

AL factions hold programmes in Satkhira, Rangpur

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Awami League factions held separate programmes yesterday in Shyamnagar in Satkhira and in Rangpur town, defying a central instruction to enforce the country-wide blockade under the banner of 14-party alliance.

The intra-party feud in Shyamnagar Awami League (AL) over nomination from Satkhira-5 constituency intensified further as two factions of the party brought out separate processions and held rallies to enforce blockade yesterday and the day before, our Satkhira correspondent reported.

Shyamnagar upazila AL is divided into two groups over party ticket. One faction led by local party president Jaglul Haider and general secretary Abdul Kader supports candidature of Khailullah Jharu of Satkhira town. Nomination aspirant Satkhira district AL leader and former MP AK Fazlul Haque and local leaders Union Parishad chairmen Asim Kumar Mridha and Shafiqul Azam Lenin and upazila

Krishak League president Mujibul Haque oppose Khailullah Jharu, branding him an 'outsider and seasonal bird'.

Jaglul Haider's faction held its rally at Babla Talai in the upazila town.

Chaired by Jaglul Haider, the rally was addressed by, among others, Anwar Hossain, Abdul Kader, Khailullah, Zafrul Haque Babu, Anisuzzaman, Mahbube Elahi, Golam Mostafa, and Asim Joardar.

They alleged that Fazlul Haque who was denied party nomination in last election for his alleged corruption is now dividing the party to serve his interest. They vowed to resist them.

The other group led by Fazlul Haque brought out a procession from the upazila AL office at Bangabandhu Market in Shyamnagar town and held a rally on party office premises with Sadar union AL president Akbar Kabir in the chair.

It was addressed by, among others, Fazlul Haque, Shafiqul Azam Lenin, Ataur Rahman, SM Abdus

Sattar, Abul Hossain, Durgapada Chakraborty and Monzur Elahi.

They alleged that upazila AL president Jaglul Haider and general secretary Abdul Kader are dividing the party by bringing 'outsider' Khailullah Jharu to contest election from the seat.

Knowing well that people of the upazila will not accept an outsider, the local AL president and the secretary are supporting Jharu only for their petty interest, said former MPAK Fazlul Haque.

"Their activities have shattered our hopes to regain the seat from Jamaat", he said.

In Rangpur, one faction of Awami League led by Abul Monsur Ahmed and Rezaul Kabir Raju held its programme near the court compound. The other faction led by AL central committee member Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhontu and local leader Mosaddeq Hossain Bablu held its rally on the Station Road in the town under the banner of 14-party alliance, our correspondent reported.

Party sources said the Abul

Monsur faction has been holding separate programmes since launching of the current spate of agitation.

Some party men belonging to the faction told this correspondent that they are holding separate programmes protesting selection of JSD leader Ekramul Haque as local co-ordinator of 14-party alliance. They said, the post of co-ordinator should have gone to AL as it is the biggest party.

AL has no district committee for long allegedly due to intra-party feud. Last month, party central

leaders Suranjit Sengupta, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Mahmud Rahman Manna, Abdul Mannan and Tipu Munshi came to Rangpur to form a committee in a council but it could not be formed due to clashes in between two factions. Rangpur district AL committee was dissolved by the central committee earlier.

No clue to Ashuganj 5 murders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Police could not trace any clue to Monday's murder of five people of a family at Charchartala village in Ashuganj.

Officer-in-Charge of Ashuganj police station Md Aminul Islam Sarkar said yesterday that it was a planned incident. "Those were clod-blooded murders done by engaging professional killers", he said.

At the time of the murders, owner of the house Haji Rafique Islam along with his wife and son-in-law were in Madraj, India for treatment.

Local people said Rafique Islam is president of local Automatic Rice Mill Owner's Association and a fertiliser dealer. His elder son Md Sajib is working in Italy.

All other member of Rafique's the six-member family were brutally killed by miscreants.

Autopsy of the bodies were done at Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital.

Any case could not be filed as the house owner is yet to return home, police said.

LDP's Moni Swapan declares candidature from Rangamati

Former deputy minister for CHT affairs says he was never called in any policy meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

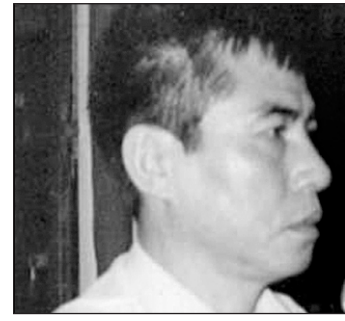
Former deputy minister for CHT affairs Moni Swapan Dewan yesterday declared that he would contest from Rangamati constituency as a candidate of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the coming election.

