

FIRST DAY OF 4-PARTY PROGRAMME

BNP factions hold rallies in Patuakhali, Khulna

Nitai Roy's group boycotts rally by rivals in Magura

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Rival factions of 4-party alliance yesterday held separate programmes in Patuakhali and Khulna to protest the nationwide blockade enforced by the 14-party alliance.

In Magura, a BNP faction led by former minister Nitai Roy Chowdhury refrained from staging any programme while their rivals led by district BNP convener and former lawmaker Quazi Saleemul Huq Kamal held a rally and brought out procession in the town as part of its countrywide programme.

In Patuakhali, one faction of BNP is led by former commerce minister and district BNP president Altaf Hossain and the other led by its secretary Snehansu Sarker Kuttia and municipality chairman Moshtaq Ahmed.

Altaf's faction started its procession from New Market after holding a rally there and paraded the town streets, our correspondent reported.

With Altaf Hossain in the chair, the rally was addressed by, among others, BNP leaders MA Rob, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Fakhruddin Khan Razi and Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) leader Abdur Razzak Kawsari.

The other faction held its rally on

the old court complex ground. A procession brought out after the rally terminated at the PDSA ground. The rally was addressed by, among others, Snehansu Sarker Kuttia, Moshtaq Ahmed, Shahjahan Khan, Delwar Hossain, Monirul Alam Swapan, Alamgir Hossain Bachchu, Bashir Uddin Miridha and JCD leader Gazi Ashfaqur Rahman Biplob.

Both Altaf Hossain and Moshtaq Ahmed are seeking four-party alliance nomination from Patuakhali-1 (Sadar, Mirzagonj and Dumki upazilas) constituency in the coming parliamentary election, party sources said.

Earlier on the day, leaders belonging to Mostaq's faction at a press conference held at the party office alleged that Altaf Hossain Chowdhury is harassing party leaders and activists by filing 'false' cases.

They claimed that a case was filed with Patuakhali Sadar thana at the behest of Altaf Hossain accusing 81 people, 40 of whom are party leaders and activists.

In Khulna, two factions of BNP held two separate rallies under the banner of four-party alliance as part of its central programme, reports our staff correspondent.

The faction led by former lawmaker Nurul Islam held its rally in front of party office at K D Ghose

road at 11-30am.

Presided over by Nurul Islam, the rally was addressed by, among others, former lawmaker Shaikh Mujibur Rahman, district BNP general secretary advocate Shafiqul Alam Mona, former general secretary of city BNP Nazrul Islam Manju, Golam Mowla, Jubo Dal leader Shafiqul Islam Tuhin and Chhatra Dal leader Arifuzzaman Apu.

The faction led by city BNP convener and former lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi held its rally at 4 PM at Royal Hotel square.

Presided over by senior BNP leader Molla Sirajul Islam, it was addressed by, among others, Khulna city Jamaat Ameer Abdul Matin, its secretary Abul Kalam Azad and some BNP leaders. Lobi and Khulna city Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman who belongs to his faction did not attend the rally.

Speakers at the rallies accused their rivals for the division in the party and expressed their determination to foil any 'conspiracy' by the 14-party alliance against holding of the next general elections in a free and fair manner.

Later, both factions brought out separate processions in the city.

In Magura, though the intra-party feud in BNP was reportedly buried

temporarily after takeover by the caretaker government, the faction backed by Nitai Roy Chowdhury did not join yesterday's meeting and procession.

Talking to this correspondent, former general secretary of district BNP Ali Ahmed Biswas, close aide to Nitai Roy, said, "Party leaders and activists could not attend the programme as they were not invited or noticed".

When contacted, joint-convener of district BNP Akter Hossain refuted Ali's allegation. "The programme was settled following the directive of central high command after a meeting at party-office. So, there is no question to invite anybody individually", he said.

"Actually, they are showing apathy to attend party programmes only to serve the purposes of 14-party alliance and to weaken the 4-party alliance", Akter alleged.

Akter's faction, after parading the main thoroughfares of the town, held a rally at Chourongi Square in advocate Sakhawat Hossain in the chair.

It was addressed by, among others, Nazimuddin Ahmed, Abdul Gafur, Alamgir Hossain and Mowlana Abdul Matin.

The district BNP has been dogged by internal feud for long, party insiders said.

Effigy of CEC Aziz 'hanged', brunt in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Fourteen-party activists yesterday 'hanged' and burnt an effigy of Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz, protesting his obstinate stand not to step down in the face of 'people's demand'.

