

2 ministers back rival BNP factions in Kishoreganj-1

Three BNP contenders to vie for ticket, Jamaat also adamant

MUKLESUR RAHMAN LITON,
Kishoreganj

Two ministers are backing two BNP contenders from rival factions for nomination from Kishoreganj-1 constituency while a former deputy minister is also in the filed.

Jamaat-e-Islami, a key partner in the ruling alliance, also wants the seat as one of the 50 it has demanded across the country.

In 2001 election, four-party alliance candidate BNP leader Idris Ali Bhuiyan was defeated by Awami League nominee Dr Alauddin Ahmed, former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, with a margin of only 114 votes. Dr Alauddin got 86,623 votes while Idris Ali got 86,509.

BNP thinks there is good chance of winning the seat in the coming election as its candidate lost the last polls with a small margin, party sources said.

But there are several nomination seekers in the constituency, which is a matter for worry for them.

Two ministers are campaigning for their candidates while a former deputy minister is seeking vote for himself, which widened the rift among BNP workers in the constituency, local people said.

At a recent public meeting at Bahadia High School compound in Egarasindur union of Pakundia upazila, education minister Dr M Osman Faruq introduced Abdus Salam, secretary of Dhaka city BNP, as a candidate from Kishoreganj-1 constituency. He described Abdus Salam as a 'guardian' of people of Pakundia and Hussainpur upazilas. The meeting was boycotted by Pakundia upazila BNP leaders, party sources said.

As Pakundia upazila BNP committee boycotted Osman's meeting, he, as president of Kishoreganj district BNP, dissolved the upazila committee.



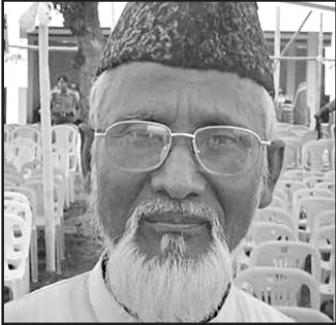
Abdus Salam



Idris Ali



Zahidul Haque



Tayebuzzaman

Following this, BNP enforced a half-day hartal in the upazila to protest the alleged 'illegal and undemocratic decision', Idris ALI, former president of Pakundia upazila BNP, told this correspondent.

Dr. Osman also dissolved Hussainpur upazila BNP committee earlier but it's secretary Rafiqul Islam is still holding the post defying the district BNP committee's decision, he said.

Former BNP lawmaker Maj (Rtd.) Akhtaruzzaman Ranjan also termed the district committee illegal, as it was formed with only two members--Dr. Osman as president and Waliullah Rabbani as secretary. A full-fledged committee was not formed in a year after formation of

the convening committee. Ranjan also threatened to form a new committee, saying the two-men committee is illegal, formed undemocratically.

On contact, Rafiq said, he is performing his duty as secretary of Hussainpur upazila committee as per instruction of public works and housing minister Mirza Abbas, who is also minister in-charge of the district.

Sources close to Abbas Said, as Abbas does not support Osman's candidate Salam, he leads a rival faction in the constituency.

The sources said Abbas was trying for nomination for his younger brother Mirza Khokon, a ward commissioner in Dhaka city.

Posters were circulated and rallies held in favour of Khokon in different areas of the constituency in recent days.

But due to poor response from people, Abbas extended his support to Idris Ali Bhuiyan. This has intensified the rivalry between factions led by Osman and Abbas, sources said.

On the other hand, former deputy minister ABM Zahidul Huq has launched campaign, meeting people and holding rallies. Zahidul had own the seat in 1991 election and was made deputy minister. As he was refused BNP ticket ion 1996, he ran in the race but lost. Now he is in the field.

Talking to this correspondent, Zahidul said he has a large number of party followers in the area.

"I am the only alternative now as the two ministers are leading rival factions of the party.

"BNP or BNP led alliance will lose the seat if I am not nominated in the coming election", he claimed.

Now, three probable BNP candidates--Abdus Salam, Idris Ali and Zahidul--are holding meetings, going door to door and distributing posters and banners, triggering off tension among BNP leaders, workers and supporters, party sources said.

Seeking anonymity some senior BNP leaders said, interference by the two ministers has worsened the situation in the constituency.

District Jamaat Ameer Tayobuzzaman said, Jamaat has been working in the constituency for five years, contributing lavishly to orphanages, madrasas, mosques and social organisations. Jamaat has also formed social welfare committees, he added.

Jamaat worked silently while BNP was engaged in feud, political circles said. Jamaat wants a seat from greater Mymensingh and Kishoreganj-1 is suitable for them, they said.

Ruta protests murder of Prof Aftab

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University Teachers Association (Ruta) yesterday brought out a mourning procession on the campus in memory of Prof Aftab Ahmed.

Prof Aftab, former vice-chancellor (VC) of National University and a senior teacher of political science department at Dhaka University, was shot by some miscreants at his residence on DU campus. He died on Tuesday.

The processionists paraded different streets on the campus.

Ruta also held a brief rally in front of Senate building with Ruta president Prof Zillur Rahman in the chair.

Addressing the rally, Ruta leaders expressed profound shock at the death of Prof Aftab and called upon the government to ensure security of all teachers of Dhaka and Rajshahi universities. They also demanded proper investigation into the incident and exemplary punishment of the killers.

