

POLITICAL SCENARIO IN GREATER RANGPUR

# AL, BNP leaders oppose Ershad's JP in alliances

AL men say 'Ershad craze' in 5 dists is no more

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Ershad's Jatiya Party is vital for both 14-party and 4-party alliances in greater Rangpur in the coming election but local leaders of both Awami League and BNP oppose his joining their alliances.

In five districts in greater Rangpur, it is now a talk of the town to which alliance Ershad would goeithier joining it or forming electoral alliance. Though Ershad at a recent press conference in Dhaka also hinted about running the polls race alone, the political circles claimed that this will not benefit his party much in the region now as the Ershad craze during 1996 and 2001 elections is no more among voters.

The political analysts claimed that Jatiyo Party (JP) will gain more if it makes an understanding with 14-party alliance, because, in 2001 polls, Awami League considerably narrowed its vote difference with the winning party in constituencies where its candidates lost as runners up.

But like BNP leaders, local Awami League aspirants also oppose Jatya Party's joining the alliance or any understanding, claiming that their position is much better now in all the 22 seats in the five districts of Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Rangpur and Nilpahmari, political

circles said.

"We do not need to sacrifice any seat for Jatiya Party. We ran second in most of the seats we lost (in last election) and our position is much better now", a top leader of Nilphamari district AL told this correspondent.

As per data collected from the election office here, JP got 16,46,624 votes and Awami League (AL) got 13,53,256 votes in 2001 election in all the 22 constituencies in five districts.

Contesting for 13 seats as alliance candidates, BNP got 6,63,000 votes and its ally Jamaat, contesting for seven seats, got 4,86,692 votes.

Awami League's smaller allies now forming the 14-party alliance had got only 18,346 votes in the area.

In Nilphamari, AL's ally JSD (Inu) and Workers Party contested in two seats out of four. In Nilphamari-3, JSD (Inu) candidate Azizul Islam got only 496 votes and Workers Party candidate Noor Mohammad Khan got 1,743 votes in Nilphamari-1 constituency in 2001 election.

Similar was the position of AL's allies in most other constituencies in the area. Only 4 or 5 parties of the 14 party combine are active in the area, the analysts said.

According to statistics, if JP joins the BNP-led 4-party alliance, their total votes, as per the 2001 polls,

stand at 27,36,316 (JP's 16,46,624 + BNP's 6,63,000 + Jamaat's 4,86,692). There is virtually no existence of two other parties of the 4-party alliance in greater Rangpur.

On the other hand, if JP makes alliance with 14-party combine, their total votes stand at 30,15,380 (AL's 13,53,256 + 13 parties' 18,345).

From this calculation, it is evident that if Ershad joins hands with 14-party, it will be easier for the combine to snatch victory in most of the seats, they claimed.

In 2001 election, JP got 13 seats, AL four, BNP three and Jamaat got two seats out of 22 in greater Rangpur. In 1996 election, JP got 21 seats and Jamaat only one. Both BNP and AL went nil.

"That (in 1996 polls) was an unusual situation because there was an Ershad craze. That craze is absent now", claimed a top AL leader in Nilphamari seeking anonymity.

Ershad's demand for nomination of party man in all the 22 constituencies provoked a sharp reaction among local leaders of both the alliances.

Kazi Aminul Haque, former general secretary of Nilphamari district AL said, greater Rangpur is a traditional stronghold of AL and the party earlier bagged most of the 22 seats since 1970, which we lost to JP in 1990 and 1996 elections.

## 12 BNP leaders to join LDP in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Twelve BNP leaders in Phultala upazila submitted their resignation Thursday night.

Upazila BNP secretary Sarder Alauddin Mithu admitted receipt of the resignation letters.

Those who resigned include vice-president Shaikh Lutfur Rahman, organising secretary Monir Hasan Tito, social welfare secretary Anupam Mitra, assistant publicity secretary Nazrul Islam Mollah.

Mithu said he heard that they might join Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) under the leadership of former Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali when he arrives in Khulna in the third week of this month.

Sources said Shaikh Razzak Ali will hold a public meeting in Khulna under the banner of LDP at Shahid Hadis Park. Large number of leaders and activists of nine upazilas of Khulna district now belonging to BNP are expected to join LDP in the public meeting.

## Man killed, 5 cops hurt as villagers beat police team

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A night guard was beaten to death and six persons including five policemen were injured when villagers chased a police team and beat them when they went to Dhalia village in Bhakeka upazila in the early hours of yesterday to arrest a wanted criminal.

The dead was identified as Tarab Ali, 60, a night guard at Dhalia Bazar.

Police and local people said, a team from Bhakeka police station led by Sub Inspector (SI) Badrul Alam went to the market and asked night guard Tarab Ali to identify the wanted accused--Md Rafiqul Islamhailing from Dhalia village. They reached in front of the house of one Ahmed at 2:30 am started calling the inmates to open the door. Suspecting the callers to be dacoits, the inmates shouted, calling for help.

Their screams drew villagers, who chased and beat the police men and the night guard, who died on the spot.

The injured policemen are constables Harun-al-Rashid, Iman Ali, Abul Hossain, Alal Uddin and driver of the pick-up van Jasim Uddin.

# Freestyle in BNP for ticket from Kishoreganj-4

10 to vie: Feud intensifies after former judge Rejaul Karim Khan Chunnu's joining

MUKLESUR RAHMAN, Kishoreganj

Dogged by internal feud for long, it is virtually free for Kishoreganj Sadar BNP leaders to campaign and stage showdown for nomination. At least 10 are in the field now, engaged in mudslinging to prove their eligibility.

