

## 2 Killed, 150 injured

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clash. In Bagerhat, attack on an Awami League election projection meeting at village Kartikia of sadar upazila yesterday left at least 15 injured, four with bullets.

Accusing BNP activists for the attack, Awami League leaders said the terrorists also torched a number of election camps and looted five houses.

Witnesses said the meeting came under attack at 11 am.

Those admitted to sadar hospital with bullet injuries are Islam Gazi, Jamer Gazi, Taherun and Shahin.

In Jhenidah, at least 10 people including four policemen were injured in a clash between the BNP and Awami League supporters in Sirajdikhan upazila yesterday.

Police said the clash ensued between the two rival parties at about 10 am at two election camps in Garabaria. Both the groups chased each other.

Four policemen, who rushed to the spot, were also injured. Six of the wounded were admitted to

Sadar Hospital.

In Gazipur, a clash between the supporters of Awami League and BNP left five people injured and an election camp of BNP ransacked at Barni Sohagpara village in Sreepur upazila yesterday.

Witnesses said the violent clash erupted following an altercation over a trifling matter. The agitated AL supporters later ransacked the election camp of BNP in the village.

In Munshiganj, at least 30 Chhatra League workers were injured in an attack allegedly by BNP workers at Madhyapara in Sirajdikhan upazila yesterday.

Five of the injured BCL activists were sent to Ichchhapura health complex and later shifted to Dhaka following deterioration of their condition.

Witnesses said the BCL workers came under attack by BNP supporters as they went to visit their election camp which was damaged by BNP men on Monday.

Additional police were deployed there to fend off further trouble.

## Less controversy

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The former CEC underscored the need for strengthening the Election Commission Secretariat rather than for making it independent like the parliament secretariat, as appealed by his successor M A Syed.

CEC Syed called upon the political parties to come forward to move a bill on the complete independence of the EC secretariat.

But the former CEC contradicting the idea said, "The terms of reference and the nature of job of parliament secretariat is in fact far different from the Election Commission's."

He rather suggested a high-power body headed by the cabinet secretary to take quick decisions and make easy access to government resources and manpower required by the EC for a free and fair election.

Hena feels that a committee comprising principal secretary, EC secretary and secretaries of the ministries of finance, establishment, law, justice and parliamentary affairs and others concerned can finalise the requisition of the com-

mission when necessary. It would help minimise bureaucratic tangles in allocation of necessary government support to the commission.

He also urged the government to consult the Election Commission before enacting any election-related law.

Identifying the lack of democratic perception as prime obstacle to democracy, he has said only election and enactment of laws cannot ensure democracy.

He suggested that an institution be set up to flourish democratic norms, and urged politicians to act in a democratic manner.

The former CEC urged the Election Commission to bolster the voter awareness programme so that voters enthusiastically turn up at the polling stations on the day of election.

"High turnout in the election lessens the possibilities of rigging and fraudulence," he said. He also suggested that everyone take the election positively.

About the election monitoring, Abu Hena gave a different view saying this time the polls monitoring groups seem to have gained the upper hand.

AL, BNP to lose some seats

FROM PAGE 1

As a last resort, both the parties are sending delegations representing central leaders to negotiate with the rebels.

AL rebel candidate Haji Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury is contesting against party nominee Abdus Shaheed in Moulavibazar-4. Abdus Shaheed was elected MP in the last election. Haji Mujibur has reportedly spent a lot of money and is campaigning vigorously.

Four other AL rebels in the constituency have also withdrawn their candidature in favour of Haji Mujibur, making his position stronger, sources said.

In Jessore-3, Kazi Shahed Ahmed sought AL nomination though he was never an AL leader. He is contesting as an independent candidate as AL refused him nomination. Sources said, he might be a problem for AL nominee Al Reza Raju who won the seat in '96 election with a margin of 10,000 votes.

The sources also claimed that Kazi Shahed enjoys the support of a section of local AL leaders and workers.

AL is also facing threats from rebel candidates Prof Amit Ahmed Khan Ratan in Mymensingh-8, Baharuddin Bahar in Mymensingh-8, Hemayetullah Awrang in Sharapuri-1, Engr. Mohammad Ali in Jamalpur-5, Abdul Rouf in Nilphamari-1, Khairul Majid Chandan in Narsinghi-4, Delwar Hossain in Barguna-1, Shahryar

Rumi in Faridpur-5, and from Dr Md Selim in Sirajganj 1, 2 and 3. Selim is the elder brother of AL leader and former home minister Mohammad Nasim who is also contesting from the three seats in Sirajganj.