College student slaughtered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A college student was hacked and slaughtered at Agorpur village in Babuganj upazila Tuesday night.

His floating body was recovered by police from a canal yesterday.

The victim was identified as Shamim Ahmed, 20, a student of Agorpur College. He was president of Agorpur Union Chhatro Moitri, a student organisation.

Delwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Babuganj police station and victims father Farid Molla said Shamin got a call over cell phone and went out of home at about 9-30 pm Tuesday. He was missing since then.

His body with marks of deep injury was found floating on Tengra canal yesterday morning. Protesting the killing, local Chhatro Moitri called a hartal in the area for today, its leaders said. Police said a case is being filed but they could not find any due to the brutal murder.



PHOTO: STAR

Teachers and other staff at Kushtia Islamic University brought out a procession on the campus yesterday protesting distortion of history of Liberation War by BTV.

Distortion of history protested

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University unit of Bangabandhu Parishad unit yesterday protested distortion of history of Bangladesh, the Liberation War and role of Bangabandhu in a documentary aired by state-run television recently.

In a statement the Bangabandhu

Parishad said the documentary -- Bangladesh Amaar Bangladesh-- produced by one Shairul Kabir Khan, has distorted the history.

They said that the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government has shown audacity and proved their ignorance showing the film.

They said officials of information ministry and BTV responsible for the

this must apologise for this and demanded immediate ban on the documentary and punishment of the persons responsible.

The statement was signed by RU Bangabandhu Parishad president Prof Muklesur Rahman, general secretary Prof Abdus Sobhan, vice-president Prof Zihadul Karim and other members.

3 JCD men get life for killing party activist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal yesterday sentenced three JCD cadres to life for killing fellow JCD man in 2004.

The convicts are Imran alias Kala Imran and Gulli Mizan alias Nizam, both hailing from Dakshin Islampur and Zuned alias Pichchi Zuned of Shahjalal Upazhahar. All of them belonged to the Upazhahar unit of JCD, student front of ruling BNP. The court also fined the convicts Tk

10,000 each.

Imran and Mizan are absconding while Zuned is in custody.

Five others were acquitted. They are NasirUddin, Wasim, Akhtar Hossain, Kazi Madur and Kazi Masum.

Special Trial Tribunal Judge Biplob Goswami passed verdict. On October 9 in 2004, a group of JCD cadres attacked JCD activist Mizanur Rahman Kamali at his house in Shyamoli residential area in Sylhet city in a dispute over estab-

lishing supremacy in the area. They fired gunshots injuring Kamali and another JCD activist Kazi Shi plu.

Kamali died at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital the same night.

His elder brother Ashraf Hossain Kamali filed a case with the Sylhet Kotwali Police station accusing 5 JCD men.

The case was transferred to the Speedy Trial Tribunal in April this year.



Ancient Moulvibazar mandop full of life as puja starts today

Gold and silver ornaments, costly sarees and *ghee* are brought by devotees, even from India

RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI,
Moulvibazar

A Durga Puja *mandop* (pandal) at a remote village in Moulvibazar district attracts thousands of people, even from across the border.

People have started crowding the 300 year-old site at Panchgaon village under Rajnagar upazila.

In the pandal, colour of goddess Durga is red which is exceptional, according to Hindu scripture.

The Puja management committee told this correspondent that at least 50,000 devotees visited the pandal last year.

This correspondent during a visit there last year found about two-kilometer long queue of public and private vehicles on road leading to the pandal, stretching from Panchgaon village to Kamala Ranir Dighi.

People had to walk long distances to reach the site.

Locals said goddess Durga at Panchgaon pandal has a tradition. Devotees, even in this modern age have a belief that goddess Durga at this pandal is embodied and listens to devotees' prayers.

During festival every year, gold and silver ornament, costly sarees and ghees are brought by devotees for 'maa Durga' and thousands of goats and sheep are sacrificed. Last year, at least six buffaloes were also sacrificed, the committee said.

It was gathered that one Sarbananda Das of the village, a

'Munshi' by profession, had arranged Puja festival for the first time there.

Once he went to Kamaykhsa (now in Assam province of India) and expressed his desire that he wanted to arrange 'Kumari Puja'.

The authority in the Kamakhya Dham allowed him to fulfill his desire. Sarbananda selected a 'Kumari' (girl) for the purpose.

After being worshipped by Munshi Sarbananda, the colour of the image of Durga (kumari) changed and turned red.

The Kumari asked Sarbananda what he desired from her (Devi Durga).

Munshi Sarbananda said he wanted blessings of Goddess and desired that the worship at his village continue. His desire was fulfilled.

Since than, Goddess Durga in the pandal is being decorated with red colour.

Sanjoy Kumar Das, 'Sebayet' (manager) of the pandal who is also the sixth generation of Munshi Sarbananda, said the festival continues five days.

But there is miss-management also. There is no shed, sitting arrangement, drinking water and toilet facilities for devotees.

A total of 533 Puja pandals have been set up in Moulvibazar this year.

The district administration has taken security measures for hold the Durga Puja peacefully, official

8X3

14X3