

ROW OVER NOMINATION FROM KUSHTIA-2 CONSTITUENCY

BNP-Jamaat difference widens in Kushtia

AMANUR AMAN, From Kushtia

The row between BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami over nomination from Kushtia-2 (Mirpur-Bheramara) constituency has widened the difference between the two allies as Jamaat is demanding ticket for a party man from the area in the coming election.

The difference between the two allies may lead to an end of 'absolute control' of BNP in the district for long, political analysts said.

They said Jamaat is 'determined' to capture at least one Jatiya Sangsad seat out of four in the district. Their prime target is Kushtia-2, claiming that alleged irregularities by immediate past BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam and a section of his party men have earned displeasure of people. This may be bad for the two parties in three other constituencies, they said.

Incidents of attack and threat of journalists, allegedly by Shahidul's men in recent past, are topics of discussion in political circles in Kushtia.

Cashing in on BNP's situation in the area and 'good organisational network', Jamaat is now demanding alliance ticket for a party man there, the analysts said.



Shahidul Islam



Abdul Wahid

Jamaat leaders there claimed that BNP's victory in the last election was mainly due to a large number of Jamaat votes. "Most party leaders and activists demand a party nominee this time and are unwilling to work for BNP leader Shahidul Islam", a front ranking Jamaat leader in Kushtia told this correspondent.

Shahidul, president of Kushtia district BNP, was elected from the constituency in last three consecutive elections including the February 15 polls in 1996.

"Jamaat has demanded Kushtia-2 seat because of repeated pressure of its leaders,

activists and supporters," said Kushtia Jamaat Ameer Abdul Wahid, also a nomination aspirant.

Shahidul's irregularities and alleged sheltering musclemen tarnished image of the four-party alliance and this was discussed at Jamaat's party meetings at all levels, he claimed. "They raised voices against him", he added.

Sources also claimed that a good number of Jamaat supporters did not vote for Shahidul in 2001 election and they will not vote for him in the coming election also even if he is nominated.

Political analysts said that in the coming polls, alliance candidate,

whether from BNP or Jamaat, will have a tough fight even if he polls all votes of BNP and Jamaat because BNP's Shahidul won the seat in last election with a small margin.

In 1996 election, BNP candidate Shahidul got 33 per cent of total 1,94,740 votes while Awami League's Mahbul Alam Hanif got 14.66 per cent, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal's (JSD) Hasanul Haq Inu 13.52 per cent and Jatiya Party's (JP) Ahsan Habib Linkon got 20.59 per cent. Jamaat Amir Abdul Wahid got 15.73 per cent votes.

In 2001 election, alliance candidate Shahidul got 39.79 per cent votes out of total 256,681, adding Jamaat's votes. Hanif got 34.72 per cent, Inu got 15.38 per cent and Linkon got 10.02 per cent.

The calculation gives a brighter picture for the 14-party alliance if it can field one candidate on the basis of consensus, the analysts said. Its candidate may poll more than 50 per cent votes in the coming election. Moreover, 4-party alliance candidate's votes may decrease because of the row over nomination between BNP and Jamaat, they claimed.

When contacted, BNP leader Sahidul declined to make any comment in this regard.

Khagrachhari BNP president resigns

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Khagrachhari district BNP president Rajib Roy has resigned from the party.

He has submitted resignation letter to the party high command, he said to The Daily Star yesterday.

BNP is not a democratic political party any more. It is run by some 'autocrats' including senior joint secretary Tarique Rahman, he alleged.

He also alleged that his contribution to BNP in Khagrachhari was not evaluated properly in last five years. "He (Tarique Rahman) could not sit for once with local leaders in last five years", he said.

