

Probable Nilphamari JP (E) candidates in next JS polls

E A M ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Jatiya Party (Ershad) is likely to field candidates in all the four parliamentary seats in Nilphamari district in the upcoming general election.

A good number of aspirants are already lobbying to secure nomination of JP (E). At present three out of four parliamentary seats are represented by JP (E) in the district.

The parliamentary seat of Nilphamari-1 constituency comprising Dimla and Domar is now represented by N K Alam Chowdhury, a close associate of H M Ershad. His main rival is likely to be Mansurul Islam, a long time chairman of Domar Municipality.

Nilphamari-2 constituency comprising of Sadar upazila is the most prestigious one. There may be six or seven contenders for JP nomination in this constituency. Present member of parliament (MP) Ahsan Ahmed

Abdus Sattar, a retired high police official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) is another contestant for JP (E) ticket. Hailing from an influential family of Nilphamari, Sattar is also financially solvent and has good relationship with JP policymakers.

Anisur Rahman Coco, a young JP leader is also likely to be an aspirant for JP nomination. In absence of the party's leaders in the district, Coco looks after the party.

Nilphamari-3 constituency comprises of Kishoreganj and Jaldhaka. It is now held by Jamaat though JP has good support there. In the coming polls, there are three probable aspirants for the party ticket.

Rashidul Chowdhury who was defeated in small margin during last parliamentary polls still continues to be a strong contender for JP nomination in this seat. The other contender for JP ticket is Nurul Haque Putin, present leader of the party unit. Amin B Sc, an old Awami

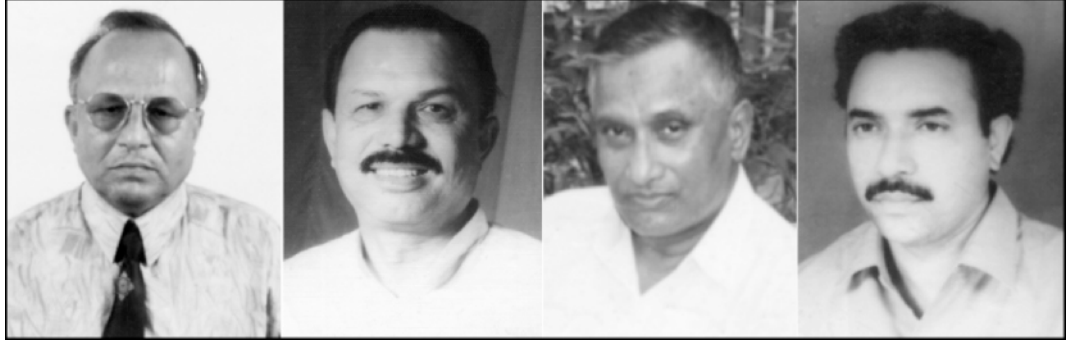


PHOTO: STAR

(From left to right): Ahsan Ahmed, Dewan Nurunnabi, Abdus Sattar and Anisur Rahman Coco.

who won with JP ticket in 1996 later on joined JP (M-M). Ahsan was the chairman of Nilphamari Municipality for long 16 years. He was the district president of BNP till 1996, when he deserted the party and joined JP after failing to get BNP nomination. He is a contender for nomination of JP.

Another strong contestant for JP (E) nomination is Dewan Nurunnabi, ex-Whip in erstwhile Ershad regime. But he contested the 1996 general election with BNP ticket, which remains to be a question mark over his integrity toward Ershad. But he refutes the allegation and informs this correspondent that due to his difference of opinion with Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury over release of Ershad, he deserted JP in 1996. After release of Ershad from jail, he once again joined JP. He is a strong contender for nomination in this constituency.

Leagueur who deserted the party and joined JP during Ershad's regime is also an aspirant for JP ticket in this constituency.

Parliamentary seat of Nilphamari-4 constituency comprising of Saidpur and part of Kishoreganj is now held by Dr Asadur Rahman, retired Vice-Chancellor of BAU and brother-in-law of Ershad.

Although Dr Rahman has the blessings of the party high command, there is also strong possibility that Ershad's younger sister Merina Rahman may get nomination in this seat.

Although Ershad still continues to command sympathy of a vast majority of the electorate in this district, yet group rivalry over party nomination in all the four seats cannot be ruled out.



