

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 go either 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 Jatiya 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 Nilphamari, 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.

Similarly 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.

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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.

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