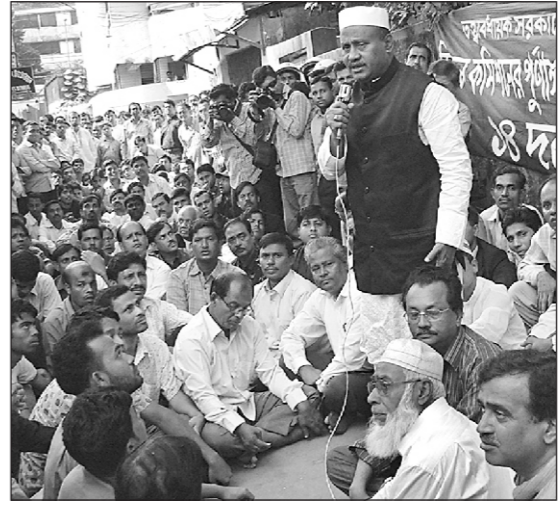
He alleged that immediate past lawmaker Wadud Bhuiyan ran the party in Khagrachhari at his will. His men were involved in crimes, corruption, tender manipulation, misappropriation of government funds and taking bribes. They also filed false cases against rival party men and journalists.

"I protested such activities but Wadud Bhuiyan ignored me", Rajib Roy said.

He declined to comment when asked if he has any plan to join any other party.

Last week BNP presidents in seven out of eight upazila units left the party and joined Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), protesting alleged failure of four-party alliance government and corruption by a section of local BNP leaders.

14-PARTY SIEGE TO EC OFFICES IN DISTRICT



(Clockwise) Chittagong City Corporation Mayor and district Awami League president ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury addressing a 14-party rally in front of election office, activists marching towards EC office in Rangpur, EC office besieged in Moulvibazar and Barisal yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT

Slain Satkhira BNP leader's mother demands trial of killers

Former party lawmaker among accused

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

An open letter to the president/chief advisor by octogenarian Mariam Begum, mother of the slain Tala upazila BNP president ABM Altaf Hossain, published in local daily Patradut yesterday demanding arrest and punishment of her son's killers has become a talk of the town in Satkhira.

In the letter she said her son was vice-president of Satkhira district BNP and president of its Tala upazila unit for long and he was elected Tala upazila chairman once and Sarulia Union Parishad chairman twice.

"A group of miscreants-Badruzzaman Badrul, Raju, chairman Golam Mostafa, Hafij, Nazrul, Akhtaruzzaman-belong to former lawmaker Habib group created a reign of terror in the area soon after the four-party alliance assumed power in 2001", she alleged.

"As my son protested their misdeeds, they killed him in a planned way. Habib is the mastermind behind the killing", she added.

"After the killing, the killers also threatened my grand son Khalid (only son of Altaf) with death at Satkhira hospital not to file case. So we did not dare to file a murder case with Tala police station fearing retaliation", she said in the open letter.

"On the contrary, former lawmaker Habib filed a case with Tala police station accusing some innocent people to save the real killers. Abdur Rahman, a member of the killing group, was made the complainant of the case", she claimed.

Even two and a half years after the murder, investigation authorities are yet to complete the probe. "I could not raise the demand for justice and punishment to my son's killers fearing retaliation by the former lawmaker and his

accomplices during the rule of four-party alliance government", she alleged.

"We met the immediate past prime minister Khaleda Zia, BNP Secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and the then state minister for home affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar seeking justice who assured us but to no action", she alleged.

"The killers are threatening us as we disclosed their names at two press conferences on November 2 and 5", she alleged.

"They also threatened us with dire consequences if we go ahead with the murder case", she continued.

She sought intervention by the President /CA and demanded proper and speedy investigation into the murder.

On contact, Habib refuted the allegation and said it is a conspiracy against him to tarnish his image.

PSTU teachers boycott class

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Teachers of Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU), brought out a silent procession on the campus and held a rally yesterday protesting attacked on Computer Science and Engineering department by some students.

They demanded punishment of the students involved in the incident.

The rally, held at Farm Mechanical Department hall room with Dr. Sultan Ahmed in the chair was addressed by, among others, Prof Dr. Rabul Haq, Prof Akkas Ali, Prof AKM Mostafa Jaman, Prof Shadash Samanta, Prof Badiuzzaman, Prof SM Hemayet Jahan and Prof Atiqur Rahman.