In addition, there are AL rebel candidates in Jamalpur-3, Gopalganj-1, Bogra-1 and 6, Nilphamari-4, Gazipur-4, Jessore-2, Chittagong-2 and 3 and in Chittagong-15. Central leaders of AL however does not consider these candidates as threats, the sources said.

An AL source here said that in a couple of seats, the rebels may bag more votes than party nominees. As a strategy, the AL central leadership is thinking of giving these candidates "last moment party support". If they win they will be taken in the party.

On the other side, BNP nominee Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury will face problem in Chittagong-7 constituency. In this constituency, BNP had initially nominated Nurul Anam. Anam is campaigning in full swing.

A similar picture can be seen in Rajshahi-5 where BNP had initially nominated Azizur Rahman but later declared Kabir Hossain as the party candidate. Azizur has not withdrawn his candidature.

Many other BNP leaders, being refused party tickets, resigned from the party and are contesting as independent candidates. Notable among them are Prof Abdul Mannan in Sunamganj-3, Abdul Gafur Montu Tangail-1 and from Habibur Rahman Habib in Pabna-4.

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AL backs US

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"In the wake of fanaticism and Taliban attack, secularism in politics has become necessary for Bangladesh," Kibria said. The tactic of using religion is a vicious ploy against Awami League, he added.

"Unfortunately, this is the kind of politics being practised in Bangladesh by them. But they don't focus on the economy," he said.

On the contrary, his party is highlighting the achievements during its five-year rule, Kibria said.

At the meeting, he also presented booklets his party is using in its election campaign.

He said AL is focusing on the CHT peace agreement, Ganges water sharing treaty with India, women's empowerment, achievements in growth rate keeping inflation under control but not resorting to propaganda.

"We are trying to highlight the achievements and going to the electorate so that they can judge," the AL Chief Election Coordinator said.

CEC assures AL  
ETV to telecast  
live election  
results

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League Election Steering Committee's Chief Coordinator Shah AMS Kibria yesterday said that the Chief Election Commissioner has agreed to allow ETV to telecast live poll results.

Kibria, during his regular press briefing at the party election office here told newsmen that the CEC conveyed this decision to a six-member AL delegation that called on him at his office yesterday.

Kibria said the CEC assured the delegation that the Ekushey Television would also be permitted to telecast the results live when his attention was drawn to press reports that the CEC would allow only BTV and Bangladesh Betar the live transmission of election results.

Kibria said they also handed over a video cassette of Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayeedi along with a protest letter. They also demanded confiscation of this cassette and prosecution of Sayeedi for his "vulgar" remarks.

He alleged that the caretaker government, in violation of the election rules, is transferring the deputy commissioners and superintendents of police without consulting the CEC.

Mia in Comilla-3 and Prof Mohammad Abdullah in Chandpur-4. Sources said, these candidates might not win but would be factors in the defeat of party nominees.

BNP nominees will face threats from rebels Chowdhury Akmal Ibne Yusuf in Faridpur 4, MM Shaheen in Moulavibazar-2, Advocate Badshah and Mashuri Rahman in Rangpur-6, Touhidul Idris in Chapainawabganj-1, Khorshed Alam Bachchu in Chapainawabganj-2, Rafiqul Islam in Chapainawabganj-3, Aminul Islam Panjab in Rajshahi-1, Moulana Shakawat Hossain in Jessore-6, Harun-ur-Rashid in Patuakhali-3, Mustafizur Rahman in Patuakhali-4, Engr. Shamsuddin in Mymensingh-6, MA Malek in Sunamganj-3, Abdul Gafur Montu Tangail-1 and from Habibur Rahman Habib in Pabna-4.

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"In the wake of fanaticism and Taliban attack, secularism in politics has become necessary for Bangladesh," Kibria said. The tactic of using religion is a vicious ploy against Awami League, he added.

"Unfortunately, this is the kind of politics being practised in Bangladesh by them. But they don't focus on the economy," he said.

On the contrary, his party is highlighting the achievements during its five-year rule, Kibria said.

At the meeting, he also presented booklets his party is using in its election campaign.

He said AL is focusing on the CHT peace agreement, Ganges water sharing treaty with India, women's empowerment, achievements in growth rate keeping inflation under control but not resorting to propaganda.

"We are trying to highlight the achievements and going to the electorate so that they can judge," the AL Chief Election Coordinator said.

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