

PCJSS mulls fielding candidates in CHT

Lawmakers of major parties failed to realise rights of hill people, top leaders claim

SANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rangamati

The Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), a political forum of indigenous communities in CHT, may field party candidates in CHT in coming election.

The decision has been taken after several meetings where PCJSS leaders alleged that lawmakers from the area belonging to major political parties failed to fulfil people's aspirations, several top leaders of the party told this correspondent.

"PCJSS will not support any Dewan or Talukder in coming polls", said a top leader seeking anonymity.

"PCJSS will nominate its own candidate. We may support any political party after negotiation and firm commitment on full implementation of the CHT peace accord", he said.

"Our (PCJSS) candidates may be a candidate of 16-party combine including AL led 14-party and newly floated Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), he said, adding the 9th parliamentary election will be crucial for CHT.

The PCJSS leaders said personalities like Dewan and Talukder represented CHT in different forums including parliament for long but they did 'nothing' for its people.

"Rather, they acted as government's brokers at different times and became benefitted. They failed to bring any change in CHT or remove the political unrest created by years of neglect and deprivation."

"Misunderstanding and discrimination still grips both indigenous and Bengalee people and so conflict

sensus at a recent party meeting, they said but declined to disclose his name.

The nomination will be announced at a press conference in 15-20 days, they said.

"I do not see any problem in announcing the party candidate as the caretaker government has already taken over", one of them said.

In Bandarban and Khagrachhari, PCJSS may think of supporting other parties' men on the basis of negotiation and firm commitments. We have also candidates in the two constituencies, he added.

"We feel that PCJSS has to be represented in parliament for full implementation of the CHT peace accord", he said.

"Our (PCJSS) candidates may be a candidate of 16-party combine including AL led 14-party and newly floated Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), he said, adding the 9th parliamentary election will be crucial for CHT.

The PCJSS leaders said personalities like Dewan and Talukder represented CHT in different forums including parliament for long but they did 'nothing' for its people.

"Rather, they acted as government's brokers at different times and became benefitted. They failed to bring any change in CHT or remove the political unrest created by years of neglect and deprivation."

"Misunderstanding and discrimination still grips both indigenous and Bengalee people and so conflict

persists and peace is disrupted", he said.

Honest and dedicated young political leaders should come to the political limelight. There are many such young leaders like Shaktiman Chakma and Goutam Kumar Chakma, they said.

Given a chance, such young, educated and dedicated leaders will try their best to change life of backward hill people, particularly the ethnic minorities and ensure their rights, they observed.

Now CHT people want new leaders to lead them for sustainable peace in the region and amity between Bengalee and indigenous people, they said.

The PCJSS becomes a major factor for big parties like Awami League and BNP when election comes but they forget their pledges once elected, they said.

Political observers said, the AL-led 14-party combine would face a 'difficult situation' in fielding candidates in Rangamati and Khagrachhari constituencies in the coming election if PCJSS turns away from it.

CHT is known as citadel of AL but now the situation has changed, they said.

PCJSS supported AL in 1996 when as it (AL) assured steps for sustainable peace in the hills. But once in power, AL did not execute the peace accord fully, PCJSS leaders said.

AL had to pay heavily for this in 2001 election when it lost the two

seats (Rangamati and Khagrachhari) as PCJSS did not provide support. It won only in Bandarban constituency.

In last election, Dipankar Talukder, who won twice from Rangamati constituency earlier, was defeated by four-party alliance candidate Moni Swapan. In Khagrachhari, BNP leader defeated AL's Kalpa Ranjan Chakma.

AL's Bir Bahadur won from Bandarban constituency in last election.

The 4-party alliance will face a crisis of suitable candidate if PCJSS fields its own candidate because Moni Swapan Dewan has joined the newly floated Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) led by Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury, the observers claimed.

United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), another forum of indigenous people in CHT which opposes the CHT peace accord, recently announced that it would field candidates in Khagrachhari and Rangamati constituencies in the coming election.

After a meeting with civil society members in Khagrachhari, UPDF declared its chief Prasad Bikash Khisa as nominee in Khagrachhari.

