawmaker from Tangail-4 (Kalihati) constituency defeating AL candidate Abdul Latif Siddiqui in the last election in 2001.

Krishak Sramik Janata League leader Abdul Kader Siddiqui Bir Uttam obtained third position in that election.

Afterwards, Shajahan Siraj became the Minister for Environment and Forest. Later, he was made the Minister for Jute and Textiles.

BNP leader Goutam Chakrabarty

was elected a lawmaker from Tangail-6 (Nagarpur) constituency defeating AL candidate Khondokar Abdul Baten in the last election.

AL rebel candidate Golam Mohammad Khan Tarek obtained third position in the election contesting as an independent candidate. After election, Tarek died in a road accident.

Goutam Chakrabarty became the State Minister for Water Resources in the cabinet of the Alliance government.

Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) leader Kader Siddiqui Bir Uttam may not contest from Tangail-2, 3, 4 constituencies in the coming election as his party men are campaigning in the constituencies as Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) candidates.

Meanwhile, AL high command may not change the previous party candidates in Tangail-2, 3, 4, and 6 constituencies because of their experience.

Abnormal price hike of essentials, power crisis and alleged corruption of BNP ministers might be the factors behind possible defeat of BNP candidates, experienced circles said.

However, BNP leaders said they would win the election because they did development works in their areas during the Alliance rule.



Shajahan Siraj Lutfar Rahman Khan Gautam Chakrabarty Abdus Salam Pintu

Nitai Roy 'persona non grata' in Magura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Intra-party feud in Magura BNP took a new turn yesterday following announcement of its central leader Advocate Nitai Roy Choudhury persona non grata in the district.

This was declared by the rival party men from a big public meeting at Nomanai Maidan. The effigy of Nitai Roy was also burnt at the meeting.

The meeting was held under the banner of 4-party Alliance to protest killing of their three activists in Magura and an alleged attempt to foil the next general election.

District BNP joint convener Advocate Mokaddes Hossain was in the chair.

Speakers vowed to resist Nitai Roy if he is renominated from Magura-1 constituency in the next election.

They alleged that Nitai does not hail from Magura Sadar and Sreepur upazilas of Magura-1 constituency.

They said last year his nomination frustrated the BNP supporters in the area. Moreover, he was defeated by Awami League (AL) candidate MS Akbar, they said.

District BNP convener and former lawmaker of Magura-2 constituency Quazi Saleemul Huq Kamal was present at the meeting as chief guest while Zia Parishad

chairman Kabir Murad and District Jamaat-e-Islam amir Mowlana Abdul Matin were present as special guests.

In his address, Quazi Kamal called upon the party supporters to get united to win election in both the constituencies.

Among others, District BNP joint conveners Nazimuddin Ahmed and Akter Hossain, Magura Poursabha chairman Abdul Gafur, District BNP leaders Monwar Hossain Khan, Iqbal Aker Khan Kafur, Mohammad Ali, Sreepur upazila BNP leader Badrul Alam Hero, District Jamaat general secretary Mowlana Liakat Ali, municipality general secretary of BNP Khan Hasan Imam Suja, former JCD central leader Monwar Hossain Khan, District Jubo Dal president Alamgir Hossain and its general secretary Khan Aminur Rahman Piku addressed.

Despite repeated attempts, Nitai Roy could not be reached for his comments.

District BNP has been dogged by internal feud for months together, party insiders said. The party is now divided into two factions. One faction is being led by its convener and former lawmaker Quazi Saleemul Huq Kamal and its joint-convener Akter Hossain. Most of the party leaders and activists are supporting this faction.

Another faction is being led by

Nitai Roy Choudhury and District BNP former general secretary Ali Ahmed Biswas.

Intra-party feud in the party became public when two rival factions brought out separate processions and held discussions separately to mark the party's founding anniversary on September 1.

Meanwhile, 12 BNP aspirants from Magura-1 constituency, in a joint press conference on September 12, said all of them would seek nomination.

However, they vowed they would work jointly for any party nominee but Nitai Roy.

The leaders central Zia Parishad chairman Kabir Murad, former central leader of Jatiyotabadi Chattra Dal Monwar Hossain Khan, former chairman of Magura municipality Iqbal Aker Khan, Brigadier General (Rtd.) Masudur Rahman Khan, retired engineer Kamal Uddin Mostofa, former general secretary of district BNP Ahmed Hossain, former president of sadar upazila BNP Kazi Abdul Aala (Aala), district BNP joint secretary Nazimuddin Ahmed, two other joint-secretaries of the same unit BNP Advocate Mokaddes Hossain, and Akter Hossain, district BNP leaders Mohammad Ali and M.A. Ahad Liton.