He left BNP and joined LDP as its Presidium member recently.

A convening committee of Rangamati district LDP will be formed within days, he told a press conference at his house in the hill town.

He said the planned LDP showdown in Rangamati on November 23 has been postponed due to the countrywide blockade. A fresh date will be announced soon after the blockade is withdrawn, Moni said.

The former deputy minister explained his plans for people of Rangamati, if elected, and criticised the immediate past BNP-Jamaat government as regards its decisions on Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).



Moni Swapan Dewan

He alleged that he was never called in any policy meeting of the government on CHT though he was deputy minister on CHT affairs for five years.

"I was a minister in name only and did not know what decisions were being made or plans taken up. At least 15 policy meetings were held", Moni said.

"Budgets involving crores of Taka were approved from the CHT

affairs ministry against various development projects without my signature.

"At the fag end of the government's tenure, Tk 19 crore was approved against development projects under CHT Development Board without approval of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, who held the ministry.

"This money was embezzled in the name of fake projects", Moni Swapan said.

Asked about leaving BNP, he said, "I had not joined 4-party by giving any commitment. Joining or leaving a party is a democratic right of a person".

Replying to questions, he said peace must be established by removing the present misunderstanding between indigenous and Bangalee people for development of the area.

Development and improving living standard of people should be the first priority, not politics, he said.

Seed crisis to slim potato cultivation in 8 N-dists

Syndicates control BADC seeds

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Scarcity of potato seeds and its high price in current peak season is affecting cultivation of the cash crop in eight northern districts of greater Rangpur and Dinajpur.

Badc seeds in the area are under the control of syndicates, sources said.

The demand for potato seeds in the eight districts is about 1.55 lakh tonnes this year, according to sources in Badc Seed Marketing Department here. Badc along with some NGOs like Brac, Proshika and Rds meet 25 to 30 per cent of the demand.

But it has supplied only 1,065 tonnes against the total demand for 1.55 lakh tonnes this season.

In Nilphamari, Badc supplied only 130 tonnes against the demand for 25,712 tonnes, Badc sources

said.

Farmers prefer Badc potato seeds because those are produced and preserved scientifically and almost disease-free.

This year, Badc decided to sell 30 per cent of its seeds directly to farmers and 70 per cent through about 300 dealers in the eight districts.

But farmers can not avail the chance because, as a condition, a farmer has to buy at least one metric ton seeds at Tk 25,000, which they can not afford.

So the potato seeds ultimately go in the hands of dealers and traders, who, in alleged league with upazila agriculture officials, have formed syndicates to control the market, the sources said.

Visiting different seeds markets in the area, this correspondent found that a 40 kg bag of Badc's A-

grade potato seeds was sold at Tk 1,600 to 1,800 against the government price of Tk 1,000 and B-grade seeds at Tk 1,300-1,400 against Tk 920.

Officials at the Regional Agriculture Extension Department in Rangpur said potato cultivating target in the eight northern districts is 1,05,190 hectares this year—16,475 in Nilphamari; 4,550 in Lalmonirhat; 4,461 in Kurigram; 6,570 hectares in Gaibandha; 32,875 in Rangpur; 11,400 in Thakurgaon; 5,500 in Panchagarh; and 23,359 hectares in Dinajpur. The production target is 16,34,652 tonnes.

November is the peak seas but due to seed crisis, potato has been sown in only 13,938 hectares so far, the sources said.

Only 14 per cent of the target has been achieved though half of the sowing season has passed.

The quantity of seeds supplied by the private sector this year is very inadequate because most farmers and traders sold their seeds preserved at cold storages because the prices were three to four times higher than in previous years. Besides, last year's massive pest attack also reduced the seed output.

Syed ali, owner of Mukta Cold Storage in Jaldhaka, said his cold storage has a capacity to preserve one lakh bags (each weighing 80 kg). Now, he has only 10,000 bags of seed potato, which was about 50,000 last year.

At Kishoreganj seeds market, a big farmer from Panialpukur village said every year he used to cultivate potato on 15 to 20 bighas. Due to seed crisis, he will sow potato only in 8 to 10 bighas this year.