Campus sources said, Mehedi Hasan, a student of Agricultural faculty became sick in class room on Monday. Some students urged Computer Science department Prof Mostafa Zaman to give a vehicle to take him to Patuakhali hospital but he declined. Prof Zaman is also in charge of vehicles.

Agitated student then ransacked some furniture in the faculty and brought out a procession on the campus demanding his removal.

The university authorities have formed a three-member committee headed by Dr. Prof Sultan Ahmed to probe the matter, PSTU Vice-chancellor Prof Abdu Latif Masum said.

Shibir declares BCL 'unwanted' at BM College

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The cadres of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) yesterday declared the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) unwanted on the Government Brojomohan (BM) College campus.

They announced this at a meeting held on the campus Tuesday morning after occupying it Monday night.

JCD and ICS leaders Moshui Alam Sentu, Abu Zafar, Sogir-bin-Syed and Saiful Islam led the occupants, witnesses said. They are now patrolling the campus to resist entrance of the BCL activists.

732 wagons stranded as Balashi ferry service suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Railway ferry service between Balashi and Bahadurabad ghats (terminals) remained suspended for the last two weeks due to abnormal fall in water level in the Brahmaputra, railway sources said.

At present, 732 railway wagons containing foodgrains, fertiliser and fuel oil were stranded on both sides of the river. This has resulted in railway loss of about 6 lakh taka daily, according to Lalmonirhat railway authorities.

Of the 732 wagons, 388 contain fertiliser and 192 contain foodgrains and stone chips while 16 tankers contain fuel oil.

Fertiliser prices shot up in the northern region due to this phenomenon.

The river lost normal depth due to deposition of sand along the ferry channel. This year water level of the river decreased alarmingly by two to three feet at some points.

At least five to six feet deep water is needed for smooth sailing of boat, according to the marine superintendent of Balashi ghat.

Sources in the marine department said the worst affected point is at Chikirpatol of Kalasonar shoal under Fulchhari upazila. A shoal of 1,500 feet length and 200 feet width was developed along this narrow channel.

Ferry service on the river was

suspended after a railway team's visit to the site on November 15.

The team included railway chief engineer Nurul Amin, chief operating super Akhteruzzaman, chief mechanical engineer Abul Hossain and Lalmonirhat railway manager Solaiman Chowdhury.

After the visit, they put forward a proposal for dredging of the river, especially along the Kalasona point, but the railway authorities are yet to respond to their proposal, said an official.

All concerned, especially the businessmen, have urged the authorities concerned for immediate dredging of the river and resumption of ferry service without further delay.

LDP seeks Khulna-2, 6 JS seats, AL declines

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has demanded two Jatiya Sangsad seats—Khulna-2 and 6 for—to contest in the next parliamentary election. But Awami League is reported to have declined.

Awami League is set to field candidates in the two constituencies, said a top central leader of the requesting anonymity. "How LDP demands these two seats while it is yet to form a committee in Khulna", the central AL leader told this correspondent seeking anonymity.

LDP central leader and former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali is making contacts with Khulna AL leaders but over cell phone from Dhaka to confirm candidature from Khulna-2 constituency.

The demand is not at all acceptable as Awami League has at least four probable candidates to seek nomination from Khulna-2 and Khulna-6 constituencies, party sources here said.

Khulna Awami League is likely to field candidates in Khulna-2 and 6 seats and will not accept any other candidate from any component party of 14-party alliance, said Khulna AL president Shaikh Harun-Rashid. "We have a strong candidate to contest from Khulna-5 constituency", he said.

Former secretary general of Bangladesh Medical Association Dr Gazi Abdul Huq may seek nomination from Khulna-5 as LDP candidate. He left BNP along with Sheikh Razzak Ali.

7X3

6X3

9X2