

AL, BNP 'rebels' mount agitation for tickets

Hartal in Sirajganj, Narail, Netrakona: Protesters march streets wearing burial cloth in Chandpur

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Agitation by nomination aspirants of different parties in their respective constituencies in several districts continued yesterday.

The staged show of strength by holding rallies, bringing out processions, blocking highways and enforcing hartal demanding nomination and cancellation of tickets to party rivals. Hartal was enforced in Sirajganj, Narail and Netrakona yesterday.

In Chandpur, several thousand Awami League leaders and workers brought out a procession and held a rally at the Shapla Chattar in the town yesterday rejecting the 'grand alliance' ticket to Prof Md. Abdullah and demanding nomination of AL leader Md. Yusuf Gazi from Chandpur-4 constituency (Sadar and Humchar upazilas).

Abdullah, a former BNP lawmaker recently joined the Liberal Democratic Party led by dissident BNP leaders Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury and Col (rtd) Oli Ahmed.

Yusuf Gazi is former president of Chandpur district Jubo League.

Speakers at the rally said leaders and activists of Awami League and its front organisation

will boycott Abdullah if the nomination is not changed, a correspondent reported.

AL leaders advocate Mojibur Rahman, advocate Anwar Gazi, Mokbul Maji, Jubo League leader Md. Ali Maji, Boji Mollah, Jafar Ahmed and Jahangir addressed the rally, among others.

Supporters of Md. Yusuf Gazi came from far away places to attend the programme, party mens said.

Yusuf Gazi ran second in 2001 election, according to election officials.

On the previous day, several thousand supporters of BNP ticket aspirant Shaukat Farid Ahmed brought out a big procession in the town wearing burial cloth for his nomination from Chandpur-4 constituency. They demanded cancellation of the nomination to district BNP president and former lawmaker AS Sultan Titu.

In Chandpur-3 constituency, supporters of 'rebel' BNP leader Sabur Khan blocked Comilla-Chandpur highway at Baburhat on Thursday for cancellation of four-party alliance nomination of GM Fazlul Haq.

In Narail-1 constituency (Kalia upazila), a day-long hartal was enforced by supporters of district BNP senior vice-president Jahangir.

Alam Biswas protesting nomination of former BNP lawmaker Dhirendra Nath Saha. The hartal was observed peacefully and no untoward incident was reported, a correspondent reported.

Both Jahangir Alam and Dhirendra Nath submitted nomination papers to contest the coming election from the constituency.

In Nareakona-5 constituency (Purbadhal and Dhubaura upazilas), Awami League activists loyal to grand alliance ticket aspirants retired DIG Abdul Hannan Khan and Principal Sirajul Islam enforced a half-day hartal in Purbadhal upazila yesterday protesting nomination of Warasat Hossen Belal from the constituency.

During hartal, they also held several meetings in the area, vowing to resist Belal, and brought out processions. There was chase and counter-chase between pickets and police at some areas of the upazila as the hartal enforcers stopped traffic on roads.

Road communication from Purbadhal to other parts of the district remained suspended. Both Abdul Hannan Khan and Principal Sirajul Islam submitted nomination papers to contest the constituency but they were denied ticket by the 4-party alliance.

On Thursday, several thousand Awami League leaders and activists brought out a procession and held a rally in Netrakona town rejecting the nomination of central AL leader Manjur Kader from Netrakona-3 constituency (Atpara and Kendua upazilas).

They demanded nomination of party leader and industrialist Iftakaruddin Pintu, who sought grand alliance ticket from the area and submitted nomination paper.

The procession was led by Kairul Islam, former president of Atpara upazila Awami League;

Abu Taher, chairman of Ashujia Union Parishad in Kendua and also vice-president of Kendua upazila AL and six other UP chairmen in Kendua upazila.

They paraded slogans against Manjur Kader.

After the procession and the rally, they held a press conference at the News Media Centre at Chutabazar in the town, where they alleged that Manjur Kader is unpopular and not involved in political activities.

They urged the AL high command to nominate Iftakaruddin Pintu in the interest of people of the area and the grand alliance.

AL accord with Khelafat protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Bangladesh Hindu, Bouddha, Christian Oikya Parishad here yesterday protested the five-point agreement signed between Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis recently.

