



ELECTION IN THE SYLHET AIR

AL swings into campaign, BNP lags a little behind

JP targets 8 out of 19 seats in region

IQBAL SIDDIQUE, Sylhet

Awami League has set its candidates in most of the constituencies in the region. The candidates have already started campaign in their respective areas. However, in some seats party nominees are facing trouble from the grassroots and rival aspirants while some nominations are yet to be announced.

On the other hand, BNP is a little behind in selecting candidates in some constituencies, while party activists in both the camps are active for their leaders. However, both the camps may face serious problems due to mismatch with the alliance partners in some constituencies.

In Sylhet-1 (City corporation and Sadar upazila) AL led alliance had already been on the campaign for AMA Muhit. Things became complicated for BNP-led four-party alliance as former finance minister Saifur Rahman Saturday expressed his reluctance over contesting from Sylhet and opted for contesting from the Moulvibazar-3 constituency (Moulvibazar Sadar and Rajnagar).

However, most of the party leaders including the 3 lawmakers of 2001 in Sylhet district are no longer with Saifur this time.

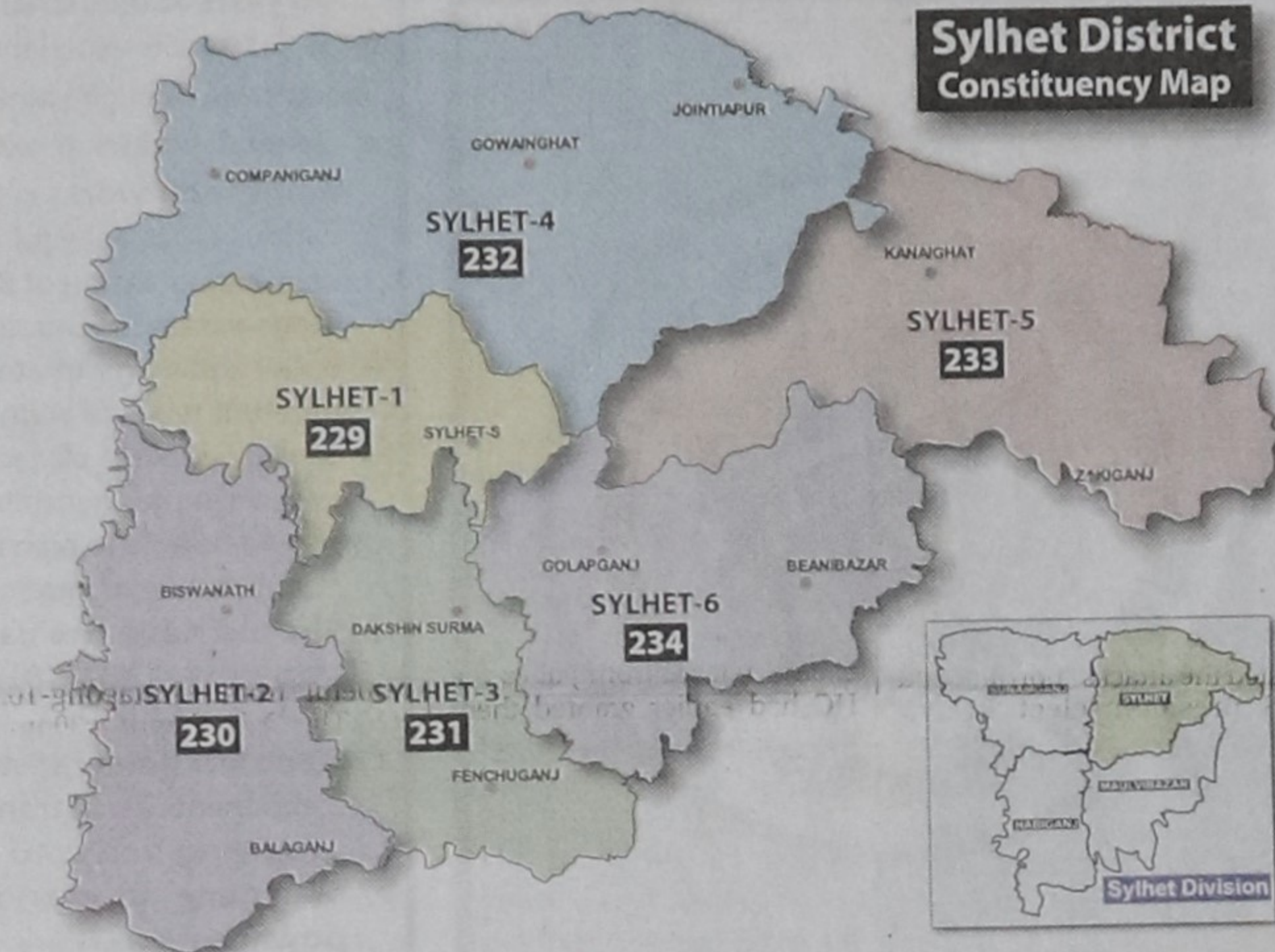
Jamaat had already said, if Saifur were dropped, they would press for the seat.

