

Alliance with JP to sweep polls in greater Rangpur

AL leaders tell The Daily Star

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

Most of the leaders of 14- party alliance in northern districts hailed Jatiya Party's joining the 'grand alliance' led by Awami League.

With JP (Ershad) on board, the alliance will have a landslide victory in greater Rangpur in coming election, bringing about a great change in the political scenario, they said.

A number of AL ticket aspirants in different constituencies in the region were however skeptical, fearing that they might be deprived of nomination as JP would demand all Jatiya Sangsad seats except 3 or 4 in greater Rangpur region.

AL should keep some of the constituencies for party candidates in the region, the aspirants said while talking to this correspondent yesterday.

Former parliament member from Rangpur-5 constituency (Muthapukur upazila) HN Ashiqur

Rahman, who is also treasurer of central Awami League, said Jatiya Party's joining the grand alliance would 'help free the country from clutches of BNP-Jamaat misrule'.

"Awami League leaders must sacrifice for greater interest of the nation as change in politics is the prime need at the moment", he said over telephone.

"Once there is some qualitative change in politics, socio-economic condition (of people in the region) will change gradually.

"We should place national interest above party interest", he said.

Ashiqur Rahman was defeated by JP candidate Shah Mohammad Solaiman Alam in 2001 from Rangpur-5. He however won the 1996 byelection defeating JP candidate Shah Alam.

Former joint secretary of Rangpur district Awami League Mosaddeque Hosain Bablu said, 14-party alliance will be stronger with JP's joining.

He said, "The BNP-led alliance patronised Islamist militants who created chaos in the country during last five years. We need more strength to neutralise them and Jatiya Party's joining will be a positive factor in this regard."

Kurigram Awami League president Maj. Gen. (Rtd) AMS Amin said all major political parties have come on the same platform to 'foil the BNP-Jamaat conspiracy to return to power any how. Amin, also a member of AL advisory committee, said, "Anti-liberation forces have united to destroy the spirit of Liberation War. We welcomed Ershad as he has vowed to join us in the fight."

Asked about nomination, he said, "I am not thinking about nomination right now. Rather, all AL leaders are now seriously thinking how to save the country from a conspiracy and carry forward the democratic process."

Amin lost to Jatiya Party candidate Tajul Islam Chowdhury in 2001 election from Kurigram-2 (Sadar upazila) constituency with about 19000 votes.

Lalmonirhat Awami League secretary Motiur Rahman said 14-party alliance candidates will win in all constituencies in five northern districts if JP stays with it till the election.

Rangpur JSD president Dr. Ekramul Hoque Swapan declined to make any comment about Ershad's joining 14-party alliance.

"It is too early to comment on it because we are to look into the ground on which JP joined the alliance."

Goutom Roy, acting secretary of district JSD however said, "We hail Ershad as he wants to fight to keep the democratic process on".

Shibir vandalises RU Udichi centre

RU CORRESPONDENT

Islami Chhtra Shibir activists vandalised Udichi rehearsal room at Mamtajuddin Arts Building on Rajshahi University campus and damaged instruments, display boards and posters there yesterday evening.

Protesting this, several hundred cultural activists held an instant protest rally on the campus. They blamed the university administration for the incident, saying Shibir is continuing its atrocities under its protection.

Campus sources said, at around 5 pm, Shibir activists equipped with firearms stormed into the Udichi rehearsal room, damaged and looted cultural instruments.

The protest rally was addressed by RU Sammilito Sangskritik Jote president Saiful Islam, its secretary Amit Kumer, Prof Moloy Bhomik, Prof Abu Bakar and Abu Sayem.



PHOTO: STAR

Sammilito Sangskritik Jote in Moulvibazar organised a cultural function at the Shaheed Minar in the town yesterday marking liberation of the district from Pakistani occupation forces on this day in 1971.

18 BNP, Jamaat men submit nomination forms in 4 dists

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Eighteen leaders of BNP and its ally Jamaat-e-Islami submitted nomination papers to returning officers in Khulna, Gaibandha, Satkhira and Dinajpur yesterday to contest in the coming election.

Besides, two 'listed criminals' also submitted nomination papers as independent candidates in Khulna, our staff correspondent reported.

Joint secretary general of central BNP and former whip Ashraf Hossain submitted nomination paper from Khulna-3 constituency, according to district election officials.

Khulna city Jamaat Ameer Prof Mian Golam Parwar also submitted nomination papers to Upazila Nirbahi Officers in Dumuria and Phultala to run in the coming polls from Khulna-5 constituency.

Jamaat central leader Shah Mohammad Ruhul Ouddus submitted his nomination papers to Paikgacha UNO yesterday and to Koira UNO on Tuesday as a candidate from Khulna-6.

'Listed terrorists' Mohammad Hossain Mukta and Shabakash Mondol submitted nomination papers yesterday as candidate from Khulna-2 and Khulna-5 constituencies, the election officials said.

In Gaibandha, four Jamaat-e-Islami leaders and a former BNP lawmaker submitted nomination papers to returning officers.