The mock hanging took place at the Mukta Mancha (open dais) in the district town amid demonstrations on the third of ongoing countrywide blocked by the 14-party to press its 11-point demand for holding a free and fair election.

The 14-party brought out processions in the town and held a rally where speakers criticised the CEC and demanded his immediate resignation.

District Awami League Secretary Zahedul Alam led the procession and presided over the rally. No untoward incident took place in the town during the programme.

No election officers in 5 Khagrachhari upazilas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Election-related activities are being hampered in five upazila election offices due to absence of election officers, said Sadar upazila election officer Nurul Hasan Bhuiyan who is also the acting district election officer.

Five stenotypists are now running the election offices in Panchhari, Mohalchhari, Manikchhari, Ramgour and Dighinaia upazilas.

Two full-fledged election officers are working in Sadar and Matrangra upazilas, district election office (DEO) sources said.

8 injured in fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Property worth Tk 10 lakh was gutted in a devastating fire at Niz Sundor Khata village in Dimla upazila Monday night.

Eight people were injured. Of them, Laily Begum, wife of Zakirul Islam, was admitted to Dimla Upazila Health Complex in a critical condition. Later, she was shifted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Local people said the fire originated from a kerosene lamp.

Because of lack of fire station at Dimla, fire fighters took a long time to reach the spot from Nilphamari, 60 kilometre away from the spot.



The 14-party brought out a procession in Netrakona town yesterday, the third day of its countrywide blockade, to press its 11-point demand including resignation of CEC MA Aziz.

BJP leaders' somersault for ticket?

Former lawmaker from Satkhira-4 joins Jamaat 'secretly'

ABU AHMED, Satkhira

The BNP rank and file in Satkhira-4 (Kaligonj-Debhata) constituency are 'determined' not to accept any nominee other than a party leader in coming election as former 4-party alliance lawmaker and BJP (Nazir) leader Kazi Alauddin has joined Jamaat-e-Islami 'secretly' to ensure alliance ticket.

Alauddin's reported joining Jamaat has triggered strong resentment in both BNP and BJP, sources in the parties told this correspondent yesterday.

Talking to this correspondent, Satkhira district Jamaat publicity secretary Altaf Hossain claimed that Kazi Alauddin has left BJP and joined Jamaat and that Jamaat high-ups are lobbying for alliance ticket for him.

"There is a possibility that he will contest in the coming election as a Jamaat man", he claimed.

Satkhira district BJP president Principal Tamiz Uddin, when contacted, said, "We have heard the news of Alauddin's joining Jamaat. This has sparked a strong resentment among party leaders and activists here".

Kaligonj upazila BNP convener Prof Khoda Baksh said, BJP leader Alauddin's joining Jamaat did not surprise him because during his



Kazi Alauddin

tenure he ignored local BNP men and favoured Jamaat men in implementing development projects.

Alauddin faced criticism from both BNP and BJP for his 'extra affection' for Jamaat rather than his own party and BNP, Khoda Baksh said.

Dr. Shahidul Alam, a senior leader of district BNP and central vice-president of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), said, "As BJP has no organisation in the constituency so the party will not be a factor for BNP in coming election".

Dr. Shahidul Alam sought alliance nomination from Satkhira-4 constituency in 2001 election but was denied. He will seek nomination again this time, he told this correspondent.

Industrialist Golam Rasul Suman is also lobbying for 4-party alliance



Dr. Shahidul Alam

ticket from the constituency. He has also started mass contact and is holding rallies. He also opposed Kazi Alauddin, sources said.

Both Khoda Baksh and Golam Rasul however declined to make any comment if the 4-party alliance nominates Alauddin again.

BJP central leader Kazi Alauddin won the Satkhira-4 seat defeating Awami League candidate Dr. Ruhul Haque by a big margin only 2001 votes.

When asked, Alauddin remained mum about joining Jamaat.

Alliance leader Khaleida Zia will decide nomination, he said.

But he declined to make any comment if the alliance does not nominate him.

BSF kills one

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Bangladeshi cattle trader was killed by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in Bhaigar border under Birampur upazila yesterday morning, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) officials and villagers said.

The dead is Khetabur Rahman 22, son of Lutfar Rahman of Kulumkheta village in Birampur upazila.

BDR officials said BSF personnel killed the victim on the spot firing at least 3 gun shots as they saw him standing near Pillar No 291/26 of Bhaigar border in the morning.

BSF dragged the body into Indian territory and did not return the body till filing of the report yesterday afternoon.