When contacted, Deputy Director (DD) of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Shakhawat Hossain admitted that potato sowing target might not be achieved this year due to seed crisis.

Top outlaw killed in Pabna by rivals

A CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A regional leader of Lal Pataka faction of the outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) was killed by party rivals in a crowded bazaar at Jalalpur in Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon.

Amjad Hossain, 35, son of late Abu Jafar of Kamorpur village in Ataikula upazila was chopped to death by assailants in the crowded bazaar, locals said.

Agitated people chased the criminals and caught one of them named Dulal, 28. The attackers hurled bomb at the chasing people resulting in injuries to Abul Kalam, 25.

Several outlaws belonging to PBCP and other parties were killed in the last one month after takeover by the caretaker government.

Police and other sources said outlawed parties in Pabna, allegedly sheltered by political parties, have surfaced again. They will be used by the parties, they said.

Shibir attack on JCD protested in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday brought out a procession here protesting attack on four leaders of its Satkhira City College unit by Shibir activists on Saturday.

Over 200 JCD leaders and activists took part in the procession and paraded the main streets of the town. They chanted slogans against the attackers and demanded their arrest and punishment for assaulting college JCD vice president Ataur Rahman, Imrul and others.

Later, they held a rally in the New Market area with district

president Taskin Ahmed Chisti in the chair.

Speakers declared Shibir leader Omar Faruque 'unwanted' in the town for his alleged involvement in the attack at the college hostel.

Among others, Mukul, Shahin, Shahinuzzaman, Milon, Arzed, Samad, Kollol, Taher, Munna, Azharul, Mani and Babu addressed.

JCD leaders beat up district Jamaat ameer Mohaddes Abdul Khaleque and secretary Nurul Huda when they went to see the injured at Sadar hospital.

A case was filed with Sadar Police Station.

Barisal Biman office locked for flights

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Several hundred people under the banner of Barisal Bibhag Unnyan-O-Bastobyan Parishad, an association for development of Barisal division, yesterday locked the Biman office here demanding resumption of its Dhaka-Barisal flights.

They also formed a human chain and held a protest rally around the Biman office. Unnyan Parishad president Golam Mawla presided the rally.

Speakers demanded resumption of Biman flights by Saturday, otherwise they threatened a greater agitation if their demand is not fulfilled within the deadline.

When contacted, Biman station manager ATMG Mustafa said the flights were closed by its authorities on November 16.



After locking Biman office, Barisal Bibhag Unnyan Parishad formed a human chain on its premises yesterday demanding resumption of Dhaka-Barisal flights.

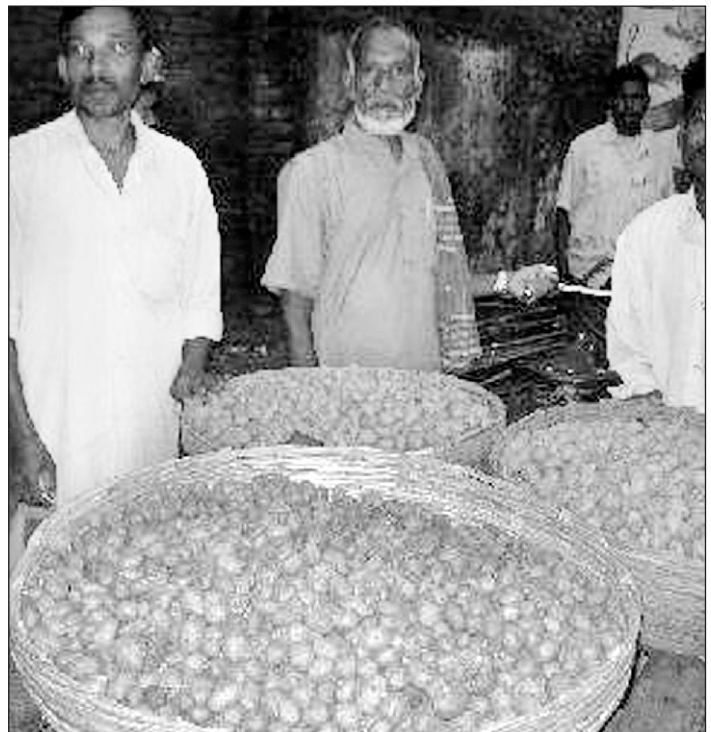


PHOTO: STAR

Bewildered farmers at Dhelapir Hat in Saidpur bargaining with traders to buy potato seeds.

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