In 2001 election, Prasad Bikash ran in Rangamati and Khagrachhari constituencies and got 14,285 votes and 20,232 votes respectively.

3 bombs go off on PSTU campus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Three bombs were blasted on the Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) campus at Dumki yesterday.

Some unidentified youths blasted the bombs, Dumki police and university sources said.

One of the bombs blasted in front of the university academic building while the other one blasted in front of Shahid Zia Hall.

Additional police forces have been deployed on the campus after the incident.

A three-member probe committee led by Prof Akkas Ali has been formed to investigate the incidents. The probe body was asked to submit report within three days of its formation, said PSTU vice-chancellor (VC) Prof Dr Abdul Latif Masum.

Gaibandha BNP factions hold programmes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Intra-party feud in Gaibandha BNP intensified as two separate processions were brought out in the town yesterday.

The processions were brought out as part of a country-wide party programme to condemn anarchy created by the 14-party combine in name of blockade programme.

Two separate rallies were held on the occasion. One rally was held at Gaibandha Shaheed Minar. It was presided by Hamidul Huq Chhana, president of BNP district committee.

Another faction of BNP held a separate meeting on the premises of district BNP office. It was presided by Shaikh Samand Azad, convener of 4-party Alliance, Gaibandha.

Jamaat-e-Islami, however, joined the rally of the faction led by Hamidul Huq Chhana.

Handover of 8 instts to CHT Council protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Parbatya Chattagram Somo Odhikar Andolan (SOA), a platform of Bengali settlers, yesterday brought out a procession in the town and held a rally in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office protesting the decision taken by CHT Affairs Advisor to hand over eight government institutions and departments to Rangamati Hill District Council (RHDC) as per the CHT peace agreement.

The eight institutions and departments include Nursing Institute, Primary Training Institute (PTI), Vocational Institute and Secondary Education. The rest were not known immediately.

SOA also submitted a memorandum to the President and Chief Advisor of caretaker government through Rangamati Deputy Commissioner demanding cancellation of handover process.

Somo Odhikar leaders at the rally also urged the CA to stop the handover and said SOA would resist the process at any cost.

The speakers included Somo Odhikar central president Mostak Ahmed and secretary Md. Jahangir Kamal, Baghaichhari upazila SOA president Selimuddin Bahari, Longudu upazila SOA president Tafazzel Ahmed, its secretary Sarder Ahmed Ali Master and Shahid Chowdhury.

They demanded scrapping of the CHT peace accord and removal of PCJSS chief Santu Larma from the post of chairman of CHT Regional Council.

The leaders called a down to dusk hartal on Wednesday (November 22) in Rangamati and threatened of tougher agitation if the demands are not met by Tuesday.

13 injured in AL-BNP clash in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

At least 13 people were injured yesterday in BNP-Awami League (AL) clashes in two separate incidents occurred at Manikchhari Bazaar in Manikchhari upazila and Nenchi Bazaar in Sadar upazila.

Police and locals said, at least 10 activists of both the parties were injured when a group of AL activists attacked the BNP activists while they were pasting posters on walls at Manikchhari bazaar.

In the other incident, three people were injured in an attack by AL activists at Nenchi Bazaar when they were returning homes from marketing, locals said.



As winter is approaching, guest birds have started arriving in Tanguar Haor in Sumanganj district.

PHOTO: STAR

350 BNP, Shibir men join AL in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

About 350 leaders and activists of BNP and Islami Chhatra Shibir, student front of Jamaat-e-Islami, have joined Awami League in Kalaroa and Tala upazilas.

They left their parties protesting alleged corruption and failure of the immediate past four-party alliance government, they told joining ceremonies.

In Kalaroa, 125 activists of BNP and its front organisations led by Kerkalkata union BNP leader and Union Parishad (UP) member Ainal Hossain joined AL on Friday at a

simple function held on the upazila AL office premises.

Kalaroa upazila AL convener Sajedur Rahman Khan Chowdhury welcomed them in the party.

On November 15, 150 leaders and activists BNP, its student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Shibir led by upazila JCD organising secretary Ruhul Quddus joined AL and its front organisations at the local AL office.