On contact, Lt Col Nurul Alam of 15, Rifles Battalion said they had sent a protest letter to BSF urging immediate return of the body.

Four land ports idle in Satkhira, Dinajpur

STAR NATIONAL DESK

The import and export activities at three land ports in greater Dinajpur and one land port in Satkhira district remained stopped for the last three days following continuous blockade programme enforced by the Awami League (AL)-led 14-party combine.

Our Dinajpur Correspondent reports: Import and export through Hili, Biral and Banglabandha ports in greater Dinajpur district came to a halt since Saturday, according to C & F agent and land port customs officials.

The ports wore a deserted a look. At least, 200 trucks carrying perishable goods remained stranded on both sides of the ports.

Immigration activities were also suspended during the period. Most of the Indian immigrants were stranded at Hili port. They are undergoing untold sufferings, Immigration sources said.

Our Satkhira Correspondent reports: Import-Export activities were halted at Bhomra Land Port in Sadar upazila since Sunday.

As a result, the government is incurring a huge loss of revenue.

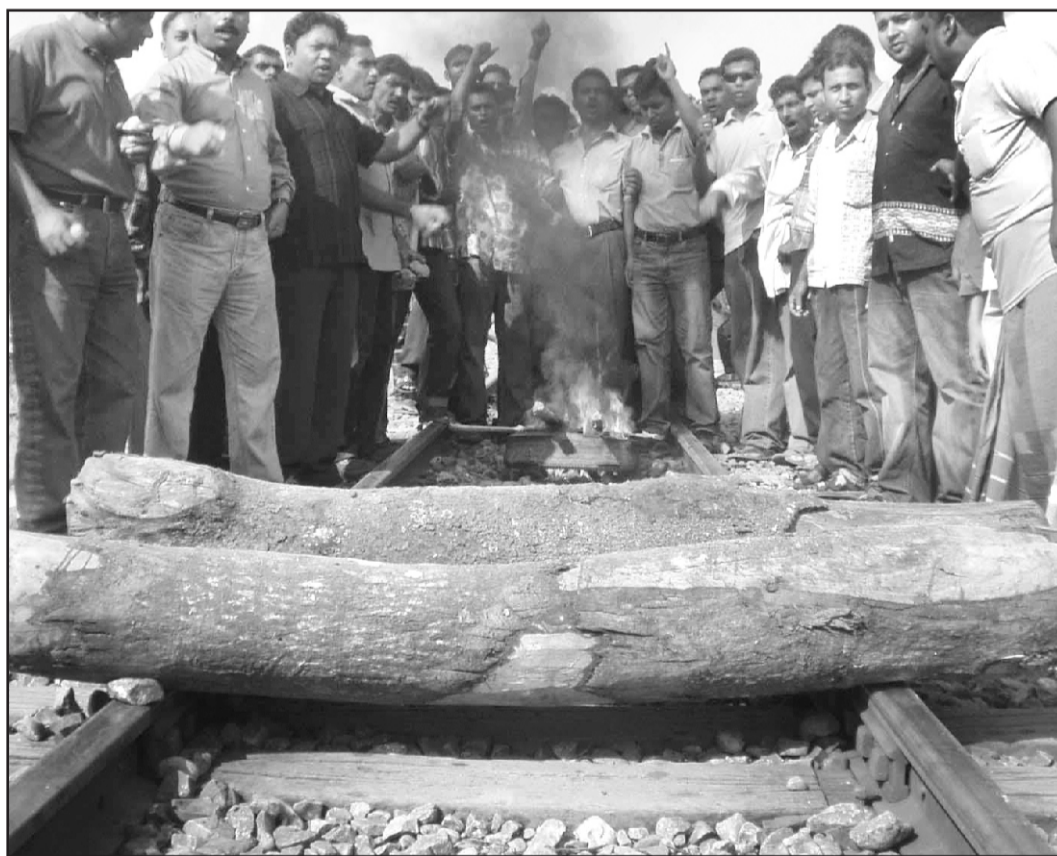
At least, 3 Indian trucks carrying goods entered into the port on Sunday but the imported goods were piled up at the port due to lack of transportation.

A number of trucks carrying goods were stuck at Ghojadanga Land Port in Basirhat thana in North 24 Parganas in West Bengalisince Sunday.

Satkhira Chamber of Commerce and Industries president Sheikh Azhar Hossain said the traders will incur heavy loss due to damage of perishable goods.

Many Indian visitors were also stranded at Bhomra port.

9X2



14-party activists burn tires and place logs on track in Sylhet to obstruct train movement yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

9X3

4X3