Held at Aqar estate here in the morning with Dr Atul Chandra Das in the chair, the meeting termed the agreement as against the spirit of Liberation War as well as against the spirit of a secular, democratic and welfare state. They urged AL to scrap the accord immediately. They feared if the deal is implemented, it would destroy democracy, the spirit of Liberation War and tradition.

Among others, Hindu, Bouddha, Christian Oikya Parishad secretary Utam Kumar Das, freedom fighter Manas Kanti Datta, Advocate Tapan Kumar Sukul and CPB leader Subhas Chandra addressed the meeting.



PHOTO: STAR

Torun Nagorik Uddog, a youth organisation, formed a human chain in Chittagong city yesterday demanding cancellation of Awami League's recent agreement with Khelafat Majlis.



(Clockwise) A BNP aspirant's supporters wearing burial cloth block a road in Chandpur town, Awami League activists lie on road during hartal in Purbadhal in Netrakona protesting nomination to a party leader, BNP men form human chain in Mymensingh town demanding change in nomination and an Awami League procession in Gaibandha-3 for ticket to their leader.

Fair polls not possible under caretaker govt

All five candidates of 'grand alliance' in Rajshahi tell press conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

All candidates of Awami League-led 'grand alliance' from five constituencies in Rajshahi have expressed their doubt over holding of a free and fair election under the caretaker government because of its 'biased role'.

At a press conference they said they were feeling 'insecure' and apprehending intimidation of voters of minority and indigenous communities by candidates of four-party alliance and their musclemen.

'Grand alliance' candidates Sardar Amjad Hossain, AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, Fazle Hossain Badsha, Omar Faruk Chowdhury and Tajul Islam Mohammad Faruk spoke at the press conference held at a restaurant in the city Thursday evening.

Many other leaders of Awami League and its allies were present. They also alleged massive flaws in the voter lists in several constituencies. Citing an example, they said 2500 voters were shown in the address of AI Amin student mess in ward no. 30 in Rajshahi city though then mess can not accommodate more than 50 people.

They said they lodged complaints with the election office about 5000 illegal voters at 29 student messes in the city but that was not corrected.

Most of the police and administration officials are still following orders of four-party alliance leaders, they alleged.

AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, a candidate from Bagha and Charkhat area said he apprehends of harassment of his party men by the law enforcing agencies and BNP-Jamaat cadres.

Fazle Hossain Badsha, vying from Rajshahi city and Pabna upazila seat said, four-party alliance candidates are distributing money among voters. He demanded their arrest.

Omar Faruk Chowdhury, contesting from Tanore and Godagari area, protested the decision to keep mobile phone network closed on the election day and the order for deposit of legal arms of candidates.

Tajul Islam Mohammad Faruk claimed that police and election officials were playing partisan roles. He said, 18 people accused in Awami League leader Zahangir murder case were released on bail while Zahangir's brother Alamgir was accused in a 'false case'.

PSTU admission from Jan 6

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Admission to first year honours courses in Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) for the 2006-07 session will begin on January 6, university sources said.

Admission will continue till January 10, the source said.

The university authorities published result of the admission test on December 27 which was held on December 26. As many as 1,765 candidates vied for 225 seats in the faculties of Agriculture, Business Administration and Management (BAM) and Computer Science and Engineering (CSE).

Candidates selected from the waiting list will be admitted on January 13-15, university sources added.

Nomination to GF leader protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) here yesterday protested nomination of Gano Forum (GF) leader Mofizul Islam Khan Kamal as a candidate of the grand alliance.

Several thousands of party activists took out a procession here protesting the nomination. A rally was held at Manikganj bus stand on the Dhaka-Arinca Highway where speakers demanded candidature of JSD leader Iqbal Hossain Khan instead of Kamal. They feared the grand alliance might lose the seat if his candidature is not changed.

BNP activists tossed seven bombs at Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) offices in Mirpur and ransacked it, sources in JSD claimed. They also vandalised at least 22 shops at the upazila headquarters during the hartal.

The men declared to resist JSD president and 'grand alliance' candidate the Hasanul Haq Inu from Kushtia-2 constituency.

Inu will fight four-party alliance candidate and former BNP lawmaker Sahidul Islam. Shahidul is also president of Kushtia district BN.

Police had arrested Arman, chairman of Dharmapur Union Parishad and vice-president of Mirpur upazila BNP, when he was allegedly leading an attack on Mirpur JSD office Thursday evening.

