

UPDF to field candidates in 3 CHT constituencies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF), an organisation of indigenous people opposed to the CHT peace accord, yesterday announced that it would field candidates in Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari constituencies in the coming election.

UPDF president Prasit Bikash Khisha will contest from Khagrachhari Jatiya Sangsad seat, its leaders announced at a press conference held at the Tribal Contractors Association office in Khagrachhari town. But they did not announce names of two other candidates in Rangamati and Bandarban.

The two names will be announced within a week by UPDF district committees in Rangamati and Bandarban, they said.

UPDF Khagrachhari district committee coordinator Ujjal Smrity Chakma, Pradipon Khisha and Pahari Chhatra Parishad (student front of UPDF) leader Kahalaching Marma also spoke at the press

conference.

"UPDF will contest in the coming election to ensure rights and privileges of indigenous and Bangalee people who are permanent residents of CHT", said Ujjal Smrity Chakma.

He said, the decision to field UPDF candidates in the three CHT constituencies was taken at a meeting held on December 10 in Chittagong. The meeting also formed a 101-member committee to coordinate party activities for the coming polls, he said.

This would be the second time that UPDF would field its candidates in the three CHT constituencies in parliamentary election.

In 2001 election, Prasit Bikash Khisa got about 35,000 votes from Khagrachhari and ten thousand over votes from the Rangamati constituencies for the first time.

"We will work for welfare of indigenous people in CHT and to establish their rights" said Pradipon Khisha, member secretary of the newly formed polls co-ordination committee.

"We will try to ensure land rights of indigenous and Banagalee people who are voters from the area", he said.

"There are at least 50,000 fake voters in the present voter list, most of them Bangalees, while 30,000 to 40,000 indigenous people are left out", the UPDF leader claimed.

We urged the authorities to included those voters and update list. We will win in the coming election with at least one lakh votes if a correct list is prepared and election is held in a free and fair manner, he said.

Replying to a question, he said possibility of an electoral alliance with any major party or combine is most unlikely.

He however said UPDF may boycott the election if a congenial atmosphere is not created. Asked about PCJSS, another indigenous platform, he said, "They are campaigning against us. We will resist them politically".

They also demanded security for their leaders including Prasit Bikash Khisha.

Bombs recovered from near Shahid Minar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Police recovered six bombs from near the Shahid Minar at Mehendiganj upazila town early yesterday.

Liakat Ali, Officer-in-charge of Mehendiganj police station, said, acting on a tip-off, said they recovered the bombs from the premises of old municipality building near the Shahid Minar at about 1 am yesterday.

None could be arrested in this connection.

Mehendiganj UNO Mahfuzul Huq, when contacted, acknowledged recovery of the bombs.

BDR-BSF trade shots on Satkhira border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) traded gunfire on Padmashakhra border in Satkhira Sadar upazila Thursday night.

BSF from Daharkanda and Hakimpur camps in 24 Parganas district, opposite to Padmashakhra in Sadar upazila, fired five shots at BDR, forcing them to retaliate by firing 7 to 10 shots. BDR sources said. No casualty was reported.

After the incident, BSF reinforced its strength in all the border outposts and increased patrol, BDR said.

On contact, Maj. Kamrul Hasan, second-in-command of 41 Rifles Battalion confirmed the incident and said a protest letter has been sent to BSF.

17 Rohingyas held for trafficking

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Rapid Action battalion (Rab) in a drive Thursday night arrested 17 Rohingya refugees from Chapolkhali village in Ukhaia upazila in Cox's Bazar district on charge of involvement in trafficking and other crimes.

The 17 are Mohammed, Abdus Shalam, Mohammed Shafi, Amin, Osman Goni, Nurul Alam, Abdul Hamid, Abdu Salam, Ali Hossain, Nobil Hossain, Nurul Islam, Mohammed Shelim, Jalilur Rahman, Mohammed Farouq, Jamal Hossain, Mohammed Hossain, and Shed Alam.

Kamal Uddin, Officer-in-charge of Ukhaia police station, yesterday said they were arrested on the basis of information that they were members of a gang engaged in trafficking. They were produced before a court, which sent them to jail, the OC said.



PHOTO: STAR

Political parties and other organisations who wanted to visited the Shaheed Minar in Bogra town on Friday to pay homage to martyred intellectuals could not enter the complex as its main gate was locked allegedly by a BNP leader. They hung wreaths on the steel-fame railing around it.

RECEPTION TO FFS IN DUMURIA Invitation to Jamaat leaders in V-Day function protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Dumuria upazila units of Awami League and Muktiyoddha Sangsad have strongly protested inclusion of two Jamaat-e-Islami leaders as special guests at a function to be held today at the local college ground to accord reception to freedom fighters.

Dumuria upazila administration arranged the function.

