

## SECOND DAY OF 14-PARTY BLOCKADE

## AL factions stage separate programmes in Shyamnagar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Two rival factions of Shyamnagar upazila Awami League (AL) brought out separate processions and held rallies yesterday and the day before to enforce the 14-party's blockade, widening the rift in the party and its front organisations there.

The party is virtually divided over nomination for the coming election Shyamnagar (Sathkira-5 constituency).

Shyamnagar upazila AL president Jaglul Haider and general secretary Abdul Kader are leading a group. The other faction is led by former lawmaker AK Fazlul Haque and Upazila Chairman Shafiqul Azam Lenin.

The faction belonging to Jaglul Haider erected a 'janatar mancha' (people's dais) at Babla Tala in the

town yesterday from where they held a rally and conducted the blockade programme. They brought out separate processions yesterday and the day before.

With Jaglul Haider in the chair, it addressed by, among others, Anwar Hossain, Abdul Kader, Khalilullah, Zafrul Haque Babu, Anisuzzaman, Mahbub-e-Elahi, Golam Mostafa and Asim Joardar.

The speakers alleged that former lawmaker Fazlul Haque, who was denied party nomination in last election for his alleged corruption, is now dividing the party to get party ticket.

They alleged that the 'dissident leaders' are acting against the party and weaken it organisationally ahead of next election and vowed to resist them.

The other group led by AK Fazlul Haque also brought out processions

in last days from the upazila AL office at Bangabandhu Market in the town and paraded the main thoroughfares in support of the blockade program.

They held a rally on party office premises with Sadar union AL president Akbar Kabir in the chair. It was addressed by, among others, former lawmaker AK Fazlul Haque, Shafiqul Azam Lenin, advocate Ataur Rahman, SM Abdus Sattar, Abul Hossain, Durgapada Chakraborty and Monzur Elahi.

They alleged that Jaglul Haider and Abdul Kader were 'purchased' by industrialist Khalilullah Jhharu, who resides at Sathkira town and is an aspirant for AL ticket from the constituency in the coming election. They have divided the party at his instigation so that he gets the ticket, they alleged.

Former lawmaker AK Fazlul

Haque claimed that most of AL's dedicated leaders and activists oppose possible candidature of Jhharu, branding him a 'seasonal bird' as he did not take part in any activity during the anti-government agitation in last five years. They also vowed to resist him.

On contact, both Khalil Ullah Jhharu and AK Fazlul Haque refuted the allegations and accused the each other for the rift in the party.

The rift that has spread to the party rank and file in Shyamnagar has shattered AL's hope to regain the seat from the Jamaat-e-Islam, said Sathkira district AL president Engineer Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Jamaat won the seat in 2001 election.

He also urged the party men to mend the differences over nomination.

## Factional clashes mark blockade in Gournadi

20 AL activists injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least 20 people including two police men were injured in clashes between the two rival faction of Awami League in Gournadi centring the 14-party alliance's blockade program yesterday.

Witnesses said two rival factions of Gournadi upazila AL led by Razu Ahmed Harun and Santosh Kumar Banik brought out separate processions in the upazila headquarters. Clashes ensued as activists in one procession tried to overtake the other at Gournadi bus-stand on Barisal-Dhaka highway.

The clashes spread to other areas, creating panic in the small town. People ran for shelter and shopkeepers downed shutters as rival activists staged chase and counter-chase for hours.

As party leaders there informed

AL stalwart and former chief whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah in Dhaka, he directed them to stop the violence and put up demonstrations together. Abul Hasnat is Barisal district AL secretary.

The rival factions then brought out a joint procession at about 2-30 pm, but sources there said tension prevailed when the report was filed in the evening.

Local businessmen associations condemning the clashes demanded action by the local administration to maintain law and order.

Gournadi police station Officer in-charge Mannan Sarkar, when contacted, said the situation is under controlled and police have been deployed at Gournadi bus-stand, Bandar and other sensitive areas.



STAR FILE PHOTO

This photo of Arghya, holding the identity card of his slain father Judge Jagannath Pandey, was taken on November 14 last year when he was two. Now he is three years old, still hoping his father will return.

## Jhalakati judges' killing day today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Today is the first death anniversary of two judges who were killed by a suicide squad of the outlawed Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) at Jhalakati on this day last year.

The judges are Shahid Sohel Ahmed and Jagadish Pandey.

To mark the day, family members, relatives, colleagues of the deceased and bar associations in Barisal, Jhalakati and Bhola have chalked out various programmes.

The programmes include discussions besides Quran Khawani, milad mahfil, offering prayers and placing wreaths at the grave of Judge Shahid Sohel Ahmed in Bhola.

Arrangements for performing rituals at the cremation ground of Judge Jagadish Pandey in Barisal. Earlier, Jhalakati Additional

District Judge Court, in a verdict pronounced on May 29, sentenced 7 JMB leaders to death.

They are Shaekh Abdur Rahman, Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai, Ataur Rahman Sunny, Abdul Awal, Khalid Saifulah, Iftekhar Hassan Al Mamun and absconding Asadul Islam Arif for the killings.

The High Court confirmed the death sentence in a verdict on August 30. The Supreme Court is now examining the leave to appeal petitions filed by the convicts.

Shahid Sohel's widow Farhana Kanta, also an officer of Dhaka University and their family members demanded immediate execution of the verdict.

