

NILPHAMARI-3 CONSTITUENCY

Jailed BNP leader's wife to contest Jamaat 'to prove her husband's innocence'

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Immediate past Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker from Nilphamari-3 constituency (Jaldhaka upazila and part of Kishoreganj) faces serious opposition from 4-party alliance partner BNP in the area.

Local BNP leaders demand nomination of Farida Begum, wife of imprisoned Jaldhaka upazila BNP president Anwarul Kabir Chowdhury.

Anwarul Kabir is serving life term in an alleged 'false' rape case.

BNP leaders claimed that the so-called rape incident and filing of the 'false' case was mastermind by the then Jamaat lawmaker from the area Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury to harass the BNP leader as part of a plan to keep him away from polls race in 2007.

Farida Begum went to Dhaka to purchase BNP nomination form from party central office. Central leaders told her that nomination paper would not be sold to any BNP candidate for Nilphamari-3 as the seat is kept for Jamaat-e-Islam candidate, she said while talking to this correspondent.

BNP has kept 45 Jatiya Sangsad seats countrywide for its allies and did not sell nomination



Farida Begum

papers to party men to contest from those constituencies.

The decision not to sell nomination paper for Nilphamari-3 has created a strong resentment in the party rank and file in Jaldhaka, some front ranking local leaders said.

They argued that Jamaat candidate won from the area in last election with BNP votes. BNP's position is better now than any other time. There is no reason to keep the seat for Jamaat in the coming election.

Jaldhaka BNP president Anwarul Kabir Chowdhury was an arch rival of Jamaat leader Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury for long.



Anwarul Kabir Chowdhury

Bloody clashes took place between BNP and Jamaat on several occasions in last four years on different issues. The rivalry is centred over alliance ticket from the constituency, the BNP leaders said.

They also claimed that the Jamaat leader always tried to harass Anwarul Kabir on different pleas. In August 1 last year, a housewife --Morsheda Begum-- filed a rape case against Anwarul Kabir Chowdhury.

On September 16 this year, the local Women and Children Repression Prevention Court convicted Kabir Chowdhury and six others to life term. The verdict angered BNP leaders and workers



Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury

who held demonstrations against the then Jamaat lawmaker, calling him the mastermind behind the 'conspiracy' and filing of a 'false' case against Anwarul Kabir.

During the trial of the case, local BNP leaders had alleged that the so-called complainant was sheltered and protected by activists of Jamaat and its student front Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Kabir's family and BNP leaders and workers claimed that Kabir is innocent.

BNP and its front organisations in Jaldhaka are united to field Farida Begum in the coming election and resist Jamaat leader Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, the BNP leaders told this correspondent seeking anonymity.

When asked, Farida Begum said if BNP does not respond to the demand of party men, she would run in the polls race as an independent candidate. "I want to prove that my husband was innocent and he is very popular in the area", she said.

Jaldhaka BNP secretary Amzad Hossain said, "It would be very difficult to make party workers campaign for Jamaat candidate (in coming election).

"They believed that Kabir is innocent and Mizanur Rahman is a conspirator" he added.

Upazila BNP acting president Omar Faruque said party leaders and workers have launched a massive campaign in the constituency in favour of Farida Begum. She has drawn sympathy of party men and people and will win the election, he claimed.

On Thursday, BNP held a rally at Jaldhaka upazila headquarters as part of campaign for Farida. It was addressed by, among others, Omar Faruque and Amzad Hossain.

The speakers said BNP and its front organisations will work for Farida and resist Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury even if he is nominated by the alliance.

When contacted, Mizanur Rahman refuted the allegation that he masterminded the incident and filing of the case against Kabir.

"I do not know anything about this. Kabir was convicted by court and he had nothing to do in this regard".

He also claimed that BNP men would campaign for him as per alliance directive if he is nominated as an alliance candidate from Nilphamari-3.

Khelafat Majlish seeks alliance ticket from Khulna-4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish, a component of four-party alliance has demanded nomination from Khulna-4 (Rupsha-Terokhada-Digholia) constituency.

In a statement issued here yesterday, Moulana Sakhawat Hossain, central joint secretary general of Khelafat Majlis demanded nomination from the constituency, claiming that his position is better than any BNP aspirant in the area.