Nurul Islam Manik, commander of Dumuria upazila unit of Muktiyoddha Sangsad, has been invited to be the chief guest while upazila Jamaat Ameer Shaikh Nazrul Islam and party leader Golam Haider have been named special guests at the function.

Dumuria upazila Awami League president and former lawmaker Narayan Chandra Chanda said Jamaat leaders Shaikh Nazrul Islam and Golam Haider killed freedom fighter Ashim Das during Liberation War and helped Pakistani occupation forces to kill many others in

Dumuria.

The Awami League leader said the Dumuria UNO included many Jamaat men in the committee formed for observance of Victory Day. The upazila administration is still being guided by former Jamaat lawmaker Mian Golam Parwar, Narayan Chandra alleged.

Meanwhile, members of Dumuria upazila unit of Muktiyoddha Sangsad have expressed their firm determination to prevent Jamaat leaders from attending tomorrow's function.

Dumuria upazila UNO Idris Siddiqui, when asked, said he was not aware of any information about killing of freedom fighter by Jamaat leaders Nazrul Islam and Golam Haider. I joined Dumuria as UNO only a week back, he said.

When contacted, the two Jamaat leaders denied allegation of their involvement in anti-liberation activities during 1971 and killing of freedom fighter Ashim Das.

AL LEADER MURDER 14-party calls hartal in Bagmara on Dec 19

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi 14-party combine has called for demonstrations in all 16 unions in Bagmara on Monday a day-long hartal on Wednesday protesting the murder of Goalkandi Union Parishad (UP) chairman and local Awami League leader Jahangir Alam Sarker and demanding arrest and punishment of the killers. He was killed on December 10 allegedly by outlaws.

The programmes were announced at a press conference here on Thursday, where Jahangir's wife Anwara Begum, mother Jobeda Khatun and brother Alamgir Hossain also demanded trial of the killers and sought security in the face of alleged threats by them.

The press conference was addressed by veteran Awami League leader Sarder Amzad Hossain, Workers Party Politburo member Fazley Hossain Badsha, Rajshahi city unit AL general secre-

tary AHM Kharizzaman Liton, district AL general secretary Omer Faruque Chowdhury and other local leaders of the 14-party alliance.

Family members of Jahangir said they are being threatened by cadres of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) and urged the government to take effective steps against them.

They alleged that during Liberation War, freedom fighters set up a camp at their house and so they became targets of Rajakers (collaborators of Pakistan army) at that time. Many of the then Rajakers in Bagmara later turned into PBCP cadres, they claimed.

During JMB (Islamist fundamentalist organisation Jamaatul Mujadidin Bangladesh) 'operation' in Bagmara, they also acted as collaborators of its chief Siddiquil Islam Bangla Bhai, they claimed.

Earlier, the same gang killed Jahangir's uncle Abul Hossain Sarker, a businessman, they alleged at the press conference.



PHOTO: STAR

Finishing touches were being given yesterday to the Shaheed Minar in Cox's Bazar town, renovated by the municipal authorities on the eve of Victory Day.

lajuddin should quit post of president, says ex-BNP MP

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Former BNP lawmaker and nomination seeker Maj (rtd) Akhteruzzaman Rajan has urged president lajuddin Ahmed to step down to save the country from present crisis.

The situation will deteriorate and the country will move towards uncertainty and chaos if he does not resign immediately, he told a press conference at Kishoreganj Press Club on Thursday.

Only a credible election held in a free and fair manner with participation of major parties can save the country from the impending crisis. Such an election is not possible under President lajuddin because he has already proved him controversial, the former BNP lawmaker said.

The recent decision taken at the Bangabhaban that 'army will remain in rest' is unprecedented. Army, once called out, can not remain in



Maj (rtd) Akhteruzzaman Rajan

rest, the former army officer said. "This proves how indecisive they (caretaker government) are", he said.

More crisis will be created one after another if things continue like this he said and urged all political parties to come to a consensus on national issues, forgetting party interests, to save the nation.

Maj (rtd.) Ranjan was elected

from Kishoreganj-2 constituency (Katiadi Upazila) with BNP ticket defeating Awami League's Habibur Rahman in 1991 and M A Afzal in 1996. As an alliance candidate in 2001, he lost to AL leader Prof. Dr. M. A. Mannan.

Earlier, on December 12, Ranjan staged a big showdown with his supporters at Koliadi upazila headquarters to justify his claim for alliance ticket from the constituency in the coming election.

At a public rally on that day, Ranjan urged lajuddin to quit the post of Chief Advisor of the Caretaker Government for holding a credible election.

He also told the rally that people of the constituency would reject any alliance candidate other than him. He has four party rivals contending for alliance ticket from Kishoreganj-2 constituency.

Ranjan was expelled from BNP thrice earlier for comments on different issues but was taken back.

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9x3

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