

AL bid to please all may end in pleasing none

Grand alliance to become big challenge in Satkhira

ABU AHMED, SATKHIRA

Possibility of joining of Ershad's Jatiya Party and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to the proposed Awami League-led 'grand alliance' has posed a big challenge to AL in sharing seats in at least three out of five constituencies in Satkhira in coming election.

Ershad's Jatiya Party (JP) wants to field candidates in Satkhira-2 (Sadar) and Satkhira-5 (Shyamnagar) while LDP is demanding Satkhira-1 (Talakarao) constituency, sources in the parties said.

Taking JP (Ershad) and LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) on board, it will be hard for AL to please local AL leaders and its allies like Workers Party (WP) and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD). AL will not give up more than one seat, according to its district leaders.

The new polarisation has also created a difference between AL and its allies. Prospective candidates of all the parties are campaigning in their respective areas, hoping to get nomination, they said.

AL won the three seats in 1996 election. In 2001, its candidates lost to 4-party alliance in the three seats but ran second in all the five seats in the district. "Now, our position is batter and we hope to win all the five seats in the district in coming election", said Satkhira district AL president of Engineer Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

AL candidates who ran second in the district in 2001 election are determined to try their luck this time, he said.

Engineer Sheikh Mujibur Rahman contested from Satkhira-1 constituency in last election.

"AL high-ups should not leave the seat (Satkhira-1) for any other ally as the constituency is a strong hold of AL and its nominee (Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) was elected four

times from there including 1996 and 1991 election", said district AL organising secretary Abdul Hamid, who is also Keralkata Union Parishad chairman in Kalaroa upazila.

LDP demands Satkhira-1 for its candidate Syed Didar Bakht, who was a state minister in Ershad government.

"AL leaders and activists will not accept him (Didar)", he claimed.

Besides, JP and LDP, Workers Party and JSD are also lobbying

Khristian Oikya Parishad seeking anonymity claimed that minority people of their communities will oppose Syed Didar Bakht as an alliance candidate because he allegedly harassed many members of a minority community implicating them in 'false cases' including the so-called 'Bangabhum' case' during Ershad's rule.

AL leader and Dera Union Parishad chairman Anwarul Islam said, "The party high-ups should nominate a candidate from among

and honest leader who strengthens party organisation at grassroots level.

Party men in the constituency will not accept any candidate other than Nazrul and if nominated this time, he will win as Jamaat did nothing for the area in last 15 years, said Satkhira Poura AL president Sheikh Nurul Haque and secretary Shahadat Hossain.

Jatiya Party will not be able to snatch the seat (Satkhira-2) from Jamaat because of its organisa-



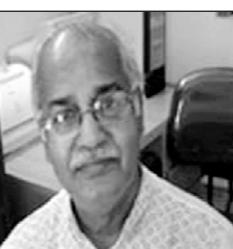
Obaidus Sultan



Abdul Jabbar



Mustafa Lutfullah



Syed Didar Bakht

14-party alliance ticket from the seat.

AL leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman however does not want to give a serious consideration to demands by Workers Party and JSD in Satkhira-1. "Our allies may not stick to their demands because of their organisational weakness", he said.

Front ranking leaders of AL-led 14-party alliance are vehemently opposing LDP's demand arguing that the newly floated party has no right to demand the seat as it has not yet been able to form a committee to face the election.

Satkhira district AL president Engineer Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, district Workers Party secretary advocate Mustafa Lutfullah and district JSD secretary Obaidus Sultan Bablu who are actively participating in the ongoing agitation are vying for 14-party alliance ticket from Satkhira-1, party insiders said.

Talking to this correspondent, some leaders of Hindu Bouddha

local AL leaders. Otherwise it will pay heavily".

Ticket aspirants advocate Mustafa Lutfullah and Obaidus Sultan Bablu said they will oppose LDP as it has no organisation in the area.

On contact, Syed Didar Bakht refuted the allegations and said 'vested quarters are hatching conspiracy' against him to tarnish his image. He said he is sure about getting LDP nomination as he did a lot of development works during his tenure.

JP sources said advocate Abdur Fazlul Haque, Shyamnagar upazila AL president Jagul Haider, secretary Abdul Kader, Khalilullah and Shafiu Azam Lenin are also lobbying for alliance ticket from Satkhira-5.

AL leaders at a recent meeting demanded nomination of a party man from Shyamnagar and conveyed their stance to the party high command, party sources said.

"If district AL president and general secretary are not given tickets, there will be a big crisis in Satkhira as this will also affect other constituencies in the district", said

Satkhira district AL secretary Nazrul Islam, who lost to Jamaat-e-Islami from Satkhira-2 in 1996 and 2001 elections, is determined to contest from there as an alliance candidate in coming election.