Jamaat leader and immediate past lawmaker Abdul Aziz submitted nomination paper from Gaibandha-1 (Sunderganj). Party leaders Aminul Islam submitted nomination paper from Gaibandha-2 (Gaibandha Sadar) and Nazrul Islam from Gaibandha-3 (Palashbari-Sadullapur). Jamaat leader Nurunnabi Prodhan and former lawmaker Shameem Kaiser Linkon of BNP submitted nomination papers from Gaibandha-4 (Gobindaganj).

Submission of nomination papers by Jamaat men angered BNP leaders. Some of them told this correspondent that Jamaat did this without consulting them. Some BNP man may submit nomination papers in the constituencies, they told our correspondent.

In Satkhira, four Jamaat leaders and one each from BNP and BJP submitted nomination papers yesterday to contest from five constituencies in the district.

District BNP convenor and former BNP lawmaker Habibul Islam Habib and former Jamaat lawmaker Ansar Ali submitted nomination papers from Satkhira-1 (Tala-Kalaroa).

Former Jamaat lawmakers Abdul Khaleque Mondal, Riasat Ali Biswas and Gazi Nazrul Islam submitted nomination papers from Satkhira-2 (Sadar), Satkhira-3 (Assassuni) and Satkhira- 5 (Shyamnagar) constituencies respectively, sources at district

election office said.

Former BJP lawmaker Kazi Alauddin submitted nomination paper for Satkhira- 4 (Kalgongj-Debhata).

They submitted their nomination papers today as the 14-party called a countrywide hartal today, BNP leader Akbar Ali said.

In Dinajpur, Jamaat leaders Md. Aftab Uddin Mollah and Md Azizur

Rahman Chowdhury submitted nomination papers from Dinajpur-1 (Birganj and Kaharal upazilas) and Dinajpur-6 (Ghoraghat, Birampur, Hakimpur and Nawabganj upazilas) respectively.

They submitted nomination papers to their respective election offices, according to sources at Dinajpur election official.

In Dinajpur-3 (Sadar), district

BNP secretary Mofazzal Hossain Dulal bought nomination form for former prime minister and party chief Khalada Zia yesterday. Dinajpur poura Jamaat secretary Md. Tamiz Uddin Ahmed also collected nomination form to contest from Dinajpur-3. Tamiz Uddin himself bought the form yesterday, election officials said.



PHOTO: STAR

Arya Sangeet Samity, a cultural organisation in Chittagong, brought out a colourful rally in the city yesterday marking 100 years of cultural activity by it.

AL LEADER MURDER

Hartal observed in Bagmara

RU CORRESPONDENT

A dawn to dusk hartal, called by Awami League-led 14-party combine, was observed in Bagmara yesterday.

The hartal was called in protest against murder of Goalkandia Union Parishad chairman and local Awami League leader Jahangir Alam Sarker allegedly by outlaws belonging to Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) on the night of December 10.

During hartal hours, buses and other vehicles kept off all roads to Rajshahi and nature through Bagmara.

Educational institutions and commercial centers also remained closed.

The local 14-party units brought out several processions in Tahirpur, Bagmara and Bhabaniganj areas protesting the murder and demanding arrest and punishment of the killers.

Bagmara upazila AL president Abdus Sobhan, general secretary Jakirul Islam Shantu and party leader Al Mamun addressed a rally in Bhabaniganj Bazar. At Tahirpur, the rally was addressed by upazila AL president Monsur Rahman Mridha and secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

They urged the caretaker government to free Bagmara from the grip of extremists and Islamist militants.

Jahangir Alam's murder triggered protests in the whole upazila. Earlier, processions were held in all the 16 unions in Bagmara.

Jahangir's wife Anwara Begum, mother Jobeda Khatun, and brother Alamgir Hossain at a press conference in Rajshahi last week alleged that their family members are being threatened since the murder.

Hunger strike by supporters for nomination

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

About 200 supporters of BNP leader and Srimongal Municipality Chairman Md Ahad Mian continued heir hunger strike for three days till yesterday demanding nomination for him from Moulvibazar 4 (Srimongal and Kamalganj) constituency in the coming election.

Twenty-seven female members of different Union Parishads in Srimongal and Kamalganj upazilas and three female commissioners of Srimongal municipality joined the hunger yesterday.

The hunger strike is being staged at the Chowmuhana Square in Srimongal and at the Sheheed Minar in Kamalganj, sources said.

The strikers said they will continue their programme till 4-party alliance nomination is announced for Ahad Mian.

Earlier, Ahad Mian declared his candidature from the constituency.

Ahad Miah, also vice-president of Moulvibazar district BNP, was a probable candidate of BNP.

In September, Mujibur Rahman Choudhury (Hazi Mujib) joined BNP from Awami League. Enjoying BNP stalwart Saifur Rahman's blessings, Haji Mujib has become a contender for alliance ticket in the area, party sources said.



PHOTO: STAR

Grameen Swapna, a local NGO, distributing warm clothes among the poor recently at Rajibpur in Kurigram district.

10X3

6X3

6.5X3