Kishoreganj Sadar BNP leader Masud Hilali, who lost the 2001 and 1996 polls to Awami League stalwart and martyred national leader Syed Nazrul Islam's son Syed Ashraful

remaining six parliamentary seats.

The intra-party feud in Kishoreganj continues for long in absence of a full fledged district committee for over 12 years, party sources said. For two years, it is run by a two-member committee headed by former education minister Dr. Osman Faruq as president and Waliullah Rabbani as secretary. A full fledged district committee could not be formed due to intra-party feud, they said.

well wisher of BNP and is campaigning. People know them and will resist them", Hilali said.

Former BNP lawmaker Ataur Rahman Khan is also campaigning, holding rallies and party workers' meetings in different areas.

On contact, Khan said he showed patience in last three elections by remaining silent. He said he would seek nomination this time. "I will decide whether I will continue in politics or not".



Masud Hilali



Ataur Rahman Khan



Rejaul Karim Khan Chunnu

Islam, staged a big showdown in the town on Sunday to prove his strength and public support.

On November 10, he told a press conference that he would resist if the alliance nominates any person other than him from Kishoreganj-3 constituency in the coming election. The constituency comprises Kishoreganj Municipality and 11 unions.

Hilali ran in the polls race in Kishoreganj-3 constituency thrice but won only in the February 15 controversial polls in 1996.

Kishoreganj-3 is important in the district for political parties because being the district headquarter, it has considerable influence in voting in

The feud intensified further recently with joining of former judge Rejaul Karim Khan Chunnu to the party. Rejaul Karim is known to be loyal to Osman Faruq. His joining the party and a rumour about getting nomination from Kishoreganj-3 has further angered groups opposed to Osman Faruq, party sources said.

At the November 10 press conference, Hilali said he will not accept any body except him to contest from the constituency. He also accused Osman Faruq of failing to form a full fledged committee and for creating division in the party.

"Rejaul Karim, blessed by a former minister, has suddenly appeared as a

District BNP secretary Waliullah Rabbani is also camping, hoping alliance ticket. Party sources however said he would not be able to draw a large number of party men.

Factions loyal to Osman and Rabbani are also holding programs.

In 2001 election, the BNP-led alliance won two seats out of seven in the district. Senior BNP leaders are doubtful about retaining the victory in the coming election is the inter-party feud persists.

## Outlaws kill 2 in Pabna

A CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least two people were killed by 'Lal Pataka' faction of the outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) in Ataikula upazila in two days.

The dead are Nizam Uddin, 30, a party rival and Afsar Ali Shikder, 50, a fish trader.

Police and local people said party rivals attacked Nizam Uddin in a tea stall at Raghurampur Bazaar Thursday night. Attackers chopped him by sharp weapons in the crowded area and left the place ensuring his death.

Ataikula Police said Nizam was a listed criminal.

On Wednesday, 'Lal Pataka' cadres kidnapped fish trader Afsar Ali for non-payment of toll and killed him, police said.



PHOTO: STAR

Journalists in Faridpur brought out a procession in the town yesterday demanding punishment of killers of Goutam Das, Bureau Chief of daily Samakal. He was killed on November 17 last year by terrorists.

## Journo gets death threat in Rajshahi

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University correspondent of daily Ittefaq yesterday received a death threat for publishing a report on Bnagladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

The reporter--Tuhinul Islam Tuhin--lodged a general diary (GD) with Motiher police station alleging that a person identifying him as a BCL League leader threatened to kill him if he sends such news again. He did not identify himself.

Rajshahi University Journalists Association in a statement condemned the threat and demanded arrest of the BCL leader.

Earlier on Thursday BCL RU unit president Ibrahim Hossain Moon also threatened Tuhin for publishing a report on BCL.

Moon however, sought apology later.

Tuhin in his report said that RU BCL is 'facing trouble on the campus due to pressure from Islamic Chhatra Shibir'.

Talking to newsmen, local BCL president Ibrahim Hossain Moon said none of BCL activists is involved in such incident.

# Police withdrawn from Khulna newspaper offices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Security forces have been withdrawn from all local newspaper offices and bureaus of Dhaka-based dailies in Khulna except Dainik Purbanchal and Khulna Press Club.

Police were deployed at the offices on orders from home ministry after the murder of journalist Manik Saha on January 15, 2004.

When asked, Assistant Commissioner (Detective Branch) of Khulna Metropolitan Police Zohurul Islam Chowdhury expressed his ignorance about withdrawal of policemen from Khulna bureau offices of Dainik Prothom Alo, Dainik Samakal, Dainik Jugantar, Dainik Amar Desh and two local dailies. He is in charge of security of media offices and newsmen in the city.

A top police official when asked said police were withdrawn due to shortage of manpower.

"We have readied a striking force which will monitor media security and pay frequent visits to (news-

per offices). Police can not be kept deployed due to shortage of manpower", he said.

Khulna Press Club secretary AK Hiru, who is a correspondent of Channel 1, said that he was not aware of such decision taken by KMP authorities.

Lives of Khulna journalists became insecure as extremists continued to give death threats for writing against their terrorist activities and killings in Khulna and other areas of south-western region.

Six journalists were killed in Khulna in last four years by extremists belonging to three outlawed parties. They are Khulna correspondent of the New Age Manik Saha, Senior crime reporter of Dainik Purbanchal Harun-ar-Rashid, Editor of Dainik Janmabhumi Humayun Kabir Balu, Khulna bureau chief of Dainik Sangram Shaikh Belaluddin, crime reporters of Dainik Anirvan Nahor Ali and Shukur Hossain.

9X2

12X3

4X3