3-day Ras mela begins in Kuakata

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The 150 year-old Ras Mela, the biggest festival of the Hindu community in the southwestern region began at Kuakata beach here on Saturday. Several thousand Hindus thronged here to celebrate the festivities. People of other religions also joined them on the occasion.

The three-day festivity began with a dip in the sea by the devotees at dawn after full moon. Devotees believe that all their sins are washed away with seawater.

A fair is also held at Dubler Char in the Sundarbans to mark the occasion. Kuakata sea beach is now full of tourists. Thousands of tourists from home and abroad flocked here to enjoy the festivities.

All hotels, motels and tourist lodges are now jam packed with visitors. The administration has taken adequate security measures by deploying large contingents of police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in all strategic points of the tourist zone.

But, this time the hotel owners increased rent. They are charging Tk 200 to 300 for a single bed room and Tk 500 to 700 for a double bed room.

PBCP leader killed in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

A regional leader of the outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) was slaughtered to death by his rivals after abduction from his house in Kamarkhanda upazila Friday night.

The victim is Helal Uddin, 42, of Jhaoil village in the same upazila. He was an accused of 10 criminal cases including two murders and four robberies, police said.

Police and local sources said a gang of miscreants numbering 12, wearing black dresses and identifying themselves as members of Rab, entered into the house of Helal Uddin at about 11.30pm. They picked him up from the house and took him to Rashulpur where they slaughtered him by sharp weapons. The miscreants left body beside the Dhaka-Uttaranchal Highway.

Being informed, police rushed to the spot and recovered the body and sent it to Sirajganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Helal might have been killed by his rivals following internal feud, police said.

8 arrested on charge of looting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Eight people were arrested here yesterday on charge of looting money and goods worth over half a crore taka from three business establishments in Saidpur town recently.

At that time, Awami League led 14-party Combine enforced a road blockade programme.

The arrested are Ziaul Haque, 35, Rabiul Islam, 35, Mokhlesur Rahman, 40, Abul Kalam, 35, Anwar, 30, Amizur, 35, and two others.

They were remanded for five days at Saidpur Police Station. Police also recovered some looted goods from their possession.

2-day Kathin Chibar Dan concludes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A two-day festival of Kathin Chibar Dan concluded here Saturday with due religious fervour.

The programmes included sewing of chibar (clothes of Buddhist monks), handing over of chibar, Buddha puja, Sangadan (collective donation), pradip puja (lighting candles) and religious speeches.

Principal Ven Chandramoni Mohasthabir of Janabul Buddha Bihar and founder of Alutilla Nava Datu Chaitta Vihar inaugurated the festival.

While addressing, he stressed on mutual trust among Bengali and hill people for maintaining peace and harmony in the region.

Over 200 priests from three hill districts of Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachhari took part in the two-day programme organised by Alutilla Nava Datu Chaitta Vihar committee. About 10,000 male, female and child devotees attended the programme.

Among others, Marma King Pahala Pru Chowdhury, Ven. Sumolakar Mohatharo, president parbatya Buddha Mission (PBM) and Prof Dr Jinabodhi Mohasthero of Chittagong University addressed.

Tourists from home and abroad also thronged the venue.

12 newcomers out to elbow out elderly politicians in Nilphamari



(Top) Mahfuzur Rahman, Aminul Islam Sarkar, Col (Retd) Saqlain, Abdus Sattar, Shamsuzzaman Shamu and Kamrul Islam (Down) Barrister Moksudul Islam, Abu Inamdar, Jafar Siddiquee, Sikandar Ali, Dr. Asadur Rahman and Shamsuzzaman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

At least 12 new faces are seen active in the election fray in the district this year.

They are retired civil and military officers, technocrats, businessmen and industrialists. They are involved in election related activities in four constituencies of the district.

The new entrants pose a real threat to elderly politicians in the district.

They are out to woo voters through various means. Their multi-coloured posters have flooded the walls of the towns. They are holding roadside rallies, visiting from door to door of voters even donating money to individuals as well as various religious, social and educational institutions. They are using money, muscle power and their high level connection to impress the voters. All the activities are aimed at winning nominations from the major political parties.

Of the new entrants, two are technocrats, one is bureaucrat, one is retired military officer, one is retired police officer, one is retired

university vice chancellor, one is former diplomat, one is barrister, three are businessmen and one is industrialist.

Six of them are seeking nomination from Awami League. They are Colonel (Retd) Maruf Saqlain (Nilphamari-4), former ambassador Aminul Islam Sarkar (Nilphamari-1), retired technocrat Abu Inamdar (Nilphamari-1), retired technocrat Sekandar Ali (Nilphamari-4), barrister Moksudul Islam (Nilphamari-4) and Kamrul Islam (Nilphamari-3).