PHOTO: STAR

The journalists of Brahmanbaria brought out a procession following a token hunger strike in protest at recent incidents of killing and repression on journalists throughout the country.

Jhenidah phone exchanges plagued with problems

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Telephone subscribers in Jhenidah district have been facing manifold problems for a long time due to poor services by the phone exchanges.

Cross connection, connecting wrong numbers and feeble sound are the constant problems the subscribers in the district are experiencing.

Some subscribers also have attributed inadequate manpower in the exchanges, negligence of duty by staff and 'ghost bills' to their misery.

There are eight telephone exchanges in the district including Jhenidah central telephone exchange. Shailakupa telephone exchange provides 313 connections through its two central battery (CB) boards. Only three telephone operators are working in the exchange against the required nine operators. None of the two linesmen allegedly attend office regularly. The on-duty operators have to manage the boards and Operator Trunk Dialling (OTD) system.

Kotchandpur CB system telephone exchange is run

with six operators against the sanctioned posts of ten operators. Only one lineman is posted there. Subscribers under Sadhati and Hatgopalpur exchanges in Sadar upazila allege linesmen always demand extra money when their help is sought for any problem.

Besides, connections remain dead for days due to mechanical problem, subscribers said.

Analogue exchange at Jhenidah town provides telephone facilities to 1,797 subscribers through single board with 14 operators.

Due to mechanical problems sending fax message from the district headquarters is a tough job, causing sufferings to subscribers.

When contacted, sub divisional engineer (SDE) of Telephone and Telegram (T&T), Jhenidah last week said sufferings of the subscribers will be addressed soon. In this regard, he said the district exchange will be brought under digital system within two months while Shailakupa and Kotchandpur exchanges within six months, providing better services to the subscribers.

Workshop in Rajshahi told

Rainwater now alternative to arsenic-contaminated water

BSS, Rajshahi

Rainwater has emerged as a viable alternative source of drinking water for arsenic-affected people.

This was stated at an experience-sharing workshop on "Rainwater Harvesting-An Action Research Project", held in Rajshahi on May 15.

The day-long meeting was presided over by SMA Rashid, Executive Director of NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, while Dr Fazle Banu Lily, Programme Officer of Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC),

was the chief guest. Dr Shukuruddin Mridha, Civil Surgeon of Rajshahi, and Abdul Matabeb, Director of Watsan Partnership Project, attended as special guests.

In a desperate bid to find out an alternative to arsenic-contaminated water, NGO Forum for DWSS, in collaboration with Watsan Partnership Project (WPP) and SDC, initiated rainwater harvesting in Charghat and Bagha upazilas taking Swallows Thanapara Development Society, Sachetan and Samata Nari Kalyan Sangstha as implementing partners.

So far, they have set up 51 plants out of the targeted 100. Now, all plants are installed on the premises of houses of well-to-do families for collecting rainwater from CI sheet houses.

Rashid informed the workshop that they are trying to find out a model which is socially acceptable and technically viable. Of course, he said, now they will go for the poor.

While relating her traditional and indigenous experience, Dr Lily said this is not an alien method. Before introduction of tubewell, there was rainwater harvesting system in the coastal areas of

South Bengal, which had saline water all around.

Even poor people with the help of 2 to 3 CI sheets and split bamboo used to collect rainwater for drinking throughout the year, she added.

While introducing the research, an official said they have used different models of Sri Lanka, Nepal and Thailand.

Dr Shukuruddin Mridha mentioned the relation between rainwater harvesting and dengue.

Referring to Nepalese experience, he said aedis mosquito well thrives in rainwater in Nepal. "So, we must be careful about this," he warned.

Referring to the treatment of arsenicosis patients, he said we have no advanced treatment facilities. Sometimes vitamins A and C are given to the affected people, he added.

Under the highly-structured research project, they have identified 178 patients of 2nd and 3rd stages. The doctors of the project attended 47 arsenicosis patients and gave them prescriptions. But only one patient was able to buy medicine.

The workshop was attended by researchers, NGO activists field workers, users, community leaders, journalists and participants

from some donor agencies.

Participants and field-based people from villages demanded more plants, especially for poor people, at the earliest. At the same time, they demanded immediate free treatment of the arsenic-affected poor people.