In Sylhet-2 (Biswanath and Balaganj) BNP is comparatively safe with its district convener former lawmaker M Ilyas Ali.

But, the AL is in trouble here as they had fielded UK AL joint secretary Shofiqur Rahman Chowdhury while



NEWAL FACES IN SYLHET (From top left clockwise): Shafiqur Rahman, MA Mannan, Matiuir Rahman, Moazem Hossain Ratan, Syed Mohsin, Shamim, Abu Zahir and Abdul Majid Khan.



Source: The Mappa Ltd.

grassroots wanted former upazila chairman Muhibur Rahman.

In Sylhet-3, BNP as well as the alliance is in a little better position with former lawmaker Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury. But, the AL has fielded Russel Shishu Kishore Sangathan central secretary general Mahmud Us Samad Chowdhury again, while grand alliance partner JP would press for their president member Atiqur Rahman Atique. JP has been pressing for 8 out of 19 seats in the region, Sylhet-3 topping the list, they added.

In Sylhet-4 (Jaintapur, Gowainghat and Companiganj) AL's former lawmaker Imran Ahmed has been on the campaign to face BNP's 2001 lawmaker Dilder Hossain Selim.

In Sylhet-5 (Zakiganj and Kanaighat) 4-party alliance has Jamaat's 2001 lawmaker Moulana Farid Uddin Chowdhury, having no other aspirant from the BNP. Awami League's former lawmaker Pubali bank Chairman Hafiz Ahmed Mazumder is on the field already although his party has rival factions in both the upazilas.

In Sylhet-6 (Golapganj and Beanibazar), Awami League has their former lawmaker Nurul Islam Nahid to contest Syed Mokbul Hossain, who was elected independently in 2001 and later joined BNP.

Mokbul told the Daily Star, "Again I will contest independent, and I am no longer with BNP or any other party." None can yet say who is to be in Sylhet-6 (Golapganj and Beanibazar) for the BNP led alliance.



Family members of 1971 martyrs form a human chain at Kaliganj killing ground in Jaldhaka upazila yesterday demanding cancellation of nomination to the 'massacre mastermind's son for Nilphamari-3.

Protest in Jaldhaka against ticket to collaborator's son

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Over hundred family members of the martyrs of 1971 'Kaliganj massacre' in Jaldhaka upazila formed a human chain and held a meeting at the killing spot yesterday protesting the nomination of the son of a collaborator to the Pakistani occupation forces for the upcoming parliament election.

The Pakistani army with the help of local collaborators killed about three hundred people at Kaliganj village in Jaldhaka upazila on April 27 in 1971. The victims were proceeding towards India to take shelter there to save their lives.

The victims' family members, who think the then Pakistan central cabinet minister Kazi Abdul Kader hailing from Sholmari village in Jaldhaka as the mastermind behind the massacre, became shocked to hear that Kader's son Kazi Faruque Kader was nomi-

nated by Jatiya Party to contest from Nilphamari-3 (Jaldhaka and part of Kishoreganj).

He is also supposed to be the candidate of the grand alliance led by Awami League.

"Our sorrow multiplied when we heard that Pakistani collaborator Abdul Kader's son Kazi Faruque Kader had been nominated to run in Nilphamari-3. He is also going to be a candidate of the Awami League-led grand alliance. We cannot realise how Awami League, a pro-liberation party, accepts such a man," said victims' family members Akhil Chandra Roy, Malda Rani Mohanta, Ridoy Ranjon Roy and Kamola Kanta Shil at the meeting.

Political parties should refrain from nominating close relatives of the collaborators of Pakistan army in 1971 to pay respect to the martyrs of the Liberation War, they said.

Chowdhury vs Chowdhury may mark Sherpur-2

A CORRESPONDENT, Sherpur

A tough contest is expected in the coming election between Awami League's Matia Chowdhury and BNP nomination aspirant former whip Jahed Ali Chowdhury in Sherpur-2 (Nakla-Nalitabari) constituency.

AL presidium member and former agriculture minister Matia has already submitted her nomination paper in this constituency.

In 1991 and 1996 Jatiya Sangsad elections, Matia won the seat.