Moulana Sakhawat has appealed to the BNP central high command to field him in Khulna-4 'to defeat any candidate of Awami League'.

BNP has lost its image among people due to intra-party squabbles. A wise and correct decision can save four-party alliance from losing the seat, he said.

President of Khulna district BNP Prof Mojibul Islam, former lawmaker Nurul Islam and central president of Chatra Dal Azizul Bari Helal are also vying for nomination from Khulna-4.

Prof Majidul Islam's supporters have already threatened to resign from BNP if he is not nominated, party sources said.

Besides, intra-party rivalry has damaged the image of former lawmaker Nurul Islam.

"In the present circumstances, I have the right to claim nomination from here as my party is one of the components of the alliance", Moulana Sakhawat said in the statement.

QUAMI JUTE MILL Workers give Dec 24 deadline to meet demands

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

About 4,000 employees and workers of Sirajganj Quami Jute Mills under the banner of Quami Jute Mills Mojdur Union yesterday brought out a procession and held a rally in the town to press their 8-point demand including procurement of sufficient jute to run the mill smoothly and payment of their arrear salaries.

The rally held at Bazaar Station was presided over by Abdul Khalek, president of the Mojdur Union.

Speakers at the rally said that, there is no stock of jute in the mill for about two weeks. Production is suspended and the mill authorities are planning to declare it laid-off, they alleged.

They said they were not paid in last 14 weeks and are passing days amid great hardships.

The gave a December 24 deadline to meet their demands and to take steps to run the mill smoothly and threatened of an indefinite siege program for non-compliance.

Among others, Sujabot Ali, Shahidul Islam, Zillur Rahman, Nabokumar and Mahub addressed the rally.

Later, the demonstrator's brought out a procession carrying bamboo sticks.

NETRAKONA UDICHI TRAGEDY

Victims yet to be rehabilitated, none punished

JAHANGIR ALAM, Netrakona

Netrakona tragedy is back to the memory with horrifying tales of murder of cultural activists by Islamist militant organisation Jamaatul Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMB).

Nine people were killed and over 50 injured in suicide bombing by JMB in front of Udichi office in the town on December 8 evening last year. The suicide bomber was also killed.

Different socio-cultural organisations held programmes recollecting the barbaric incident and demanding punishment of killers and rehabilitation of the victims.

Udichi Shilpi Gusty began the day by placing wreaths at the blast spot. Wearing black badges, its cultural activists then brought out a mourning procession in the town. Their programme also included a protest rally and a Ganasangeet (cultural event) in the evening on Shahid Minar premises to create awareness against violence in the name of religion.

The protest rally was presided over by Parimal Roy, convener of Netrakona Tragedy Day Udjapon Committee (committee to celebrate Netrakona Tragedy Day). It was addressed by leaders of different political parties, socio-cultural organisations and cul-



Blast victims Sudipta Pal Shelley and Haider Ali

tural activists.

The speakers included Netrakona district Awami League president Shamsuzzoha, its general secretary Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru, Netrakona CPB (Communist Party of Bangladesh) secretary Khandaker Anisur Rahman, Udichi secretary Sanuar Hossain Bhuiyan and ATM Razzak, member-secretary of Netrakona Tragedy Day Udjapon Committee.

The speakers criticised the then BNP-led four-party alliance government, saying it protected militants who killed people including cultural activists and judges in the name of religion. But none of the assailants behind the Netrakona tragedy has been punished, they said.

They also criticised the role of the then state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar, alleging that he tried to divert the case to save the militants.

They said most of the people injured in the blast are leading a miserable life but the government did little for them. Many are yet to get proper treatment.

Families of many victims are yet to get compensation from the government.

Two cases were filed after the incident. Police after investigation submitted charge sheet against five persons including JMB leader Siddiqui Islam Bangla Bhai and his wife Fahima Chowdhury. Both the cases were sent to Speedy Trial Tribunal in Dhaka.



Two factions of freedom fighters aligned with 14-party alliance (top) and 4-party alliance brought out separate processions in Barisal town marking liberation of the district from Pakistani occupation forces yesterday.

6.5X3

2.5X2

8X3

6X3

4X2