

# Mudslinging by Kishoreganj BNP bigwigs over reform

*Khaleda loyalists claim rank and file support*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Front ranking BNP leaders in Kishoreganj are divided over reform issue, one faction supporting expelled secretary general Mannan Bhuiyan and the other siding with newly appointed secretary Khandaker Delwar Hossain.

The reformists are led by former education minister Dr. Osman Faruk and a few former lawmakers Mojuribul Rahman Monju and Shafiqul Islam. Dr. Osman is president of Kishoreganj BNP.

Shafiqul Islam was elected lawmaker from Kishoreganj-7 constituency (Bhairab-Kulaichar) in the controversial February 15 election in 1996.

Party sources here said the three reformist leaders led by Dr. Osman Faruk hardly visit their areas though they are seen on TV at meetings at Mannan Bhuiyan's residence in Dhaka.

Monju was last seen in the area when he came to Kishoreganj to appear before court in a case. He is on bail in several cases for alleged involvement in murder and extortion.

The other faction is led by former Iawm al-Kursi Maj (rtd) Akhteruzzaman Ronjon and Ataur Rahman Khan. Ronjon was elected from Kishoreganj-2 constituency (Katiadi) in 1996 and Ataur Rahman Khan won the 1090 polls from Kishoreganj-3 (Kishoreganj Sadar).

Talking to this correspondent, party leaders aligned with Delwar claimed that they muster support from all presidents, secretaries and conveners of 13 upazila BNP committees as the BNP led by Khaleda Zia is the mainstream party and upholds the ideology of the party's founder late president Ziaur Rahman.

They claimed that Ronjon keeps



DR. OSMAN FARUK



MAJ (rtd) AKHTERUZZAMAN

regular contact with party leaders and activists in the district.

BNP bagged only two seats out of seven in Kishoreganj in 2001 parliamentary election by Dr. Osman Faruk from Kishoreganj-4 (Karingonj-Tarail) and the other by Mojuribul Rahman Monju from Kishoreganj-6 (Nikly-Bajipur).

Talking to this correspondent, Maj. (rtd) Ronjon alleged that during BNP-Janmaat government, Dr. Osman and Mojuribul Rahman Monju abused power and were involved in corruption. They have now turned reformists to save themselves, he claimed.

Dr. Osman had earlier criticised the party chief's decision calling it 'undemocratic' when she made her younger brother Sayeed Iskander a vice-president of the party.

His comment drew flak from some party leaders including Akhteruzzaman Ronjon.

District Jubo Dal convener Jahangir Alam Molla, who reportedly supports Delwar, said it is not surprising that Shafiqul Islam is with Mannan Bhuiyan. "He is deserted by party leaders and activists,

by the leadership of Khaleda Zia.

Ranjan claimed. He said he keeps regular contact with party men at all levels, who are behind Khaleda Zia's leadership.

Maj. (rtd) Ranjan said, Dr. Osman Faruk was a newcomer in BNP and he almost ruined the party in the district by dissolving different upazila committees which were not loyal to him or his men.

Dr. Osman tried to introduce Dk. Mohanagar BNP secretary Abdus Salam as a BNP candidate from Kishoreganj-1 (Hussainpur-Pakundia) but all party men rejected him. To take revenge, Osman dissolved party committees in Hussainpur and Pakundia upazilas, Ranjan said.

Police sources said Monju faces several cases for murder and extortion, filed with Nikli and Bajipur police stations.

Jubo Dal leader Jahangir Alam Molla claimed that Shafiqul Islam is not a factor in his own constituency as he has a few supporters. It matters little if he supports Mannan Bhuiyan, Molla said.

Akhteruzzaman Ronjon, who is also a former president of district BNP, said Dr. Osman Faruk's alliance with expelled Mannan Bhuiyan "may mislead some party men for time being". He is deserted by party leaders and activists,

by the leadership of Khaleda Zia.

Contacted, district BNP secretary Wali Ullah Rabbani said, he had no communication with district BNP president Dr. Osman Faruk.

Rabbani said, he and his followers support Khaleda Zia and had appointment of Khondokar Delwar as secretary general.

This correspondent also contacted Hussainpur upazila BNP convener Abdul Kuddus Hera, Karimganj upazila BNP president Rafiqul Rahman and secretary Monsur Ahmed and Kishoreganj Sadar upazila BNP president Masud Hillali. They said most party men in their areas are united under the leadership of Khaleda Zia.

## Jaldhaka food inspector held for bribery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Police arrested Jaldhaka upazila food inspector yesterday on charge of taking bribe from dealers for issuing delivery order (DO) to draw rice from government godown under open market sale (OMS).

Police said food inspector Hamidul Haque Poddar realised Tk 70 from each of 13 dealers to issue delivery order to draw their allotments from the local LSD godown. He realised a total amount of Tk 1,050 from the dealers.

Being informed, Jaldhaka Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Shahidul Islam Bhuiyan rushed to the food inspector's office and caught the food inspector at 12:30 pm along with the bribe money. The UNO handed over the food inspector to police in presence of local journalists.

Police said the accused food inspector confessed to the wrongdoing but said he took the bribe on orders from upazila food controller Faruque Islam. The UNO filed a case with Jaldhaka police station in this connection.

Rafiqul Islam, who was secretary of the dissolved party committee in Hussainpur upazila, also echoed the same sentiment.

Maj. (rtd) Ranjan also ridiculed Dr. Osman Faruk, saying, "He led a two-member district committee comprising himself (as president) and Wali Ullah Rabbani as secretary."

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# Prof Taher murder trial stayed due to date error

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Trial of Prof STaher Ahmed murder case has been stayed due to error in gazette notification.

Six persons including Rajshahi University teacher Mia Mohammad Mohiuddin and Islami Chhatra Shibir leader Mahbubul Alam Salehi are accused in the case.

The Court of District and Sessions Judge in Rajshahi that ordered the stay on Sunday said the stay would continue until the government corrects the mistakes regarding essential dates in the gazette notification.

The government in the gazette notification recently opted for holding trial of the case by Rajshahi Speedy Trial Tribunal.

According to the prosecution, Prof Taher, a senior teacher of geology and mining department, was killed on February 1, 2006 and police recovered his body from a sewer behind his house on RU campus on February 3.

According to the prosecution, Prof Mia Muhammad Mohiuddin of the same department, and former RU Shibir president Mahbubul Alam Salehi master-

mined the killing of Taher, promising killers with computers and jobs.

Three killer suspects Jahangir, Salam and Nazmul in judicial confessional statements confirmed Mohiuddin and Salehi's involvement. Azimuddin Munshi is another accused in the case.

Prosecution lawyers said the date complexity might delay the trial for an indefinite period while the accused are trying to influence the case.

"We are worried as an influential accused [in the case] is enjoying bail and there was pressure for saving Shibir leader Salehi," said a lawyer seeking anonymity.

The case was transferred it to the district judge's court on August 20.

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