Jagadish Pandey's widow Pallabi Pandey Rita, also a bank official and their family members expressed disappointment over delay in execution of the verdict.

## Gangni BNP leader bombed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A BNP leader was killed when some unidentified criminals hurled two bombs on him at Fatehpur in Gangni upazila in Meherpur Sunday night.

Siddiqur Rahman alias Kana Siddiq, 40, vice-president of Gangni Pouro unit of BNP, came under the attack when he came out of a mosque in the village after prayer at about 10:30 pm, police said.

The bombs blew away his left leg from knee and right arm. He died while being taken to Kushtia General Hospital.

Police arrested one Gaziur Rahman, Siddiqur neighbour, as a suspect in the incident. A case was filed with Gangni police station.

## Rejoinder

Jamalpur BNP leader Mostafizur Rahman Babul has contradicted a report published in The Daily Star on page six on November 12, which said he may join the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) led by Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury if he does not get party ticket from Jamalpur Sadar constituency in the coming election. He said he will remain in BNP whether he gets nomination or not. In the rejoinder he also claimed that BNP chief Khaleda Zia during her recent visit to Jamalpur publicly announced his nomination from the constituency.

Our Reply: Our story is based on local LDP sources.



PHOTO: STAR

Fourteen-party activists on Mohanagar Express after stopping the Dhaka-bound inter-city train at Brahmanbaria railway station to enforce their countrywide blockade yesterday.

## KUSHTIA-4 CONSTITUENCY

## BNP rift widens as party men demand 'new face' in polls race

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

The intra-party feud in BNP in Kushtia-4 (Khoksa-Kumarkhali) constituency has taken a new turn as a large number of party leaders

and activists have urged the party high command to nominate a 'new face' instead of the immediate past lawmaker from there.

On Sunday, the leaders at a rally held at Kumarkhali municipal market



Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rumi

ground termed immediate past lawmaker Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rumi a 'failed public representative and urged the party high command not to nominate him again in the interest of the party and to retain its victory in the coming election.

With Kumarkhali municipal BNP vice-president Abdul Kader Biswas in the chair, the rally was addressed by, among others, Kumarkhali Pouro BNP president and municipal chairman Nurul Islam Ansar Pramanik and upazila BNP joint secretary and chairman of Sadaki Union Parishad (UP) Lutfor Rahman.

"It will be very hard for him (Mehedi) to win the coming polls because he is detached from party activists and supporters and none trusts him as he did nothing for them," Nurul Islam Ansar told at the meeting.

Ansar also expressed his desire to run in next election from the constituency if nominated.

According to party sources, BNP in Kumarkhali is divided into two factions—one led by Nurul Islam Ansar and the other by party's Kumarkhali unit president Anwar Hossain Bakul. Bakul is loyal to Mehedi Rumi.

The rival factions are holding meetings and rallies to show their strength and are engaged in mud-slinging against each other, sources said.

When contacted, Ansar alleged that Mehedi did not materialise any commitment he made before the 2001 election and has become unpopular, he claimed.

Ansar urged the party high-ups to nominate a 'new face' to retain the seat as the 4-party alliance will have a strong rival candidate.

Mehedi Rumi refuted all the allegations. "Party high-ups know who is competent. The 4-party government implemented many development projects in my constituency so people must vote me", he told this correspondent when contacted.

Mehedi was elected twice from Kushtia-4. He defeated Awami League candidates Abdul Hossain in 1996 and Sultana Tarun 2001.

## Move to shift polling centre protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A proposal to shift a polling centre in Mirzapur upazila inhabited by Hindus has created resentment among the voters as well as the 14-party leaders.

Local administration proposed shifting of the polling centre in (Tangail-7) constituency from Barodam Government Primary School to Chaleksshar High School, about 5 kilometre away from the original centre. Bad communication and security problem were shown as reasons for its shifting.

Mirzapur upazila Awami League (AL) president and former lawmaker Ekabbar Hossain said the move was taken as part of 'election engineering mechanism' by the administration.

The Barodam centre was set up in 1973. Since then, the Hindu voters of Barodam and Shewratol villages exercised their franchise in the previous elections.

They expressed their dismay saying they will have to go to the proposed centre to cast votes passing a 5-kilometre path crossing the Bongshai River.

On contact, Mirzapur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Khondokar Mahbubur Rahaman said they were not at all aware about existence of the Hindu voters before placing the proposal. "The proposal for shifting the centre will be changed", he said.

## 'Establish rights of Harijans'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Speakers at a discussion held here yesterday stressed on the need for establishment of constitutional rights of the Harijans, a lower cast of the Hindu community.

The discussion titled, 'Role of Media in Establishing Rights of Harijon Community,' was jointly organised by Fair, an NGO, Matir Dak, a local daily newspaper and Advocacy Group, working for establishment of rights of the Harijon community.

Advocacy Group president Nazrul Islam was in the chair while former lawmaker Advocate Bodruddoza Gama was present as chief guest. Islamic University teacher Prof Dr Rashid Askari and Kushtia Press Club president M.A Razzak were present as special guests.

Among others, The Daily Star Correspondent Amanur Aman, Weekly Kushtia Barta Editor Khadimul Islam, Daily Manabjamine Reporter Hasan Jahid and Aker Kagoj Correspondent Advocate Rajib Ahsan Ranju addressed.

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