Jahed, who won the seat in 2001 election, is awaiting nomination.

Party sources said Jahed's nomination is almost certain. After the promulgation of the state of emergency, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed on July 3 a corruption case with Nakla Police Station against Jahed on charges of earning Tk 1.30 crore illegally beyond his

known income.

Police sources said the case is now under investigation.

Besides, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) has also filed a tax evasion case against him.

Apart from Jahed, former secretary Barrister Mohammad Haider Ali and Islami Bank's Central Shariah Board Chairman Maulana Mukhlesur Rahman are also nomination aspirants from the four-party alliance.

Mukhlesur collected his nomination paper from the Election Commission secretariat on November 6. He has already begun his mass contact programme in the area and inaugurated four mosques constructed with foreign donation in his constituency recently.

Haider's close sources said he may not be able to run the polls on technical ground.

In Sherpur-3 constituency, Sreebordi upazila Awami League Vice-president

Engineer Fazul Haque Chan

has got party nomination for the ensuing Jatiya Sangsad election.

But former MP Khandaker Md Khurram is opposing Chan's nomination claiming that the grassroots leaders and workers of the party support him.

Khurram also submitted his nomination paper on November 23.

In this seat, BNP's probable candidate is Sherpur district BNP General Secretary Md Mahmudul Haque Rubel who is also a nephew of Awami League candidate Chan.

Awami League (AL) could not win the seat for 21 years from 1975.

In 1996 election, AL candidate late MA Bari won the seat, but in 2001 election he was defeated by BNP's young candidate Md Mahmudul Haque Rubel, son of former MP late Dr Serajul Haque.



Henry Talukder to run from stalwarts' seat

GOLAM MOSTAFA JIBON, Sirajganj

For the first time, a woman in Sirajganj is in the polls race, creating enthusiasm among her supporters and members of the public.

Jannat Ara Henry alias Henry Talukder, will run in Sirajganj-2 constituency (Sirajganj Sadar and Kamarkhanda) with Awami League ticket. She submitted nomination papers on Sunday and has launched campaign.

Both Awami League and BNP has a good base in Kurigram-2, political observers said. BNP candidate Mirza Muraduzzam was elected from the constituency in 1991.

AL candidate Mohammad Nasim was elected from the constituency in 1996, while BNP-led four party alliance candidate Iqbal Hassan Mahmud Tuku won the seat in 2001. The two veterans are convicted and may not be able to contest the upcoming polls, they said.

Henry is also a popular Rabindra Sangeet singer. She is also involved with so many socio-cultural organisations in the district. She is the first woman contestant from the constituency in parliamentary election. Her candidature is now widely discussed in the area.

Talking to The Daily Star, she said she is excited to run in the constituency where bigwigs like Nasim and Iqbal Hassan Mahmud won earlier.

Tug-of-war for ticket in Satkhira-1

BNP vows not to surrender it to Jamaat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Difference between BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami is widening in Satkhira over nomination in Satkhira-1 (Tala-Kalaroa) constituency, won by district BNP convener Habibul Islam Habib in 2001 election.

Habib's nomination has become uncertain as Jamaat central Shura member Md Ijrat Ullah is vying for alliance ticket from the constituency.

The feud intensified yesterday as local BNP leaders and activists at a meeting held on its office premises demanded nomination of Habib.

Former BNP lawmaker

Habib faces at least five cases including one for alleged involvement in the murder of Tala upazila BNP president ABM Altaf Hossain.

Habib came to Satkhira on November 14 after 22 months when he got bail from High Court.

The BNP meeting with Kalaroa upazila BNP president Prof Bazlur Rahman in the chair was addressed by, among others, district BNP member-secretary Samsuzzoha Babu and leaders and activists at its front organizations.

The speakers said they will not surrender the seat to

Jamaat and no one but Habib will be acceptable to them in the constituency. They demanded Habib's nomination.

Meanwhile both BNP and Jamaat are campaigning for their candidates. However Habib claimed that there is no reason to 'drop' him since the alliance is still in force.

"This is the only BNP seat in Satkhira district I think, Jamaat candidate Ijrat Ullah will not vie for nomination for the sake of existence of the alliance here", Habib said while talking to this correspondent yesterday.

"I was implicated in several

cases by vested quarters to tarnish my image to keep me out of politics.

I am innocent", he said. A top Jamaat leader seeking not to be named said Jamaat will seek the 4-party alliance ticket from the constituency as Habib failed to fulfill his 2001 election pledges.

"If the alliance intends to retain the seat, there is no alternative to nominating Jamaat leader Ijrat Ullah", claimed the Jamaat leader.