In Tala upazila, 120 BNP leaders and activists led by upazila BNP leader Masud Biswas joined AL on November 8 at a simple function held at the local AL office. District AL

president Engineer Sheikh Mujibur Rahman welcomed them in the party, saying it proved that the BNP-Jamaat government did not do anything for the area.

At the joining ceremonies, the newcomers said misrule and corruption by the BNP-Jamaat government increased sufferings of the people.

They alleged that immediate past BNP lawmaker Habibur Islam Habib did little development in Satkhira-1 (Tala-Kalaroa) constituency during his tenure. He (Habib) used them as tools and shattered the party image by sheltered terrorists and criminals, they alleged.

Sundarbans Textile GM assaulted by workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Agitated workers of Sundarbans Textile Mills here attacked and ransacked the general manager's (GM) office and assaulted him allegedly in presence of a magistrate Saturday night.

Police said the workers entered the office of GM Mozaffar Hossain at about 7 pm demanding payment of three months' unpaid salaries and allowances. They also demanded stoppage of a move to recruit 400 new workers until payment of their arrears. As he turned down their demands, workers got agitated, ransacked his office and assaulted him.

Mill workers said about 829 staff and workers are deprived of salaries and allowances for the last three months. They were not paid for doing overtime work since July. About 300 workers work in the mill on 'No Work No Pay' basis, they said.

The workers brought out processions around the mill and held rallies in front of mill gate for about a month, but the authorities did not pay heed to their demands.

Every month, the mill is incurring heavy loss as production is being hampered due to shortage of workers.

On contact, GM Mozaffar Hossain confirmed the incident of attack on his office, but said the workers did not assault him. He said that action would be taken against the culprits after getting order of the higher authorities.

FIVE-POINT DEMAND RU employees begin 5-day agitation

RU CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred officials and employees under the banner of Rajshahi University (RU) Officers and Karmochari Oikyo Parishad yesterday staged a sit-in demonstration in front of the administrative building.

They started the demonstration as part of their five-day work abstention programme demanding immediate realisation of their five-point demand.

All the university activities came to a halt during the demonstration which will continue till November 23.

The major demands are extension of service age from 60 to 65, regularisation of jobs of 31 officials recruited in 2001 and cancellation of a decision to cut 20 percent of pension money.

A rally was also held during the demonstration. Speakers announced continuation of their programme until realisation of the demands.

Oikyo Parishad president Dr Mirza Wazed Hossain Beg and members Shahazada Mia, Ayub Ali and Mukul addressed the rally.

Teachers and students expressed solidarity with the agitators and urged the university authorities to fulfil their demands.



Journalists brought out a procession in Mymensingh town and formed a human chain in front of local press yesterday demanding punishment of terrorists who attacked their colleagues in Fulbari in the district during processional work on Thursday.

PHOTO: STAR

BNP rift widens over ticket from Khulna-2, 3

Lobi faction demands nomination for Tayebur Rahman from Khulna-3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna district and city units of four-party alliance have demanded nomination of Khulna City Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman from Khulna-3 (Khalishpur-Daulatpur) constituency instead of former Whip Ashraf Hossain.

The demand was made at a meeting of four-party alliance liaison committee held Sunday night at the Mayor Bhaban in Khulna city.

Presided over by City Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman, the meeting was attended by leaders of BNP, Jamaat and Islami Oikyo Jote.

None from the BNP faction led by former lawmaker Nurul Islam attended the meeting.

The meeting unanimously resolved that BNP high command would be requested in

writing to nominate Mayor Tayebur Rahman to contest in the next national elections from Khulna-3 seat of Jatiya Sangsad.

On the other hand, former Whip Ashraf Hossain has claimed that the high command gave him assurance about nomination from Khulna-3 constituency.

"Accordingly, I started mass contact and party workers' meeting from Saturday in Khulna-3 constituency from where people elected me twice", he said.

The two factions of Khulna BNP are again on collision course over nominations from Khulna-2 and Khulna-3 constituencies, party sources said.