Researchers claimed that during the last seven to eight months they have not found bacteria and people are taking water from plants easily. But one participant spoke of his experience of having bacteria within one month in preserved rainwater in a coastal area.

NEWS SNAPS

Couple commit suicide

UNB, Benapole

Having failed to endure the shock of his wife's suicide news, a young farmer allegedly killed himself at village Raghunathpur in Chouigachha upazila of Jessore on Sunday.

Villagers said Nurul Islam, 30, who was working in a paddy field, took his own life by taking pesticide after hearing that his wife Nazma Begum, 23, committed suicide following a family feud.

Diarrhoea claims 11 in Moulvibazar

UNB, Moulvibazar

Diarrhoea that broke out in an alarming proportion in the tea gardens of Rajnagar upazila of Moulvibazar district claimed 11 lives of workers and affected 250 others last week.

Of the dead, eight were identified as Sabitri, 45, Kitab Ali, 50, Tipra, 40, Resmi, 3 of Chanbag and Satyabati, 40, Dipali, 2, Fatema, 4, and Minoti, 2 of Aminabad area. Identity of three others could not be known. Officials of the tea gardens said taking of contaminated pond water, stale food and lack of ignorance about cleanliness are the main reasons behind outbreak of the disease.

Three unnatural deaths in Manikganj

UNB, Manikganj

Three unnatural deaths were reported in Manikganj district on Thursday.

Police said Rabeya Begum, 15, allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself at her husband's house at Galdangi village in Gheor upazila Thursday, the day after she was sent there. Villagers aid Rabeya was given marriage forcibly by her stepmother. Habezur, 30, son of Sadar Ali of Panjankhara village, was electrocuted while work in with live wire of a house of Alo Miah in the evening. Five-year-old Nabin, son of Mohimuddin of Mitura village of sadar upazila, drowned in a pond on the same day.

Six policemen suspended

UNB, Luxmipur

Six policemen including a Havilder were suspended for negligence of duty when an under-trial prisoner escaped from the court hajot in Luxmipur on Sunday. An inquiry team headed by additional police super Mohammad Amin has been set up to find how under-trial prisoner Abul Khair Ledu escaped from the custody. It is recalled that no action was taken against the police from whose custody two accused of murder case managed to escape with handcuff in August last year.

Malaria strikes back in Sunamganj

UNB, Sunamganj

Malaria has reemerged in Tahirpur upazila (UZ) of Sunamganj district affecting over 300 people in 25 frontier villages according to unofficial sources.

The disease is spreading fast in Uttar Borodal, Dakshin Borodal and Uttar Sreepur unions of the upazila. A common complaint of the patients is that they do not get proper treatment due to short supply of necessary medicines in remote villages. Officials at the Civil Surgeon Office said field workers were working in the affected areas to combat the disease, but they could not provide any figure of malaria affected patients.

Clash over land leaves 40 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

At least 40 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups at village Reskombari in Shahjadpur upazila of Sirajganj district on Sunday morning.

Police and witnesses said the trouble started when the supporters of Abdul Mannan clashed at about 8:30am on the day with the supporters of Samad Fakir group over land. Six of the injured were admitted to local hospital while others to local clinics.

Anniversary of death



The second anniversary of death of Khondker Ferdous, former Circulation Assistant of The Daily Muktantho will be observed today (Wednesday), says a press release.

On the occasion a 'milad mahfil' has been arranged after 'Asr' prayers at the deceased's home at village Jotabari under Modhupur upazila in Tangail district. Friends, relatives and well-wishers of the deceased are requested to attend the 'mahfil' and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Intensive 'Aus' cultivation scheme

UNB, Narsingdi

An intensive scheme has been taken up to bring 16,350 hectares of land under 'Aus' paddy cultivation with an output target of 30,836 tons in six upazilas of Narsingdi district.

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said of the total, 2000 hectares will be brought under the high yielding variety and 14,350 under the local variety of seeds. Upazila-wise break-up of the cultivation target: 3,920 hectares in Sadar, 530 hectares in Polash, 1,500 hectares in Shibpur, 2,850 hectares in Monohordi, 1050 hectares in Belabo and 6,500 hectares in Raipura upazilas.