On contact Jamaat central leader Ijrat Ullah said if he is nominated by the BNP led alliance he will be able to retain the seat.

Protest by 2 Khulna AL aspirants' men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police foiled observance of token hunger strike by over 2000 people in the Khulna Press Club premises at 10 am yesterday (Thursday) in demand of nomination to Khulna district Awami League president Sheikh Harun-ar-Rashid from Khulna-1 and senior Vice President

Advocate Sheikh Nurul Huq from Khulna-6 constituencies.

Later, they went to the Khulna Awami League office to observe token hunger strike from 10:30 a.m. till 2 p.m., which was followed by a rally.

The grassroots level people came to Khulna from Batiaghata, Dakop, Koira and Paikgacha upazilas of Khulna-1 and Khulna-6 seats of the

Parliament in protest against nominations of Nani Gopal Mandal and Advocate Sohrab Ali Sana.

After the token hunger strike a rally was held where speakers appealed to AL Chief Sheikh Hasina to review nominations by fielding Sheikh Harun in Khulna-1 (Batiaghata-Dacope) and Advocate Nurul Huq in Khulna-6 (Koira-Paikgacha) constituencies.

Otherwise, the speakers warned that the party would face polls debacle in the two seats.

AL Parliamentary board has fielded Dacope upazila AL president Nani Gopal Mandal in Khulna-1 and Advocate Sohrab Ali Sana in Khulna-6 to contest in the upcoming national elections.

Nominations to these two new faces have triggered discontent among grassroots level workers and leaders of the two constituencies.

Sheikh Harun and Advocate Sheikh Nurul Huq said they were stunned at the decision of the AL parliamentary board regarding nomination in the two constituencies.

Advocate Sheikh Nurul Huq who won Khulna 6 seat in 1996 said he would contest as an independent candidate if the nomination were not reviewed.

Sheikh Harun-ar-Rashid who was elected lawmaker from Khulna-1 in 1986 national elections said that the decision was unacceptable to him.

"Yet, I would not go against party decision", Harun said urging Sheikh Hasina to review the nomination and field him in Khulna-1.



PHOTO: STAR

Supporters observe a token hunger strike on the premises of Khulna Press Club yesterday demanding nomination to Khulna district Awami League President Sheikh Harun-ar-Rashid for Khulna-1 and senior Vice President Sheikh Nurul Huq for Khulna-6 constituencies.



Mahmudul Hassan Abul Kalam Azad Gautam Chakraborty Lutfar Rahman Motin

Intra-party feud dims BNP hopes in Tangail 4, 5, 6, 7

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

BNP could not close its rank and file in the district yet and the party men have already divided in many areas over candidatures in the ensuing Jatiya Sangsad election.

BNP candidates won five out of the eight JS seats in the district in 2001. Of the rest three seats, Awami League got two and Krishak Sramik Janata League one.

Although BNP have good organisational strength in the district but intra-party feud and rivalry over nominations may cause a disaster in the coming election, party sources said.

This time, party is facing problems over candidatures in at least four out of eight constituencies, they said.

In Tangail-4 (Kalihati), BNP leader Shajahan Siraj won the election in 2001 defeating AL

candidate Abdul Latif Siddiqui. This time, Shajahan Siraj cannot contest in the election due to convictions in corruption cases under Emergency Power Rules (EPR).

In absence of Siraj, industrialist Lutfar Rahman Motin, engineer Badlur Rahman Khan and former student leaders Selim Reza and Benazir Ahmed Titu are seeking party ticket from the constituency. Lutfar Rahman Motin has already got the green signal from the party high command.

In Tangail-5 (Sadar), BNP's Maj Gen (Retd) Mahmudul Hasan won the election in 2001 defeating AL presidium member Abdul Mannan.

There is no alternative to Mahmudul Hasan this time also as he is the most eligible candidate in the constituency, party insiders said.

In Tangail-6 (Nagarpur-Delduar), Gautam Chakraborty won the elections in 1996 and 2001 defeating AL candidate Khandakar Abdul Baten.

This time, about a dozen party leaders including Habibur Rahman Khan Channu, Enamul Karim Shaheed and barrister Ashek Ali are seeking party nomination.

In Tangail-7 (Mirzapur), BNP's Abul Kalam Azad Siddiqui was defeated by Awami League (AL) candidate Ekabbar Hossain in the election of 2001. In 2008 election, several party leaders including Sayid Shohrab, Firoz Haidar Khan and Abdur Rouf are seeking party ticket from the constituency.

Abul Kalam Azad is prospective among the contenders this time also, party insiders said.