Ashraf Hossain is being favoured by Nurul Islam faction while Ali Asgar Lobi faction favours city Mayor Tayebur

Rahman so far as nomination from Khulna-3 is concerned, they said.

On the other hand, former general secretary of Khulna city BNP Nazrul Islam Manju said that he has got indication from party high command about getting nomination from Khulna-2 constituency.

"We will never support any non-political person like Lobi even if he gets nomination from Khulna-2", Manju said.

Former law maker Ali Asgar Lobi said he will abide by any decision of party high command as regards nomination from Khulna-2.

"But how an immature chap like Manju can dream of becoming a lawmaker without support of majority of party leaders and workers?" Lobi said.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The Rangamati unit of newly floated Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) led by dissident BNP leader Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury and Col. (rd) Oli Ahmed will stage a show-down in Rangamati on November 23 and hold a public meeting on Old Court Building ground at Reserve Bazaar in the hill town.

All preparations are going for the programmes, likely to be joined by a large number of political leaders and activists and members of the civil society members, LDP sources said here yesterday.

LDP Executive President Col



Moni Swapan Dewan

(rd) Oli Ahmed, its secretary general Maj (rd) Abdul Mannan and party leader from Rangamati Moni

Swapan Dewan will be address the rally, they said.

BNP leader and former deputy minister for CHT Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan joined LDP recently.

Meanwhile, the district BNP has declared that it will resist the show-down by Moni Swapan as he 'betrayed' with 4-party alliance.

Asked about this, Moni Swapan brushing aside the threat and said, "I don't bother any obstacle by BNP".

"I am not involved with any terrorist group or Mafia network. I have joined a progressive political party", he told this correspondent yesterday.

SEQUEL TO SATURDAY'S FACTIONAL CLASH

Kishoreganj JCD declares BNP secretary 'unwanted' in district

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Kishoreganj district Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) general secretary at a press conference here yesterday declared local BNP

A tense situation prevails in the town as several rival BNP factions brought out processions chanting slogans against each other after Sunday's clash.

Sumon alleged at the press conference that the BNP secretary

president and former BNP lawmaker Masud Hilali.

Both Hilali and Robbani seek nomination in the coming election, sources said.

At one stage, some people attacked the meeting, leaving



Waliullah Rabbani

secretary Waliullah Rabbani 'unwanted' in the district. "We will resist him in the district", Abdullah Al Masud Sumon told newsmen.

Sumon was among 12 party men injured in an attack on a meeting of former education minister and district BNP president Dr M Osman Faruk Saturday evening, allegedly made by supporters of Kishoreganj district BNP secretary Waliullah Rabbani.

Sumon read out a written statement at the press conference, describing the attack.

Shumon said, Emdad Ullah, Waji Ullah, Niamat Ullah and Foyjullah are brothers of Waliullah Rabbani, who led a gang of at least 50 people in the attack on JCD leaders, leaving 12 injured.



Rejaul Karim Khan Chunnun

with his brothers have made Kishoreganj town "their den as all the brothers were involved in toll collection and land grabbing". They are also accused in several cases for murder and extortion.

Injured JCD sports secretary Shohel Rana, its district leaders Babar, Babul, Shajahan, Toshar and Sadar upazila JCD vice-president Rajan were present at the press conference.

On Saturday in the evening, a BNP meeting was held on the compound of Islamiya Chhatrabash (hostel) in the town with Dr Osman Faruk in the chair.

At the meeting, Osman Faurk dissolve Kishoreganj Sadar BNP committee, which was opposed by Sadar upazila BNP



Masud Hilali

12 JCD activists injured. Dr Osman's Faruk was escorted to safety by police and his followers, sources said.

The trouble ensued as Dr Osman Faruk tried to make former judge Rejaul Karim Khan Chunnun convener of Sadar BNP with a motive to seek nomination for him from the Sadar constituency, the sources said.

Chunnun joined the party on October 7 at a function attended by party chief Khalada Zia in the town, which was arranged by Dr. Osman Faruk, they said.

Masud Hilali at a press conference on November 10 declared himself a candidate from the Sadar constituency and vowed to resist any other candidate.