Three of them seek nomination from BNP. They are incumbent Public Service Commission (PSC) member Mahfuzur Rahman (Nilphamari-4), ready made garments businessman Shamsuzzaman Zaman (Nilphamari-2) and Greater Rangpur Exporters and Importers Association convener Shamsuzzaman Shamu (Nilphamari-3).

Three of them seek nomination from Jatiya Party (JP). They are former Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) assistant commissioner Abdus Sattar (Nilphamari-2), retired Bangladesh Agricultural University vice chancellor (VC) Dr Ashadur Rahman (Nilphamari-4) and industrialist Jafar Siddiquee

(Nilphamari-1).

Previously, politically ambitious candidates preferred to join either BNP or Jatiya Party (JP). But from the 1996 parliamentary elections, Awami League (AL) is also welcoming them. The candidates prefer to join major popular parties because they have a good chance to win elections from these parties. They are least bothered about political ideology.

Sources in BNP, AL and JP said dedicated party leaders and workers do not easily accept these candidates as they are yet to prove their sincerity. Still they create their own position within the party.

People have mixed reaction about the politically ambitious personalities. A group of people believe these candidates keep themselves away from general people after winning election because they have no public connection.

Another group is of the opinion they are most advanced section of society. So, they can render good service to people.

While exchanging views with journalists at Nilphamari Circuit House, PSC member Mahfuzur

Rahman, who is seeking nomination from BNP from Nilphamari-4 constituency said he would resign from his official position once he gets nomination from the party. He claimed to have a high level connection in the government. Once elected, it will be easier for him to get recommendation or grant for development work in his area.

On contact, former diplomat Aminul Islam Sarkar who is a nomination seeker from Awami League from Nilphamari-1 constituency said the immediate past lawmaker failed miserably to meet people's expectations in his constituency. So, he is seeking party nomination following request from local party leaders and workers.

When asked to comment, elderly politician and former National Awami Party (Bhasani) president Babu Nalini Kanta Roy said the newcomers entered politics with a high political ambition when elderly politicians failed to meet people's hopes and aspirations by changing colour and joining parties most often.

5,000 Khagrachhari BNP men join LDP

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Over 5,000 BNP leaders and activists joined the newly floated Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) at a simple function held here yesterday.

The prominent BNP leaders included Mohalchhari Upazila BNP president Anup Mohazon, Dighinala Upazila BNP president Zafar Ahamed Chowdhury, Tabalchhari BNP president and Taindong Union Parishad (UP) chairman Fazlul Huq, Barnal UP chairman Akber Ali, Goumti UP chairman Harun-Or Rashid and ex-Matiranga Upazila Parishad chairman Abul Kashem.

A meeting was held to mark the occasion which was presided by Matiranga Pourashava chairman Upazila BNP president Nasir Uddin.

While narrating the plight of people during 4-party Alliance rule, speakers said 20 activists of different political parties were killed, 21

women lost chastity, 14 journalists were tortured, 121 BNP leaders harassed for protesting party lawmaker Wadud Bhuiyan's corrupt practices, 5,000 Awami League leaders were driven away from homes. About 300 false cases were filed by the lawmaker and his aides against them in last five years.

They said BNP could not fulfil even one of its election pledges, rather its lawmaker prosperous by misappropriating crores of taka from various projects during its tenure.

On the occasion, about 1,000 people of eight upazilas formally handed over 'Kula', election symbol

of LDP to Nasir Uddin. After the meeting, thousands of people brought out a procession in Matiranga upazila town. Processionists paraded the main streets of the town chanting slogans against BNP and urging people to vote for LDP in the ensuing election.



PHOTO: STAR

A female devotee donating money at Alutilla Nava Datu Chaitta Vihar in Khagrachhari on the occasion of Kathin Chibar Dan.

8x3

Property worth Tk 50 lakh was gutted in a devastating fire in Jaldhaka upazila on Saturday, traders said.

Five people were also injured when a big crowd thronged the spot to extinguish the fire.

Fire brigade sources said the fire originated from short circuit at a stationary shop. It engulfed 14 other stationary shops in the bazaar.

Because of lack of a fire station at Jaldhaka, it took a long time to reach fire fighters from Nilphamari, about 24 km away from the spot resulting in much loss.

BDR and police allegedly resisted a big crowd who came to extinguish the fire. At that time, Section 144 was in force in the area following Jamaat-Awami League clash on Sunday.

However, ignoring the barrier, people extended their helping hands to extinguish the fire.

Businessmen alleged they incurred bigger loss due to the barrier.

Local people suspected it to be and act of criminals who wanted to loot the bazaar taking advantage of unstable political situation in the area.