Sadar upazila AL president S M Shawkat Hossain and secretary Shahjahan Ali said they have demanded to party high-ups ticket for Nazrul Islam as he is a popular

local weakness, they claimed. Nazrul Islam is the only strong candidate to face Jamaat, they said.

District JP joint convener advocate Abdur Rouf however claimed that if nominated by the alliance, JP may win the seats.

JP central leader Golam Reza who ran third in Satkhira-5 in last election, is also lobbying for ticket from the area.

AL leaders former lawmaker AK Fazlul Haque, Shyamnagar upazila AL president Jagul Haider, secretary Abdul Kader, Khalilullah and Shafiu Azam Lenin are also lobbying for alliance ticket from Satkhira-5.

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"If district AL president and general secretary are not given tickets, there will be a big crisis in Satkhira as this will also affect other constituencies in the district", said

Satkhira AL vice-president Anwar Hossain. "We hope to get at least 4 out of 5 seats in the coming election", he claimed.



Capt Nurul Alam Gazi's wife Suraiya Zaman Gazi and other family members broke down (left) when his body was flown to Bakuria-Katakhali village in Bakerganj district in a army helicopter yesterday. He was killed in a crossfire between activists of PCJSS and UPDF in Rangamati (Story on page 16).



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

RU authorities' pro-Shibir stance triggers protests

RU CORRESPONDENT

The Progressive Teachers Society (PTS) at Rajshahi University and

students and cultural organisations yesterday protested the university authorities' decision allowing Islami Chhatra Shibir to hold cultural functions on the campus canceling the earlier given permission to Sammilita Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) to hold programmes on December 16 and 17, marking the Victory Day.

The RU unit of SSJ had scheduled cultural functions on the premises of Martyred Memorial Archive on December 16 and 17 after taking permission from director of the Teachers Students Cultural Centre (TSCC) on December 10.

On December 15, TSCC authorities sent a letter to SSJ president stating that Bikalpa Sangskritik Sangha (BSS), a cultural organisation of Islamic Chhatra Shibir, would hold functions at the venue on December 16 and 17.

On December 16, at about noon, Shibir-backed cultural organisation Bikalpa Sangskritik Sangha occupied the venue and the podium and took away loud speakers erected by SSJ. They later obstructed SSJ activists when they tried to go to the venue for their cultural programme.

The PTS in a statement yesterday protested the RU authorities' decision. It also expressed concern over what it called depriving SSJ and other progressive organisations from holding cultural

programmes on the campus for last several years and patronising Shibir and Jamaat-e-Islam.

This vitiated academic atmosphere on the campus, they said and called upon the university administration to play a neutral role.

The statement was singed by PTS convener Prof. Abdus Sobhan, Prof. Mizan Uddin, Prof. Mokhlesur Rahman, Prof. Bidhan Chandra Das, Prof. Ananda Kumar Saha, Prof. Shamsuddin Ilas and Prof. AHM Zihadul Karim.

The Rajshahi University unit of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday staged separate demonstrations on the campus protesting the Shibir vandalism and foiling of scheduled cultural programmes of SSJ Sunday evening.

The SSJ took out a procession on the campus and paraded different streets protesting the Shibir vandalism allegedly under the RU authorities' patronisation.

At the rally held in front of the Central Library, speakers said Shibir wants to ban all progressive cultural activities on the campus and demanded immediate removal of TSCC Director Abdur Rahman Siddiqi.

They also threatened to launch a tougher agitation together with other progressive student organisations against the TSCC director if he is not removed.

BCL also held a rally protesting Sunday's incident and called upon the RU authorities to stop 'Shibir terrorism' on the campus.

They also demanded punishment to the persons responsible for Sunday's incident. The rally was addressed by BCL RU general secretary Ayeen Uddin and other party leaders.

Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, RU Drama Group, Udcchi, Gonoshishi Sangstha and other cultural organisations in statements also condemned Shibir for Sunday's incident and demanded punishment of persons responsible.

RCC honours 250 freedom fighters

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) accorded a reception to 250 freedom fighters of Rajshahi Sunday night, marking the Victory Day.

RCC Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu handed over crests and cash awards to the war heroes.

He also handed over letters to the freedom fighters waiving holding tax and water supply tariff.

Earlier, while announcing the city corporation budget for the current financial year, the mayor kept a provision to waive holding tax and water tariffs for free-



A four-day exhibition of children's paintings on the Liberation War at Cox's Bazar Public Library ground marking the Victory Day draws visitors in large numbers every day.

dom fighters residing in the city.

Freedom fighters working with RCC also received Tk 2,500 prize bonds each for their outstanding contribution to the corporation's activities.

The function was held at the Green Plaza of Nagan Bhaban with RCC Chief Executive Officer Korban Ali in the chair. It was attended by RCC officials and elite of the city.

The function was also addressed by treasurer of Bangladesh Mukti Joddha Sangsad and Rajshahi district commander Nazrul Islam Khoka and its city unit commander Muhammad Penu.