Police said Arman is a 'listed criminal' but could not be arrested as he was allegedly sheltered by Sahidul.

On Thursday, Arman along with about 50 party men attacked the JSD office and asked party leaders and activists there to leave the constituency, JSD sources claimed. Some of the JSD men were also beaten, they added.

When the news spread, JSD activists rushed to the spot and were locked in a clash with BNP men.

On information, Mirpur police rushed to the spot and nabbed Arman. Police also charged baton on JSD activists when they laid a siege to the police station demanding punishment of Arman.

Later, additional police forces from district headquarter went there to control the situation as several thousand JSD activists and supporters came on streets to protest the incident.

Arman was sent to Kushtia jail yesterday.

During the hartal, BNP activists attacked and ransacked the JSD office.

The grand alliance yesterday protested the incident and demanded arrest of those involved in the attack on JSD office.

A tense situation was prevailing in the upazila yesterday.

4TH DAY OF STRIKE BY JUTE MILL WORKERS FOR SALARY

Rail slippers torched, vehicles damaged in Khalishpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Angry workers and employees of jute mills went berserk yesterday in different areas of Khalishpur industrial belt on the fourth day of their rail-road blockade programme to press their eight-point demand including payment of arrear salaries and Eid bonus. The agitation programme was announced earlier by the Patkai Sangram Parishad (PSP), which also gave a call for hartal in the industrial belts of Khulna and Jessor districts as part of movement.

The agitating workers while in a procession at Khalishpur damaged many autorickshaws, roadside shops and bill boards pelting stones and hitting those with clubs.

They removed rail tracks and set rail slippers on fire at Kashipur New Road under Khalishpur thana at about 9.30 in the morning.

Life was virtually paralysed in the industrial belts during the

dawn-to-dusk hartal yesterday.

Production in all eight state owned jute mills in Khulna-Jessore industrial belt is suspended since the blockade programme began four days ago.

Leaders of the Patkai Sangram Parishad (PSP) said workers and employees of jute mills will not compromise this time and quit streets until their eight-point demand is met.

They want payment of all arrears and Eid bonus by December 31. Otherwise, the situation will turn more violent in the entire industrial belt which may go beyond control of authorities, PSP convenor Sarder Motaharuddin said.

Meanwhile, top officials at jute mills in the area have been provided with security at their houses as they are feeling insecure with their families.

Killing of Somo Odhikar leader protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Somo Odhikar Andolan (SOA), a platform for Bengali settlers fighting for equal rights in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), yesterday protested the recent killing of its leader Kina Mohon Chakma and Ghilachhari army camp commander Captain Nurul Azam Gazi.

Kina Mohon Chakma was killed by unidentified armed miscreants on December 1 while Captain Nurul Azam Gazi of army was killed by armed activists of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) on December 17.

SOA activists brought out a procession in the hill town and submitted a memorandum to the Chief Advisor (CA) through Rangamati Deputy Commissioner (DC) containing their three-point demand which include removal of Santu Larma from CHT Regional Council, Taskforce and CHT Hill District Council.

Earlier, a protest rally was held in front of the DC office where speakers blamed Santu Larma for the killing by his armed cadres. They demanded immediate arrest of the killers and exemplary punishment to them, otherwise they threatened to boycott election and resist all election related activities in Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari.

Among others, SOA president Mostak Ahmed Chowdhury, vice president Moniul Alam Humayun, secretary Jahangir Kamal, joint secretary Md Yunus addressed.

BNP, Jamaat close ranks in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Jamaat Prof Abdul Matin, city president of Chhatra Shibir Tariqul Islam Piku, Khanjahan Ali thana BNP president Mir Kaied Ali and ward commissioner Shahinul Islam Pakhi.

Sources in both Jamaat and BNP said Ashraf Hossain apologised for what happened on September 14 last year during a function held in Khalishpur Hardboard Mill in presence of Jamaat Ameer and former industries minister Matir Rahman Nizami.

Both sides agreed to 'forgive and forget' the past sour relations.

At the meeting, leaders of Khulna Jamaat assured alliance candidate Ashraf Hossain of their full support in the coming election in Khulna-3.



PHOTO: STAR

Supply of sacrificial animals in Chittagong city was adequate but buyers were seen shying away at Shagorika cattle market yesterday due to high prices.